

Palisades Views



Volume XXXVII No. 6

June 2007

Bluff property is protected

In case you haven't heard, 430 acres of bluffs and forests overlooking the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers have been protected with the creation of Palisades Preserve near Grafton. The area is known for its scenic natural beauty and long-distance views of downtown St. Louis.

The preserve's creation was a joint effort of Great Rivers Land Trust, The Conservation Fund, Adams Development Co., Lewis and Clark Community College Foundation and National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, according to a press release.

"The Palisades Preserve is the largest and most significant privately owned, undeveloped property in the region," said Alley Ringhausen, executive director of Great Rivers Land Trust. "Thanks to (supporters), we were able to protect key wildlife habitat and safeguard educational and recreational opportunities that will benefit our entire community."

The property is considered essential to protection of endan-

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Gardener to discuss trip to Chile

Julie Conley, landscape gardener at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey, will share experiences from her internship in the Republic of Chile, including Easter Island, at the June meeting of the Piasa Palisades Group.

She will highlight the ecological and social challenges facing the developing nation in South America, particularly the explosion of agriculture and the balance between preservation and historic land usage.

Conley is finishing her thesis to complete a master's degree in pub-

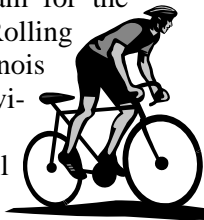
lic horticulture from University of Delaware in Newark. She earned a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and spent several years gardening for animals, both two- and four-legged, at the Toledo Zoo in Ohio.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Monday, June 11, at the First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton. Conley's presentation will be followed by questions and refreshments. For more information, call the Sierra Club office in Alton at (618) 462-6802.

Team being formed for bike ride

Piasa Palisades Group staffer Christine Favilla, her husband, Cody, and son, Braedon, are inviting Sierra Club members to join their bicycling team for the second-annual Rolling on the River: Illinois Ride for the Environment Aug. 25.

The event will benefit Prairie Rivers Network, Illinois Environmental Council and Illinois Stewardship Alliance, which have close ties to the Sierra Club. They work on issues such as clean air and water, healthy foods, protection of natural areas and environmental education.



Cyclists can participate at levels ranging from a casual cruise to an intense work-out along the scenic Fox River in Northern Illinois. Established routes of 15, 25, 45, 62 or 100 miles include safe, paved, light-traffic roads with scenic vistas, rolling hills, wildlife, multiple river crossings and five rest stops (one at a winery). Support vehicles will be available in case of mechanical or medical problems.

Favilla sits on the Illinois Stewardship Alliance board of directors. Her team will take the 15-mile route to raise \$1,000 for that organization to "secure local food systems and support small farmers." But people

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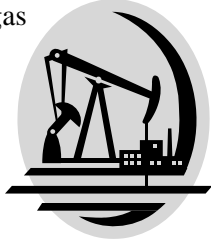
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Plan to produce tar-sand oil poses health risks

By Wayne Politsch
Group chair

We find ourselves living in difficult energy times. Headline-grabbing electric and gas prices jeopardize our way of life. The twin threats of global warming and oil-flow disruption in the Middle East loom in the background.

Meanwhile, energy policy coming from the White House and oil corporations is "business as usual."



Some believe they can avoid crisis by drilling, mining and waging war. Others want to put all their eggs in the corn-ethanol basket.

One mega-corporate plan hatched at the ConocoPhillips Wood River refinery is to extract oil from Canadian "tar sands," a mixture of sand, clay, water and thick oil called "bitument." Sounds messy, doesn't it?

The extraction process requires

huge amounts of natural gas and water. Tar-sand oil production generates 2½ times as many greenhouse gases as conventional methods. Already, mining and piping is posing one of the largest ecological challenges in Northwest Canada.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is seeking comments until June 7 on permits related to the plan's effect on air and water quality. Unless the agency receives a strong public message, it

