

Wild Onion

The Newsletter of the Chicago Group of the Sierra Club

Third Quarter 2009

Take Yourself Out to the Ball Game (along with 49 other Sierrans!)

Chicago Group's Annual Cubs Fundraiser

Chicago Cubs vs. Houston Astros

Monday, August 31, Wrigley Field, 7:05 p.m.

Everybody loves the Cubs, especially Sierra Club members! The Cubs-Astros rivalry is long and bitter. The Cubs really need your presence and positive energy to insure a win against this aggressive Central Division rival.

Please join us for a night of baseball and conversation and maybe a nightcap in a nearby watering hole after the game.

Ride your bike to the ballpark, park it in the bike lot free of charge and make your game day transportation both money- and carbon-free.

Sierra Club's annual summer ball park excursion has proven so popular that we've expanded to 50 seats and dropped our seats down a level to the 200 section on the first base line. First baseman Derrek Lee looks even taller from this angle!

Wear a green shirt over your Cubby gear and make our section a noticeable environmental presence at the game and get ready to smile for the television cameras.

The 50 200 section tickets are being sold for \$45 each, with \$13 going toward support of Chicago Group's many conservation initiatives.

Ticket reservation starts July 4. Be sure to reserve early as these tickets are a hot commodity and will go fast. Ticket limit: five per person.

Contact Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com beginning July 4. E-mails received before July 4 will receive a response. Be sure to indicate how many seats you want. Your tickets are reserved upon receipt of your check.

See you in the Friendly Confines August 31.

Kingston Mines Blues Club Sierra Club Fundraiser

Sunday, October 18, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m., 2548 N. Halsted, Chicago

The end of summer gives some people the blues, but Sierra Club has the cure: A house rockin' blues fest at Chicago's best blues bar, Kingston Mines.

This fundraiser equally benefits the Chicago Group and the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club and all proceeds will permit vital volunteer work in Chicago and around the state to flourish.

Everyone dances at this party — you can't help it! — but there will also be plenty of opportunity to meet other Sierra Club members and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Illinois Chapter.

Information about the Kingston Mines event is available at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org> or by phone at 312-251-1680, ext. 8.

Tickets are \$35 per person before September 30 and \$40 after that date. All tickets will be available at a will-call desk at Kingston Mines.

To purchase tickets, please send a check made payable to Sierra Club to:

Sierra Club - Kingston Mines
70 East Lake Street, Suite 1500
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Montrose Beach Monthly Beach Sweeps and Dune Restoration Days

Saturdays: June 20, July 18, August 15 and September 19

9:00 a.m. ó 12:00 p.m.

Chicago Group has adopted Montrose Beach and throughout the spring, summer and fall, Sierra Club members work on cleaning up the beach and restoring the dunes natural area.

Montrose Beach is one of Chicago's largest and nicest beaches. That means it attracts thousands of families every summer who generate a lot of trash. We pick up tons of garbage annually from the beach.

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

But Montrose Beach also has a remote, wild side. An extremely rare beach ipannei habitat has developed on the east end of the beach. It is home to a large number of rare dunes plants and hosts many nesting and migrating birds, as well as urban mammals like raccoon, coyote and opossum. We work with restoration volunteers on vegetation projects to improve this beautiful wild beach habitat.

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.

For more information, please contact Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com or 773-935-8439 (evenings only, please).

Directions to Montrose Beach House:

Montrose Beach is accessible by bus, foot, bicycle, roller blades and car. Bike racks are available at the beach house.

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

By bike, cyclists should head east on Montrose Ave. into the park from the lakefront bike path. Follow the directions below.

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

Follow Montrose Avenue east into the park, after it begins to curve to the left/north, turn right/east at the first possible right turn (it's 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. Car drivers can park near the path on either side of the road. Bikers, walkers and bladders should turn left and follow the path to the beach house and walk around the building to the north east side where Sierra Club will be set up.

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 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.

GreenFest: 2009

The Chicago Group of the Sierra Club once again made a big difference at Chicago's Green Festival at Navy Pier on May 16 and 17 by persuading people to take political action, many for the very first time.

The weather was beautiful for this weekend festival and attendance was very good with a steady stream of environmentally-inclined, happy people streaming in all day both days.

Chicago Group of the Sierra Club had a record four "asks" or booth goers and got a good response to every one.

One letter asked Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to increase protections for the Polar Bear, which is listed as a threatened species on the federal list. One letter urged Congresspeople in Washington to support legislation that would push the use of renewable energy sources, increase energy efficiency requirements and fund green jobs. A postcard urged U.S. EPA administrator Lisa Jackson to finalize her agency's findings that greenhouse gas emissions pose an endangerment to human health. Finally, Sierra Club's No Foam sub-committee collected postcards urging Chicago Mayor Richard Daley to institute a styrofoam ban in the city.

We met a lot of kids who needed no persuasion when it came to linking global warming to its negative impacts on wildlife, especially on Polar Bears. Tons of kids signed our Polar Bear protection letter.

