

Wild Onion

The Newsletter of the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club

Second Quarter 2008

Endangered Species Day: Sierra Club Among Many Co-Sponsors Chicago Group Plans Biodiversity Blitz, Global Warming Lecture on May 17

by Christine Williamson, Chicago Group Conservation Chair, member of Sierra Club's Wildlife & Endangered Species Committee

May 16 is the third annual U.S. Endangered Species Day and the timing couldn't be better.

Not only are birds migrating and prairies, forests, deserts, marshes, pastures and parks greening across America, but many environmentalists remain concerned about last year's behind-the-scenes shenanigans in Washington D.C. and their impact on the plight of endangered animals, plants, birds, insects and reptiles.

Sierra Club will be celebrating the amazing wildlife that resides in or visits Chicago with a biodiversity blitz through Lincoln Park, followed by a lecture about the impacts of climate change on wildlife and a tour of Lincoln Park Zoo's endangered species exhibits.

Endangered Species Protection is Vital.

Sierra Club and other environmental groups are concerned about other actions by the Bush administration, including the repeal of logging restrictions in Pacific Northwest old-growth forests that are the habitat of the endangered Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet; erosion of protection for Gray Wolves, Grizzly Bears and American Bison in Yellowstone National Park; and with development issues in the Everglades that may adversely affect

the imperiled Florida Panther.

While many Washington legislators, including our own Senator Dick Durbin (D-Illinois), have expressed a strong desire to strengthen protections for threatened and endangered wildlife, especially Polar Bears, funding is chronically short for federal listing and species protection programs. Congress needs to provide adequate funding annually for the Department of the Interior's ESA support work. More than 250 U.S. plants, animals, insects, invertebrates and fish have been flagged as strong candidates for endangered or threatened status, but DOI staff plead a perpetual lack of funds for their lack of action in reviewing and listing these species.

But one concrete action by the the U.S. Senate is its designation of May 16 as Endangered Species Day.

Dedicating a specific day to public outreach about Endangered Species is a wonderful way to help everyone from school children to politicians to Joe Q. Public about the importance of maintaining strong protections for wildlife around the world that is threatened by habitat destruction, neglect, excessive exploitation and global climate change.

Bike to Work — Join Team Sierra Green in the Bike to Work Week Challenge

Reduce your carbon footprint to almost zero by biking to work, school, social events and around-town chores.

For the second year in a row, Chicago Group is participating in the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation's Bike to Work Week Challenge in the second week of June. The object is to get as many members as possible to bike to work June 7-13. Bike part or all of the way, it all helps reduce carbon emissions and might help Team Sierra Green win the CBF's top prize for organizations of our size. Partial journeys count, so

you can bike to the train station or drive part-way to your destination and bike the rest.

Every participant is eligible to win a prize from CBF and gets special discounts at participating retailers through CBF. Every day you ride is another chance to win Environmental Activist Rewards.

To join Team Sierra, the SC bike commuters, contact Take' Yamamoto at ch-socials@illinois.sierraclub.org or 773-528-7812.

June 23 is Car-Free Monday. Step It Up a Notch: Give Up Your Car for a Month!

We're serious. We want all Sierrans to stop driving! Giving up the family or work car for the whole month would be optimal, but we REALLY want all of our members to cease and desist from driving on one day: June 23 is Car-Free Monday.

Imagine the difference (we can!) that all 9,000 Chicago Group members could make by just not turning the key in the ignition for ONE day. Maybe you can work from home that day. If you need to go out, walk, cycle, canoe, run, skate, skateboard or use public transportation. If you can't avoid using a

car that day, please be sure to car pool and combine your chores into a single, quick run.

But please think hard about the positive aspects of not turning that key for a whole month. If even half of our members kept the car in the garage for 30 days, the reduction in carbon emissions would be massive!

For every day you don't use a car in June, you will be credited with a chance to win a prize in the Environmentalist Activist Rewards Program.

Chicago's Endangered Species Day Celebration

by Christine Williamson, Chicago Group Conservation Chair

Chicago Group of the Sierra Club will spend May 17 in Lincoln Park. We're going to scour the lake front parks from Montrose Beach to North Avenue, recording every species of plant, animal, bird and bug that we find — and can identify — in Lincoln Park. Amazingly enough, a number of endangered species live in this huge city, or pass through it during migration in the case of birds. This blitz will aim to find the maximum species possible ranging from common residents like mosquitoes and Canada Geese to the rare migrant Cerulean Warbler.

