

Wild Onion

The Newsletter of the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club

Second Quarter 2009

2009: The Year of Getting Involved

by Christine Williamson, Chicago Group Chair

Chicago Group of the Sierra Club had a wonderful response to 2008's Year of Living Responsibly. Many members showed up at the dozens of events designed to help everyone live more conscious, responsible lives.

In 2009, we're taking it up a notch, asking members to become more involved in the behind-the-scenes activities of the club. In particular, we hope to find volunteers to help us plan more events from locating community sponsors for our activities (food, equipment, human hours; publicity, money, coffee(!) etc.); to recruiting volunteers for set up and break down; to training volunteers to be more effective leaders, educators and planners; to fund raising; party and socials planning; lobbying; environmental and outdoor education; outings training and field trips; and even someone to handle Sierra Club calendar sales.

We need people with every kind of skill set. We need newsletter and web site graphic designers. We need

communicators, especially younger people with strong social networking skills and savvy. We need people to plan a Cubs baseball outing and a night of blues at Kingston Mines. We need people who will walk precincts to talk door-to-door about the Chicago Climate Action Plan. We need political activists who will make phone calls, visit legislators' district offices, as well as their Springfield and Washington offices to push environmental legislation. We need habitat stewards who will pull weeds and nurture endangered plants on Montrose Beach.

In short, whatever you're interested in, we probably have a way to help you pursue the interest.

Come to our fun activities this spring and talk to experienced club activists to learn more about how you can help the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club. Or contact Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com or Cory Jones at cory.jones@illinois.sierraclub.org

Fighting Global Warming From Your Dinner Table: A Program by Author-Chef Laura Stec

Date: April 9 or 10
Location: TBA, 7:30 p.m.

Join Chef Laura Stec on her whirlwind tour, talking about her new book, *Cool Cuisine: Taking the Bite Out of Global Warming*, written with atmospheric scientist Eugene Cordero. This will also be a great time for new members to learn about Sierra Club!

Author-Chef Stec will help you move from the Global Warming Diet, heavy in meat, imported foods and foods grown with pesticides and fertilizers to Cool

Cuisine, an approach that is low carbon. The emphasis is on local, organic, fresh foods, reduced meat consumption, minimal processing and waste reduction.

We'll also offer a quick Sierra Club 101 overview to let you know what Chicago Group is working on this year and how you can help.

Don't miss this event: It will change your life. Check our web site <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/> for the date and location or contact Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com or 773-935-8439.

Environmental Book Club Meeting, Thursday, May 14

Come join fellow environmentalists as we read and explore the issues facing the world today.

Our next reading is *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle - A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver. Many ecological theoreticians advocate purchasing everything locally so as to minimize the use of transportation. Is it possible

to do so? Learn how one family learns how to adapt as they spend one year eating locally. Rick Bass of the Boston Globe says this book will change your life.

We meet at the Book Cellar Book Store, 4736 N. Lincoln at 7:00 p.m. R.S.V.P. to Take' Yamamoto at ch-socials@illinois.sierraclub.org or 773-528-7812.

Earth Day at Montrose Beach

Saturday, April 18, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Celebrate Earth Day a little early this year by cleaning up Montrose Beach and natural area with the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club. The beach and the dunes natural area are in need of a good spring cleaning before the plants start growing and people and migrant birds return to the sands.

People of all ages are welcome to participate in picking up trash. Last year's haul included an emerald ring, beautiful and cool blue crayfish claws and a boat dashboard complete with speedometer!

Spend a spring afternoon tidying up one of Chicago's finest natural landmarks. Come for all or part of the work period. Dress for the weather, bring a filled water bottle and work gloves if you have them.

Chicago Group has adopted Montrose Beach and will conduct beach clean-ups and dunes restoration work

with steward Leslie Borns on April 18, May 23, June 20, July 18, August 15 and September 19. For more information, please contact Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com or 773-935-8439 (evenings).

Directions: Meet at the Montrose Beach House.

By bus, the CTA #78 Montrose bus will drop you at Marine Drive and Montrose. Walk east on Montrose into the park. Follow the directions, below. The walk to the beach house will take about 15 minutes.

By bike, head east on Montrose into the park from the lakefront bike path. Follow direction, below. Bike racks are available at beach house.

By car, exit Lake Shore Drive at Montrose Ave. and head east into the park. Follow the directions, below.

Follow Montrose east into the park, after it begins to curve to the left/north, turn right/east at the first possible right turn (a T-junction). The small green bait shop will be on your right. Follow the park road east. The harbor will be on your right. Look for an asphalt path on the left that leads north toward the white beach house. Drivers can park near the path on either side of the road. Bikers, walkers, and bladders should turn left, follow the path to the beach house and walk around to the northeast side where Sierra Club will be set up.

Green Fest May 15, 16 & 17, Navy Pier, Chicago

Chicago Group made its first appearance at Chicago's Green Fest in 2008 and got rave reviews for its booth and support materials which educated the public about the impacts of global warming on wildlife. The stunning booth got a lot of attention from passersby.

More important than looks, more than 25 Sierra Club volunteers talked to many of the 30,000 plus attendees and easily persuaded more than 2,000 to sign a letter to then-Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, urging him to list the Polar Bear as an endangered species without loopholes that excluded global warming as a direct impact on this magnificent Arctic species.

Despite our letters, Kempthorne didn't listen and went ahead with a faulty Polar Bear ES listing. As if that wasn't bad enough, the previous administration pushed through an 11th-hour administrative rule change that greatly reduced the power of the Endangered Species Act.

This year, Sierra Club volunteers are needed to continue our educational campaign, helping average people understand how their actions contribute to global warming, impacting habitat and wildlife. This is NOT complicated to explain. It's a simple message: Reduce your carbon footprint and save endangered species.

We're stressing personal responsibility to reduce global warming through taking the City of Chicago's \$800 Challenge and learning more about the Chicago Climate Action Plan. We will ask fest-goers to sign a postcard urging their U.S. Congressman and Senators to pass legislation that will repeal Bush regulations that weakened the Endangered Species Act and the clauses of the Polar Bear listing that exempt global warming threats from consideration in the species' recovery plan.

Get involved! Be part of the solution! Have fun meeting people! We'll train you as a global warming educator and show you how to persuade people to take action. A simple postcard — multiplied by 60,000 (estimated attendance of this year's Green Fest) — could make a huge difference in saving America's most endangered species from the impacts of global warming and other threats.

Volunteers needed for booth set-up Friday, 5/15 and break down Sunday, 5/17. Volunteers needed to staff the Sierra Club booth all day Saturday, 5/16 and Sunday, 5/17. Volunteers get free entrance into Green Fest.

To help, contact Cory Jones at coryjones@illinois.sierraclub.org. It's not too early to sign up to help your planet.

Deadline for next issue is May 10, 2009.

Chicago Group Information

For information about the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club, check the web site often: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago>. You may also subscribe to e-News for e-mail delivery of a monthly calendar of activities.

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.