

## The River Prairie Group Makes Its Endorsements Count

The River Prairie Group put some volunteer muscle behind its 2010 Primary endorsements and can take pride that each of our endorsed candidates was victorious.

Several had hotly contested races. Roger Kotecki, Forest Preserve 6, and Mike Formento, Forest Preserve 4, each survived strong primary challenges. Kotecki and Formento, along with Dewey Pierroti, endorsed for Forest Preserve Commission chair, have provided leadership and key votes on issues that matter most to environmentalists such as wildlife diversity, habitat restoration and healthy lakes and streams.

Dan Cronin, whose long history of leadership on environmental issues in the General Assembly earned him the Sierra Club's endorsement for DuPage County Board chair, handily won his primary.

Each will face challengers in the General Election. The RPG will make separate endorsement decisions for the General Election.

The new early primary and December filing deadline presented a volunteer's nightmare as all the work of endorsement, to be meaningful, had to be done during the busy holiday season.

Many thanks go to Connie Schmidt who chaired the interview team and to participants Jan Beaton, Ruth Najacht, Tom Richardson,

Linda Sullivan and Mary Vieregg. All candidates who returned our questionnaire were invited to a one hour interview. All endorsements must receive a two-thirds majority vote by the RPG Executive Committee and Illinois Chapter Executive Committee.

The Sierra Club endorsement is highly sought after, in part, because volunteers provide the "feet on the ground" efforts that it takes to get elected. RPG volunteers called every Sierra Club member in Forest Preserve District 6, informing them of Kotecki's endorsement. Many of those called asked for yard signs. Thanks go to Jan Beaton, Tom Richardson, Connie Schmidt and Mary Vieregg who made those calls. In addition, during a cold, snowy January, Jan Beaton, Barbara and Tom Richardson, Connie Schmidt and Linda Sullivan canvassed several precincts.

Many thanks go to Tom Wronski who chaired a highly successful Sierra Club PAC fundraiser and to Frank Orto who organized a call night for Dan Cronin.

In addition to endorsements for county races, the Sierra Club endorsed state representatives Mike Fortner, 95, and Sandra Pihos, 42, in the General Election.



*From left to right: Mike Formento, candidate for District 4 DuPage Forest Preserve, Jack Darin, Executive Director Illinois Sierra Club, and Dan Cronin, candidate for Chairman DuPage County Board.*

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### DuPage Sierran

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[Http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg)

For activities, legislative action alerts, & outings information

**We are on Facebook!** Check out:

[http://www.facebook.com/pages/River-Prairie-Group\\_of\\_the\\_Sierra\\_Club/96257429851](http://www.facebook.com/pages/River-Prairie-Group_of_the_Sierra_Club/96257429851)

## Lombard is Officially Cool

By Jenny Smiechowski

Lombard joined 48 other cities in the state of Illinois and became a Cool City, after Lombard Village President, William Mueller signed the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

The Sierra Club's Cool City campaign encourages citizens to take immediate action against global warming, by starting in their own communities. "From my involvement with Cool Cities, it is the best way for people who are concerned about climate change to take action. Individual actions are important, but when people work together at the community level the impact is greater and becomes more visible," said Illinois Cool Cities Chair, Lonnie Morris.

The campaign was inspired by the US Mayor's Protection Agreement, which mirrors the Kyoto Protocol Global Warming Treaty. The agreement commits participating mayors to reducing global warming carbon dioxide pollution in their cities to seven percent below 1990 levels by 2012.

The signing of US Mayor's Protection Agreement is an official pledge of Lombard's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint, but the city already has many green features that make it a Cool City. For example, in the spring of 2009 Lombard received a direct Formula Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant which funded a pilot LED street lighting project. The village also converted 1/3 of its traffic lights to LED through its TRAFFIC signals project.

Lombard offers its residents options for alternative transportation including train-access and two rails-to-trails bike paths, and has three Toyota Priuses for the Public Works Department. Furthermore, Lombard adopted a village-wide vehicle anti-idling protocol, and partnered with District 44 schools to discourage parents from idling in school pick-up zones.

In addition to Lombard, four other cities in DuPage County have already become Cool Cities by signing the US Mayor's Protection Agreement, and many others have initiated Cool Cities campaigns.

Elmhurst is one city that has successfully attained Cool City status. Under the leadership of Jim Babcock, Elmhurst has assembled a coalition of civic organizations,



*Illinois Sierra Club Cool Cities Chair, Lonnie Morris presents Cool City certificate to Lombard Village President, William Mueller*

faith groups, healthcare, education institutions, and concerned individuals and businesses. The coalition worked together to engage city government and administration in their goal of reducing Elmhurst's greenhouse gas emissions.

Based upon Elmhurst's success, Babcock sees great potential in the Sierra Club's Cool City Campaign as a means to address global warming on a community level. "[The] Cool Cities program takes a suite of real, common sense solutions to the local community. [It] is multi-faceted and flexible, and can be implemented in some shape or fashion in just about any circumstance," said Babcock.

