

PRAIRIE FLYER

Newsletter of the Sierra Club Prairie Group • East-Central Illinois • July/Aug/Sept 2002

Prairie Group General Meetings

Prairie Group meetings are held the second Wednesday of every month, 7:30 p.m. in the Bondurant Room of the Illinois Disciples Foundation, at the corner of Wright and Springfield, Champaign, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, July 10

No meeting this month due to so many people being out of town.

Wednesday, August 14, 5:30 p.m.

(note the earlier time)

Summer Potluck!

Enjoy the company of fellow Sierrans and environmentalists at a backyard potluck hosted by Jim and Karen Beauchamp, 1002 Elliot Drive, Urbana (just east of Yankee Ridge Elementary School). Please bring a dish to pass. Paper plates, plastic ware, and drinks provided, but you are encouraged to bring your own PP and PW. We'll also have a couple of grills for carnivorous types and lawn chairs for the sedentary set.

Wednesday, September 4, 7:30 p.m.

(note this meeting is a week early)

Urban Sprawl

Last November, the Prairie Group sponsored a sprawl tour using our local public transportation system. Participants saw first hand the impacts of poor planning on our community. For this meeting we will first view the Thomas Hylton video "Save Our Lands, Save Our Towns," which appeared on WILL last year, and then follow that with a panel discussion. We will include participants from urban planning departments and the business community as well. This discussion will focus on how we can ensure that our community grows sensibly while maintaining its character.

Wednesday, October 9, 7:30 p.m.

Upcoming Elections

Elections are fast approaching, so mark this date on your calendars now! We are hoping to put together a "candidate forum" for local, state, and national candidates hoping to represent our community. This will be an excellent opportunity to find out their level of commitment to protecting our environment. Watch for a notice in the next newsletter with all the details!

Outings

Backpacking Trip — Camp Hutchins Area of Shawnee National Forest

October 25-28, 2002

Near Carbondale, IL. The Prairie Group is considering adopting this proposed wilderness area. We will explore a new trail possibility and existing trails. Meet at Trail of Tears Campground Friday evening and hike a loop including some off-trail exploration, spending Saturday and Sunday nights on the trail. Some backpacking experience preferable. Breakfast and dinner Saturday through Monday is provided. \$30 fee. Contact Jack Kuehn at 217-649-8397 or j-kuehn@uiuc.edu

Outings-Related E-Mail List Available

An e-mail discussion list has been created to announce and discuss local chapter outings. Sign up two ways:

Send an e-mail to: LISTSERV@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG
Subject: [leave blank]

[Message body] subscribe IL-PRAIRIE-OUTINGS-FORUM

You will receive from the list server a confirmation note that will require a response. The confirmation note will explain what to do to confirm your subscription.

Or visit <http://lists.sierraclub.org/SCRIPTS/WA.EXE?SUBED1=il-prairie-outings-forum&A=1> and sign up directly.

If for any reason you have problems signing up, please e-mail Mike Corn (mcorn@uiuc.edu) for assistance.

Would you like to volunteer for the Prairie Group, or offer ideas for the Prairie Flyer? E-mail geo_gore@yahoo.com

ONE EARTH, ONE CHANCE®

Notes From the Chair

by George Gore

THANKYOU

A big thank you to Trent Shepard for leading our 2002 calendar sales and raising nearly \$1,000 for our local group this year! Another thank you to everyone who donated in the Illinois Chapter's annual March fund raising appeal because 50 percent of donations from members in our group return to our group, which in 2000 totaled over \$1,300. With your financial support, Sierra Club volunteers and staff work hard to ensure our Illinois legislators and polluters are held accountable for spoiling our air, water, land and food.

KANKAKEE COUNTY

Our Kankakee County members will soon be joining the Sauk-Calumet Group in Southern Cook County and Will County. Approximately 80 members will benefit from larger and closer group meetings, while gaining assistance in fighting the third airport in Peotone and establishing the Grand Kankakee Marsh, while boosting local support to keep landfills out of the new Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. We wish our Kankakee County members well and would certainly welcome any members who want to remain in the Prairie Group. If you wish to remain with Prairie Group, please contact our membership chair, Jim Beauchamp.

