

# Shawnee Trails

News of the Shawnee Group — January 2006

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



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## Shawnee Group Event Calendar

**January 1st (Sunday)**  
Stone Soup Gathering—  
Giant City State Park, 11 AM

**January 5th (Thursday)**  
Shawnee Group ExCom  
Meeting, 6 PM at Clara  
McClure's, Carbondale

**January 12th (Thursday)**  
Public member meeting at  
Carbondale Twp., 7:30 PM.

**January 16th (Monday)**  
LaRue Swamp Hike, 9 AM

**January 26th (Thursday)**  
Newsletter Folding, Carbon-  
dale Township, 6 PM.

## Foraging For Edible Mushrooms of Southern Illinois

Join the Shawnee Group on January 12th for a presentation by Joe McFarland, staff writer for Outdoor Illinois Magazine. Joe is an employee of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and is based at Giant City State Park. His professional and personal passion and a frequent subject of my magazine articles is mycology. Mycology (from Gk. mykes "fungus") is the study of fungi, their genetic and biochemical properties, their taxonomy, and their use to humans as a source for medicinals (such as penicillin) and food (beer, wine, cheese, edible mushrooms), as well as their dangers, such as poisoning or infection.

As a photographer and writer, he expects to publish a book in 2007 about edible Illinois mushrooms. It is being written with the curator of mycology at the Field Museum in Chicago in 2007.

Joe says he is "fascinated by the hunt for wild mushrooms of all kinds and (I) keep detailed notes about everything that contributes to a basket filled with fresh specimens. I encourage all amateur mushroom hunters to do the same, for obvious rewards.

Spring morel foraging for me can often be a matter of glancing at notes, then walking directly to specific areas with an opened pocket knife, ready to cut."

During one exhausting day in 2003, he picked over 1,000 morels in one place.

McFarland says that hunting wild fungi is not entirely based on chance and random good luck. His presentation will share a few tips to make everyone from beginners to serious morel addicts more successful mushroom hunters.

Joe McFarland and Shawnee Group leaders will be gather before the meeting for dinner at the Great Wall Restaurant at 5:45 on Thursday, January 12<sup>th</sup>. The public is welcome to join us. The meeting presentation at the Carbondale Township Office, 217 East Main, starts at 7:30 PM. #

## Katrina Aftermath

by Becky Gillette

I stayed at home in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, for Hurricane Katrina. I questioned the wisdom of this when the Gulf of Mexico came into my living room.

I was lucky. I had only a foot of flooding and a few thousand dollars in uninsured damages. I can still live in my home. Many of my neighbors weren't so fortunate. FEMA estimates that 300,000 households in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama were displaced by Katrina.

Rose Johnson of North Gulfport, my Mississippi Chapter co-chair, lost most of the shingles off her home and suffered extensive flooding, but her house stood. For weeks after the storm, without electricity, 14 family members stayed with her while she volunteered handing out food and relief supplies.

A month after Katrina hit, Rose and I ventured into a neighborhood south of the railroad tracks in Gulfport, closed to everyone but residents and cleanup workers because of health threats and looting. We met Sierra Club volunteer Lark Mason, whose home two blocks from the beach was inundated with seven feet of water. Lark was gutting her house. Clothing, including her mother's wedding dress, was hanging from the rafters to dry. She showed us the devastation between her home and the beach, with the Port of Gulfport in the background. Cars, boats, and huge shipping containers were stacked topsy-turvy over mounds of debris from destroyed buildings. Water poured from broken water and sewer mains, and biting flies were having a field day.

Years before, the Sierra Club had opposed the Port of Gulfport's plan to fill in 40 acres of the Mississippi Sound for a container parking lot, urging that the lot be located five miles inland. Now the containers had turned into torpedoes, ramming into houses and spreading their contents over the surrounding area. Rail cars containing pork and

(Continued on page 3 - Katrina)

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>

**January 1 (Sunday) Annual Stone Soup Gathering, Giant City State Park, Makanda, IL**

Join us in Giant City State Park to celebrate the new Year, explore nature, & eat good food. Meet at shelter #2 (in the valley) starting at 11:00 AM on January 1st. After a potluck lunch at noon, the hearty will take a leisurely hike on one of the park's trails. Come earlier to contribute your donation to either the vegetarian or carnivorous soup. Also, bring a dish to pass (veggie, salad, bread, desert, or appetizer) and your own drinks. We will have two fires going in the shelter to keep you warm. Bring your Frisbee or golf clubs if you want. We will also be counting the votes for the Group ExCom election. Come join the camaraderie and fun!

