

SHAWNEE TRAILS

Shawnee Group, Sierra Club

August 2001



General Meeting

There will be no general meeting of the Shawnee Group during the month of 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, on September 13, 2001.

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

Hope to see you there in September!

I have one share in corporate Earth, and I am nervous about the management.

-E.B. White

Visit Our Website:

<http://illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee>

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Protect Wild Forests -Your Letters Needed Again!

By Barbara McKasson, Conservation Chair

On Jan. 5, former President Clinton issued a final plan to protect 58.5 million acres of our National Forests from logging and road building. This included protection for the last wild areas in Alaska's Tongass National Forest. More than one million Americans wrote letters, attended the 600 public hearings and spoke out in favor of protecting the remaining roadless areas in our National Forests. But days after taking office, President Bush delayed implementation of the plan, and this week launched a formal effort to weaken forest protection by opening a new 60 day public comment period, which began July 10th. It seems Bush wants to appear to be upholding the policy, while in fact, letting individual forest supervisors make the decisions.

This would allow local logging and commercial interests control what happens on the national forests that really belong to us all!! Tell U.S. Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth to protect our wild forests, personalizing your letter with information about why you care about protecting our National Forests in general, Shawnee National Forest or other national forests in particular, and any experience you had commenting on this policy last year.

Your personal comments will make the letter even more effective. **DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 10, 2001.** Email your comments to: roadless_anpr@fs.fed.us. Snail mail comments to: USDA Forest Service - CAT. FAX comments to: 1-801-296-4090. Attention: Roadless ANPR Comments, P.O. Box 221090, Salt Lake City, UT 84122

SAMPLE LETTER:

Dear Chief Bosworth:

Unfortunately, more than half of our National Forest land has been damaged by logging, road building and other development. The last roadless areas in our National Forests have some of the highest quality fish and wildlife habitat, back country recreation and clean water supplies in the country. More than one million Americans already participated in the rulemaking by voicing support for protecting all of the last wild areas in our National Forests.

Six hundred public hearings were held across the country, with the vast majority supporting protection of the 58.5 million acres of

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roadless areas in our National Forests.

I urge you to let the Roadless Area Conservation Rule stand as it is written in the January 2001 Record of Decision. I am counting on you to fully and immediately protect all of our national forest roadless areas - including Alaska's Tongass. I strongly oppose allowing forest-by-forest decisions on logging, roadbuilding and other development in these areas.

I have enjoyed the peace, and solitude in the roadless areas of Shawnee Forest. I especially appreciate the fact that these areas provide a sanctuary for sensitive interior forest species. In particular, I take several hikes a year in these areas to enjoy the native spring flowers that are protected in these areas from road building, logging, and motorized vehicles.

I participated in the hearing held in Marion, IL, by the FS personnel on Shawnee Forest. It was a well publicized hearing, with ample opportunity for any interested party to participate. There were three times as many people who favored the proposed protection of up to 60 million acres of roadless areas, including areas in Shawnee National Forest and in the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, versus the number of people who opposed the policy. The record of decision issued by the Clinton administration in January, 2001, should be upheld. Please consider this an official comment on the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Roadless Area Conservation.

Sincerely, Your Name and Address

For further information online, go to: www.sierraclub.org/wildlands/wildforest/. To customize a standardized letter and send it online from the Sierra Club website, go to: <http://whistler.sierraclub.org:8080/takeaction/wildlands/index4.jsp>. You can read the official notice in the Federal Register (July 6, 2001) online. There is also a link to the notice from the USDA Forest Service Website.

CANARIES IN A COAL MINE

by Marc Miller

There are many things about rivers and streams that are so spectacular and intriguing. And conservation efforts would benefit greatly by having more people intimately aware of stream biology.

A recent "River IQ" poll released by National Geographic Society (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/geographyaction/>) suggests that that most lack a good understanding of the problems facing our rivers. Most polled did not know the leading causes and the biological impacts to rivers.

I think most of us would do well to slow down, safely wade into a stream riffle and start looking down. Among the aquatic insects, darters, stonerollers, and crayfish, you may find some of the most amazing animals – the canary in the coal mine – Illinois' freshwater mussels.