We're going to move between natural areas in the park by bike to make the blitz carbon neutral. Foot travelers can meet the group at various pre-set times and locations to help with the blitz at a single site.

I'm a bird watcher, so we'll have the fliers covered when it comes to identification, but we need plant, bug, reptile and lichen specialists to help with field identification.

But anyone can participate: The most important criteria for the biodiversity blitz is enthusiasm for plants and animals and a strong curiosity about the world around you. Binoculars to help you identify distant creatures and a digital camera would be helpful so you can snap pictures of creatures not immediately identifiable and look them up in guide books later.

We'll end up at Lincoln Park Zoo, lock up our bikes and have a look at some of the zoo's very rare species.

Afterwards, nationally recognized speaker Chad Kister will present a program about the impact of global climate change on wildlife.

Chad is a fanatic defender of the Arctic as well as an adventurer. He's written two books about the Arctic and threats to the eco-system there. Chad traveled more than 700 miles across the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on

foot and by canoe, living off the land and seeing firsthand the impacts of pollution from oil extraction and of climate change on high northern species. Chad is intimate with the Arctic and will help you understand why this habitat — and many others around the world — are so vulnerable to climate change.

Chad's program will be the perfect ending to a perfect day. Even if you don't care to "blitz," you'll enjoy the zoo tour and the educational program that follows.

Want to blitz? Attend the program and zoo tour? Details are still in flux about the May 17 celebrations, so be sure to check the Chicago Group web site for more information at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/>.

You can also subscribe to Chicago Group's e-news publication, which delivers all our events to your e-mail in box at the beginning of each month. Click on the "subscribe to e-news" icon in the left column of the home page.

R.S.V.P. for the biodiversity blitz, the zoo program and Chad Kister's program to Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com. If you need more information, phone Chris at 773-935-8439 (evenings).

You'll get one entry to the Environmental Activist Awards Program for participating in each of these three activities.

To learn more about the Endangered Species Act and the Sierra Club's efforts to protect wildlife, see: www.sierraclub.org/esa

To learn more about the impacts of global warming on wildlife and habitat see: <http://www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/habitat/>

For more information about Endangered Species Day, see: www.stopextinction.org/endangeredspeciesday

RECYCLING MEGA DROP-OFF DAY!!

Plus Tour of Chicago Household Waste Recycling Facility

April 5, 9:00 a.m., 1150 N. North Branch St. on Goose Island

If all 9,000 (or even just half) of Chicago Group members gather up all hazardous household wastes, computers and cell phones and computers in their homes for recycling, we'll help the year-old Chicago Household Chemical and Computer Recycling Center SHATTER its previous one-day waste stream record.

Make April 5 your personal Earth Day by committing to bringing your household e-waste and chemicals in for safe recycling.

Besides basking in the knowledge that you responsibly recycled electronics and hazardous material stuff, you'll also get to tour the center. It's small and deceptively simple in appearance. All three previous tours have sold out. Everyone came away impressed with the ingenuity of the city's Department of the Environment staff in finding ways to recycle tons of electronics and

hundreds of gallons of potential pollutants.

The facility accepts the following 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. There's a swap room where you can take away partially-used chemical products and paint.

You'll get one entry to the Environmental Activist Awards Program for participating in this activity. You'll get more chances to win if you bring TONS of recycling to the center — at the trip leader's discretion.

R.S.V.P. to event leader, Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com or evenings at 773-935-8439.

June is Alternative Transportation Month — The Green Way to Work & Play!

As concerned Sierrans, you are aware of the consequences of global warming. But what are the major sources of carbon dioxide?

In the U.S., 40 percent of carbon dioxide comes from electricity generation using coal. The next major source is from cars, accounting for 33 percent of the total, according to the U.S. Emissions Inventory.

As part of our Year of Living Responsibly 2008 campaign, we want to help people break their reliance on cars to the extent they can by designating June as Alternative Transportation Month. The goal is to work on reducing the harmful effects of automobiles on the environment. This can be done in two ways: by making automobiles less polluting and by urging people to drive less.