**January 16 (Monday) La Rue Swamp Hike, Wolfe Lake, IL** A winter hike along the beautiful LaRue Swamp. Walking along this level road, we will have the swamp on one side, and a continuous cliff line on the other side. The rock formations are accented by winter precipitation. We will leave Murphysboro ranger station at 9 AM, or LaRue Swamp picnic area at 9:45. A car shuttle is available. We will discuss the contribution of the swamp wetlands to our ecosystem. Trip leader is Bob Tyson 684-5643. #

## Adventures with Uncle Bob Tyson

### *Your Guide to Self-Adventure*

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

This month I recommend to you STARVED ROCK STATE PARK located at the Utica exit on I-80 in northern Illinois. Quoting from the park brochure, "There are eighteen stream-fed canyons, formed by glacial melt-water and stream erosion. They slice dramatically through tree-covered, sandstone bluffs for four miles....the park is best known for fascinating rock formations, primarily made of St. Peter Sandstone". The park seems to have abundant wooden staircases on ascending and descending trails, as well as wooden platforms over dips in the terrain. A number of short trails emanate from the visitor center/lodge. To get away from the crowds there, I offer these suggestions:

Take RT 178 past the min entrance to the parking area for St Louis Canyon. The 0.5 mil trail has an intersection-go right. It ends in a deep punchbowl canyon with a 30 ft waterfall. Now return to the car and take RT 178 to Rt 71. Go left and drive about 4 miles to the parking area for Ottawa and Kaskaskia Canyons. The latter has steep walls and dead ends at a rock wall; Ottawa is a loop trail with steep walls and a large rock shelter. Drive 0.25 mile to the east for Illinois Canyon. This is a longer trail thru continuously winding walls.

Back in the car, go west a couple miles on RT 71 and look for a sign on the right that just says "trail parking". This takes one to both LaSalle and Hennepin Canyons. Take the long descending staircase for LaSalle. The walk ends up parallel to the Illinois River for approx a mile; then look for a white, tall bridge. Turn left before the bridge (the loop will return over the bridge). Follow this ridge top trail until you approach a gigantic rock shelter with a waterfall. Walk under it and pick up the trail again, and follow to the bridge. We back-track to the staircase and return. At the top of the staircase, note that Hennepin Canyon trail starts on your left. If the Illinois River has experienced recent flooding, forget any of the above. Further information from Bob Tyson at 684-5643.

### **We Missed You!**

Ten participants enjoyed an outing on Dec 14 on Happy Hollow Trailhead. The temperature was perfect, snow cover highlighted the ravines, great views of rock formations and cliff lines, and some frozen waterfalls.

### **OUTINGS LEADER TRAINING**

Outdoor Leadership Training 201 is being offered to new leaders in Illinois. You are encouraged to attend the Curve State Park training being held in Troy, Missouri from July 7-9. This is approximately 30 miles northwest of St Louis. Shawnee Group members will be reimbursed for some costs: training, lodging, meals, materials. To register, mail a check for \$45 to:

**Workshop # 06991A, Sierra Club Outings, 85 Second Street, 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94105**  
Be sure to include your membership number. Further information is available from Bob Pauls 618-549-9408



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

**ExCom Chair/Conservation Co-Chair:**

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

**Secretary:**

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

**Treasurer:**

Yolanda Comiskey, 549-2119  
<mailto:yolandajeweler@hotmail.com> (x)

**Membership Chair/Conservation Co-Chair:**

Tim Stenson, 687-5456  
<mailto:timstnsn@netscape.net> (x)

**Outings Chair:**

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

**Vice-Chair/Webmaster/News Editor/  
Chapter Delegate/Chapter Outings  
Chair/Midwest Outings Subcommittee  
Chair:**

Bob Pauls, 549-9408  
<mailto:bob.pauls@sierraclub.org> (x)

**Program Chair:**

Phyllis Beck, 549-9819

**Publicity Chair:**

Shelby Seegers-Schafer, 529-2022  
<mailto:sseegers-schafer@hotmail.com>

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chicken fouled the air with an unbearable stench.

The Club also opposed a waste pit expansion at the nearby DuPont DeLisle chemical plant into wetlands near the Bay of St. Louis. Our main concern was toxic releases from a hurricane surge. We blocked the expansion, but after Katrina there were huge concerns about the release of toxics such as dioxin, PCBs, and heavy metals from the DuPont plant.

Club activist Paul Stewart lived across the Bay of St. Louis from the DuPont facility, which produces 15 million pounds of toxic waste a year. His home is gone. Paul and his wife Melody went to Capitol Hill to meet with congressional leaders in late September urging that homes and schools near DuPont be tested to assess the safety of returning to the area.