Carol Stream has also signed the US Mayor's Climate agreement. Jan Smith is currently the Carol Stream Cool Cities citizen lead, and she has helped the city apply for and receive a \$173,000 Department of Energy grant for local energy efficiency and conservation projects.

In addition to her many successes, Smith asserts that her greatest challenge has been in maintaining a consistent level of activity in the coalition. "We had around 30 people come down from various organizations to our first meeting. Then it dwindled down to about 6 who are active," said Smith. "Our biggest challenge is to get more citizens aware and involved in the problem of global warming." But Smith encourages citizens and communities working toward Cool City status to stay strong: "It's a long process. Don't give up. Make use of the Sierra Club Cool City resources."

*continued on next page...*

## *“Love Me Timber”* with Sierra Club on Earth Day

By Lonnie Morris

The River Prairie Group kicks off Earth Day 2010 with a concert at Benedictine University featuring Green E, The Environmental Elvis. David Pyle, performing as Green E, infuses the message of environmental responsibility with humor through his adaptations of Elvis classics such as “Love Me Timber” (Love me Tender) and “Are You Recycling Tonight” (Are You Lonesome Tonight).

The songs of Elvis are a fitting tribute to Earth Day and the 40 years of accomplishments since the first event in 1970. Elvis rocked American pop music in the 1950’s with his famous gyrations, and the first Earth Day, with 20 million participants, transformed the national consciousness, ending an era of environmental apathy.

Pyle began his performance career in the 1980’s as a stand-up comic. With the rise of cable comedy channels in the 1990’s, the market for live stand-up comedy shrunk and Pyle found himself looking for new audiences. He took his act in a novel direction by merging two passions, a love of Elvis’ music and concern for the environment, and creating Green E. Originally from Georgia, Pyle now lives an eco-friendly life style in Chicago and is employed by Robert Morris College as an English instructor.

*David Pyle as Green E,  
The Environmental Elvis*



While growing up in the 1970’s, the only green message Pyle heard was “Turn off the light when you leave the room.” Times have changed says Pyle. “Today’s audiences are refreshingly cognizant of environmental issues. Caring for the environment has become part of our culture.”

Pyle adds, “Technology, such as hybrid cars, has created more opportunities and given the opportunity, people will do the right thing for the environment.”

“Don’t Waste Fuel” but join the RPG for an Earth Day celebration with Green E on April 21st.

For more information about Green E visit [www.greenelvis.com](http://www.greenelvis.com)

For more information about Earth Day at Benedictine University, contact Jean-Marie Kauth at (630) 829-6272 or by e-mail at [JKauth@ben.edu](mailto:JKauth@ben.edu)

### *Lombard, continued*

Smith’s advice is simple but helpful to any city starting or continuing their Cool City campaign. Glen Ellyn is one city currently working toward becoming a Cool City, and Glen Ellyn Cool Cities citizen lead Jeffery Gahris is looking for as much support as possible from the citizens of Glen Ellyn. “We are always looking for new people to become involved, particularly Glen Ellyn residents who care about the future of Glen Ellyn and have good skills for building coalitions. In the end, we hope to establish a good planning process that will lead to good emissions reductions projects down the road.”

Gahris asserts that the city is well on its way to signing the US Mayor’s protection agreement. “Barring any resource issues that would prevent it from moving to the

next step, Village staff seemed optimistic that it would sign on, and it seems open to volunteer support for Cool Cities program.”

The most valuable aspect of the Cool Cities campaign overall is that it empowers citizens to affect change in their community, and the world cumulatively. Each city has unique stories, different players, individual challenges, opportunities, and strengths. Many citizens have stepped up to the plate, and successfully implemented a campaign in their community, a task that takes a high level of commitment and dedication. Like Lombard, Elmhurst, Carol Stream, and Glen Ellyn, cities all over the country are rallying together to stop global warming by doing what they can to make their city cool.

## The Voice of an Individual

By Trisha Steele

The voice of each individual makes a difference, even when it remains silent.

What does silence say? For one thing, it says that something doesn't matter enough. It says that the downside of speaking up is bigger than any accomplishment that would be achieved by voicing an idea. And this brings us to the second thing silence says. It says the voice of an individual doesn't make a difference, so why bother? Yesterday, I experienced how wrong this is.

I receive routine email broadcasts on environmental education opportunities from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). On a whim, I responded with a question: Is Springfield aware of, and concerned about, the drop in environmental education programs offered at various nature centers across the state? I explained that I understood that the budget crunch was causing a problem, but it appears that this has become a trend and it would make me feel better to know that someone in Springfield cares.

Quickly, I received a response saying the issue didn't belong to the receiving individual's department, and it would be forwarded on to someone who could respond to it. And so, I thought, "I shouldn't have bothered because my voiced concern won't make any difference." But, yesterday, I received a call from the Director of State Parks, Mr. Tony Mayville.

He told me that the educational nature programs at the state parks are valued. We talked about the need to introduce people to the expansive biodiversity here in Illinois, the importance of expanding environmental literacy, and the impact of interpretive programs on the "leave no child inside" goal.