SIX KEY DECISIONS

Even if you can't donate financially right now, you can still make a tremendous difference for the environment. For example, these are the six most important decisions you make that impact the environment: 1) Voting in each election, 2) Number of children, 3) Size and location of home, 4) Diet (e.g. locally produced, organic, less meat), 5) Large household appliances, 6) Vehicle efficiency

LOCAL ACTION

This summer, Prairie Group is cooperating with Illinois Student Environmental Network (ISEN) to run an action table on Saturday mornings at the Farmer's Market in Urbana. If you'd like to help, contact someone on our executive committee and you'll have a great opportunity to meet the local community and educate people about current environmental issues. We'll have a variety of postcards and petitions so people can not only talk about problems, but actually do something to help solve the problems.

CHAMPAIGN RECYCLING

Some of you may have noticed our recent support of student environmental groups working to bring recycling to Champaign apartment buildings. University of Illinois students from Earth Doctors and SECS gathered over 1,000 petition signatures, surveyed over 500 apartment residents who largely supported small fees to establish an apartment recycling program, and researched costs and benefits of implementing potential solutions before bringing this information to the Champaign City Council. Unfortunately, the initial request for a special study session fell one vote short. Speaking against the student's proposal, At-large councilman Thomas Bruno said he wanted to see voluntary recycling programs at apartments. The students have a compelling economic and environmental case and plan to push the issue much harder next year before the upcoming city council elections. If you vote in Champaign, please contact your council member and let them know you support establishing a recycling program in Champaign apartments.

FAIR TABLING

This summer, Prairie Group plans to do some tabling at local festivals, the Champaign county fair, and the state fair in Springfield. If you'd like to get more involved and meet great people concerned about the environment, come join us as we educate our local community about pressing issues like Illinois wetlands and encourage people to take action to protect valuable natural

Future Sierra Club Outings Survey

As planning for fall outings begins, we thought chapter members would be the best source for ideas on where to visit. A preliminary list of 76 popular spots in Illinois, sorted by their distance from Champaign-Urbana, is on the chapter website at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/prairie/OUTINGS.html>. This table also includes a URL to some information about (almost) each site. We encourage you

resources from destruction. If you'd like to join us or would like us to join you at your county fair, please contact me or our membership chair.

REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Have you moved lately or changed your name? This November some very important elections are taking place in Prairie Group and the environment needs your help! You can register to vote directly with the county clerk or your city clerk. Some libraries, schools, and community organizations have Deputy Registrars. You can also fill out a motor-voter form when you get your driver's license, but may not be able to vote absentee the first time you vote.

POLITICAL ENDORSEMENTS

With elections just around the corner, Sierra Club is busy sending questionnaires to candidates, conducting personal interviews, and deciding whether to endorse political candidates. Many environmental groups work on conservation programs and some offer local outings, but Sierra Club is unique because we empower grassroots environmental activists to stand together under a nationally recognized name and directly lobby and endorse politicians. Sierra Club is also non-partisan, which means we don't care which party a politician is with, as long as they help protect our environment! To make these important endorsement decisions, we have a 70+ page manual, but it boils down to: 1) The candidate's track record and platform on the environment, 2) An incumbent's environmental voting record, 3) Can the candidate win or at least mount a credible campaign. If you have any thoughts or concerns about local, state or federal candidates in your area, please inform our political chair, Dick Bishop.

NEW EXCOM LISTSERV

Now we can involve Sierra Club members from our entire region of 12 counties in policy discussions and decisions. In theory, we could have executive committee (ExCom) meetings on-line, allowing ExCom members living in Bloomington/Normal, Pontiac, Charleston, Mattoon, Danville, Rantoul, etc. to participate directly. Our new e-mail listserv will allow ExCom members to post directly, while remaining open for all members to observe. If you're not on the ExCom, you can now follow the decision process and send your thoughts, ideas or concerns directly to ExCom members or submit it to the listserv editor for posting to the listserv. To get involved, point your web browser to lists.sierraclub.org/archives and scroll down to IL-PRAIRIE-EXCOM. Hopefully, the sign-up process is clear from here, but if you have any trouble just e-mail me and I can add you.

PRAIRIE GROUP ELECTIONS

We'll have four seats open for election to two year terms starting in January 2003 and we need several more candidates to ensure a good, democratic election. If you're interested in running for election to our Prairie Group ExCom, or simply want to publish your two cents on where you think we should be going, please contact me for more information.