Mussels "make their living" by filtering water – a biological water quality sampler – to collect detritus and plankton. These animals are by and large stationary, moving ever so slowly, and cannot escape by locomotion the effects of pollutants, especially siltation.

Their method of reproduction is absolutely amazing. They require predatory fish as a host for the early part of their life cycle. Mechanisms for attracting fish include lifelike lures that when struck, release young onto the gills of the gullible fish. One endangered species, the rainbow, actually uses its entire body to mimic a crayfish, and can only successfully reproduce when a smallmouth bass strikes.

For over 175 years, biologists have documented the occurrence of 79 mussel species in Illinois, and have noted dramatic declines. Of these species, 5 are extinct, 14 are federally endangered, 17 no longer occur in Illinois, 21 are state endangered, 4 are state threatened, and 4 more are on a watch list. Over 44% of the species still found in Illinois are in danger.

Mussels depend on healthy fish populations for reproduction, most requiring habitats that haven't been covered by mucky silt, and can be impacted by poor water quality. This amazing animal IS the canary in the coal mine. Their decline should concern us all, and prompt us to act to restore and conserve Illinois' rivers and streams.

For more information on mussels, visit the Illinois Natural History Survey site: <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/cbd/collections/mollusk.html>.

PLEASE WRITE ASAP!!!
GOV. RYAN CAN HELP SAVE SUGAR CREEK

As you probably know, Sierra Club has been fighting for years to prevent the destruction of Sugar Creek near Marion, Illinois.

Sugar Creek harbors a wealth of biodiversity and is the highest quality creek remaining in the Saline River drainage. For more than 10 years the City of Marion has been seeking to dam Sugar Creek to create a water supply reservoir, even though the community could easily purchase water from the nearby Rend Lake Intercity Water System, 3.8 miles away. Damming the creek would destroy one of the few remaining free-flowing streams in Illinois, inundate more than 1200 acres of high quality forest and wetlands, and destroy the habitat for at least two state-listed threatened and endangered species.

Allowing the City of Marion to construct another reservoir when they clearly have the opportunity to purchase water from a nearby regional water system would set a dangerous precedent. The Illinois State Water Survey has identified numerous other Illinois communities whose reservoirs have lost capacity due to siltation. Granting a permit to dam Sugar Creek will certainly encourage these other communities to also pursue reservoir construction and lead to the degradation of many of the remaining high quality streams in Illinois.

Before Sugar Creek can be destroyed, Illinois Governor George Ryan's administration must approve the project. Your letter written **TODAY** can prevent the destruction of Sugar Creek. Your letter can help us convince Governor Ryan that Illinois should not allow Sugar Creek to be destroyed, when Marion has good alternatives available for a new water supply. We need a barrage of letters to remind the Gov. Please act today - Governor Ryan and the Illinois EPA will probably decide this summer.

Points to include in your comments:

- The state should not approve a project that will result in the death of endangered species.
- Illinois can help prevent the dam and resolve the Sugar Creek issue by helping the City of Marion find alternative sources of water.

Thanks in advance for your help. Here is a sample Letter - Please send your own today to:

The Honorable George Ryan

Governor of Illinois

State House, Room 207

Springfield, IL 62706.

Re: Proposed Sugar Creek Dam, Marion, Illinois

Dear Governor Ryan:

I am writing concerning the proposal to dam Sugar Creek in Johnson and Williamson Counties, in Illinois.

I urge your administration to oppose this project because it would destroy a high-quality, free-flowing stream that is home to endangered species. Please direct the Illinois EPA NOT to certify that the proposed dam is consistent with Illinois' water quality standards.

The dam would destroy much of Sugar Creek, a high quality stream and the last free-flowing tributary of the Saline River, including the habitat of two Illinois threatened and endangered species.

The City of Marion clearly has the opportunity to purchase water from a nearby regional water system - Rend Lake. Building a dam instead of using this water would be a dangerous precedent. The Illinois State Water Survey has identified numerous other Illinois communities whose reservoirs have lost capacity due to siltation. Granting a permit to dam Sugar Creek will certainly encourage these other communities to also pursue reservoir construction and lead to the degradation of many of the remaining high quality streams in Illinois.

There are environmentally sound and economically reasonable alternatives to the impoundment of Sugar Creek. Instead of approving the destruction of Sugar Creek, please use your leadership to help Marion secure a long-term water supply from neighboring systems.

