

## General Meeting

Shawnee Group, Sierra Club  
June 2000

There will be no general meetings of the Shawnee Group during the months of June, July, August.

Regular meetings of the Shawnee Group are 7:30 PM on the second Thursday of the month and will resume at the Unitarian Fellowship building, in September.

The Unitarian Fellowship is located at the corner of University Avenue and Elm Street, in Carbondale, Illinois.

Hope to see you there in September!

### Adult CPR

Senior Advantage members interested in renewing or earning a CPR card for FREE may do so by calling 1-877-480-4040 and making reservations.

The seminar will take place at the UMW of A Hospital in W. Frankfort Cafeteria on June 28, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

### Quote of the Day!

“By raising standards to 45 mi/gal for cars and 34 mpg for light trucks, we would save more oil than we import from the Persian Gulf, drill from California’s coast and potential arctic Refuge reserves combined”  
--Dan Becker, director of the Club’s Global Warming Campaign.

## Letters Needed On Comment Period For Horse Trails Through Natural Areas (Deadline is June 15, 2000)

by Barb McKasson

Sometime this week, you should be receiving an alert from the Illinois Chapter asking you to send a postcard or write a letter concerning designated trails through seven of the designated Natural Areas. If at all possible, PLEASE WRITE A LETTER, EVEN IF IT IS A VERY SHORT LETTER! Letters are given much more weight than form letters or post cards. Also, note that the deadline is June 15th, not June 8th, as stated in the alert. In addition, if you are down to the wire on this, you can send your comments by email to: [mlross@fs.fed.us](mailto:mlross@fs.fed.us), with the subject heading of "Natural Area Trails EIS." If you want more information, request the Natural Area Trails EIS Public Scoping Package and topographic maps of the seven areas, with current and proposed trails. Call 1-800-MYWOODS, or visit one of the USFS offices. To view the scoping package on the internet, go to: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/shawnee>. Send written comments to: Richard Johnson, Vienna Ranger District, P.O. Box 37, Vienna, JIL 62995. For further information, or questions, call Richard Johnson at (618) 658-2111.

### The Skinny on the Proposal:

Thanks to the efforts of Sierra Club members and other conservationists, all 80 designated natural areas are now officially closed to potentially damaging uses. Last year, the interim Shawnee Forest Supervisor was finally persuaded to close the remaining 40 areas, although many still do not have the boundaries marked. Law enforcement officers have written tickets for violations, and we have reports from field biologists that nature's healing process is already underway.

So why is the Forest Service now talking about putting horse trails through seven of the natural areas? When the 1992 Amended Forest Plan was being prepared, some of these areas represented "land links" between blocks of Forest Service land and others already had designated trails in them. The areas that were "land links" had "proposed trail corridors", not guaranteed or promised trails. When the Sierra Club appealed the Forest Plan and then challenged it in federal court, we did not challenge the proposed trail corridors. That is how the proposal to put horse trails through these seven natural areas came about.

The Sierra Club supports the portion of the Forest Plan that protects the

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natural areas from degradation. We also believe people should have access to these sites. We believe horse riders should be able to enjoy the natural areas like everyone else, just not while on their horses. We believe a system of high quality trails going around and/or leading up to the more popular natural areas, with staging areas and sturdy, adequate hitching structures should be built to accommodate equestrian users. We still, as always, support horseback riding on designated trails in the other 95% of the forest.

**Recently**, USFS personnel have more closely evaluated the proposed trails, and found that the areas of **Little Grand Canyon and Bulge Hole** really are too steep and rocky, and flood too often, for them to put designated horse trails through these two areas. The Forest Service also has proposed that no trail be designated through the **Lusk Creek Zoological Area** south of the Eddyville-Golconda blacktop. We wholeheartedly agree with the Forest Service on this assessment. There is nothing "promised" or "magical" about the number seven. **We oppose** any proposal to substitute trails through any other designated natural areas to "make up for" not putting equestrian trails through Little Grand Canyon and Bulge Hole Natural Areas as suggested by the Shawnee Trail Conservancy ( associated with the Wise Use Movement).

Two other natural areas, **Garden of the Gods and Larue-Pine Hills**, already have designated hiker/equestrian trails that have been used for a long time. We now have the opportunity to express our position that if riders do not conform to the rules and stray from the designated trails, that these trails be closed to equestrian use.

**We oppose** any horse trail through the **Double Branch Hole Natural Area**. The purpose of these trail proposals is not to provide equestrian access into natural areas, it provides for a passage through them. The proposed trail does not go anywhere. It does not connect two existing trail segments, it just goes into and out of the natural area. This area has already been extensively degraded by horse use. The thin soil and moss-lichen community on the cliffs has been worn down to the bare rock. Plants and soil now slough off the rock in rain storms and add to the silt burden in the creek. This area has been sadly degraded mainly due to the expansion of the Hayes Creek horse campground into the portion of the natural area that is on their private property and right up to the boundary of the USFS Double Branch Hole Natural Area. When it rains, mud, manure and urine run right into Double Branch Hole.

The two remaining natural areas included in the proposed EIS are **Jackson Hollow** and **Lusk Creek**. Lusk Creek NA is within the Lusk Creek Wilderness Area and is recognized as a very high quality biological area. However, studies done by state and national biologists have documented the significant damage in Lusk Creek N.A. from horses. There are numerous user-made horse trails in the area, many of them leading down steep cliffs to the creek. This is an exceptionally beautiful area, especially Indian Kitchen. The River to River Trail already goes through Lusk Creek Canyon Natural Area. The Forest Service is proposing a second hiker/equestrian trail that would cut through the middle of the Lusk Creek area, and join the River to River Trail to three other designated horse trails that border the Lusk Creek Canyon N.A.