After I explained to one little boy aged about seven why we have to stop greenhouse gas emissions to stop global warming so we can stop the melting of sea ice and save Polar Bears, he put his hands on his hips and asked the most pertinent of questions: Why don't they just stop it already?

In all, we collected more than 3,000 signatures on our four action asks from GreenFest goers which we will mail to the right public officials ASAP.

Many Sierra Club members stopped by the booth to say hello and renew old acquaintances and we attracted a both new members and potential new conservation activists and outings leaders.



Our Polar Bear, Edward (it was Edward Warden inside that hot, furry costume all weekend), won the hearts of the many children at the festival (aside from a few scared screamers) and adults. Edward even charmed a number of reporters, who put



Sierrans staff the Greenfest booth.

him on prime time television news in Chicago. Thanks for being the world's friendliest deadly predator.

Our beautiful booth, which featured the impact of global warming on wildlife, as well as pictures of the many Sierra Club volunteers who helped build, staff and pack up the booth can be viewed in our photo gallery (coming soon).

Huge thanks first of all to Cory Jones and Bob Coon, who took primary responsibility for GreenFest.

Chicago Group ExCom members also were front and center in pulling off the GreenFest event:

Thank you Chris, Tony, George, Ken and Take'.



Photos on this page by Bob Coon.

A big thank you is due to the No Foam sub-committee co-chairs, Stacy and Karen.

A sincere thank you to all the Sierra Club members — more than 20 of you, too many to list — whose assistance built the booth and whose warm smiles and friendly faces persuaded so many "average" citizens to step up and take action to benefit the environment.

Don't miss GreenFest 2010! We'll be spreading our message of environmental responsibility again next year. Come join us!

Take a Minute: Save a Polar Bear

Here's the letter to Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar we asked GreenFest goers to sign. Please take a moment to rewrite the letter a little in your own words or download and print a copy for mailing from <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/Chicago/>

The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W., Washington , D.C, 20240

May 15, 2009

Dear Secretary Salazar:

On Endangered Species Day, I am writing ask that you do more to protect Polar Bears from the impacts of global warming by making good on your word to “do all we can to help the Polar Bear recover, recognizing that the greatest threat to the Polar Bear is the melting of Arctic sea ice caused by climate change.”

I was very disappointed that you did not revoke the Bush administration's rule under Section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that weakened normal Threatened species protections for the Polar Bear.

The Section 4(d) rule does not require that the federal government address the primary threat to Polar Bears, namely activities that produce greenhouse gas

emissions outside the bear's range which contribute to global warming. Global warming is destroying the sea ice environment necessary for Polar Bear survival. But the Polar Bear Rule 4(d) specifically states that the incidental takes — or deaths — of Polar Bears caused by activities outside the bear's range is permitted under the ESA.

You said in a statement on May 8 that “the Endangered Species Act is not the proper mechanism for controlling our nation's carbon emissions. Instead, we need a comprehensive energy and climate strategy that curbs climate change and its impacts — including the loss of sea ice. Both President Obama and I are committed to achieving that goal.”

I strongly urge you and President Obama to make good on your word to quickly develop a climate change strategy that will help to protect all wildlife, including the Polar Bear, before it's too late.

I believe if the Polar Bear is to recover, it will also need full protection under the Endangered Species Act. As you monitor the effectiveness of the 4(d) rule, I hope that you consider taking additional, bold actions specifically designed to help save this imperiled species.

Yours sincerely

Chicago Group's Annual September Beach Sweep: Volunteer time and supplies needed in advance of the Sept. 19 event

Chicago Group of the Sierra Club's annual September Montrose Beach Sweep, part of International Coastal Clean-Up Day, grows bigger and better each year. 2008's event attracted more than 300 people and this year's sweep likely will bring in more than 500 people.

Sierra Club needs a team in place well ahead of the event to plan and implement event set up and break down; volunteer registration and education; advance publicity and group registration; coordination with other groups; data compilation and post-event online data entry; and fundraising and supplies procurement.

If you, your company, school PTA, church group or hobby club can assist with any advance labor, please get in touch! It takes a lot of water, snacks, soda, coffee, gloves and trash bags to keep so many people happy and healthy as they clean the beach and restore the dunes.

We need 1,500 work gloves, 1,000 contractor-weight black trash bags, 1,000 blue recycling bags, 50 mechanical “litter-gitter” trash pick-up sticks; 30 large jugs of water; 500 water bottles attendees can re-use

(Sierra Club offers a nice logo bottle in blue; 750 bottles of sports drinks; 350 cans of soda; 1,000 energy bars; five large coffee carafes plus cream and sugar; and

500 individual trail mix snacks. We need a small army of volunteers to solicit donations from local businesses or to donate cash to pay for the items.

If you or your group can sponsor this event that enhances and preserves Montrose Beach, one of Chicago's natural treasures, by sending people, supplies or cash, please contact Cory Jones at cory.jones@illinois.sierraclub.org.