HELP WANTED

Prairie Group really needs a conservation chair and a publicity chair. No experience required! I was a conservation chair my first year in Sierra Club and learned a lot about how to turn my concerns into action that helped protect the environment. There are also lots of other opportunities for anyone interested in making a difference for the environment to get involved. Just tell us what you want to see done or enjoy doing and we'll find a good match for you. Hours are incredibly flexible and since we're all volunteers, any assistance from once a year to 20 hours a week is greatly appreciated!

to take a moment to scan the list and e-mail us the spots you'd like to visit — ideally choose a few at various distances from our area. Please e-mail choices to mcorn@uiuc.edu or join the e-mail discussion list and send your choices to it. Feel free to e-mail Mike (mcorn@uiuc.edu) or Jack (j-kuehn@shout.net) directly with ideas or suggestions for outings or suggested additions to the list.

Event Reports

Training Day - March 1st

by Brett Kaplan

On the weekend of March 1st three local Champaign-Urbana Sierra Club members joined Sierrans from all over the state at a training weekend at Pilgrim Park in Princeton, IL. Eric, Jane, and I arrived just as the snow was starting to fall hard. By the next morning the forest was covered in snow and the world was beautiful.

The goals of the training weekend were to educate us about state-wide environmental issues and train us how to organize campaigns around the issues. Emily McFarland, Nat Garrett, and others came from the San Francisco chapter to lead general discussions while local leaders organized groups around three themes: The Wetlands Campaign, The Water Campaign, and The Shawnee National Forest.

I chose the Water Group where we discussed cleaning up Illinois' rivers, lakes, and beaches and the need to enforce the largely-ignored Clean Water Act. Someone came up with a brilliant idea for a water campaign: a group of Sierrans don HazMat suits (bright orange, of course) and stage a performance on rivers and at beaches (especially in Chicago), thus alerting the public that if waterways aren't cleaned up one can only be safe in water wearing a HazMat suit. We floated several bumper-sticker ideas and found that formulating catchy sayings is harder than you might think; someone did come up with one that seemed to stick: "Join the scene, make our water clean."

Albert Ettinger, a lawyer who has worked with the Sierra Club for some years, was on hand to answer all detailed, legal questions on why the EPA hasn't enforced the Clean Water Act and what we can do to encourage it to do so. The water group ended with a plan to return to the Princeton area for a meeting on June 8 to discuss further plans.

After breaking up into our discussion groups we came together in a larger group, where some of the San Francisco folks talked to us about topics such as becoming media savvy. Nat Garrett ran a media panel guiding us through ways and means of successful media negotiation.

Overall the weekend was a great time to learn about local environmental issues and get better acquainted with running a campaign to make a difference. All training aside, the best part was a hike through the snowy forest capped by sled-trains of Sierrans cascading at top speed down a hill, this and the ensuing mammoth snowball fight again proved that radical politics is always fun.

Canoe Trip on the Middle Fork of the Vermillion River - May 4th

by Alice Englebretsen

This trip was led by Clark Bullard who was active in getting the Middle Fork designated a National Scenic River, the only waterway in Illinois with such a designation. The weather was perfect with clear blue skies and no wind to speak of. About 50 people launched canoes and kayaks. The water was running fast as we had received several significant rain storms, but that made for a very exciting time. Not only were there about 10 people from the local Prairie Group, but a large contingent of people came down from Chicago with the Prairie State Canoeists. The trip was 12 miles from Kinney Ford to Kickapoo State Park. Clark provided insights into the struggle to get the Middle Fork designated a National Scenic River by preventing efforts to build a reservoir. The struggle is not over. As Clark said, "Environmental wins are temporary, and environmental losses are permanent." He talked about the area's geology, and on one stop many participants hiked up a ridge with some unique plant life and to an ancient Indian campsite and burial ground.

We reached the end of our trip happy, wet, and exhilarated. For more info on the Middle Fork check out www.middleforkriver.org. Thanks, Clark, for a great canoe trip!

Prairie Group Website/E-Mail/Listserv

The Prairie Group website is <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/prairie>. Check the site for updates on activities and information.

