

Shawnee Trails

News of the Shawnee Group — May 2005

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



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Shawnee Group Event Calendar

May 5 ~ Group ExCom meeting, 6 PM at McClure's.

May 12 ~ Membership Program: Crab Orchard Refuge, 7:30 PM at the Carbondale Township Office.

May 15 ~ Outing

May 24 ~ Newsletter deadline.

May 28 ~ Newsletter Folding @ Carbondale Township Office.

June 1 ~ Members' Picnic and Panthers Den Hike

A Look into the Future of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

Come meet Dan Frisk, the manager at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge (CONWR), at our Shawnee Group program meeting on Thursday, May 12th. Dan will be giving us a presentation that will preview the proposed Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the refuge – including a pictorial tour of changes needed on the refuge. Come at 7:00 for conversation and refreshments, or 7:30 for the program. You are also invited to join Dan and Shawnee Group leaders before the meeting at 5:30 for the dinner. On May 12, we will be dining at Kaya, a Japanese/ Korean Restaurant, located at 817 South Illinois Avenue in Carbondale.

Dan has been the refuge manager at CONWR since July, 2004. He is a wildlife biologist who has specialized in managing habitat for endangered species. He has worked for the federal government for 24 years – first at Ft. Bragg and then for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for the last five years. Dan has been the manager at the PeeDee (Piedmont) Refuge in North Carolina and at the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, one the last remaining coastal wetlands of Lake Erie. Now, as the new CONWR Refuge Manager, Dan hopes to help restore native species and reduce fragmentation of habitat.

The CONWR draft management plan will probably be released for public comment in May or June. The Comprehensive Conservation Plan will guide management decisions for the refuge for the next 15 years. Decisions must be made concerning the current industrial and agricultural uses presently on the refuge. There is also a possibility of a land swap with SIU-C, which would trade some FWS land on Crab Orchard Lake for SIU land adjacent to the forested wilderness areas. One major goal for the refuge is to increase native habitats, such as warm season grasses and oak-hickory forest, thus providing higher quality habitats for native species of concern. ☩

Peabody coal-fired power plant is still a burning issue:

Public Hearing on May 11 in Marissa -- Your participation is needed.

A year ago many of you attended a Public Hearing on Peabody's proposed Prairie State Generating coal plant where the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) heard testimony regarding the issuance of an air permit. Since then, the air permit was approved, but then remanded due to an Appeal filed by Sierra Club and several other environmental and health advocacy organizations.

Meanwhile, the IEPA is moving ahead with the wastewater discharge permit – known as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

A public hearing will take place on Wednesday, May 11, 2005, 6:30 p.m. at Marissa Jr.-Sr. High School Gym, 300 School View Drive, Marissa, Illinois.

Over **18 million** gallons of water will be withdrawn from the Kaskaskia River every day and will be used in the coal fired boiler units and used within the plant for other operational purposes.

The plant will then discharge an average of 1,700,000 gallons of really dirty wastewater per day into the Kaskaskia River. In addition, emergency overflow discharges during extreme wet weather events will be permitted to Mud Creek.

Your participation is important. Please come out to the hearing.

For more information, please contact Terri Treacy at 618-683-2161 or e-mail:

<mailto:terri.treacy@sierraclub.org> ☩

Safe, happy and inspired

Descriptions of all outings of the Shawnee Group and five other Chapter Groups in Illinois are now available in one central location thus making it easy to find a wider range of outdoor activities by any Sierra Club member or the general public. Go to the Group website for the link to this feature: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee/outings.htm>

May 15 (Sunday) Draper Bluff, Cedar Bluff, and Goreville Falls (SNF)

Draper Bluff is on private land and hosts a vertical climbing school. We will hike to view a beautiful cliff line and rock formations from the top of 100 foot bluffs. We will then drive a short distance to Cedar Bluff for a short hike among gigantic bluffs and rock shelters. Cedar Bluff and the Falls are on Illinois Department of Conservation land. We will explore whether ATV riding is still occurring here. Meet at Murdale Shopping Center big sign 12:30 PM in Carbondale or the Marion Wal*Mart parking lot (near Ryans) at 1 PM. Contact Bob Tyson, trip leader at 684-5643.