We've got a lot of activities and advice to help you ditch your car. Not only will the environment win, but you may win for every action you take this month. All you have to do is let us know when you take action and live responsibly. Your name will be entered in the drawing for prizes at the end of the year for our Year of Living Responsibly Environmental Activist Awards Program. The prizes are good, and so are you, for taking the right environmental steps.

All the information you need to record your activities for the Year of Living Responsibly can be found at the bottom of this article.

Clean Car Campaign

To make automobiles less polluting, the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club has initiated the Clean Cars Campaign.

Illinois is not among the states that have enacted measures requiring cars to meet stringent anti-pollution and mileage requirements. If Illinois requires or encourages cleaner cars, it will be a big incentive to automotive companies to make a solid commitment to offering clean and energy-efficient cars.

You can help by writing or e-mailing your Illinois state legislators asking them to adopt the California standards for cleaner cars. A sample letter is shown below. Feel free to adapt the letter and put its points into your own words. Everyone who writes a letter gets another chance to win in Chicago Group's Environmental Activist Awards Program.

Clean Car Educational Forum

Thursday, June 12, 7:00 p.m., Illinois Chapter Office, 70 E. Lake St., Suite 1500, Chicago

Confused by all the hype about clean cars? Will Reynolds, chair of the Illinois Chapter Clean Car Campaign will

present the latest information about what's available in clean car technology, clean car standards and legislative efforts. Local Sierrans will share tips about transportation alternatives like iGo/Zipcar, public transportation and bike commuting. You'll get one entry to the Environmental Activist Awards Program for participating in this activity.

Please R.S.V.P. after May 15 to Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com or 773-935-8439 (evenings). Be sure to contact Chris if you plan to attend: if we get a big response, we may move to larger venue.

Using Public Transportation to Get to Work

Chicago commuters have the second longest automobile commute in the nation; only surpassed by New York. Residents in Will and McHenry counties have some of the worst commutes.

There is a better way! Take public transportation. One estimate by the American Public Transportation Association says public transportation reduces U.S. oil usage by 1.4 billion gallons each year. That translates into almost 300,000 fewer cars filling up each day.

Getting around Chicago and the suburbs is not hard and it's cheap. Those who live and work in the city have access to one of the best public transportation systems in the nation, the Chicago Transit Authority. Even during rush hour, express buses whisk you to work in no time. The 'el and Metra trains are even faster.

You can plan trips using a map or, for more fun and ease of use, the RTA Trip Planner. Find this handy tool at: <http://tripsweb.rtachicago.com/>. The route planner covers both the CTA and RTA suburban public transportation network, so you're set to be more productive by leaving your car at home. Paying is easier than ever with several options. See the CTA web site for fare information: <http://transitchicago.com/maps/fares.html>.

Chicago Group's Year of Living Responsibly Environmental Activist Rewards Program

Enter your name at our website at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/YLR> or send an e-mail to ch-socials@illinois.sierraclub.org detailing what you did and when. Please include your name, address, phone, and e-mail so we can contact you if you win. You can also mail your contact information to Take' Yamamoto at 555 W. Cornelia Ave. #301, Chicago, IL 60657.

Prizes will be awarded at our December Volunteer Appreciation and Chapter Service Party and include cool outdoor gear, field trips with local "environmental celebrities" and a grand prize of \$1,000 toward a Sierra Club outings trip.

Chicago Group Information

For information about the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club, check the web site often: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago>. Contact details for group leaders who can answer questions about activities and how you can get more involved can be found on the home page. You may also subscribe to e-News for e-mail delivery of a monthly calendar of activities. To subscribe, click on the Chicago Group e-News box in the right column on the home page.

Chicago Group's newsletter, *Wild Onion*, is a quarterly publication with in-depth news and discussion of local issues. *Wild Onion* now can be sent electronically, saving printing expenses and paper. To receive *Wild Onion* by e-mail, send your name, Sierra Club membership number and e-mail address to editor@illinois.sierraclub.org.

April 19 Earth Day Beach Sweep and Dunes Restoration

Chicago Group has adopted Montrose Beach and we truly love taking care of this natural oasis in our crowded city.