If you want to keep up with the latest opportunities to get involved, sign up for our listserv (group e-mail system) by going to <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives> and scrolling down past many Sierra Club listservs to click on "IL-PRAIRIE-ALERTS." On the next screen click on "Join or leave the list" then fill in blanks for "Your e-mail address" and "Your name." Then select the listserv settings you want (the default should be fine for beginners) and click on the "Join the list" button. You should get an e-mail response to finish confirming your subscription. If you have any problems please e-mail George Gore, Interim Listserv Chair, at geo_gore@yahoo.com

MEETING BRIEFS :

Winter Madness Fair, February 13

In February, we hosted a slightly different meeting than usual. One of Prairie Group's goals over the next months is to increase our active member base. As a kick-off, we hosted a Winter Madness Fair. While it didn't feel like winter due to the mild weather, it was a highly successful event! Approximately 12 new faces came to learn how to get involved in the Club's wide array of activities.

ExCom members put together displays of various ways we try to make a difference in protecting the environment. The ExCom member or Chair for each committee gave a short talk about goals and the many opportunities for new people to contribute. Dick Bishop, Political, talked about recent re-districting and resulting changes for our elected representation, and how the Club participates in the electoral process through candidate interviews and endorsements. Jim Beauchamp, Membership, shared the number and locale of our local membership base, and how we keep a list meeting attendees as a reference for people to contact when something important comes up. Members can be identified by areas of issue interest, congressional district, etc. Jack Kuehn, Outings, talked about opportunities to get out and enjoy the natural world. He said the Club will provide training for people who want to lead outings.

Newsletter Editor Alice Englebretsen discussed the importance of our local newsletter and website as avenues to provide a broad range of information and opportunities to members. We're always looking for people to write articles or help with the webpage. George Gore, Group Chair, talked about the Sierra Student Coalition, and Jen Hensley spoke about the Conservation Committee (currently open) as a means to connect with people from other enviro-oriented organizations and coordinate local campaigns. Kirstin Replogle, Program, said the committee secures speakers for general meetings, usually educational in nature, and open to the public. Finally, Terri Treacy, Shawnee Wildlands Outings Coordinator shared the possibility of "adopting" a section of the Shawnee National Forest, tying in the Chapter's wilderness campaign and outings all in one. The Group is considering this action.

If any committee sounds good, we welcome participation! Contact anyone on ExCom for more info on how to help.

We're very excited that several new people are already making significant contributions. Thank you Jane Teresi, Brett Kaplan, Tom Talty, and Mike Corn, for giving time and energy to the Club and to the broader conversation of how to make this a better world.

Legislation Issues, Jack Darin, IL Chapter Director, April 10 Jack had a wealth of information regarding environmental issues happening in Springfield. The meeting was well attended by some new, current, and potential members, in addition to several candidates running for state office.

Some of the legislative and political concerns and successes in Springfield that Jack discussed are:

- Although the federal government is responsible for protection of many environmental areas, some areas are

left to the state to legislate and enforce. (Note the IEPA is the state's enforcement agency)

- During the 80s the goal was reached to recycle 25 percent of household waste going to landfills.
- Gov. Ryan set up an open land trust fund, e.g., the Allerton Park adjoining land acquisition.
- There are ongoing problems with park and forest districts and corporate hog farms, where manure is getting into streams. Livestock management act needs to be passed.

We've had some notable successes, but future success depends on local support. Sierra Club has a big advantage in helping the environment as it is the only environmental group able to endorse election candidates and can lobby politicians. Many legislators are moderates or undecided on environmental issues and are influenced by constituents.

Activist tools the Sierra Club can use to effectively communicate with their legislatures are to: • Meet in person • Send letters • Make calls • Send pre-printed postcards • Send e-mail (though e-mail may be effective nationally, especially with the anthrax scare, its effectiveness is uncertain on the state level.)

The best way to influence legislators is to meet with them in their home office! Next best is to write a personal letter.

The Illinois Action Network assists by e-mailing short descriptions of issues, providing sample letters that can be edited, and providing a channel for converting e-mails into faxes, which are more effective than actual e-mails.

The Illinois Wetland Protection Act — HB 6013

Wetlands Bill 6013 was a major focus for Illinois Chapter. In a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, the Federal Government no longer has protective jurisdiction over wetlands not connected to another body of water such as a lake or river. That means approximately 1/3 of all wetlands remaining in Illinois have lost protection. This has been the case for the past 14 months. Only three counties (DuPage, Kane, and Lake) have passed their own ordinances. This bill would require a permit from the state before anyone could destroy a wetland in Illinois.

