

Wild Onion

The Newsletter of the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club

First Quarter 2007

Cook County Forest Preserve Lifts 10-Year Restoration Moratorium

Last Five Sites Now Eligible — and Overdue — for Restoration Work

by Christine Williamson, Conservation Chair

Bobbie Steele, interim president of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, issued an executive order on Oct. 3 and lifted the ban on habitat restoration, including burning and the removal of non-native and invasive vegetation from the last five so-called “moratorium” sites.

President Steele received a standing ovation from fellow CCFPD Commissioners, staff and the audience in attendance at the regular Board meeting.

A moratorium was placed on restoration activities in all 67,000 acres of the Cook County Forest Preserve District System in 1996. While the ban on habitat management work was lifted for most sites in the late 1990s, the moratorium remained in place for five preserves located along the North Branch of the Chicago River and elsewhere in the wealthy Sauganash neighborhood on Chicago’s far northwest side.

Chicago Group and the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club fought the moratorium bitterly throughout the years, but influential and well-heeled campaign contributors convinced then-president John Stroger

to leave the ban in place. His son, Todd Stroger, incoming president of the Cook County and Forest Preserve District Boards, has said he will not reinstitute the ban.

The relaxation on restoration activities means that the Chicago Group will be permitted to do more than pick up trash at LaBagh Woods Preserve, our adopted service site. This beautiful, hilly, wooded preserve located at Cicero and Foster along the banks of the North Branch of the Chicago River is in dire shape. Invasive and non-native species such as European Buckthorn and Garlic Mustard are rampant in the preserve and need to be controlled through cutting and burning to give native wildflowers and other plants a chance to return to the site.

Look for spring, summer and fall service outings beginning in April and get ready to get your hands dirty! LaBagh Woods needs an extreme make-over and your help in restoring this area will be important.

Subscribe to Chicago Group e-News

The Chicago Group has established a better way to keep its members up-to-date with news and events — with Chicago Group e-News.

This e-mail listserv is an easy, efficient way to maintain a growing e-mail list. Through e-News, subscribers are kept informed monthly about programs, socials, outings and environmental events in our neighborhoods.

Because this listserv is for members only, you must have a Sierra Club membership number to sign up. Check the address label on *Sierra* magazine to find your number.

Take a minute to subscribe online to receive the next issue at <http://Illinois.SierraClub.org/Chicago/>

e-News.

To get more information about Chicago Group’s hugely successful social outings, subscribe to the e-newsletter at: http://illinois.sierraclub.org/chicago/socials/social_listserv.html and check the web site at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/chicago/outings/>.

Energy Film Festival: An Afternoon of Movies and Conversation

See article in this issue for more information or contact Anne McKibbin at amckibbin@law.gwu.edu or 312-927-5546.

Chicago FINALLY Trashes the Blue Bag Program Residents Get Ready for REAL Recycling in 2007

by Christine Williamson, Conservation Chair

Starting in February, Chicago residents finally can join the rest of the civilized world by recycling curbside and say goodbye to Blue Bags.

In late October, Mayor Richard Daley finally admitted defeat (sort of) over the city's ill-fated and virtually useless Blue Bag recycling program. He told local newspapers that he wanted to expand a very successful pilot curbside recycling program that garnered 80 percent participation in the Beverly neighborhood in the 19th Ward.

All households in the 19th Ward will be the first in the city to receive 96-gallon curbside Blue Carts for all common recyclables such as glass, plastic, metals and paper. In August, Blue Carts will be distributed to households in six more wards: 1st, 5th, 8th, 37th, 46th and 47th. Without giving a timetable, Mayor Daley said the curbside recycling program will be expanded to all 50 wards "as quickly as possible," according to the *Chicago Tribune*. For Sierrans living in these lucky seven wards, curbside recycling will seem like a dream.

More Drop-Off Centers Established for Wards without Blue Carts

For those not in the first wave of "carting" this year, the next best option is to take recyclables to an expanded list of drop-off centers. City of Chicago Department of Streets & Sanitation, in partnership with the Chicago Park District, now has 15 Recycling Drop-Off Centers in operation.