Banish cabin fever! Celebrate Earth Day outdoors, cleaning up the beach and working with Leslie Borns, the steward of the dunes natural area on native habitat restoration. April 19 is a great time to see migrant birds as they move north through Chicago to Canadian breeding grounds, so if you have binoculars, be sure to bring them. You can spend as long or as little time as you like at this event, which goes from 9 a.m. to noon.

Refreshments will be served. Dress for the weather (the event runs rain or shine), wear a hat and bring work gloves if you have them.

Questions? Contact event leader Christine Williamson, at birdchris@aol.com or evenings at 773-935-8439.

You'll get one entry to the Environmental Activist Awards Program for participating in this activity.

Directions: meet on the water (east) side of the beach house at Montrose Beach; look for the Sierra Club banner. Take Montrose east under Lake Shore Drive. Take the first possible right turn (at the bait shop). About 200 yards after the turn, look on your left for a paved path that heads toward the water. The white beach house is at the end of the path — you'll see it through the trees.

If driving, park on either side of the park road and walk to the beach house. Bike parking is available at the beach house. The # 78 Montrose bus stops at Marine and Lake Shore Drive. Head east under Lake Shore Drive and follow the directions above; the walk to the beach house will take about 15 minutes.

Lincoln Park Land Grab: Protest Letters Needed A.S.A.P. to Mayor Daley

by Christine Williamson, Chicago Group Conservation Chair

As part of a secret deal, the Chicago Park District sold the exclusive rights to a four-acre chunk of the south end of Lincoln Park to the Latin School of Chicago.

There's no other word to use regarding this deal except "sold." The Chicago Park District Board approved a contract October 25, with minimal public notice, that gives the Latin School the ability to build a \$900,000 artificial turf soccer stadium at the very south end of Lincoln Park. You've probably noticed the earthmovers inside the fenced off enclosure very close to the western side of the pedestrian bridge that spans Lake Shore Drive just north of North Avenue. Latin will have nearly exclusive use of the field between March 1 and October 31 for between 20 and 49 hours per week.

Latin is one of the city's most expensive private schools. One of the Park District Commissioner's kids attends the school; at least the commissioner abstained from voting. The Park District has set up citizen's advisory boards for many of its park properties and generally allows these councils to comment on proposed activities. The Lincoln Park Advisory Council was not advised of Latin's exclusive contract by the park district and its opposition to pri-

vatizing a public park has been ignored.

The Sierra Club is adamant that public lands must remain public and available to all users. The club is a fierce proponent of public input into land use decisions every where in the United States. Chicago is no different. Public lands must remain accessible. Period.

Chicago Group's 9,000 members need to write letters to Mayor Daley demanding that he ask the Park District Board to reconsider its decision regarding Latin School's soccer field sweet deal. There's no reason why the earthmovers, stalled as they've been by winter weather, can't simply move the earth back where it was, and why the CPD can't re-seed the four-acre parcel with native plants to create a natural area for everyone to enjoy.

Write a letter to Mayor Daley and ask him to help keep Lincoln Park public. Drop an e-mail to the Mayor by going to the city's web site <http://egov.cityofchicago.org> and clicking "About the Mayor" in the right column. You'll be moved to a page that lets you link into The Mayor's Office home page. Click it and then click Contact Us and complete the e-mail form.

Chicago Green Festival: Volunteers Needed

Sierrans are needed to build the Sierra Club's booth at the Green Festival at Navy Pier on May 16 and to staff it on Saturday and Sunday and then dismantle it.

More than 60,000 people are expected to attend. It's the perfect venue to attract new Sierra Club members and activists. Volunteer for three-hour (or longer) shifts from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. May 17 and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. May 18.

Information about the Green Festival is available at <http://www.greenfestivals.org/content/view/230/200/>

You'll get one entry to the Environmental Activist Awards Program for participating. Contact Cory Jones to volunteer at cory.jones@illinois.sierraclub.org.

Environmental Book Clubs — Fun & Learning Combined

Join interesting and lively discussions about environmental books. Learn more about the issues facing us and more important, possible solutions.