He explained that, in Springfield, the lack of funding and also the perception that the state can still operate with less resources are seen as major hurdles. Some politicians say that the cost of the IDNR could be better contained if it were managed more efficiently. But, he pointed out, that the state of Illinois ranks 50th in the nation in terms of the number of employees relative to total population. How can the state manage with less? As we volunteers here at Volo Bog and the Moraine Hills State

Parks know, supervisors and environmental educators are already pitching in where they can to cover other types of responsibilities, due to the staffing shortages.

I asked whether Springfield was shifting public education to local governments, such as conservation districts and forest preserves. Well, this led to a big discussion on how our state parks are funded. He explained that shifting interpretive programming to local governments is not their intention, but the local government parks have an advantage over the Illinois State Parks – a guaranteed funding source.

Right now, there is a statewide tax (Real Estate Transfer Tax) that collects \$0.50 for every \$500 in value at the closing of real estate sales. Half of that goes to the IDNR. However, part of that funding is designated for the protection and acquisition of natural areas, while most of it (70% of what IDNR gets) has to go towards a grant program (the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Act or 'OSLAD'). OSLAD helps with the development and improvement of local parks but none of it helps our state parks. The direct revenue we earn through camping and shelter reservation fees is not nearly enough to sustain our park system, so we have to rely on general revenue, such as state income and sales tax; and as general revenue taxes go down, so does the funding for our state parks. He pointed out that the financial resources available to operate our state parks are not consistent and follow the overall health of the state economy. So, I said, it all boils down to the fact that the state parks do not have a guaranteed funding source for park development and improvement needs, much less for providing interpretive nature experiences.

Then, I asked whether the state of Illinois would consider doing what the state of Wisconsin does: leave voluntary payment envelopes at the parking entrances. I pointed out that generally the public doesn't know how often the payment envelope boxes are checked but the fee is small enough that most people don't take the chance on getting a ticket for non-payment. He said that the this solution to the underfunding issue, along with other options, is being considered.

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## River Prairie Group Member testifies at EPA hearing

*By Cindy Ward*

In November '09, The Environmental Protection Agency wanted to hear from the people of Chicago about the proposed regulations for carbon dioxide emissions. Given that I had recently completed a video for Citizens Against Longwall Mining (C.A.L.M.), who were opposing the destruction of their southern Illinois properties by underground coal mining, I felt I had something to contribute.

The E.P.A. is proposing a rule that will restrict big polluters and a handful of pollution sources, including coal-fired power plants. According to a post by Greg Haegele, Deputy Executive Director of the Sierra Club, these polluters are responsible for more than half of the global warming pollution in the United States.

I spent much of the summer working with the members of C.A.L.M. First I learned about their dire situation, and then I helped them tell their story in the video, "The Sinking of the Heartland" (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9ErSxkEi54&feature=autofb>).

I heard stories and saw evidence of destroyed water sources, polluted water, polluted air, devastated land and lives ruined in the wake of the mining now proposed for their area.

Those of us living in the northern part of the state receive little information about the damage done by our demand for coal to fire our electric plants. Fifty percent of electricity comes from coal. All of the high-tech equipment that we so enjoy so much, has a dirty little secret; the source of their power is a big contributor to global warming.

Illinois Senate Bill SB 3107 concerning Longwall Mining is currently in the Senate Agriculture and Conservation Committee. Contact the members of that committee to voice your support of the bill as it currently exists. You can read the bill for yourself by going to the Illinois General Assembly website, where you will find a list of bills pending before the Senate. The bill is sponsored by Kyle McCarter. In addition to McCarter, the committee includes Chairman Michael W. Frerichs, A.J. Wilhelmi, Deanna Demuzio, Linda Homes, Toi W. Hutchinson, David Koehler, Tim Bivins, and Gary G Dahl.

I am glad that I was offered this rare opportunity to share what I've learned through working with C.A.L.M. to support the E.P.A. in their efforts to regulate big polluters.

*Voice, continued*

We talked about the importance of volunteers to the stewardship of the state's parks and he encouraged me to continue volunteering. We also discussed how volunteers, no matter how well intentioned, can't take the place of staff who provide well-trained, consistent, and reliable services.

So, what, you may ask, did I actually accomplish and why should you step out of the comfort of silence? Well, I wanted to know if the 'decision makers' were aware of the loss of interpretive nature programs at state parks around the state of Illinois. I got an answer. And, frankly, that not only makes me feel better, it invigorates me to now voice my concern to you. Won't you join me? Like the spring peepers coming out soon, the multitude of our individual voices could become a strong and determined chorus.

An old Chinese proverb says that if you want to plan for a year, plant rice; if you want to plan for a decade, plant trees; and, if you want to plan for a lifetime, plant ideas. It takes a voice to plant ideas. Please share your voice with your state politicians; tell them you are concerned about our state parks, our nature centers, and the drop in interpretive nature programs offered. Don't let your silence say that nature educational experiences don't matter enough.

Postscript: Mr. Mayville was very generous with his time and even got the aid of other staff to help me understand the funding of the state parks. Any over-simplifications or errors are my own and, if there are any, I apologize to the reader. I have relayed what I learned to the best of my ability.