May 27 to May 30 (Fri.-Mon.) Missouri Ozarks (Taum Sauk Section) Hawn State Park & Missouri Botanic Gardens

Two days of hiking amid Spring flowers, waterfalls and streams on the hills of the Missouri Ozark Mountains. On Monday, visit the Missouri Botanic Gardens in St. Louis. Double occupancy at a luxurious B&B in Bonne Terre, with a two-person thermal massage tub in each room. Cost is \$150 in advance, which includes 3 nights lodging (double occupancy), 3 gourmet breakfasts, evening snacks/desserts, Sierra & administrative fees. Dinners at local restaurants (not included in cost). Limit 12. Leader is Paul Silverman. Co-leader: Joe Pokorny. Assistant leader: Diana Haskins. Call Paul at 847-392-3433

Shawnee Group Summer Picnics

- ★ **June 4th (Saturday)** – Hike in Panther's Den 10 AM (Call Bob Tyson @ 684-5643), then, starting at 1:00 PM, explore private prairie, fish, swim, talk, etc. at Bill & Dottie Boman's house, 2795 S. Rocky Comfort Rd. (driveway across from Panther's Den Lane) Bring dish to pass for potluck, beverages
- ★ **July 9th (Saturday)** – Picnic & pool party at Stan Harris' house, 98 Edgewood Lane, Carbondale. Bring potluck dish, beverages.
- ★ **August 7th (Sunday)** – Beach Party at Spring Arbor Lake with our host, Don Lawrence, starting at 3:00 PM. Bring boats, swim suit, fishing gear, potluck dish, beverages, and lawn chair. ☞

Adventures with Uncle Bob Tyson

Your Guide to Self-Adventure

<http://illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee/unclebob/adventures.htm>

This month I recommend to you **Big Oak Tree State Park** near East Prairie, Missouri.

Directions: Cross I-57 at Cairo and proceed to Charleston, MO where you will take MO 102 south for approximately 25 miles. This is flat delta country through soybean and cotton fields, as well as marsh areas. Follow the brown signs. Two trails start at the parking area. Go to the self-service visitor center for exhibits and maps. Start the 3/4 mile boardwalk trail. Along the route you will encounter thick canebrake, bald cypress trees, and other huge trees including a 140 ft. Burr Oak (18 ft. diameter), a black Willow tree at 118 ft. (10 ft. diameter), and other majestic trees. Six trees qualify as state champions, and two are national size champions. There are 150 species of birds in the park. This park is not well-maintained. I found that, after a half mile hiking, whole sections of boardwalk were missing and hikers must continue on concrete muddy piers to finally reach the lake. According to the website, the boardwalk is being replaced in segments. It will be completely closed for repairs in May and August 2005.

Back to the parking lot, cross the road and take the other trail which forms a loop; this will offer you additional views of gigantic trees. Back in the car, drive up to the lake and locate the unmarked trail which parallels and surrounds the lake. On the trail you'll soon discover cypress and tupelo trees in the lake. You may want to avoid this place on a hot, humid summer day. During my first visit to this trail was on a pleasant Fall day. The second visit was in July and I "itched" all over my body after a couple hours, despite only few insect bites. This park is noted in the book, Hiking in Missouri by Kevin Lohraff.

For more information on this hike, contact Bob Tyson at 684-5643.

WE MISSED YOU! Eight of us enjoyed our Sierra Club hike on April 18 to Hayes Creek Canyon and Sand Cave. Besides the unique geological formations, wildflowers were abundant. On April 2, six volunteers repaired trails at Panther Den Wilderness. Four came from the SIU student environmental center. As you may recall, the Shawnee Group adopted this area as its service project.

