



Shawnee Trails

News of the Shawnee Group — April 2003

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Event Calendar

- April 10** ~ Membership Meeting @ Unitarian Fellowship at 7:30 PM
- April 14** ~ Hike from Fountain Bluff to Grand Tower, 8:45 AM
- April 17** ~ EXCOM Meeting
- April 19** ~ Noon deadline for May Newsletter content.
- April 19 – 22** ~ Earth Day Activities to be announced.
- April 24** ~ Newsletter Folding @ Don's, 5:30 PM

W I L D F L O W E R S

Please join Sierra Club members and the public for a presentation about wildflowers by Kim Harris, professor of agribusiness economics at SIU-C. His beautiful photo presentation will introduce attendees to the diversity of wildflowers in Southern Illinois. The pre-meeting social dinner to which all are invited will be held this month at 5:45 PM at the Italian Village Restaurant.

To appreciate wildflowers one usually needs to have access to public lands, much of which is threatened by development and abuse by inappropriate recreational activities, such as all terrain vehicles. In undisturbed areas wildflowers are easy to find.

Most people recognize that plants have great aesthetic value. Wildflowers provide a spiritual link between nature and our diverse cultural history. Plant communities form the basis for many important recreational activities, including hiking, fishing, hunting, photography, and nature observation. However, many people tend to take wildflower communities for granted even though plants have been very important to medical discoveries throughout history.

Native plants and flowers have great untapped potential as sources of improved genetic traits such as disease resistance, drought tolerance, and improved nutritional value.

The delicate wildflowers and other plants that grace Southern Illinois in every season protect the soil from rampaging rains. These native plant communities also provide the habitat necessary to sustain both indigenous and migrating insects, birds and other wildlife.

Without the protected habitat to support them, birds and animals of all kinds are in danger of extinction. The diversity of plant communities in our region is extremely important for sustaining a healthy ecosystem. We need to remember that every species counts! Plant habitats must be protected before species become critically endangered and possibly lost forever.

The accompanying photographs on the right and back page portray some of the flowering plants that can be found in Southern Illinois. #



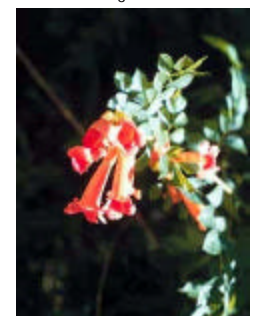
Sweet William



Yellow Honeysuckle



Dogwood



Trumpet Creeper

© These photographs may be used for non-commercial purposes providing credit is given the USDA, NRCS: <http://plants.usda.gov/index.html>

The public is welcome to attend the membership meeting and all other Sierra Club meetings and outings.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

Outings Calendar

See outing updates at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee/outings.htm>

SHAWNEE GROUP OUTINGS

April 14 (Monday) ~ Fountain Bluff (Near Gorham) to Grand Tower. Leave 8:45 AM from Murdale Shopping Center sign; 9 AM in Murphysboro at the junction of old Hwy. 13 and RT 127 parking lot. This is an easy 3.5 mile walk along bluffs and ever-changing views of the Mississippi River. While this is planned as a round trip walk, we can also make a car shuttle available. For further information, contact Bob Tyson at 684-5643.

NON SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS

April 12 ~ Battlefield Trail hike. Meet at Mitchelville store. Meet at parking lot for wild flower walk.

April 19 ~ Godwin Trail Hike. Meet at Alto Pass pavilion.

April 26 ~ Bell Smith Springs hike. Meet at parking lot for wild flower walk.

May 3 ~ Sand Cave to Bell Smith Springs. Meet at Shawnee Mart store in Eddyville.

The above hikes start at 10 AM and are sponsored by the River-to-River Trail Society. Contact John O'Dell at 252-6789.

April 16 & 17 ~ Tunnel Hill Van Tours. Call Tunnel Hill State Trail office at 618-658-2168.

April 19 ~ Wildflower Walk. 10 AM. Limekiln Slough guided wildflower hike. Meet at Slough parking lot off Cache Chapel Rd.

Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge Special Events

Space is limited for following: Please reserve your place and get outing details at 618-634-2231. All free, except Birding Blitz!

April 26 ~ Heron Pond Hike: History and Ecology. 1 – 3 PM. Meet at Heron Pond trailhead. Easy. Length: 1.25 miles.

April 26 ~ Buttonland Swamp Canoe Trip. 9 – 11 AM or 1 – 3 PM. Meet at Lower Cache River Access Easy. 2 hrs.

April 26 ~ Wildflower Walk in the Cache Basin. 9 – 11 AM. Meet at Cache River Wetland Center. Easy. 2 hrs.