Sincerely, Your Name, Address

Horses and State Natural Areas

by Stan Harris

Some of the horse camp owners are making a big play to have the designated natural areas opened to equestrian traffic in the revised master plan. They say that the natural areas are not visited by hikers - among untruths and lack of understanding about those treasures.

It is important to write letters to Forrest (Skip) Starkey, Forest supervisor
Shawnee National Forest,
50 Highway 145,
Harrisburg IL. 62946

Express your support for pedestrian-only access to the designated natural areas. You may state your objection to equestrian traffic because the weight and shod feet (and 4 instead of two) of a single horse causes more damage than a large group of people.

Express your pleasure at the flowers, assemblage of vegetation, uniqueness, etc, on your visit to natural areas whether on federal, state, or private land. If you have visited one or more of the designated natural areas in the Shawnee Forest say so. If you have noted any improvement in conditions since the official closure, express approval—or if you perceive recent damage, say so.

Examples of designated natural areas are: Jackson Hollow, Jackson Hole, Double Branch Hole, Bulge Hole, Pine Hills (which is traversed by the River to River Trail), Little Grand Canyon, Bell Smith Springs, Garden of the Gods, Cretaceous Hills, Burke Branch Research and Ecological areas, Martha's Woods, Lusk Creek (3 separate areas) and many less well known. Some people hiked to Bear Creek this Spring but I don't know whether they actually went to the natural area.

Progress has been made. Let's keep up the good work.

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 August newsletter will be August 25, with folding on August 30 at Don Larence's House. To check on directions call Don at 457-8989.

EXCOM MEETING

The August ExCom meeting will be held on Thursday August 23, 5:30 p.m. at Cathie Hutcheson's house. For directions call Cathie at 529-2022.. All members are welcome to attend.

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 OUTINGS

As reported in the last newsletter, the Sierra Club is planning a self-guided cave tour to Illinois Caverns Saturday, Aug 18, near Waterloo, IL. We'll leave Murdale Shopping Center (under the sign) at 8:00 AM and Murphsboro Ranger Station at 8:30 AM. See the last newsletter for details on what to bring or wear. You need to notify me prior to August 11, if you plan to participate. Advance notice is required for two reasons: 1. If we have over 25 people from both chapters (Belleville), IDNR needs to be notified. 2. I need to know who has extra hardhats, bike helmets, etc. Call Bob Tyson at 684-5643 for questions and reservations.

Jackson County Hiking Club is sponsoring an evening hike Saturday, August 25. We'll leave Murdale Shopping Center at 6pm and arrive at Tunnel Hill, IL at 7:00 PM to walk the Tunnel Hill Trail. Bring snacks and bug spray. For more information contact Barb at 457-4369.

FOREST SERVICE TRAIL RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

My thanks to the five from our club who helped on the Garden of the Gods Wilderness trail in June. A total of 22 people were there. The next project is July 28 on Panther Den trail (SW of Marion). Leave Murdale Shopping Center at 8:30 AM. Work starts at 9:30 AM at junction of wayside road and Forest Road 749. Bring lunch, water, gloves, cap, backpack, and sunscreen. For more information contact Bob Tyson at 684-5643 or Ranger Peterin at 687-1731. The August trail project is Aug 25 at the Ripple Hollow trails (south of Jonesboro). Meet on Forest Road 235 with junction of 664, west of Mill Creek.

ADVENTURES WITH UNCLE BOB

This monthly series is devoted to highlighting a hike for those unable to make our group outings or cannot find the places on their own. This month we feature **PICKLE CREEK CONSERVATION AREA**.

This place is nearby the two areas discussed in the last newsletter: Hawn State Park and Hickory Canyon. Cross the bridge at Chester and follow to Highway H. Follow H until it ends. Turn left and follow to Highway Z. Take this road to I-55. Go to St Genevieve and exit for Missouri Highway 32. Go 16 miles to Highway A. Arrive at the parking area. This is a moderate 2 mile loop trail. The salient features include twin natural arches, unique rock formations, waterfalls, canyons, winding cliff walls, and a distant view on a dome glade rock. Any questions, contact Bob Tyson at 684-5643.



Shawnee Group

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

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