TRAIL UPDATES

1. Tyson Canyon has been improved with repair to both the bridge and boardwalk.
2. The Forest Service reports that new signage has been installed at the south end of Bald Knob Cross Trail, starting at the Rhine Road trailhead. ☞



Shawnee Group ExCom Leaders
(x) = ExCom officers with voting rights

ExCom Chair/Conservation Co-Chair:

Barb McKasson
529-4824 <mailto:babitaji@aol.com> (x)

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Jo Ann Nelson
529-1884 <mailto:jnelson@siu.edu> (x)

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Yolanda Comiskey
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687-5456 <mailto:timstnsn@netscape.net> (x)

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684-5643 <mailto:robkay43@webtv.net> (x)

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203-9679 <mailto:johnson812@hotmail.com>

ALERT: Support HB 241: Environmental Right to Know

By Barb McKasson

Please call your Illinois state representative in Springfield and ask him to support HB 241, the Environmental Right to Know bill. This bill grew out of the so-called Lockformer incident in DuPage County in which the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) knew that people in an area of DuPage were drinking and bathing in contaminated water. IEPA suspected the source of the contamination was the Lockformer Company, but did not inform the people of their peril or, shockingly, have the authority to stop the contamination.

This bill provides the IEPA with two new authorities. First, the bill authorizes the director of the IEPA to order responsible parties to stop releasing pollutants into the environment. Second, the agency is authorized to notify the public of the release of contaminants and of its actions regarding the contaminants.

Excitingly, this bill has passed out of the Illinois Senate. Because the costs are borne by the polluting company on the "polluter pays" concept, there is little cost to the taxpayer, but industry opposition will be stiff. Industry did not notice the bill when it was in the Senate, but they have noticed now. Please call your representative **today**. (See contact information below). To find out who your state representative is, go to:

<http://www.elections.state.il.us/dls/pages/DLSAddresscrit.asp>.

Restore Crucial Funds to IDNR and IEPA

Urge your state senator and representative to sign the Environmental Budget "Dear Colleague" letter in support of an adequate budget for IDNR and IEPA. The letter also asks the legislature to dedicate 10% of any new capital for environmental projects.

Wetlands

Senate Bill 761, a bad wetlands bill, has passed the Illinois Senate. This bill creates weak protections for isolated wetlands, and does not allow counties or local governments to have stronger protections for wetlands than the state. This would invalidate the stronger wetlands protections that Lake, DuPage, Kane and other counties have in place. Call your state representative and urge him or her to vote NO on S.B. 761.

Continued from Back Page

SAMPLE LETTER to:
Shawnee National Forest Supervisor:

(HB 241 Continued on page 4)

Dear Supervisor Nicholas:

Please include my comments in the official record of the proposed draft management plan for Shawnee National Forest (SNF).

I support the Forest Service proposal to ban ATVs, dirt bikes and other unlicensed off-road vehicles from the forest. I also support requiring horse riders to ride only on the designated trail system. The Forest Service should designate enough trails to accommodate the horse and hiker traffic, but not more trails than the Forest Service can maintain. To aid compliance, the Forest Service should provide adequate maps of the designated trails, plus make sure all designated trails are well marked.

I strongly oppose your proposal to resume commercial logging on SNF. I also oppose selling more oil, gas and mineral leases in the forest. The best, highest, and most valuable uses of Shawnee National Forest are for wildlife habitat and for quiet recreation. With urban sprawl greatly increasing, more species are dependent on our national forests for survival. Sprawl and high-way proliferation also increases the value of our national forests as a place for quiet recreation and spiritual renewal. Logging, oil drilling and mining are incompatible with these uses, and spoil the aesthetics of the forest in large areas.

I especially urge you to give a higher level of protection to the highest quality natural areas, such as the 80 designated Natural Areas and Research Natural Areas. There are only a couple thousand such areas in Illinois, constituting less than 1% of the land area of the State of Illinois. I also urge you to recommend Burke Branch, Camp Hutchins and Ripple Hollow for wilderness designation by Congress, and provide them wilderness level protection. Since SNF is so fragmented, we need to make sure these areas are protected from logging, drilling and mining. I also urge you to recommend the following creeks for national Wild & Scenic River status: Lusk, Big, Bay, Grand Pierre, Barren and Hutchins Creeks.