April 26 ~ Geology of the Cache. 9 AM – 3 PM. Meet at Barkhausen Wetlands Center.

April 26 ~ Birding for the Beginner. 9 – 11 AM or 1 – 3 PM. Meet at Cache River Wetland Center.

April 27 ~ Birding Blitz. Midnight to Midnight. ☩

Adventures with Uncle Bob

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

Your Monthly Guide to Self-Adventure with Bob Tyson

NOTE: All outing participants can benefit from first aid training. The Club has arranged for discounted basic first aid training for Sierra Club members for only \$3. Contact kendowil@aol.com

Continuing with our series on wilderness areas in Illinois, this month we highlight the **BALD KNOB WILDERNESS AREA**. Most people are acquainted with the cross on Bald Knob Mountain and its 360 degree view of the surrounding ridges. To visit Bald Knob, drive to Alto Pass and follow the signs to the top using the blacktop road.

1) About halfway to the top, look for a trailhead sign and small parking area on your right. Both the **Godwin Trail** and **Ranbarger Hollow Trail** start here and split a quarter mile downhill. The Godwin Trail traverses ridgetops and valleys for six miles into Hutchins Creek and Clear Springs Wilderness area reaching its western terminus at Pine Hills scenic drive where there is a small parking lot. Note the hike here on April 19th. The Ranbarger Hollow trail runs 3 miles one way, much of it is along an abandoned forest service road. A significant feature is its views of deep ravines on both sides of the trail along the hike. Some places are deeply eroded with the trail four feet deeper than its banks; the soil there is mushy from equestrian use. Along the route is a junction that is signed for a spur to Bald Knob Cross trail (not an official Forest Service trail).

2) Up at the cross look for **Bald Knob Cross Trail**. During leaf-off there are lovely views of the surrounding ridgetops. Spring brings an array of wild azaleas and an abundance of mushrooms. Go right (west) along the tree line about 100 feet and you will find the wilderness trail sign. This is a 3 mile loop trail. After a short distance, you arrive at a junction. I suggest you take the left route. Going right is a very difficult, steep and rugged descent. At its base no trail signs are evident.

3) For another access point to the above trail, take RT 127 south from Alto Pass to Rhine Road. Turn right and travel 2.9 miles to the marked trailhead sign and parking lot. While on this road, note the interesting cliff walls, views of steep hills, and a creek cascading over a staircase of rock. For those living south of Alto Pass, turn off Route 127 at Brown Section Road and follow to the junction with Rhine and make a left. The Forest Service has been advised of improvements needed on this trail. Your additional comments to them would be welcome. For more trail info, contact Bob Tyson at 684-5643. ☩

Help Protect Our State Parks, Forests, and Conservation Areas from ATVs

Please write to your Illinois Senator and Representative to Oppose SB 1521 & 1804; HB 2816 & 2273

Dirt-bikes, 4-wheelers and other all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) can cause major damage to trails and natural areas, pose dangerous safety threats to riders and bystanders, and produce high levels of noise. Now, ATV riders want these dangerous, noisy facilities built in our state parks. They also want the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to have severely limited law enforcement capabilities counteracting laws that protect people and wildlife at ATV facilities and events.

ATV riders are pushing two legislative proposals that jeopardize our state recreation areas, safety, and wildlife. Both proposals deal with how funds from the Off Highway Vehicle Trust Fund are spent by the IDNR. Both proposals put our parks and natural areas at risk.

- SB 1521 and HB 2816 would promote ATV facilities in our state parks, forests, and recreation areas, and remove a long-standing prohibition against using funds from the Off Highway Vehicle Trust Fund to build ATV facilities on land owned by the IDNR. Currently, these funds are only used for ATV facilities on private land.
- SB 1804 and HB 2273 would cap annual expenditures from the Fund for enforcement and administration at only 15%. Such limited funding jeopardizes public safety and the environment. If limited to 15% this level would only fund one conservation officer statewide to regulate and enforce laws for all of Illinois' ATVs.

Our state parks and other IDNR lands should be safe, quiet places for families to relax and recreate, as well as for protected wildlife habitat. Allowing ATVs to roar through our state parks is inconsistent with these uses.

SB 1804 & HB 2273 WOULD LIMIT ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS FOR ATVs

Illegal ATV use is a major problem throughout the state. Burial mounds at Cahokia Mounds (an Illinois World Heritage Site), have been irreparably damaged by illegal ATV use. Illegal ATV use has also irreparably damaged some Illinois Nature Preserves. Landowners throughout the State are having nightmares dealing with property damage and the loss of peace and quiet caused by illegal ATV use. In addition, river levees, such as the ones along the Mississippi River in Madison County, have been damaged by illegal ATV use. Illegal ATV riders are very difficult to catch since they can speed away and are hard to identify. Public land managers do not have the law enforcement resources they need to protect our lands. When citizens try to get help to protect their private property, they are typically told there are not enough law enforcement resources to catch the illegal ATV users.