The Chicago book club meets at the Book Cellar, 4736 N. Lincoln Ave at 7pm, 2nd Thursdays of May, July, Sept. and November. Our May reading is "*Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*" by Bill McKibben.

The Oak Park book club meets at the Oak Park Public Library at 834 Lake St. We read McKibben's book in May.

Book clubs are just one of many activities of the club's Social Committee. For more, join our mailing list at http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/socials/social_listserv.html. or contact Take' Yamamoto at ch-socials@illinois.sierraclub.org or 773-528-7812.

Sierra Club Leads the “Step It Up” Chicago Global Warming Leadership Forum

by Vera Leopold and Tony Fuller, Chicago Group Air/Energy Committee

The Chicago Group of the Sierra Club was a lead sponsor of a major global warming forum in Chicago at the end of October last year.

The event attracted more than 150 participants and was part of the “Step It Up 2: Who’s a Leader?” nation-wide initiative to train activists to obtain specific, meaningful political action to address global warming.

The event was held at the High Risk Gallery, whose bright, art-lined interior was the perfect backdrop to a series of speakers from the environmental community and local politicians.

Among environmental organization speakers were Jack Darin, director of the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, Tim Montague from Climate Justice Chicago and Anthony Star of the Center for Neighborhood Technology. Each speaker emphasized the science behind global warming and the need to take specific action.

Star, for example, examined global warming in a local context, using data from the soon-to-be-released Chicago Climate Action Plan. He demonstrated how the large goal of reducing the city’s greenhouse gas emissions to below 1990 levels could be tackled by dividing it into smaller “wedges,” representing different aspects of city operation. “The longer we wait [to take action on global warming], the harder it will be. All new growth needs to be carbon-neutral,” Star said.

Darin discussed the Sierra Club’s four key Illinois legislative initiatives to combat global warming: Clean Cars, Clean Energy, Cool Cities, and Cap Carbon. He highlighted recent legislative victories, such as establishing a new renewable energy standard, which requires that Illinois utilities obtain 25 percent of their power from renewable energies by 2025.

Local and state officials including State Representative Greg Harris (D-Chicago), Cook County Commissioner Mike Quigley, and Debra Shore, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, offered their insights on global warming solutions. The Step It Up events also generated responses from U.S. Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. and Senator Barack Obama, who both supported the event.

In addition, the Sierra Club, as part of its Illinois Clean



Chapter Director Jack Darin (far left) and Air/Energy Committee Co-Chair Tony Fuller (center) join local politicians (from left) Greg Harris, Mike Quigley and Deb Shore in combating global warming.

Cars campaign, asked participants to sign postcards petitioning the state legislature to adopt California’s stricter fuel economy standards for vehicles. Hundreds of energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), donated by the city of Chicago, were distributed.

The event was organized in part by the Chicago Group’s Air/Energy Committee which meets monthly at the downtown office of the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club. Please contact Tony Fuller for more information about the committee’s activities at arfarf13@sbcglobal.net or 773-728-6164.



Sierrans and other environmentalists step up to fight global warming.

Subscribe to Chicago Group e-News

Chicago Group has a better way to keep members up-to-date with news and events: Chicago Group e-News.

Through e-News, subscribers are kept informed monthly about programs, socials, outings and environmental events in our neighborhoods.

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>.

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

Chicago Inner City Outings Back on Track

by Colin Tysoe, ICO Chair

The Chicago Inner City Outings (ICO) program is blossoming once more.

For those of you who don't know us, ICO is a Sierra Club community outreach program that provides opportunities for urban youth and adults to explore, enjoy and protect the natural world. ICO groups exist throughout the United States and it's only fair that Chicago should have one to be proud of.

As ICO Chicago's long-time stalwart organizers Barb Reed and Karen Kalichman focused their energy in other areas and key leaders moved away, the group was dormant for a short while. Now with nearly 30 volunteers signed up and an ever-growing list of agencies to work with, ICO is out there getting kids into the woods, the dunes and the prairies.

We continue to work with Su Casa a homeless shelter for single women in Back of the Yards neighborhood. With all ages from nursing babes to parents these trips are real family outings and great fun for all. Over the last year we've petted huskies at Winterfest, tapped maple syrup, hiked and played in the Indiana Dunes.

