

# SHAWNEE TRAILS

Shawnee Group, Sierra Club

APRIL 2001

## General Meeting

**Shawnee Group, Sierra Club  
April 2001**

The April General Meeting of the Shawnee Group will take place at the Unitarian Fellowship building, at **7:30 PM, on April 12, 2001.**

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

This month's program will be presented by **Jody Shimp on The Status of Invasives in Southern Illinois.**

Hope to see you there!

### **Dinner Before Meeting**

Join some of the Executive Committee, the speaker(s) for the evening's program, and other members for dinner at **the Great Wall** located between Gator and the Post Office east of the University Mall. **5:45 p.m. on April 12,** before the meeting.

### **Recycle that Computer**

IBM will accept any PC for recycling or reuse, regardless of maker. Cost to the consumer is \$29.99, which buys a postpaid shipping label. IBM either recycles the components or will refurbish the system and donate it to Gifts in Kind International.

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## Sugar Creek Hearing

**With the Illinois EPA - April 9th (Monday)  
7 PM at Marion High School Gym**

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency will be holding a hearing on the proposed Marion Dam on Sugar Creek to receive public input on the decision of whether or not to issue a Section 401 Clean Water Permit. Denial of that permit would stop the project and save Sugar Creek. We need as many environmentally concerned people there as possible to let the IEPA know that people want to preserve free flowing streams, and want to protect biodiversity. We have to let them know the public will not tolerate the unnecessary destruction of native plant and animal communities, and of threatened and endangered species. This decision will probably be precedent setting for almost two dozen communities that have silted in water reservoirs. If Marion is allowed to dam a free flowing stream, then it is likely many of these other communities would be allowed to dam other streams.

We definitely recognize Marion's need for a new water supply, but there is absolutely no good reason that they can't hook up to the Rend Lake Conservancy District. Rend Lake is currently underutilized, and less than half the water available for use by communities and businesses is being used. Marion's officials keep trying to manufacture reasons why they have to build the dam and reservoir, but none are truly valid. Illinois Chapter Sierra Club has spent a large chunk of money to hire an economist to analyze the ETI economic consultants' report on the proposed dam. This analysis has uncovered many false assumptions, faulty statistics, and "fuzzy math", evidently used to make it appear that the proposed dam and reservoir on Sugar Creek is the best alternative economically. We KNOW that the proposed Sugar Creek dam is one of the most environmentally destructive alternatives in the DSII (Draft Supplement II).

- Some Issues to Raise in asking IEPA to deny the 401 Permit
- The 401 Permit would cause a violation of Illinois water quality standards by killing rare aquatic life in violation of Illinois' general use standards.
  - The proposed permit would cause a violation of Illinois' anti degradation and non degradation water quality standards.

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- The environmental study for this project has been grossly inadequate. The biological survey at Sugar Creek was conducted in the winter. Two threatened and endangered species (least brook lamprey and Indiana crayfish) have been found, but it is likely that others exist there also.
- Sugar Creek is also one of less than 5% of Illinois streams given a "biologically significant" rating. It is the last free flowing stream in the Saline River drainage. We must not let this high quality stream be degraded.
- The Marion officials claim they have a downstream release plan to maintain stream levels for the T & E species, but no plan has been made available to the public, and they do not include it in their proposed budget.
- The lowered flow and interruption of the natural flow of water normally draining into Sugar Creek would also cause increased concentration of pollutants as a result of building the dam and reservoir.
- Erosion and siltation from construction of the dam and reservoir will cause unacceptable pollution that will likely kill some of the threatened least brook lamprey and some endangered Indiana crayfish.
- IEPA should require or at least encourage regional water planning and full utilization of regional reservoirs, such as Rend Lake, rather than allowing individual towns to each dam their own stream, thereby degrading many more streams.
- The ETI cost study used to prepare estimates of the costs of alternatives was not included in the DSII. We obtained a copy of this report and found that it contained faulty assumptions and questionable methodologies. The IEPA must obtain and independently review the ETI study in order to adequately review this permit application.
- The environmental damage that would be done by building the dam and reservoir would not save money - there are several feasible alternatives that would be much less damaging environmentally, and are likely to even cost less than the proposed dam and reservoir on Sugar Creek.
- There is acid mine runoff in the area of Sugar Creek, which now is minimized by topography and wetlands. However, if the dam and reservoir is built, acid mine runoff would begin flowing into Sugar Creek.
- There are hundreds of old railroad ties that were disposed of near the proposed dam site, plus some old garbage dumps. These also would be disturbed and exposed by construction, and would cause polluted runoff into Sugar Creek.