One of the top sources of dioxin releases in the country, DuPont DeLisle claims it had no environmental releases from the devastating storm. Paul, who has toured the plant and seen the waste pits, is skeptical. "DuPont admits the plant was flooded, but they say no toxics were released. How can they possibly know that without testing nearby homes and schools? The waste pits are supposed to be impermeable because the toxins they contain are deadly and should never find their way into the environment. That all changed with Katrina, but no one, including the state, EPA, FEMA, or our elected officials, seems concerned about the health risks.

"Katrina didn't pollute our land," he asserts, "DuPont did. It was irresponsible to allow that plant to be located directly on the bay in hurricane-prone area. They played Russian roulette and lost, our land is now toxic, and all DuPont can talk about is getting operations back up and running."

Southeast Louisiana was also awash in toxics in Katrina's wake. New Orleans escaped the worst wind damage, only to suffer the catastrophic flooding that environmentalists had long warned was a near-inevitable consequence of a major hurricane in this ecologically fragile city, located below sea level.

"The flooding brought a toxic soup to New Orleans," said Darryl Malek-Wiley, a Club organizer who has not been allowed to live in his New Orleans home since the hurricane. "On top of hazardous waste and refinery site pollution, bacteria and fecal matter contaminated the floodwaters."

Survivors in Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama are contending with con-

taminated drinking water, broken sewage treatment systems, oil and chemical exposures, and toxic sediments and sludge, all of which pose a risk to recovery personnel, returning residents, and business owners.

"The response of regulatory agencies has been very disappointing," says Mississippi Sierra Club Director Louie Miller. "In Mississippi, they have largely failed to do any testing or remediation of toxic contamination from industrial sites. When we need them the most, they're nowhere to be found."

Stepping in where regulatory officials largely feared to tread, environmental consultant Wilma Subra took samples in September in Louisiana's "Cancer Alley," an area along the Mississippi River with high concentrations of refineries and chemicals plants. She found toxic heavy metals, petroleum-based organics, and bacteria from untreated sewage in the waters and debris caking the communities. Seven million gallons of oil spilled in southeast Louisiana, and numerous chemical plants and Superfund sites flooded, spawning what is likely the worst environmental disaster in US history.

In mid-September, Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe introduced legislation that would allow the EPA to waive or change any law under EPA jurisdiction for up to 18 months. "This is an unwarranted and dangerous bill," Gulf Coast Sierra Club leaders said in a letter to Inhofe. "The tragedy of Hurricane Katrina should not be used to waive or erode environmental laws, regulations, and statutes in Gulf Coast states or elsewhere."

Malek-Wiley, who evacuated to Houston, has been trying to reestablish contact with the community leaders he worked with prior to the hurricane. "It's been difficult to reconnect with people since they're scattered across the country," he says. "But the ones I have been in touch with want to rebuild their communities, better than before, with less pollution and toxics. I talked to one leader whose mother was killed by the flooding. She said even though she was facing this intense personal tragedy, 'I'm a fighter for my family and my community.'"

The Sierra Club has launched a Gulf Coast Environmental Restoration Project to help the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama Chapters work with local communities to restore and recover in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. We are nearly halfway to the goal of raising \$250,000. To contribute, please go to <http://www.sierraclub.org> and click on Gulf Coast Environmental Restoration Project.

Editor's note: More updates on the Katrina recovery, including accounts from other Gulf Coast Sierrans, can be found at <http://www.sierraclub.org/gulfcoast>.



# **Crab Orchard: A Refuge for Motorboats and Industry or Wildlife and Nature Walks?**

**Help Protect Wildlife on Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge**

**By Barbara McKasson, Group Chair**

**Comments Needed by January 17, 2006**

The Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge (CONWR) has released its proposed Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The plan would govern the management of the refuge for the next 15 years. Decisions to be made will affect how much of the refuge will be devoted to industry, agriculture, camping, jet skis, a private yacht club, water skiing, and, of course, wildlife. All of these competing interests have their advocates, and all of us who care about nature and the environment must "speak up" by sending in our comments on the Plan and DEIS **by January 17, 2006**.

The CONWR Refuge consists of almost 44,000 acres, with over 9,000 acres in 3 lakes. It is located mostly south of Route 13, between Carbondale and Marion, Illinois. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a mission to preserve the wildlife and to provide the six wildlife-related recreation activities: wildlife watching, photography, nature education, hunting, fishing and wildlife research. The creation of this refuge also required the additional missions of providing for industry and agriculture, mainly because it existed on the land when it was designated as a refuge.

Enclosed is a form letter. **IMPORTANT:** Please sign the letter **AND** print your name and address below your signature. We encourage you to add your own comments on the additional lines. Then fold the form letter, attach a stamp (39c after January 8<sup>th</sup>), fasten with tape and mail. OR...

To CUSTOMIZE YOUR LETTER ON THE WEB, go to our website at: <http://www.illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee/letter0105A.txt> and copy and paste the text to your word processor for customization.