Boys and Girls Clubs have a variety of sites around the city and we have been working with the James Jordan Club doing hikes and service trips. Now with support from Doug Chien at the Chicago office we have been able to reach out to other Clubs and help them bring outdoor adventures into their programs.

Chicago Youth Centers do similar work and we have started working with them in the past year. Recently we had nearly 25 children in Palos Park hiking, scavenger hunting and cooking out under Rich Balis' expert guidance. We also did some compass navigation for the budding backpackers and bird identification for the naturalists.

We are partnering with Chicago Public Schools and local habitat restoration groups for service work in the same forest preserves that we enjoy with the children. This builds appreciation of the challenges as well as the delights of these treasured areas. REI recently recognized this work with a grant to help us expand the program.

We will be using materials from National Audubon Society to help children explore the preserves and Friends of the Forest Preserve materials to encourage them to come back to the preserves with their families and spread the word.

We strive to put to use the great work being done in the Chicago area by other agencies. ICO readily embraced the principles of the "Leave No Child Inside" campaign in Chicago, doing our best to give children outdoors adventures as well as quiet reflective time with nature.

Our website is now up and running where you can learn more



James Jordan Boys and Girls Club join ICO to remove invasive buckthorn at LaBagh Woods in Chicago. Photo by Colin Tysoe.

appreciated, but we also need aid with fundraising, equipment management or general administration.

If you don't have the time (or even if you do), donations also are much appreciated. Costs, especially transportation, are always rising and a day trip to the Indiana Dunes can cost \$500. The national group covers insurance and helps with some grants but we depend on help from our local supporters for our program to succeed.

Tax-deductible donations (payable to Sierra Club Foundation) should be sent to Chicago ICO, 1719 West Weathersfield Way, Schaumburg, Illinois 60193. For more information, please contact Colin Tysoe at 847-985-7313 or tysoe2@yahoo.com.

Cool Villages Day, April 19

The League of Women Voters of the La Grange Area (LWV-LGA) is hosting a Cool Villages Day, featuring speakers from Environment Illinois, Sierra Club, The Center for Neighborhood Technology and ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability, 9:00 a.m. to noon., Reber Center, LaGrange Township High School North Campus, 100 N. Brainard, La Grange.

The idea is to persuade LaGrange and other western suburban city officials to make their communities official Cool Cities, just like Chicago and other Illinois communities already have. The program will be helpful for anyone who wants to know more about the extent and impact of carbon emissions in their town and in the state and how to reduce collective and individual carbon emissions. If village officials and individuals would commit to lowering carbon emissions, it would be great.

Lonnie Morris, chair of the Cool Cities Campaign of the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, is among event presenters.

More info and an agenda are at www.lagrangerealwv.org

August 20 Cubs Fundraiser: It's NOT Too Early to Plan for Summer Baseball

Chicago Group will repeat last year's sold out Cubs fundraiser. This year, we expect the Cubs to badly spank the Cincinnati Reds (now managed by ex-Cubbie manager Dusty Baker).

We're starting the evening of August 20 with a 5:00 p.m. pre-game party at the Williamson's house, a 15-minute walk from Wrigley Field. Then we're off to the ball park for a wonderful night game at 7:05 p.m.

Since public transportation to the Williamson's and Wrigley Field is abundant and bike parking is safe and free at both venues, please leave your car at home.

The 50 upper deck tickets on the first base line are being sold for \$30 each, with \$10 going toward support of Chicago Group's many conservation initiatives.

Reserve tickets now: Tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis. There is a limit of five tickets per person.

You'll get one entry to the Environmental Activist Awards Program for participating in this activity.

Contact Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com, be sure to indicate how many seats you want. A \$10 per ticket deposit is required to reserve your tickets.

2008 The Year of Living Responsibly Calendar

April 5 — Earth Month Massive Sierra Club drop off at Chicago Household Chemical and Computer Recycling Facility, along with facility tour

April 19 — Earth Day Montrose Beach Sweep and Dunes Restoration Work

May 17 — Endangered Species Day/Lincoln Park and Lake Calumet Biodiversity Blitz, Rally and Party. Participate in a treasure hunt to find every diverse species of wildlife we can on foot and bike in Lincoln Park. We'll tally our species count over lunch at Lincoln Park Zoo, followed by a lecture about the impacts of global warming on wildlife the world over.