No pre-sorting is needed at the sites, just put all materials in a single bin. All locations are open seven days a week during daylight hours.

Drop-Off Recycling Sites

1. City Facility Campus - 1424 W. 39th St .
2. Near South - 1758 S. Clark
3. Calumet Park Beach - 9801 S. Avenue G
4. Auburn Gresham - 7811 S. Racine
5. Household Products & Electronics Collection - 1150 N. North Branch
6. Chicago Center for Green Technology - 445 N. Sacramento
7. North Lawndale - 1817 S. Pulaski
8. West Pullman - 11615 S. Indiana
9. Pasteur Park - 5825 S. Kostner
10. Marquette Park - 6734 S. Kedzie
11. Riis Park - 6110 W. Fullerton
12. Portage Park - 4100 N. Long
13. Kosciuszko Park - 2732 N. Avers

14. Rainbow Park - 3111 E. 77th St .
15. Far North Side - 6441 N. Ravenswood

City Opens First Permanent Household Chemical/Electronics Drop Site

In addition to drop-off sites for "regular" recyclables, on November 18, the city opened its first permanent Household Chemicals and Computer Recycling Facility, located at 1150 N. North Branch.

The city's \$3.8 million, 24,000 square foot facility will accept the following materials for recycling or safe disposal: antifreeze, used motor oil, old gasoline, oil-based paints, paint thinners, aerosol paints, herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, lawn chemicals, solvents, drain cleaners, cleaning products, pool chemicals, hobby chemicals, mercury, fluorescent lamps and bulbs, computers and cell phones. Residents may also swap old paints with one another for free in the Paint Exchange Room.

The recycling facility is open on Tuesdays from 7 a.m. to noon; on Thursdays from 2:00 to 7:00 p.m.; and on the first Saturday of every month from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

"We need to dispose of these household hazardous products responsibly and recycle, where possible," said Mayor Daley in a news release.

In the news release, Mayor Daley also drew attention to the new center as one of Chicago's state-of-the-art environmentally friendly buildings. "In addition to a green roof, the building features the first solar wall in the State of Illinois. This wall will absorb heat and reduce energy consumption," said Mayor Daley. The building was also constructed from existing materials, recycles heat and retains storm water.

For Recycling to Work, Everyone Must Recycle!

City dwelling Sierrans: Please be sure to avail yourselves of the program as soon as it is offered in your area. Encourage your neighbors to do the same. Recycling will be easy with the Blue Cart system and there's no excuse for not recycling!

City Info Sources

For more information about the new Blue Cart Program, Drop-Off Recycling Sites or the Household Chemicals and Computer Recycling Facility, call 311 or go to the City's web site at www.cityofchicago.org/

Chicago Group Calendar of Events

Thursday, January 1

Environmental Book Club: *Omnivore's Dilemma*
Book Cellar bookstore at 4736 N. Lincoln, Chicago
7:00 p.m.

Ever had a book so good you couldn't put it down?
Didn't you just want to share that event with someone?
Now you can. The club meets at the on the
second Thursday of every other month. Our next
reading is *Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan.
Limit: 15 participants

For more information and to R.S.V.P., contact Take'
Yamamoto at 773-528-7812 or by e-mail at ch-socials@illinois.sierraclub.org.

Mondays, January 15, February 12, March 12 (tentative)
Chicago Group Air/Energy Committee
Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club
70 E. Lake Street, Suite 1500, Chicago, IL 60601
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

For information or to confirm meeting time and place,
contact Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com or
773-935-8439 (evenings) or check the web site at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/>

Saturday, January 20
X-Country Ski Where the Snow is Best
Near Milwaukee, WI or Berrien Springs, MI. Location
depends on the snow!

Beginning and intermediate cross country skiers are

welcome to enjoy great skiing at either Lapham Peak
State Park (west of Milwaukee) or Love Creek County
Park in Berrien Springs.