In April, Illinois Chapter, including people from Prairie Group, went to Springfield to lobby the State House to pass this bill. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass. Special interest groups such as realtors, developers, and anyone interested in developing wetlands led tremendous opposition.

Good news: the fight is not over. Sierra Club, with other wetland advocates, will lobby at the next opportunity, perhaps in Nov. 2002 for the Spring 2003 session. You can help win the next vote on wetlands by contacting your State Rep. now and let them know what you think of their vote. Since Representatives Tom Berns and Rick Winkle both voted "present" or undecided, we recommend writing letters personally to them. See contact information below:

Thomas B. Berns, District 104, 1717 Philo Road, Suite 27, P.O. Box 1047, Urbana, IL 61802; 217-384-5336

Richard Winkel, Jr., District 103, 201 West Springfield Ave., P.O. Box 1736, Champaign, IL 61824; 217-355-4994.

Officer Biographies

Jim Beauchamp — Membership Chair

Jim grew up in Michigan and has always enjoyed the outdoors which, as a youngster, he had a chance to do in summer because his parents usually sent him to camp. Later he became a Boy Scout and Explorer Scout, earning an Eagle badge. He camped as an adult, but it wasn't until the late '70s on a Colorado backpacking trip that he got an appreciation of the fragility of the mountain environment. Visits to parks in New York state in 1980 convinced him something needed to be done to counter routinely occurring water pollution. Visits to the seashore in California, where he lived in 1962-63 and 1968-69, impacted his awareness of the need for regulation of offshore oil rigs and oil tankers.

Meanwhile, Jim joined the faculty of U. of I at Urbana-Champaign, first with the dept. of electrical and computer engineering, then on a joint appointment with the school of music and dept. of ECE. He retired in '97, but is active as a professor emeritus, attending several professional meetings a year, publishing, and giving talks on computer music, acoustics, and music perception and cognition.

Jim joined the Sierra Club in 1982 and very soon after became a member of the Prairie Group ExCom in 1983. He's served in various positions over the years: 1983-84, treasurer; 1985-90, vice chair; 1991, membership; 1992, secretary and membership; 1993, chair; 1998-2002, membership; 2001-2002, vice chair. Canoeing is a favorite activity and in the '80s he led several summer trips on the Current River in Missouri. However, his main role has

been as a mainstay of the group's infrastructure.

Jim has three children in their 30s and 40s, three grandchildren and, with his wife, Karen, a young son who shares his interests in music, swimming, baseball, and hiking.

Kirstin Replogle — Prairie Group Program Chair

Kirstin is employed as a Research Specialist in Life Sciences at UIUC. A Life Member, Kirstin's been active in the Sierra Club for over 10 years. Beginning with activism surrounding the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Voyageurs National Park issues, her interests gradually shifted from public lands protection work to environmental justice and Right-to-Know issues. During this time, she held many leadership positions within the North Star Chapter (Minnesota), including Membership Chair, Delegate to the Chapter ExCom, and Chair — all for the Minneapolis Group. In 1996, she was appointed Chair of the Sierra Club's National Environmental Justice Committee, where she's participated in the development of the Club's National Environmental Justice Grassroots Organizing Program and advocated for increased involvement by the Club in this exciting work.

Kirstin moved to Urbana in 1996, and joined the Prairie Group ExCom in 2001. At year's end, Kirstin will finish her tenure on the EJ Committee, at least for a time, and while she will miss not being formally associated with her exceptional colleagues, she keeps mumbling something about finally getting some "free time"...

Executive Committee Members of the Prairie Group (ExComm) Website: www.sierraclub.org/chapters/il/prairie

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Secretary - OPEN, Conservation Chair - OPEN
List-Server Chair - OPEN, Fund Raising - OPEN
Environmental Education Chair - OPEN
Chapter Delegate, Alternate - OPEN
Membership Co-Chair - OPEN

All OPEN positions available now. If interested, contact Jim Beauchamp at j-beauch@uiuc.edu or at 217-344-3307.

† elected or appointed to ExComm for 2001-2002
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