May 17 & 18 — Chicago Green Festival, Navy Pier Sierrans needed to staff a booth Saturday and Sunday. It's a perfect venue to attract new Sierra Club members and activists.

June — Alternative Transportation Month. Special Prizes for everyone who gets to work or play every day this month without a car or carpools it every time.

June 12 — Clean Car Educational Forum, with Will Reynolds, Chapter Clean Car Campaign Chair. Basics of clean car standards and how to choose a vehicle that meets them. Information about alternative transportation from iGo/Zipcar to bike commuting to mastering public transportation.

June 23 — Car-Free Monday. Chicago Group wants to lead Illinois in making one day a year car-free. Monday is the heaviest commuting day, but we challenge everyone to find another way to get where you're going.

July 19 — From Farmers' Market to Picnic Table. Eat locally, organically and simply. A professional chef will go to Chicago's Green Market with us and help select food we'll take back to a kitchen for a cooking demonstration. Then, we'll eat!

August 10 — Dog Days of Summer Celebration: Ravinia by Bike or Public Transportation. The concert program hasn't been announced yet, but we know the evening will be wonderful and relaxing, because we're having the event catered with local, sustainably-grown products and organic wine,

beer and soft drinks. All you have to do is get here, which we ask you to do via Metra which stops at the gates or by bike. Abike contingent will leave Chicago and take the North Shore path to and from Ravinia.

August 20 — Cubs Fundraiser. We admit it. Watching the Cubs spank the Reds (now managed by Dusty Baker) on a summer evening with 50 SC buddies is mostly just for fun. But this modest fundraiser will provide money needed for Chicago Group's many conservation and environmental education programs. Reserve now: this event sold out last year.

September 20 — Montrose Beach International Coastal Clean-Up. Join more than 100 other Sierrans and friends in cleaning up Montrose Beach as a part of a worldwide coastal clean-up day and work on a habitat restoration project in the dunes natural area of the beach. There is great potential for good bird watching during this period of fall migration.

October 11 — Bike to the Botanic Gardens. Enjoy a ride (25- miles each way) on the bike trail, which parallels the North Branch of the Chicago River a good portion of the journey. See why the river is important to migrating birds and wildlife.

October 22 — Air/Energy Issues Night. Members of Chicago Group's Air/Energy Committee host an evening of discussion, education and action about global warming and energy issues over good food and drink.

November 8 — Greening Your Life: Home, Garden, Workplace. This day-long event will feature a series of great solutions for health, home, garden and office — from Sierrans and green tech professionals — that will help you maintain a responsible, sustainable lifestyle.

December 6 — Holiday Service Outing and Party, Illinois Chapter Office. We start early doing whatever's needed from data entry to painting, filing, and making phone calls. By noon, we'll need some holiday cheer: lunch and drinks are provided. We'll award prizes to those who've been active all year in living their lives more responsibly. We'll draw the winning ticket for the \$1,000 Sierra Club trip raffle prize!

A Moonlit Trip on the Chicago River: Shine On Harvest Moon!

On Saturday, October 20, 2007, a group of 17 joined the Outings and Socials groups for a delightful evening on the Chicago River.

We put in at Rockwell and Addison while it was still daylight with several rented canoes and kayaks and paddled up to Argyle where we had a great Middle Eastern meal.

Paddling is a unique way to see the city of Chicago. We spotted birds that you normally don't see unless you are a bird watcher, including a Great Blue Heron and a Belted Kingfisher.

On the return journey, we had a very pleasant paddle in the moonlight. We looked for wildlife, but only had confirmed sightings of large city rats! The temperature remained at a comfortable 70 degrees most of the night.

To learn more about other outings and social activities, check out Chicago Group's outings and social calendars online at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/chicago/outings/>

Better yet, subscribe to our e-mail lists: For social activi-



Sierrans ready for their moonlit canoe cruise. Photo by Take' Yamamoto.

ties, go to http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/socials/social_listserv.html. For general Chicago Group activities, go to <http://whistler.sierraclub.org/listsub/?listname=IL-CHICAGO-NEWS>.