## Sierra Club Outing Explores Energy-Efficient Home Design

By Jenny Smiechowski

On January 24th, Jan Bradford facilitated a Sierra Club Outing to Oregon, Illinois to share information about green home building. More than 15 participants pulled themselves out of a warm bed early on a rainy, fog-laden Sunday morning so they could see for themselves if and how these homes could withstand January in Northern Illinois. Their attendance was rewarded with a glimpse into three different buildings, all incorporating different elements of energy-efficient design.

Bradford said the trip was inspired by her own long-time interest in using alternative energy in home design. “I broke ground in 1980 and built a solar addition to my home,” said Bradford. “I had a vision at that time, and because of that vision I brought you all here for this solar presentation.”

Like Bradford’s home, two of the buildings toured on the outing used passive solar energy, which means they use sun energy without any active mechanical systems. The first was a prototype home called Pura Vida, designed and built by Solar Homes LLC. Victor Zaderej, President of Solar Homes LLC, built Pura Vida to demonstrate that a home in the upper Midwest can be heated with one watt per square foot during the coldest time of the year.

In addition to passive solar energy, Pura Vida also uses a 1.8 KW Skystream Windmill and efficiency-boosting building materials like a structural insulated panel system (SIPS), a building panel system noted for its strength and energy-efficiency. According to Solar Homes LLC, Pura Vida uses 80% less energy to heat and cool than the average, well-built American home.

The second destination on the outing was the Kickapoo Nature Center. The nature center was built to fill the needs of the Kickapoo Mud Creek Nature Conservancy, while also providing an example of the future of energy-efficient construction. The center and Pura Vida use many of the same design features. They both use passive solar energy and efficient building materials to ensure air tight insulation.



*The Kickapoo Nature Center, Oregon, IL*

To prevent the leakage of air and energy, The Kickapoo Nature Center was built using structural insulated panels (SIPS) and insulated concrete forms (ICFS), which provide incomparable temperature stability through fully insulated, reinforced concrete walls. “Efficiency is key,” said Bob Vogl, cofounder of the Illinois Renewable Energy Association and trip guide for Pura Vida and the Kickapoo Nature Center. Other important features of the nature center are an earth tube, a solar roof, and a heat recovery system.

The third and final stop on the outing was the home of Jean and Doug Kroupa. The Kroupa’s home is an earth home, blanketed in dirt on one side. According to the Kroupas, the home was constructed using over 900 cubic yards of concrete and 30 tons of structural steel. It is the kind of home that is ready to take on any natural disaster or nuclear fallout. But sturdiness is key when supporting 8,000 tons of dirt – 12,000 tons when wet. “The ceiling is the same strength as most of the overpasses you see over the highway,” said Doug Kroupa. The Kroupas even have a picture of when they had a bulldozer, treaded backhoe and Bobcat on the roof at the same time.

But in addition to the seeming indestructibility of the Kroupa’s earth home there is another, more important benefit to having their home draped in dirt – energy efficiency. “At some point we’re going to be energy neutral in the house,” said Doug Kroupa. Having an earth home saves energy because the earth maintains a relatively consistent temperature and also shields the home from

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For a complete list of upcoming outings visit:

<http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg/> \t “\_blank” [illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg/](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg/)

## Meet Your Ex-Com Members

By Bonnie Blake

We are going to be doing a series of articles on our current Executive-Committee members. With this article, we have interviewed Computer Committee Chair and Outings Leader, Joe Pokorny.

Joe has been a member of the Sierra Club since 1986. He connected with the River Prairie Group because he worked in DuPage County, was involved with DuPage County issues, and was not interested in going to meetings and activities in Chicago. He joined the RPG for the outings involvement, although he had been helping the Save the Prairie Society with Wolf Prairie maintenance prior to joining.

### *Some of his favorite Outings memories are:*

- *Foggy sunrise on Chickenbone Lake (Isle Royale NP, MI.)*
- *A few animal encounters!*
  - ▶ *Moose...some very close! (Isle Royale NP, Glacier NP, Grand Tetons NP, Cabinet Mountain Wilderness MT, Yellowstone NP)*
  - ▶ *Marmots, mountain goats, big horn sheep, grizzly bears (Glacier NP)*
  - ▶ *Eagles and osprey from afar, including an osprey catching a salmon (Kootenai Falls, MT)*
  - ▶ *The turquoise blue of Cracker Lake and a marmot encounter, which included the attempted theft of sweater! (Glacier NP)*
  - ▶ *Fellow Sierra Club and outings friend, Ed Doty's surprise recovery when almost falling off a beaver dam on Isle Royale. According to Joe it was a Kodak moment. If they had a video-camera, it could have been on YouTube!*

Joe loves the vast and varied geology of the US, especially the National Parks, along with the camaraderie of the



*RPG Executive Committee member, Joe Pokorny*

many participants on the outings. Other activities that Joe likes are riding his bike or hiking by himself to think and get exercise.

He considers himself an audiophile and videophile. He has many CD's, DVD's, Blu-Rays, Laser Discs, vinyl, and high-end audio / video equipment, and he enjoys all of it. He is an electronic "do-it-yourselfer" and loves messing around on the computer (e.g. data manipulation, formatting, and previously – AWK (UNIX) script writing- says he is out of practice now) a true computer geek! All of us at the RPG are grateful to have Joe as our computer guru!

