

1 Chair's Corner

New Year's Eve is coming up, the time of reflection and new resolutions. I wonder if any of you will find yourself committing to do more service for organizations in need. The Prairie Group of the Sierra Club is one such organization that is in great need of new volunteers who can faithfully execute. Our board is a small one at 6 members, and we find ourselves stretched to do the basics to keep the organization afloat.

Therefore, there is little time for conservation campaigns or regular programming. So if you find you have time to spare and are interested in working with us on energy or environmental justice issues, please notify me at waterforwishes@gmail.org.

Don't forget to get outside this winter!

Stacy James

2 IDNR wind expert Keith Shank talks to Sierra Club about wind farms

On September 27, the Sierra Club and the Normal-based Audubon Society co-hosted a presentation on wind farms by Keith Shank. Mr. Shank is the Illinois Department of Natural Resource's primary point of contact for wind energy developers and governments considering wind energy projects. In particular, he advises on the potential effects of wind projects on endangered species and Illinois natural areas.

During his presentation, Mr. Shank made a number of interesting comments, including:

- The State of Illinois does not regulate wind projects; rather, counties usually develop a wind ordinance.
- Local governments must consult with IDNR on a project's potential impacts, but the recommendations do not have to be implemented.

- It is estimated that on average, 1-2 birds and 3-4 bats per turbine per year, are killed by collision with wind turbines.

- Displacement or exclusion may be the most significant impact of turbines on wildlife.

- There may be effects on ground animals, but that hasn't been studied much.

National Sierra Club has a policy on wind siting, which can be found at

www.sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/wind_siting.aspx.

In short, the Club supports the development of wind resources for electricity generation. In most cases, the negative impacts can be managed through good siting. The Club supports projects where appropriate siting criteria are satisfied, public participation is possible, and environmental concerns are remedied.

The Prairie Group will be following applications for new wind farms in east-central Illinois, and attend public meetings when we feel it is important to express our concerns or support.

3 Hike at Mingo Lake

We had lovely fall weather and an adventure-some group for our 7-mile hike at Mingo Lake in Kennekuk County Park near Danville on October 23. The six participants enjoyed the fall colors and beautiful scenery of the wooded trail

the lake. Snacks were enjoyed afterwards and the only downside of the day was the fact that the Dairy Barn in Danville had closed a month previous to our excursion. We hope everyone will be able to join us on our next hike sometime in the spring.

Mingo Lake Outing: Stacy James, Beth Wohlgenuth, Lixiang Han, Jim Webb, Rachel Vellenga. Not pictured: Dick Bishop Mingo Lake from the dam.



4 Prairie Group Executive Committee (Excom) Elections

This fall, the Prairie Group sent out a call for nominations for the Executive Committee. However, there were no nominations and hence no election. Three ExCom seats expiring this year are held by Dick Bishop, Alice Englebretsen, and Stacy James. These three board members will continue for another 2-year term.

The ExCom will elect officers at a meeting in January. We will notify members of this meeting in advance and of the results afterwards.

In September, Kirstin Replogle left the board after more than 10 years of faithful service (we'll miss you!). The ExCom is looking for someone to fill the remaining year of her vacated seat. In particular, we are looking for someone interested in working on environmental justice or energy. If you can be of help, contact Don Davis at zoots2005@gmail.com. We'd love to have you join us!

5 Events

- We have reserved a slot at the Holiday Market in Lincoln Mall in Urbana for Saturday, December 10. As usual this is a chance to meet members of the Excom, join the Alerts list, buy Sierra Club T-shirts, backpacks, caps, calendars, and ... Printed copies of this newsletter will be available.
- Tuesday, December 13, 6:30-8:30 pm, Champaign Public Library, Room C. Our annual event to share vacation pictures. Bring a folder of your pictures on a CD or a flash memory; computers and a projector will be provided.

Know of a local event other Sierra Club members might be interested in?
Let Rachel Vellenga know at rlvellenga@yahoo.com.

Executive Committee and Regular volunteers

Term 2012 – 2013 (positions listed are for 2011):

Stacy James – Chair, Conservation Chair

Dick Bishop – Vice-Chair, Chapter Delegate, Newsletter Editor, Webmaster

Alice Englebretsen – Treasurer, Alternate Chapter Delegate

Term 2011 – 2012:

Donald Davis – Political Chair, Assistant Treasurer

Stuart Levy – Webmaster, Assistant Conservation Chair

Rachel Vellenga – Outings Chair, Publicity Chair

The above members will designate someone to replace Kirstin Replogle.

Regular volunteers:

Jim Beauchamp – Membership Chair, Listserv Manager

Cynthia Hoyle – Transportation Chair, Planning Chair

Trent Shepard – Publication Representative

Kirstin



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