Sincerely, Your name and address



Shawnee Forest Plan Alert

... coming to your mailbox soon!



The long awaited Shawnee National Forest Resource Management Plan has finally been released for review. We are thrilled with a couple aspects of the Plan – it excludes all off-road all-terrain vehicles from the Forest and restricts horse use to designated horse trails only!

As expected, commercial logging is back in the Plan – it's called "Vegetative Treatments Through Timber Sales." And, to our dismay not even one of the three

proposed Wilderness Areas was recommended for national wilderness designation.

The Shawnee Forest Committee is looking at all of the issues within the Plan and formulating Club positions on everything. Because this issue is so important for every Illinoisan, more information will be put into an separately mailed alert that will be distributed Chapter-wide to every Illinois member of the Sierra Club

in mid-May. The alert will offer additional talking points and sample letter expanding on the examples provided in this issue of the Shawnee Group's monthly Shawnee Trails Newsletter. The comment period ends on June 16th – so you will have plenty of time to get your comments in once you receive the alert.

If you are interested in reading the Plan for yourself you can download it off the Forest Service web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/shawnee/> – go to this Forest Plan Revision link. You will also find a list of libraries where the Plan can be viewed. If you have questions or need

NO EXIT

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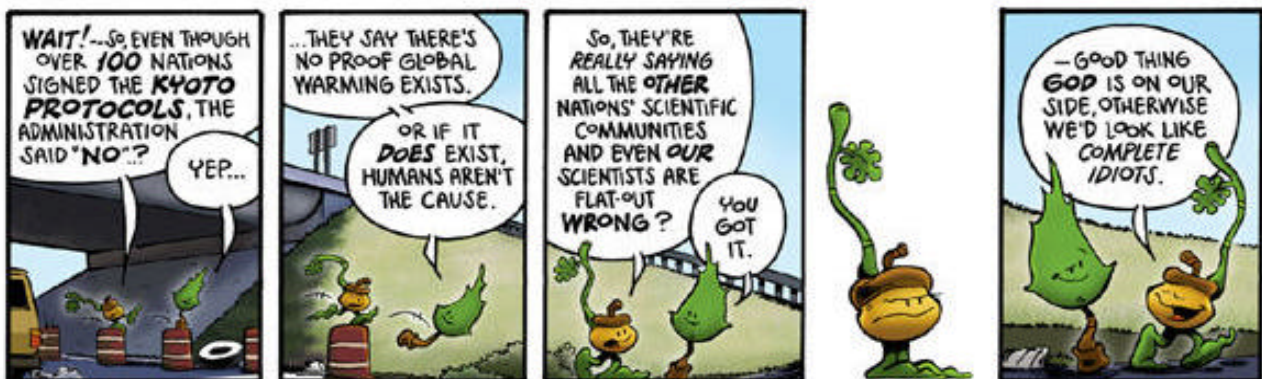


more information, please call Barb McKasson at (618) 529-4824 or e-mail her at

<mailto:Babitaji@aol.com> #

RUSTLE THE LEAF

BY PONCE & WRIGHT



(HB 241 continued from page 3)

- ★ Rep. Mike Bost, District 115, (618) 457-5787; (217) 782-0387; 202-N Stratton Bldg., Springfield, IL 62706
- ★ Rep. John Bradley, District 117, (618) 997-9697; (217) 782-1051; 265-S Stratton Bldg., Springfield, IL 62706
- ★ Rep. Brandon Phelps, District 118, (618) 253-4189; (217) 782-5131; 292-S Stratton, Springfield, IL 62706
- ★ Rep. Dan Reitz, District 116, (618) 443-5757; (217) 782-1018; 200-9S Stratton, Springfield, IL 62706
- ★ Senator Dave Luechtefeld, District 58, (618) 243-9014; (217) 782-8137; 103B Statehouse, Springfield, IL 62706
- ★ Senator Gary Forby, District 59, (618) 439-2504, (217) 782-5509; M122 Statehouse, Springfield, IL 62706
- ★ Senator John O. Jones, District 54, (618) 242-9511; (217) 782-0471; 103D Statehouse, Springfield, IL 62706 #