I asked Joe if he thought the RPG was effective in changing / challenging environmental problems in DuPage County. He said that he thought so, and that we have received praises, but there is a lot to do and protect that is still on going. I also asked Joe what he thought new members should know about our group. Joe thinks new members should know about our Outings program (a little prejudice there!) and all the other things we do as a group. Getting involved is the best way to know the RPG and to make a difference.

### *Outing, continued*

wind and sun. According to the Kroupas, their home has never dropped below 50 degrees in the winter without heat, or risen above 79 degrees in the summer without air conditioning.

After a full day of home energy-efficiency exploration, participants of this outing left brimming with knowledge about building greener homes, knowledge which they

will hopefully one day put into practice. Outing guide Bob Vogl emphasized the importance of sharing green building information with people because of the potential it has to create change. "If you can change [people's] energy paradigm, you can solve a lot of problems," said Vogl.

## Calendar of Events

General programs are held at the Glen Ellyn Public Library approximately six times a year. Times/days for general programs may vary, check with [www.illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg](http://www.illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg) for detailed information about general programs and other activities sponsored by the group.

Glen Ellyn Public Library is in downtown Glen Ellyn at 400 Duane St. Duane runs east/west and is the first street on the south side of the Metra tracks. From Highway 53 or I-355, exit at Roosevelt Rd., go a few blocks west on Roosevelt, then turn right (N) at Main St. in Glen Ellyn. Head north a few blocks on Main to just before the railway tracks; turn left (W) on Duane. The library is on the right (N) side of Duane. Committee meetings are usually held in Sierra Club activist's homes. For times and locations, call the Sierra Club activist listed.

### PROGRAMS AT THE GLEN ELLYN LIBRARY:

Call Bruce Blake at 630.629.2520 or email [Rllnstns1@aol.com](mailto:Rllnstns1@aol.com)

### Friday, April 9 – Fundraiser for the River Prairie Group

7-9 p.m., Warren Tavern, 3 S. 530 2nd St., Warrenville

Join the River Prairie Group for a night of music featuring singer/song-writer Michael Schmidt, and Chris Bogosian and Jonathan Lather of Hot Hot Robot. A cost of \$25 per person or \$40 per couple includes 2 drinks (beer, wine and unlimited soda) and snacks.

Call Connie Schmidt at (630) 393-6276 or by email at [twstr111@msn.com](mailto:twstr111@msn.com) to reserve your tickets today!

### Saturday, April 10 – Native Plant Sale Deadline

Interested in growing plants native to our area? Plants that don't need fertilizers and don't have to be watered all the time? Choose from a selection of native Illinois plants. Last date to place an order is April 10, 2010. Plants will be available for pick in late April or early May. For more information or to obtain an order form please visit the River Prairie Group's website (<http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg>) or contact Bruce Blake at (630) 629-2520 or by email at [rllnstns1@aol.com](mailto:rllnstns1@aol.com)

### Wednesday, April 21 – Green E, The Environmental Elvis

7:30 p.m., Benedictine University, 5700 College Road, Lisle

David Pyle performs as Green E, The Environmental Elvis. Pyle puts an environmental spin on the King of Rock n Roll's classics such as "Love Me Tender" (Love me Tender), "Don't Waste Fuel" (Don't be Cruel) and "Are You Recycling Tonight" (Are You Lonesome Tonight). For more information about Green E visit: [www.greenelvis.com](http://www.greenelvis.com)

### Thursday, April 22- Benedictine Earth Day Events

Benedictine University, 5700 College Road, Lisle

An all day Earth Day celebration which includes a recycling drive from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in the Krasa Quad, an open mic from 1:30-2:30 p.m., a student poster presentation from 2:30-4:15 p.m. in the Krasa Center Fireside Lounge, a panel discussion on water from 4:30-5:45 p.m. in the Krasa Presentation Room, and a showing of Food, Inc. followed by a student-led discussion in the Krasa Presentation Room from 7:00-9:00 p.m. For more information about Earth Day at Benedictine University, contact Jean-Marie Kauth at (630) 829-6272 or by e-mail at [JKauth@ben.edu](mailto:JKauth@ben.edu)

### Saturday, April 24 – Great Western Trails Clean Up\*\*

Approximately 9:00 a.m. (Start times and locations may vary)

Annual all-volunteer trail clean up of the Great Western Trails. Bring friends, family, work-gloves and garbage bags and help clean up litter along the Great Western Trails. If interested in helping please contact Don Kirchenberg at [frndsgrtwstntrl@aol.com](mailto:frndsgrtwstntrl@aol.com). For more information about the Great Western Trails visit: [www.friendsofthegreatwestern-trails.com](http://www.friendsofthegreatwestern-trails.com)

### Saturday, May 15 – International Migratory Bird Day\*\*

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Willowbrook Wildlife Center, 525 S. Park Boulevard, Glen Ellyn