HOW ATVs THREATEN OUR HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

- Human Health Impacts: Noise generated by ATVs does more than annoy people. Scientific research has shown that relatively continuous exposure to sound levels exceeding 70 decibels (e.g. freeway traffic), can be harmful to hearing. ATVs routinely produce between 81-111 decibels. This is roughly the equal to a rock concert or busy street. Long term health impacts include altered movement patterns, behavioral changes, and stress related health problems. One study found that small mammals became unusually aggressive and disoriented after exposure to a motorcycle race.
- Environmental Impacts: Like humans, exposure to ATV noise can result in hearing damage or even loss. This has severe consequences for animals dependent on their hearing for finding prey, avoiding predators, and breeding. Noise also can cause increases in heart rate, blood pressure and blood cholesterol, as well as have negative impacts on the digestive and respiratory systems. Persistent, unrelenting noise exposure could cause these temporary stress reactions to become chronic stress diseases, such as high blood pressure or ulcers. The elderly, young, and individuals with existing health problems are at greatest risk. In a quiet forest or countryside, the noise from the average motorcycle can be heard from up to 7,000 feet away. The louder engines can be heard from over 11,500 feet, which is a distance of over two miles.

Please write or call your Illinois Senator and Representative ASAP! Tell them to oppose both of the ATV bills cited above.

Rep. Mike Bost	(618) 457-5787	(217) 782-0387	632 Statehouse, Springfield, IL, 62706
Rep. Gary Forby	(618) 439-2504	(217) 782-1051	257-S Stratton, Springfield, IL, 62706
Senator Leuchtefeld	(618) 243-9013	(217) 782-8137	103B Statehouse, Springfield, IL, 62706
Rep. Brendan Phelps	(618) 253-4189	(217) 782-5131	265-S Stratton, Springfield, IL, 62706
Rep. Dan Reitz	(618) 443-5757	(217) 782-1018	200-9S Stratton; Springfield, IL, 62706
Senator Larry Woolard	(618) 985-5559	(217) 782-5509	M115 Statehouse, Springfield, IL, 62706 #

Submitted by Barb McKasson



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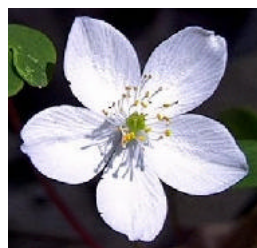
Carbondale, IL

Permit 3

Shawnee Group
P.O. Box 117
Carbondale, IL 62903-0117
USA, Earth, Milky Way

March 13, 2003: Less than two weeks after EPA administrator Christie Todd Whitman told the Senate that she knows of no incident in which environmental protections have ever hampered the military's ability to train, her agency's enforcement chief testified in support of legislation that would exempt the military from federal environmental and public health laws. The Pentagon is asking Congress to grant the military sweeping exemptions from the Clean Air Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Superfund cleanup law, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Endangered Species Act. "This is an outrageous retreat on environmental and public health protections said Alys Campaigne, NRDC's legislative director. "Giving the military blanket immunity is unwarranted because the laws protecting our air, water, wildlife and public lands already contain exemptions for national security."

↔ Above the Law: <http://www.nrdc.org/media/pressreleases/030312.asp>



Wildflowers of Southern Illinois

Shawnee Group Executive Committee

Chair	Laurel Toussaint	964-1339	✉ mailto:laureltous@hotmail.com
Vice-Chair	Donna Ayers	985-6917	✉ mailto:dayers@accessus.net
Secretary	Cathie Hutcheson	529-2022	✉ mailto:hutche@siu.edu
Treasurer	Bill Boman	995-9976	✉ mailto:billbo@onemain.com
Conservation Chair	Barbara McKasson	529-4824	✉ mailto:babitaji@aol.com (Ex-Officio)
Membership Chair	Ron Schmeck	529-8387	✉ mailto:rae50@siu.edu
Outings Chair	Bob Tyson	684-5643	✉ mailto:robkay43@webtv.net

Sierra Club Websites

National: <http://www.sierraclub.org> IL Chapter: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org> Shawnee: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee/index.htm>
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National Sierra Club Listserv Portal (subscribe to other newsgroups): <http://mitchell.sierraclub.org/infosys/Listserv/ListHome.asp>
National Sierra Club Outings Catalog: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/>
Sierra Club Chapter Outings Catalog: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/>
Shawnee Group Outings Catalog: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee/outings.htm>
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