HELP WANTED!

Additional assistance is needed for many activities during Chicago Group's exciting Year of Living Responsibly.

Chicago Group is seeking members with specific skills or the energy and willingness to take on new projects. The specific jobs to be filled include:

Water Committee Chair and Members — Chicago Group's Water Committee is multi-faceted. Committee members do hands-on work like water quality testing in Lake Michigan and beach clean-up monthly from April through October at Montrose Beach. The biggest event of the year is in September, when as many as 150 members and friends work to clean-up Montrose Beach and assist in habitat restoration in the dunes, all part of International Coastal Clean-Up Day. The Water Committee also follows political/regulatory developments and acts as a clean-water advocate on a wide variety of water issues in Chicago. A chair is sought coordinate the committee's work and members are needed to perform a variety of tasks. The time commitment for the chair is several hours per week; for members, several hours per month.

Print and Web Graphic Designers — Chicago Group will be redesigning its communications with members and the outside world in all media this year and talented graphic designers are needed to accomplish the goal. Ideally, we'd like to find several professional designers who want to volunteer their talents to create graphics that will make Chicago Group's conservation message both inspiring and compelling. The time commitment may be significant initially and scale back to several hours per month in the second half of the year.

Fundraising Committee Chair and Members — Chicago Group's ambitious 2008 agenda requires additional fundraising. Several fundraisers are planned for this year that need coordinators, including two or three Cubs games (a total blast to plan AND attend!), a non-motorized outing to a summer Ravinia concert and a year-end raffle to win a fabulous Sierra Club outing. A chair is needed to



Join in planning another successful Montrose Beach Sweep in Sept. See ad for Water Committee vacancies! Photo Credit: Robert Coon

coordinate money-raising activities and party-loving, "people" people are needed to handle logistics for these and other fun events. The time commitment for the chair is several hours per week; for committee members, several hours per month, depending on the activities happening during a given period.

Membership Committee Members — Volunteers are needed to assist in welcoming new members as well as in developing activists from within Chicago Group's 9,000 membership base. Duties include contacting new members by mail, e-mail or phone to welcome them to Sierra Club, providing them with information about forthcoming activities and gauging their interest in becoming more active in conservation, outings, political, lobbying or administrative activities. Time commitment: several hours per month.

Got your attention yet? Ready to pitch in? Please contact Christine Williamson, Chicago Group chair, if you're interested in volunteering at 773-935-8439 (evenings) or bird-chris@aol.com.

I Just Quit Trading in Pollution Credits

by Take' Yamamoto, Social Chair

Like most environmentalists, I felt I did my job in protecting the environment. I don't drive much or use air conditioning unless it is really unbearable. But I have one vice: stereo and video equipment. This in itself wouldn't be bad, except when one gets to a certain level where the sound quality of the system sounds better if you leave it running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I tried once to turn everything off, but the sound quality afterwards was bad enough that it drove me back to leaving everything on all the time.

How did I justify this usage of electricity? In my mind, I was trading not using air conditioning or driving a car to be able to keep my stereo equipment running 24/7. On a personal level, I was trading in pollution credits to pollute elsewhere.

Some people think trading in pollution credits is a good thing. I do not. After much soul searching, I decided to make a small personal sacrifice to help save the environment: Now I turn off all my stereo equipment. The results? My last electricity bill went from 6.6 average daily kWh to

4.7 kWh, a savings of 620 kWh a year, translating into a quarter of a ton of carbon dioxide a year! Wow!

That little sacrifice made a big difference. It got me thinking of other ways to save energy. I re-arranged my computer power strips so I can easily turn off everything and eliminate what's known as phantom or vampire usage by the monitors. Phantom usage is when an appliance draws electricity even when turned off. TVs are a prime example, they draw power continuously to start up more quickly or drive internal clocks.

Where else can environmentalists can make a difference? Like many of you, I enjoy the out-doors. Unfortunately, in Chicago, that means driving a long way to get away from it all. I used to drive to northern Wisconsin in search of snow for cross-country skiing. I no longer can justify that energy expenditure and am looking for other winter sports activities that demand less energy to participate in.

Where are you trading your own personal pollution credits? Better yet, where can you lessen your carbon footprint?