Celebrate the natural spectacle of spring bird migration. This is a wonderful time of year to enjoy migrating songbirds, especially in their beautiful breeding colors. Willowbrook has a number of activities planned to celebrate the arrival of these "feathered jewels" including: scheduled bird walks for adults, new birders and families and a kids activity station. Exhibitors will include the DuPage Birding Club, Chicago Bird Collision Monitors, Illinois Sierra Club, and DuPage County students. For more information or to register for events call: (630) 942-6200 ext.0

### Saturday, May 22 – Sierra Club Plant Sale

10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Whole Foods Market, 151 Rice Lake Square, Wheaton

Come purchase plants and learn something too! The plant sale will include talks about native plants from 12:00 am to 2:00 pm and workshops on gardening for butterflies, shade gardening with natives, and residential prairies. This plant sale is co-sponsored by Wild Ones, Greater DuPage Chapter. Please visit the River Prairie Group's website (<http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg>) for more information as it becomes available.

*\*\*Indicates activities that are not sponsored nor administered by the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has no information about the planning of these activities and makes no representations or warranties about the quality, safety, supervision, or management of such activities. They are published only as a reader service because it may be of interest to the readers of this publication.*

## River Prairie Group (RPG) Outings

Note: All local Group outings are offered at cost. Longer and more expensive outings require deposits (ask leader about refund policy). Including updates on those below, new RPG listings, and offerings from other local Groups, current listings are on the internet at: [illinois.sierraclub.org/outings](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/outings). Contact the Leader or Assistant indicated for more information and outing requirements.

*For up-to-date information, visit: [illinois.sierraclub.org/outings](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/outings)*

### **Apr 3 (Sat.) Day Hike at Starved Rock State Park, Utica, IL**

View the earliest varieties of wildflowers in this breaking-of-spring hike through the park's scenic sandstone canyons and forests, with grand views of the Illinois River valley. Waterfalls and streams are usually most active this time of year. Hiking about eight miles over moderately hilly terrain, we will do some cleanup along the trails. Wildflowers will be identified and discussed. \$3. Limit 25 per hiking group. Call Leader Fred Weber at (630) 469-6826 or [fredaweber@hotmail.com](mailto:fredaweber@hotmail.com).

### **Apr 9-11 Beginners Backpacking at Forest Glen Preserve, Westville, IL**

Discover backpacking! Beginners trip to Forest Glen Preserve, where we will hike along a beautiful wooded trail adjacent to the Vermillion River. Forest Glen is a 1,800 acre nature area of wooded ravines, grassy meadows, and tall-grass prairies. Learn about the Vermillion Country Prairie Restoration Project. We will hike about 7½ miles on Saturday, camp at a remote campground, and hike 3 ½ miles back to the parking area on Sunday. Cost is \$35; \$5 discount for SC members. To participate, call Leader John Stevens at (773) 857-2646 (home), (773) 550-0945 (cell), or email [johnsstev@hotmail.com](mailto:johnsstev@hotmail.com).

### **Apr 10 (Sat.) Glacial Park Geological Day Hike, Ringwood, IL**

A leisurely spring interpretive hike with a trained geologist, in Glacial Park, the crown jewel of the McHenry County Conservation District. We will hike approximately 6 miles and observe geological features and learn about their origins. Leader is Mike Davis. \$3. Limit 20. Calls taken by Assistant Leader Berni Kolasa at (847) 885-2287 or [bcanoodle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bcanoodle@sbcglobal.net).

### **Apr 16-18 Two-Day Beginners Backpack at Yellow River State Forest, Waukon, IA**

Get out of your car and campgrounds, put on a backpack, hike the trails on an overnight packing trip. Learn about the driftless area of NE Iowa. We will cover 10-12 miles of this wooded, moderately hilly country, encountering streams and spectacular overlooks. Primitive camping Saturday night on a small forest clearing. Departing the State Forest early afternoon Sunday, we drive to nearby Effigy Mounds Nat'l Monument and conclude with a short hike on wooded bluffs overlooking the Upper Mississippi National Waterway. Cost is \$45; \$5 discount for SC members. Contact Leader Chris Lazzari at

(630) 863-3347 or [clazstar@hotmail.com](mailto:clazstar@hotmail.com).

### **Apr 23-26 Shawnee Natl. Forest Spring Flower Hikes, Harrisburg, IL**

Enjoy day hikes and learn spring flowers in the spectacular wilderness areas of Shawnee National Forest southeast of Harrisburg, IL: Garden of the Gods, Burden Falls, Bell Smith Springs and Heron Pond along the Cache River. Double occupancy at a local motel. Cost is \$135 and includes lodging & 3 breakfasts. Not included: lunches, dinners, transportation. Limit 10. Contact Leader Paul Silverman at (847) 392-3433 or [marshallgp@aol.com](mailto:marshallgp@aol.com).