Two potential routes have been proposed through the **Jackson Hollow NA**, one through the center of the natural area and one skirting the area to the north. We plan to examine the proposed trails to find out what plants, and other features of the natural areas would be affected by the trails, plus get opinions from biologists on the effects. The trail through the center was there before the area was identified as a natural area but did not get the traffic it does now. The trail proposal for the Jackson Hollow NA is dependant on whether or not the railroad will provide an easement to cross the tracks. At this time there is no such easement.

The **scoping letter also proposes changing the trail density in the wilderness areas in Shawnee Forest** from 1 mile of trail to 2 miles of hiking/equestrian trail for every square mile (640 acres) of wilderness. This change is specifically proposed here because Garden of the Gods and Lusk Creek Wilderness areas contain the designated natural areas in question. We think we will have to be flexible on this point. In order to route a trail around a Natural Area instead of through it may mean a longer trail within the wilderness area. Instead, we will need to insist on a case-by-case analysis.

Again, **many individual letters are needed**. Even a very brief letter is helpful. Thanks!  
If you have any questions or concerns on this issue, feel free to call **Barb McKasson** (618)529-4824 or **Ed Cook** (618) 995-9309.



## SHAWNEE OUTINGS



**The River-To-River Trail Society** will host a small celebration in observation of National Trails Day on Saturday, June 3rd, 2000 between the hours of 2 and 4 PM at the log cabin area in downtown Alto Pass, Illinois.

The celebration will include a demonstration of making and carving walking sticks, distribution of hiking information from local clubs and groups plus forest and park services and displays of hiking equipment by local businesses. A short National Trails Day program will be held at 3 PM.

The River-To-River Trail begins at Battery Rock on the Ohio River on the east boundary of Illinois and extends to the west to Devil's Backbone Park on the Mississippi River. The trail is used by hikers, bikers, and horse riders. On National Trails Day a hike is planned along this trail. Bicycle riders will ride primarily the on-road portions of the trail and horseback riders another portion of the trail.

The hikers will come from the east and arrive in Alto Pass at approximately 2 PM. The hike is planned in the off-road or wooded section of this trail around Cedar Lake. For more information about the National Trails Day hike, interested persons may call Sandy Anderson at 618-893-4545.

A trail ride is also planned for horseback riders on Saturday. They will ride into Alto Pass from the west by way of the Godwin Trail portion of the River-to-River Trail. They will also plan to arrive in the village of Alto Pass at approximately 2 PM. Interested persons may call the Union County Saddle Club at (618) 893-2753 for more information about the ride.

Refreshments will be available from 2--4 PM for all National Trails Day participants. The program that will be held at 3 PM will feature trail representatives and dignitaries.

At 4 PM the Nationals Day participants are invited to join the Fourth Annual Crawfish Festival at the Alto Vineyard located on Hwy 127 in Alto Pass. Cajun music, crawfish boil, and wine by the glass will be presented between the hours of 4 and 8 PM. The fee for the Crawfish Festival will be \$2 per person.

The River-To-River Trail in Illinois is part of the American Discovery Trail that provides a trail from the Atlantic shore in the east to the Pacific shore in the west. More information on the ADT will be available at the National Trails Day celebration in Alto Pass, Illinois, on Saturday, June 3rd, from 2--4 PM. Plan to attend this Trail Day celebration!

**Fern Hike at Round Bluff Nature Preserve, June 10**--Spend this Saturday morning hiking in Round Bluff Nature Preserve at Ferne Cliffe State Park to learn fern identification. John Schwegman, botanist, will be in attendance to aid in identification. This will be a fairly easy hike on an established trail. The hike will concentrate on botany rather than distance. Meet under the sign at Murdale Shopping Center in Carbondale at 8 a.m. for carpooling to the park where parking will be in the lot for Round Bluff. This site has unusual ferns like hay-scented fern, cinnamon fern and spinulose wood fern as well as more common ferns. For more info phone Gary Uhlir at 327.3236 or email <wdswlker@midwest.net>.

### Environment Discussed at meeting of Peace Coalition--Tuesday June 13

The Peace Coalition is sponsoring a forum Tuesday, June 13, 7:00-9:00pm at the Carbondale Senior Citizens Center, "Good Tax \$/ Bad Tax\$: A Forum on Critical Needs." Scheduled is a discussion moderated by **Georgeann Hartzog**. Panelist **Mary Campbell on health care, an environmentalist on Paducah, Susan Allen on economic conversion, and Lisa Barnes on education.** The forum involves an analyses of the impact of existing federal budget spending priorities.

### NEWSLETTER DEADLINE & FOLDING

Every month we get together to fold the newsletter for the newsletter mailing. **We welcome all the help we can get.** The deadline for the July newsletter will be June 17 with folding on June 21 at Don Lawrence's house at 5:30 pm. To check on directions call Don at 457-8989.

### EXCOM MEETING

Our June meeting will be held on June 15, 5:30 PM, at Clara McClure's house. All members are welcome to attend. For directions call Clara at 457-2025.

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAVE PAPER AND RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER BY E-MAIL?

**Simply send a signed letter by regular mail or an e-mail message to <<donaldlaw@aol.com>> indicating that you would like to receive it by e-mail and I will put you on the e-mail list and take you off the regular mail list. Please give your name and regular PO address in your request.**



**Shawnee Group**  
**SIERRA CLUB**  
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**Earth**

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**Yes, I want to join!** I want to help safeguard our precious natural heritage. My payment is enclosed.

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Contributions, gifts or dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible. They support our effective, science-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**

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**PROTECT AMERICA'S ENVIRONMENT.**  
*For our Families... For our Future*

  
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