We had a good showing at the Corps hearing in March, with many environmentalists making excellent comments. We also heard that the Governor's office was flooded with calls asking him to settle the stalemate and save Sugar Creek. Now we need your help one more time. Please either come to the IEPA hearing on April 9th, and/ or write the IEPA, asking them to deny the 401 Permit for the project to discharge into public waters.

### **What You Can Do**

1. ATTEND THE IEPA HEARING ON APRIL 9TH, 7 PM at the Marion High School gym at 1501 South Carbon St. Take Rt. 13 to Carbon St. in Marion. Go south through town. Just south of town, look for the sign for the high school on the left side of the road. To car pool, meet us at 6:10 at the NE parking lot at University Mall, just across from Gator's. Call Barb 529-4824 to car pool. Call Barb or Laurel Toussaint (618) 964-1339, if you need more information to testify at the hearing. Please attend even if you do not wish to testify. Your presence at the hearing will help to support those who do.
2. Send your written comments to the Illinois EPA to, and tell them you oppose the issuance of the 401 permit for the proposed Marion City Dam & Reservoir on Sugar Creek:

Bruce Yerdin, Manager, Watershed Management Section  
 Illinois EPA  
 Division of Water Pollution Control, Permit Section 15  
 1021 North Grand Ave.  
 P.O. Box 19276  
 Springfield, IL 62794-9276  
 OR send a FAX to Mr. Yurdin at (217) 782-9891

Written comments must be received by May 9th.

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3) Contact Governor Ryan and ask him to support regional water supplies in Illinois. Let him know that we are counting on him to resolve this stalemate. Urge him to help the City of Marion make the right choice - to buy treated water from the Rend Lake Water District, and not to destroy Sugar Creek. Call (217) 782-6830.

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## **General Meeting: Invasive Plants and Animals in Southern Illinois**

Jody Shimp, a senior biologist with IDNR, will be giving a slide show and talk on the status of invasives in Southern Illinois, research that has been done on invasives, and possible solutions. This is a very important topic, since invasives are now considered a major threat to native plants and animals, second only to habitat loss. This is also a very controversial topic that we need to be dealing with in relation to all natural areas - Shawnee Forest, the refuge, etc. The meeting is at the Unitarian Church in Carbondale, at University and Elm streets, at 7:30 PM. Please join the speaker and some members at The Great Wall restaurant at 5:45 for dinner before the meeting.

### **Giant City State Park Outing: Invasives and Natives**

On Saturday, April 21st, Jody Shimp will lead two hikes for the price of one. This is a follow-up to the general meeting on April 12th. We will look at invasive species in the morning, and eat lunch at one of the shelters. In the afternoon, we will hike the Trillium Trail to look at the many native spring flowers. Meet in front of the Giant City Lodge at 9 AM. Bring lunch, water and good walking shoes.

### **Thank You**

Thanks to Anne Hill and Steve McKasson for the many hours they spent helping me fold, sort, label, and mail the special alert on Sugar Creek that we sent out to over 2000 people. Also, thank you to all of you who responded to the alert by calling or writing Governor Ryan, attending the Corps hearing, and or writing the Corps. If you forgot to respond to the Alert, you have another chance. Please respond to the new Sugar Creek Alert in this newsletter. Thank you! Barb McKasson, Conservation Chair

## **Your Local Group in Action**

The following pictures should help to give members a better idea of member participation in the Shawnee Group of the Sierra Club...editor.