### **Apr 24 (Sat.) Day Hike at Franklin Creek State Natural Area, Franklin Grove, IL**

Join us for an April hike at this beautiful 882-acre park. We will hike about 7 miles. Beautiful Franklin Creek flows throughout the park, and there are several stream crossings that can be up to two feet deep. Low-lying areas along the creek bed support a bottomland forest dominated by silver maple and hackberry. Ravines support mesic (intermediate between wet and dry) upland forest characterized by sugar maple and basswood. We will learn about the many spring wildflowers including Virginia Bluebells, Wild Columbine, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Wild Ginger, Mayapple, and Prairie Trillium. An optional visit to the Nachusa Grasslands or the Franklin Creek Grist Mill will also be offered. Limit 16. To sign-up, email Leader Paul Saindon at [paul@pauls.us](mailto:paul@pauls.us) or call (847) 922-3379.

### **Apr 30-May 3 Missouri Ozarks (Taum Sauk Section) Hawn State Park - Missouri Botanic Gardens, Farmington Area and Saint Louis, MO**

Two days of hiking amid spring flowers, waterfalls and streams on the hills of the Missouri Ozark Mountains. On Monday, visit the Missouri Botanic Gardens in St. Louis. Double occupancy at a local motel. Cost is \$165 in advance, which includes 3 nights lodging (double occupancy), Sierra & administrative fees. Not included: transportation, lunches on the trail and dinners at local restaurants. Limit 12. Call Leader Paul Silverman at (847) 392-3433 or email [marshallgp@aol.com](mailto:marshallgp@aol.com). Missouri State Parks website: <http://www.MOstateparks.com/hawn.htm>

### **May 9 (Sun.) Annual Mother's Day Walk at Volo Bog, Ingleside, IL**

Our annual Mother's Day hike will be held at Volo Bog State Natural Area. This unique area was formed thousands of years ago by the Wisconsin glacier. The morning will start with 3 miles of hiking around the bog, followed by an interpretive walk into the center of the bog. After lunch, we will continue with another short hike on nearby trails. View spring flowers and birds too. Families welcome. Limit 20. Leaders: Mark Ginger and Berni Kolasa. Call Berni at 847-885-2287 or [bcanoodle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bcanoodle@sbcglobal.net).

*River Prairie Group (RPG) Outings, continued...*

*River Prairie Group (RPG) Outings, continued***May 13-16 3-Day Backpack  
in Hoosier National Forest, Story, IN**

A moderately-paced spring adventure of backpacking, camping and day-hiking in the forested hills of south-central Indiana. Learn how the Forest Service is gradually increasing the acreage in this National Forest. Covering about 7 miles on each of 3 days (Fri-Sun), we'll backpack into the forest on Friday, camping by a stream. We will spend the middle day in hiking and exploring this vast wilderness area, and backpack out on the third day. Suitable for beginners in good physical condition and for experienced backpackers as well. Trip fee of \$50 is due April 10th. Limit 14. Call Leader Fred Weber at (630)469-6826 or email fredaweber@hotmail.com.

**Jun 20-21 Biking the Driftless Region of Wisconsin,  
Southwest Wisconsin, WI**

Camp on a secluded farm in SW Wisconsin and ride the low-traffic, paved roads on Saturday, and check out the Pine River trail Sunday. We will ride from 20-40 miles Saturday on hilly paved roads, and 15 miles on flat limestone Sunday. We'll have a campfire at the farmhouse Friday night and ride Saturday and Sunday. We will also visit the Kickapoo Reserve visitor center to learn about the history and geology of the area. Cost is \$20, covering breakfast Sat. and Sun., and dinner Sunday. Contact Leader Steve Carrow at (630) 293-4988 or stephencarrow@sbcglobal.net for more information.

**Jul 23-25 Canoeing The Upper Iowa River,  
Decorah, IA**

Enjoy a canoeing weekend through a clear, meandering river. This river is ranked as one of the top scenic spots in America. The river features 100 foot bluffs, rising from the river's edge. Natural springs are frequent and eagles, hawks, and heron are common sights along the towering rock formations. We will arrive Friday night and base camp both Friday & Saturday nights on river-front sites. Our camp includes hot showers and flush toilets. The cost of \$85 includes group meals, canoe rental, and camp fee. \$5 discount for SC members. Limit 18. To sign up, call Leader Chris Lazzari at (630) 863-3347 or email clazstar@hotmail.com.

**Aug 19-24 Backpacking – Pictured Rocks National  
Lakeshore, Grand Marais, MI**

Join us for a scenic, challenging 43-mile hike (including one 12.4 mile day) along the North Country Trail in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. We will meet Thursday night at a motel in Grand Marais (double accommodations included in the trip cost), and begin hiking Friday morning. The trail is well maintained, and runs through woods and along Lake Superior. We'll be rewarded with spectacular views atop 50-200 foot high cliffs. We will camp four nights along the trail. Limit 10. Cost is \$75. Call Leader John Stevens at (773) 342-2794, or email johnsstev@hotmail.com.

**Aug 21-28 Yellowstone National Park Hikes –  
EXPLORATORY, Yellowstone, WY**

Eight days (7 nights) in the spectacular Yellowstone area at the Flagg Ranch Cabins. Hikes in the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River, West Thumb Geyser Basin, and many others TBD, learning about abundant wild life; bear, bison, moose, elk and lots of small ones. The scenery is beyond description. Cost: \$800 per person double occupancy, payable in advance, includes lodging & Sierra Club donation. Not included: meals, transportation. Limit 8. Contact Leader Paul Silverman at (847) 392-3433 or marshallgp@aol.com.

