

SHAWNEE TRAILS

Shawnee Group, Sierra Club January 2002



General Meeting

Shawnee Group, Sierra Club
January 2002

The January General Meeting of the Shawnee Group will take place at the Unitarian Fellowship building, at 7:30 PM, on Thursday, **January 10**.

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 **Bob White** from Dubois on **bats and bat houses**.

Hope to see you there!

Dinner Before Meeting

Join some of the Executive Committee, the speaker for the evening's program, and other members for dinner at the **Great Wall** located west of the Post Office and east of the University Mall **5:45 p.m.** on Thursday, January 10, before the meeting.

Sierra Club desk and wall calendars still available
(see p 2 for details)

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Senate Energy Bill First Priority in New Year

by John Barry /The Planet

New Year's celebrations are past. Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa leftovers have been eaten. Thanksgiving and Halloween are distant memories. The holiday season is finally over. The new year, with all its new uncertainties, begins in earnest.

First out of the chute, the U.S. Senate will be turning its attention to America's energy needs, with a **critical vote on a Senate energy bill expected in mid-February**.

The Senate energy debate will swirl around the bill introduced in December by Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.). **The National Energy Security Bill, S. 1766, is a huge improvement over the plan proposed by President Bush and the bill passed by the House of Representatives in August.**

The Daschle bill is on the right track because it recognizes that our **energy policy must protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other special places**, plus help curb global warming and reduce America's oil dependence. The bill creates a strong framework to accomplish these key things, and move us to a cleaner, safer, more secure energy future.

However, some key elements have been left blank, to be filled in later. For example, the bill calls for improvements in automobile fuel economy, but doesn't say how much of an improvement should be made. **We need to make sure that there is a loud chorus of support for a Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standard of 40 mpg for cars, light trucks and SUVs by 2010.**

Another fill-in-the-blank deals with tax subsidies for new energy technologies. The bill doesn't say yet how much or which technologies and industries will benefit. We need to make sure our tax dollars support clean, renewable technologies like solar and wind power, and don't subsidize nuclear power or so-called "clean coal," which is anything but.

The Senate bill calls for 10 percent of our electricity to be provided by new renewable energy sources by 2020, but **studies by the Union of Concerned Scientists** show that we can achieve 20 percent.

Continued on P. 2

And please be sure to tell your senators to reject any and all amendments to drill the Arctic Refuge. Clearly, our voices are needed now. Please take a minute to write a letter to your senators. You can use the **sample letter below** as a starting point.

Or go to the Club's new Take Action Web site at <http://whistler.sierraclub.org/action/actionindex.jsp> and send an e-mail or fax to your senators. Add your voice to the growing chorus for a cleaner, safer, more secure energy future.

Sample letter:

Support A Cleaner, Safer, More Secure Energy Future

Dear Senator _____

The Senate's energy bill, introduced in December by Sens. Daschle and Bingaman, is a significant improvement to the backward-looking bill passed by the House. The Senate bill would increase federal research and development for energy efficiency to more than \$1 billion per year by 2006, and mandate higher efficiency for appliances. It also recognizes that a sound energy policy must protect special places like the Arctic Refuge and help curb global warming.

This bill is a strong framework. However, more is needed. The Senate bill requires that 10 percent of our electricity be provided by clean, renewable energy by 2020, but studies show that we can achieve 20 percent. It also calls for improved fuel economy and tax benefits for energy technologies, but does not yet specify how much. The Senate should require a CAFE standard of 40 mpg for cars, light trucks and SUVs by 2010, and should support clean renewable energy, not nuclear power or fossil fuels.

And please reject any amendments to drill in the Arctic Refuge.

Sincerely,



Wetland Defenders Wanted!

Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter is looking for two or three volunteers to research the impact of the January 2001 decision by the US Supreme Court that removed all protection for one type of wetland. Thanks to the Court's decision, those wanting to destroy an "isolated wetland" are free to do so. Before the January decision you needed a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

We would like to know how many applications have been submitted to the Corps office's in St. Louis/Louisville/Rock Island between January 2001 and January 2002 that the Corps has said 'no permit required.' This information will then become part of a statewide report on the impact of the Court's decision.