YOUR Comments Needed to Preserve Shawnee National Forest – Deadline: June 16

By Barbara McKasson

The Draft Plan for the Shawnee National Forest (SNF) and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) have been released for public comment. We need everyone to write comments to the Forest Service (FS) to let them know we want the forest managed to preserve the scenic beauty, habitats for wildlife, watersheds for clean water, and well-maintained trails and facilities for recreation. The horse camp owners, ATV riders, jeep drivers, motorcyclists, lumber companies, etc., will be demanding a bigger piece of the forest. WE MUST RAISE OUR VOICES ABOVE THE CROWD. Below are some suggestions for points to make in your letter. If you want a copy of the Draft Plan and DEIS mailed to you, call 1-800-MYWOODS. You can download or view the plan at the website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/shawnee/>

The good news is that the FS proposes to prohibit use of all unlicensed vehicles on the forest, such as ATVs (four-wheelers). They also would limit horse riding to designated trails instead of allowing cross-country riding. The bad news is that they propose to once again allow commercial logging, as well as, oil, gas and mineral leasing on the forest. The FS also wants to only manage Camp Hutchins, Ripple Hollow, and Burke Branch as recreation areas, not as Wilderness Areas.

Suggested "talking points" to use in your letters:

- ★ Thank the FS for proposing prohibition of all off-road vehicle use on the forest. Off-road vehicle use causes extreme erosion, siltation, and damage to plants and animals. It is also incompatible with all other forms of recreation.
- ★ Thank the FS for proposing a well-maintained, marked trail system on SNF for both horse riding and hiking, and for discontinuing the off-trail horse riding.
- ★ Support horse riding on designated trails only. Cross-country horse riding creates new user-made trails that cause erosion, and are not maintained
- ★ Oppose all commercial timber sales – National Forests are one of the last havens for many species and for quiet recreation. They should not be managed as tree farms.
- ★ Oppose any new oil, gas or mineral leasing on Shawnee Forest: drilling and mining are incompatible with wildlife, recreation, and clean water.
- ★ Oppose artificial openings on SNF. The wild turkey population in Illinois has greatly increased, and does not need help from the Forest Service. SNF is already too fragmented. Interior forest species are the animals with declining habitat and declining populations. Wildlife openings further threaten forest interior species by attracting forest edge predators.
- ★ Recommend wilderness designation and use management to enhance wilderness qualities for Camp Hutchins, Ripple Hollow and Burke Branch. Protect all 80 Natural Areas (which are on the IL Natural Areas Inventory) from incompatible uses (horse riding, motorized vehicles, camping, etc.)
- ★ Expand Management Indicator Species (MIS) list to be more representative of wildlife dependent on the forest. FS must conduct on the ground surveys of both MIS and Threatened and Endangered Species (TES), with follow-up monitoring.
- ★ Protect high quality streams, especially Lusk Creek, Bay Creek, Big Creek, Grand Pierre Creek, Barren Creek and Hutchins Creek. Recommend all six of these streams for Wild & Scenic River designation.
- ★ Support obliteration of user-made trails that are not designated as official trails so that they will no longer be used and will no longer cause soil erosion and stream siltation.
- ★ The Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines should be strengthened by changing "should" to "shall", and by making guidelines mandatory or converting most of the guidelines into standards. As it is, the many guidelines are non-enforceable.
- ★ More law enforcement officers on SNF to monitor and penalize illegal off-road vehicle, ATV and horse use.

MAIL COMMENTS TO:
Shawnee National Forest
Forest Plan Revision Comments
50 Hwy. 145 South, Harrisburg, IL, 62958

FAX COMMENTS TO: (618) 253-1060
Attn.: Forest Plan Revision Comments

E-MAIL TO: mailto:r9_shawnee_plan-revision@fs.fed.us

A sample letter containing selected talking points from above is shown on **page 3**. A copy is also available for copying online at: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee/savesnf2005.htm>



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