To increase the impact of your letter, send copies to:

- ★ Senator Dick Durbin 701 N. Court St., Marion, IL 62959
- ★ Senator Barack Obama 701 N. Court St., Marion, IL 62959
- ★ Representative Costello 250 W. Cherry St., Carbondale, IL 62901
- ★ Representative Shimkus 110 E. Locust St., Harrisburg, IL 62946

To get more details on the plan, you can call the refuge at (618) 997-3344 and ask for a CD or hard copy of the CCP/DEIS, or you can just ask for the summary. You can also view the plan and DEIS on the website at: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/craborchard/index.html>

On the website above, you can view the plan in digestible chunks in Adobe .PDF format, and submit comments.

Comments can also be mailed to: Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, CCP Comment, 8588 Route 148, Marion, IL, 62959 #



"Rustle The Leaf" Comics characters courtesy of Go Natur'L Studios, LLC, 2005. The "Rustle The Leaf Comics" properties copyright and trademark of Go Natur'L Studios, LLC. All Rights Reserved. New "Rustle The Leaf" cartoons are available weekly on the Shawnee Group website. Check it out at: <http://Illinois.sierraclub.org/Shawnee>

**Quotable:** "Just as the Vietnam War was a defining issue for previous generations, climate change is the issue that will define our generation. Youth comprise the majority of the world's population, and they will feel the impacts of flooding, draughts, increased prevalence of disease, lack of food security and other impacts of climate change. Governments need to stop asking what this will cost them, and start asking what this will cost us. This is no time to play politics. We are all in bed together."

~ Rosa Kouri, National Director, Sierra Club Youth Coalition



Shawnee Group  
P.O. Box 117  
Carbondale, IL 62903-0117  
Third Planet from the Sun

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Dear Supervisor Frisk:

Please accept the comments below as part of the record for the comment period for the Draft CCP/DEIS for the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. I...

1. Support the inclusion of the 120 acres within the Crab Orchard Wilderness as part of the wilderness. This measure would help to maintain the wilderness character of the current wilderness. Trail development in the wilderness should be kept to a minimum.
2. Believe off-road vehicles destroy vegetation and disrupt wildlife and should not be allowed on the refuge. Even allowing handicapped use of ATVs can be a slippery slope, leading to wholesale abuse of the special permits, which has taken place on Shawnee Forest.
3. Support banning jet skis on the Refuge. Their amount of noise, air and water pollution is unacceptable.
4. Oppose both the land swap (Alt. B) and/or leasing of Refuge land adjacent to Route 13 on Crab Orchard Lake. Building commercial facilities such as a hotel, restaurant, golf course and water park are incompatible with the Refuge's main mission of wildlife protection, wildlife related recreation, and the four purposes of the Refuge.
5. Support cutting back the amount of Refuge land proposed for row crops - from 4,400 acres to 2,200 acres. The number of wintering geese on the Refuge is now one-tenth or less of what it used to be. Thus, one half or less of the row crops should be a sufficient "safety net" in case of a more severe winter.
6. Support consolidation of large blocks of native grassland and closed canopy hardwood forest in order to provide habitat for grassland birds and forest interior birds, whose populations have been decreasing at an alarming rate.
7. Support protection and enhancement of habitat for federally threatened and endangered (T & E) species. The Refuge should not only protect, but also work to increase populations of federal T & E species, in particular bald eagles and Indiana bats.
8. Support management for threatened and endangered state species, especially ones appropriate to the Refuge, such as osprey, red shouldered hawk, Henslow's sparrow and golden mouse. The Refuge should work with Illinois Department of Natural Resources and others to do this.
9. Oppose radical methods of thinning pine stands, such as final shelterwood cuts, which can damage the existing hardwoods in a mixed stand and can set back the recovery of hardwoods.
10. Support buying inholdings from willing sellers as a high priority. I support buying the inholding adjacent to the Rocky Bluff area to make sure that this Mecca for spring flowers is not damaged by incompatible development on that inholding.
11. Support the goal of converting the stands of non-native pines to hardwoods accelerated by the use of fire and planting hardwoods. I oppose commercial logging, especially when the loggers are not supervised to use the best management practices, which has happened in the past on the Refuge.
12. Support banning the use of gas motors on Devil's Kitchen Lake. I support the FWS ban of gas motors on the south end of Little Grassy Lake in order to protect the Wilderness experience from noise.
13. Support establishing baseline conditions in the Wilderness and managing to protect and enhance the wilderness resource. The refuge can do more to protect against degradation by illegal horse use, ATV use, etc.

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Sincerely,

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\_\_\_\_\_  
(Dated) \_\_\_\_\_

39¢  
Postage

Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

CCP Comment

8588 Route 148

Marion, IL 62959