Dinner before meeting at Mugsy Mcquires



Presenters at the General Membership Meeting



ExCom Meeting at Clara McClure's



Folding the Newsletter at Don Lawrence's



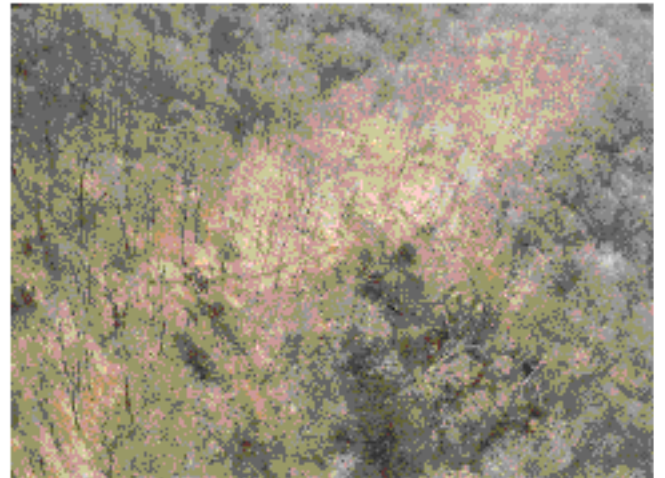
John Johnson fueling his Stinson for Aerial Reconnaissance of the Shawnee Forest



Barb McKasson and Sebastian Muhl looking over maps of the Shawnee



John the pilot with Barb the navigator



How the Forest looks from above



# SHAWNEE OUTINGS



**Fountain Bluff & Pine Hills Outing Saturday, April 14.** Wildflower outing led by Stan Harris and Clara McClure. Meet at Murdale shopping center at 9 a. m. For more information call Clara at 457-2025.

**Giant City State Park, Saturday, April 21.** This trip will be led by Jody Shimp. See details on page 3 under Giant City Outing. For more information call Bob Tyson at 684-5643.

## Other Outings

**Jackson Hollow Hike, Saturday, April 7.** Enjoy scenic bluffs, canyons, wildflowers. Meet at 8 a. m. at the Murdale shopping center sign or at 8:45 a. m. at Marion Walmart parking lot nearest Ryans.

**Godwin Trail Hike, Saturday, April 14.** Meet at Jonesboro Food World at 9 a. m. or the Inspiration Point area(on top of Pine Hills) at 9:45 a.m.

**Larue Pine Hills Day:** Unfortunate news from Andy West Site Superintendent, Trail of Tears State Forest, "It will not be held in 2001 -- we are hopeful that we can put it together for 2002". Give him a call at 618-833-4910 if you have any questions.

## Adventures With Uncle Bob

by Bob Tyson

Each month I shall endeavor to highlight a hike or scenic spot for those of you who are unable to make our organized hikes, so readers can venture out by themselves. This month I am featuring **FOUNTAIN BLUFF:** To reach it go into Gorham from Hwy 3. Turn left at a house that looks like a church and follow the road out to the bluffs. Park (not on the road) where possible anywhere along the two mile stretch, and walk along either the road or on the abandoned railbed as you view the cliff walls with its formations and observe the patterns in the rocks. There is an isolated grove of trees on your right and 50 yards before the west end of it look for an opening on your left which will take you to petroglyphs. As cliff walls start to diminish while walking west, you will note the rail bed continues to the river where one can continue walking all the way to Grand Tower and enjoy the Mississippi and bluff views on the Missouri side. Return by your car to hwy 3 and proceed south to Happy Hollow road. Follow it up a steep grade to the top of Fountain Bluff; park at one of three overlooks and hike along the road. It ends in about 3 miles. Enjoy views of the river, ravines and bluff from an elevation roughly 500 ft above the plains

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### 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 May newsletter will be **April 22**, with folding on **April 26** at Don Lawrence's house at 5:30 PM. To check on directions call Don at 457-8989.

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### EXCOM MEETING

Our April ExCom meeting will be held on Thursday, April 19, 5:30 p.m. at Clara McClure's house. For directions call Clara at 457-2025.. Any member is welcome to attend.

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### 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.



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**Political Chair**—Clara McClure, 457-2025, pippin1983@gateway.net

**Outing Chair, Greeter**—Bob Tyson, 684-5643

**Shawnee Trails Newsletter Editor, Computer Committee, Marine Chair**—Don Lawrence, 457-8989, donaldlaw@aol.com

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

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**Boulder, CO**  
**80322-2968**

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