**Aug 28-Sep 5 Teton National Park , Jackson Hole –  
Colter Bay – Driggs, (ID), WY**

Nine days (8 nights) in the spectacular Tetons; 4 nights in Colter Bay Cabins, 4 nites in Driggs, ID. Hikes along Jackson Lake, Jenny Lake, Phelps Lake and 3 awesome canyons. A chance to learn about abundant wild life. The scenery is beyond description. Cost \$490, payable in advance, includes lodging, Sierra Club donation and Jenny Lake boat shuttle. Not included: meals, transportation and park admission. Limit 12. Contact leader Paul Silverman at (847) 392-3433 or marshallgp@aol.com.

**Sep 5-11 Glacier National Park Day Hikes,  
East Glacier Park, MT**

Seven days (6 nights) in beautiful Glacier National Park. Learn about the effect of global warming on glaciers. Cost \$340, payable in advance, includes 6 nights lodging, park entry fees & two Medicine Lake boat ride. Not included: meals, tips, transportation. Limit 12. Contact leader Paul Silverman at (847) 392-3433 or marshallgp@aol.com.

**Sep 24-27 Porcupine Mountain Wilderness  
Fall Color Hikes, Ironwood, MI**

Three day hikes at the Porcupine Mountain Wilderness in Michigan's Upper Peninsula with hiking and views unlike any other in the Midwest. Towering virgin timber (pines, cedar, hemlock, oak, maple), secluded lakes, waterfalls, and miles of wild rivers and streams make a visit to the "Porkies" a trip to remember. Cost \$150 includes: 3 nights lodging, 3 breakfasts & Sierra fee. \$5 member discount. Full payment required in advance. Limit 12. Contact leader Paul Silverman at (847) 392-3433 or marshallgp@aol.com.

**Oct 15-18 Shawnee National Forest  
Fall Color Hikes, Harrisburg, IL**

Day hikes and fall colors in spectacular wilderness areas in Shawnee National Forest, southeast of Harrisburg, IL: Garden of the Gods, Lusk Creek, Indian Kitchen & Heron Pond on the Cache River. The mix of trees can provide an unequalled autumn spectrum of color. Maple, gum, and dogwood produce brilliant reds, beech dress in yellow, oaks are scarlet, and pines sprinkle the palette with green. Learn "Why Leaves Turn Color". We'll be staying at a local motel. Cost is \$135 and includes lodging & 3 breakfasts. Limit 10. Contact leader Paul Silverman at (847) 392-3433 or marshallgp@aol.com

## Join the Bluestem Network, The Official Lobbying Network of the River Prairie Group!

You'll receive a call whenever the Sierra Club Phone Tree Network is activated with an environmental action alert. Bluestem is generally activated on a monthly basis. Upon receiving the phone call notification, members can access the environmental action alert by two ways: receiving it at an email address or by checking the RPG Web page. The action alert instructs members how to place a call to elected representatives and the position that the Sierra Club has taken. A phone call to elected officials has proven to be the most effective way to have an impact on public policy. To join, clip and mail the application to Linda Sullivan, 302 W Windsor Ave, Lombard, IL 60148.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

IL County \_\_\_\_\_

Sierra Club Member? Yes  No

Home phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
(required to join)

Answering machine? Yes  No

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

*if you wish to receive action alerts via email*

## Join the River Prairie Group Listserv!

We encourage everyone to sign up so you do not miss out on any of our news and activities. Stay up-to-date on the River Prairie Group's latest activities by joining our listserv. The listserv is open to anyone interested in finding out more about our group. The purpose of this list is to announce the activities, meetings, news and special events of the the Sierra Club's River Prairie Group, located in DuPage County, Illinois. The format of the list is for announcement and news distribution only, so members will receive but not be able to post messages.

Anyone interested in subscribing to this list can join in either of two ways:

Go to: <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/IL-RPG-NEWS.html> and click on "Join or leave the list."

or send an email to: [Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org](mailto:Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org)

Leave the subject line blank, in the message area type: **SUBSCRIBE IL-RPG-NEWS** **Firstname Lastname** (*substitute your first and last names*)

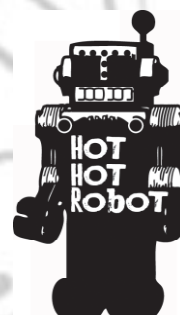
## Fundraiser for the River Prairie Group of the Sierra Club

### *A night of Music featuring*

With Singer/Songwriter Michael Schmidt And Chris Bogosian and Jonah Lather of Hot Hot Robot



**Friday April 9, 2010**  
**7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**



**\$25 per person or \$40 for a couple**  
*Includes 2 drinks and snacks*  
*(beer, wine and unlimited soda)*

*At the historic Warren Tavern*  
*3 S. 530 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Warrentville 60555*



Call Connie Schmidt 630 393-6276 or e-mail [twustr111@msn.com](mailto:twustr111@msn.com) to reserve your tickets today!