At this time, no one knows the full extent of the damage done by the Court's ruling. The need for this report is therefore vital in our efforts to pass state legislation to protect our state's isolated wetlands.

We estimate about 15 - 20 hours of time, over two months, will be needed to contact the Corps, examine the permit applications, and compile the data. We plan to release the report in March of 2002.

To volunteer or for more information contact:

Douglas Chien, Conservation Field Representative at 312-251-1680 or <<doug.chien@sierraclub.org>>

Forest Service Trails Planning Meeting

FOREST SERVICE TRAILS MEETINGS CONTINUE

The next meeting is **Tuesday, January 15 at 6:30 pm at Marion High School** auditorium. This is your opportunity to have input as well as show support for the Sierra Club, whether you are a hiker or horserider. We hope to discuss an area of the Shawnee Forest for proposing trail designation, and improvement, rerouting or elimination of existing trails where appropriate. For more info, contact **Bob Tyson** at 684-5643

Sierra Club desk and wall calendars are still available for you, for gifts.

You can get a wall calendar for \$10 or a desk calendar for \$12, less than what you would pay at a store. Call Sabrina at 549-2608 or Clara at 457-2025 to order one or pick one up at the Sierra Club program on Thursday, January 10. Calendar sales are our main fund raiser and we need your help. Thanks.

Natural Areas Trails Project for Shawnee Forest

by Barbara McKasson

Since 1999, the 81 Natural Areas (NAs) in Shawnee Forest (which equals about 5% of the Forest) have been closed to all incompatible uses that would threaten these high quality areas. **Horse riding is one of the incompatible uses**, and presently, horses are allowed in only two of the 81 Natural Areas in Shawnee Forest. These areas contain rare, native plant communities that must be protected if we are to preserve at least a small part of our natural heritage. However, some of these areas also contain remarkable geological features, which means they are also very scenic. In fact, some horse campground owners have been using some of these areas in their advertising in order to attract more horse riders to Shawnee Forest. **Until ten years ago, there were only about five horse stables and campgrounds** in the Shawnee Forest area. **Now there are at least twenty-five**, with thousands of horse riders using the trails in Shawnee Forest on some weekends. Therein lies the problem.

In response to pressure from some horse riders, and to continuing erosion problems, the Forest Service (FS) has proposed the "**Natural Areas Trails Project**" for Shawnee Forest. This study analyzes four alternatives for designating equestrian trails in as many as eight of the most popular large Natural Areas. Within this problem, there is also an opportunity. The four alternatives also include plans for alleviating the erosion from user made trails in these eight areas, especially where the trails are silting up streams.

We are still evaluating the details of this DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Statement). However, we can make some general statements about the four alternatives. There are already long-time established equestrian/hiking trails in Garden of the Gods and Larue-Pine Hills. These will remain open, but with no additional trails designated in these two areas. Bulge Hole NA (which is small with steep hillsides) would be closed to horse riding in all but Alternative 4. None of the alternatives would allow a horse trail in Little Grand Canyon Ecological Area - there would remain a hiker only trail. Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 designate new horse/hiking trails in four of the Natural Areas - Jackson Hollow, Double Branch Hole, Lusk Creek Canyon Ecological Area, and Lusk Creek Zoological Area.

Alternative 1 is the "**No Action**" alternative, which means no new designated horse trails in any of the Natural Areas. However, there would also be no mitigation of all the user made trails that would continue to erode with every rainfall, causing deeper trenches, loss of plants, and siltation of streams.

Alternative 3 is the FS (Forest Service) "**Preferred**" alternative because, according to the DEIS, it would have the least negative impact on rare plants and animals, while allowing horse/hiker trails in some of the most scenic NAs. There would also be mitigation of erosion and siltation in streams caused by illegal user made trails in these NAs.