For more information or to register, contact Tom
Coogan at 773-237-7187 between 7:00-10 p.m. or
by e-mail to thomascoogan@yahoo.com.

Saturday, February 3

Cross-country Skiing at Love Creek County Park
Berrien Springs, MI

Join us for a day of skiing on six miles of groomed
trails at Love Creek County Park in Michigan. The
nature center has educational displays, ski rentals and
a fireplace. Night skiing is offered. Limit 20. For more
information or to register, call Mark Ginger at 847-
699-0329.

Thursday, March 8

Environmental Book Club: *Collapse*
Book Cellar bookstore at 4736 N. Lincoln, Chicago
7:00 p.m.

Discuss *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or
Succeed* by Jared Diamond. Learn how an eco-
meltdown can be a main catalyst for success or failure,
combined with society's response to (or disregard for)
the coming disaster.

Limit: 15 participants. For more information and to
R.S.V.P., contact Take' Yamamoto at 773-528-7812 or by
e-mail to ch-socials@illinois.sierraclub.org.

Energy Film Festival: Warm Up in the Dead of Winter

An Afternoon of Movies and Conversation

Ever been to an energy film festival? Neither have
we! So join us on Sunday, February 25 at the
Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum in the McCormick
Room, 2430 N. Cannon Drive, Chicago from 1:30-
5:00 p.m.

The Air/Energy Committee of the Chicago Group
of the Sierra Club is hosting the city's first-ever
film festival featuring a variety of movies and short
documentaries about energy issues. Be entertained,
enlightened and invigorated by movies with a
strong message about energy sources, uses and
responsibilities.

We haven't decided which of the many possible
films we'll be screening, but they may include
recent episodes of the Sierra Club Chronicles,
documentaries like Homeland and Kilowatt Ours,

animated shorts and the TBS global warming
comedy special "Earth to America!" Check Chicago
Group's web site nearer the date for specifics about
the films selected for the festival (<http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/>).

We'll follow the screenings with refreshments and
conversation and, for those interested, will retire to
a nearby watering hole for drinks, dinner and more
conversation.

We'll need a head count just to make sure we've
got enough snacks to help you cure your cabin
fever, so please R.S.V.P. to Anne McKibbin at
amckibbin@law.gwu.edu or 312-927-5546.

Please let Anne know if you intend to join us after
the screening for drinks and dinner.

Send correspondence regarding the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club to Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com or mail to: 4046 N. Clark St., Unit K, Chicago, IL 60613.

Chicago Group seeks committed volunteers for all activities. Whatever environmental activity interests you, we probably have a way for you to volunteer your time and talent. Contact the relevant committee chair (below) if you know what you're interested in or, for general inquiries, contact Cory Jones at cory.jones@high-techpartners.com or at 773-463-4072.

EXCOM

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SIERRANS OUTDOORS ONLINE

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: February 1, 2007

Send editorial copy, ads (tiff, eps or camera-ready) and photos (if electronic, send black & white tiff, minimum 300 dpi, sized to fit column) by e-mail to Christine Williamson at: birdchris@aol.com or send hard copy to Christine Williamson, 4046 N. Clark St., Unit K, Chicago, Illinois 60613.

Chicago Air/Energy Committee Off to a Roaring Start

Chicago Group's newest conservation committee, the Air/Energy Committee, is already plunging straight into direct action on air and energy issues.

The committee is moving along, fueled by lots of new faces, great ideas and fresh energy to tackle the myriad issues facing Chicago and the suburbs, the state, the nation and even the planet!

In coming up with local strategies to curb global warming, air pollution, energy misuse and to control the onslaught of coal-fired power plants threatening Illinois, the committee intends to have some fun (see the advertisement for our February Energy Film Fest in this issue).

If you're interested in joining this new committee, please contact Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com or 773-935-8439 (evenings) or check our web site for details about the next committee meetings (<http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/>).

The early 2007 dates are tentatively scheduled for the evenings of January 15, February 12 and March 12 at the office of the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, 70 E. Lake Street, Suite 1500, Chicago, IL 60601.



Photo by Lisanne Freese.