The second part of the project plan calls for a **change in trail density** in wilderness areas. In Alternative 1 (the "no action" alternative), trail density in wilderness areas would remain at 1 mile per square mile, leaving little flexibility in location of trails. In the original FS proposal (Alternative 2), the FS proposed increasing trail density in wilderness areas to 2 miles of trail per square mile for a maximum of 90 miles of trails in the seven wilderness areas. Alternatives 3 and 4 would change the trail density to 1.3 miles per square mile of wilderness.

The 70 day comment period for the DEIS will end in mid-March. We will send out an alert by February. If you want to get a copy of the DEIS from the Forest Service or have any questions about the DEIS, call Dick Johnson at the Vienna FS office at (618) 658-2111. The FS will also be holding a public open house on January 22, 2002, at the Marion Hotel and Conference Center, 2-8 PM. Shawnee Forest employees will be answering questions concerning the four alternatives described in the DEIS.

Trinidad and Tobago (May 29 - June 5, 2002)

by Nelda Hinckley

Cost of the trip is \$1997 or \$1847 with ten people registered. The price includes airfare, lodging, all meals, and guided fields trips. For more information, phone Nelda at 549-5588 or 457-7676 ext. 8323. To register, send \$150 deposit to Nelda Hinckley, Asst. Professor of Biology, John A. Logan College., Carterville, IL 62918. Students register for Biology 241, **Introduction to Tropical Ecology**, for 3 hours credit. Travel arrangements by Caligo Ventures, Inc.



SHAWNEE OUTINGS



by Bob Tyson

(Our Stone Soup outing, January 1, was our only outing for this month...ed.)

Other Outings

Saturday, February 2 – Jackson County Hiking Club - Pickle Creek Conservation Area. Meet at Murdale Shopping Center sign at 8 am or Murphysboro ranger station at 8:30 am. This trip will also include **Hickory Canyon** as well as a 2 mile loop in **Hawn State Park**. The hikes are moderate in difficulty. All 3 areas are close together, located between St. Genevieve and Farmington, MO. For more info call Bob Tyson at 684-5643.

ADVENTURES WITH UNCLE BOB

(Column for those unable to participate in our group hikes but are able to hike on their own)

by Bob Tyson

This month we highlight **Round Bluff Nature Preserve Trail**. Go into Ferne Clyffe State Park and turn south. Follow signs to the parking lot. This easy to moderate trail is a one mile loop. You will be following a mesa-like sandstone knoll of vertical cliffs ranging from 50-100 ft in height. The trail has 3 wood staircases to ease you over steep terrain. Wind and water erosion have formed some interesting rock formations. Unique plant life includes prickly pear cactus, several species of ferns, toothwort, jack-in-the-pulpit, dutchman's breeches, and farkleberry. For more info, call Bob Tyson at 684-5643.

(Last month's issue on South Cumberland Recreation Area had an error: Fiery Gizzard Trail is 10 miles long and its terminus is Foster Falls on Hwy. 41.)

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 February newsletter will be **January 26** with folding on **January 31** at Don Lawrence's house at 5:30 PM. To check on directions call Don at 457-8989.

EXCOM MEETING

Our January ExCom meeting will be held on **Thursday, January 24, 5:30 p.m.** at Clara McClure's. For directions, call Clara at 457-2025. Any member is welcome to attend.

SAVING PAPER AND COSTS BY USING E-MAIL

Changing the method by which you receive the Shawnee Trails Newsletter has never been easier. To receive the electronic edition, go to <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/il-shawnee-trails.html> and click on the "join or leave the list" menu option. Once you join the newsletter mailing list, every issue will then be e-mailed right to your computer within minutes of its publication. Subscribing to the electronic newsletter instead of the paper edition helps the Sierra Club not only save trees, but reduces the Shawnee Group's overhead expenses for printing and mailing which consumes approximately 40% of the group's annual budget. Also, the electronic version is available in color unlike the B&W paper edition. Subscribe today! (PS. If you already receive the electronic version, you do not need to resubscribe using this new method!). Need help? Contact sg618@yahoo.com



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

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

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