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2007 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|--|----------|
| Chair | Wayne Politsch | 6424 Alpha Drive, Alton, IL 62002 | 466-6150 |
| Vice Chair/Secretary | Sandy Wood | 1719 Central Ave., Alton, IL 62002 | 463-0358 |
| Treasurer | Louise Freeman | 4813 Kaskaskia Trail, Godfrey, IL 62035 | 466-0656 |
| Conservation | Jim Bensman | 1802 Main St., Alton, IL 62002 | 463-0714 |
| Membership | Gayle Borman | 510 Hamilton Blvd., Wood River, IL 62095 | 254-2250 |
| Chapter Delegate | Bob Larson | 909 McKinley, Alton, IL 62002 | 462-2925 |
| Political Action | Michael Fischer | 1001 McPhearson, Alton, IL 62002 | 462-3832 |
| Member | Everett Loy | 221 Ladd, Alton, IL 62002 | 462-5919 |
| Youth Coordinator | Jon Byrd | 2065 Pinehurst Way, Maryville, IL 62062 | 401-9939 |

OTHER COMMITTEES AND STAFF

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|---|----------|
| Outings | Larry Tucker | 1822 Park Ave., Apt. A, Alton, IL 62025 | 462-0649 |
| Outings | Rich Keating | P.O. Box 13, Edwardsville, IL 62025 | 656-3647 |
| Fund-raising | Bob Freeman | 4813 Kaskaskia Trail, Godfrey, IL 62035 | 466-0656 |
| Hospitality | Audrey Wiseman | 3941 Sarah Lane, Alton, IL 62002 | 259-5997 |
| Merchandising | Dave Wiseman | 3941 Sarah Lane, Alton, IL 62002 | 259-5997 |
| Staff Person | Christine Favilla | christine.favilla@sierraclub.org | 462-0282 |

SIERRA CLUB OFFICES

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------|
| Illinois Chapter | 200 N. Michigan, Suite 505 | Chicago, IL 60601 | (312) 251-1680 |
| Piasa Palisades Group | 223 Market St. | Alton, IL 62002 | 462-6802 |
| | E-Mail | Home Page | FAX |
| | ppg_sc@yahoo.com | www.Illinois.SierraClub.org/PiasaPalisades | 462-0282 |

CALENDAR

Saturday, June 2 National Trail Day clean-up. Sierra Club volunteers will work at McCulley's Heritage Center, a beautiful bird-watching area near Kampsville in Calhoun County. Take an easy hike to an old dump (ravine) and pick up litter and debris. Hours are 10 a.m. to noon. Enjoy other center activities afterward, including free lunch for volunteers. For more information, call Christine Favilla at (618) 462-6802.



Monday through Friday, June 4-8 Summer Discovery Day Camp at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. The season kicks off with a pre-kindergarten camp called "Magical Forest Fairy Adventure" for ages 3-5. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to noon. Advance registration required. The fee is \$75 for members or \$85 for non-members. For more information, call Patti Brown at (618) 466-9930.

Saturday, June 9 Third-annual Native Plant Sale and Expo at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Hours are 9 a.m. to noon in the Talahi Lodge greenhouse. Prices range from \$1 per plant to \$10 per six-pack. Exhibitors will provide information and sell products. Free tours of Olin Nature Preserve and Mississippi Sanctuary and expert advice on how to plant a prairie in your backyard. For more information, call Patti Brown at (618) 466-9930.

Sunday, June 10 Classic Car Show in downtown Alton. The Sierra Club will bring in hybrid vehicles and their owners to showcase features and answer questions. Free T-shirts for hy-

brid owners and other volunteers. For more information, call Christine Favilla at (618) 462-6802.

Monday, June 11 Piasa Palisades Group monthly meeting. Julie Conley, landscape gardener at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey, is the guest speaker (see related article). Meet at 7:30 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton. For more information, call the Sierra Club office at (618) 462-6802.

Saturday, June 16 Creek clean-up at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey. The Sierra Club has been asked to help the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center remove litter and other debris from Upper Rocky Fork. Volunteers needed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (free T-shirts). Make a difference at this often-neglected stream with unique substrates and interesting wildflowers. For more information, call Christine Favilla at (618) 462-6802.

Monday, June 18 Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee meeting. All members are welcome to attend! Meet at 7 p.m. at the Sierra Club office, 223 Market St. in Alton. For more information, call (618) 462-6802.

Tuesday, June 19 Piasa Palisades Group monthly bike ride. Take a 15-mile loop on the Nickel Plate Trail and Nature Trail in the Edwardsville area with an ice-cream stop. Meet at 6 p.m. in the parking lot between University Drive and Bluff Road, south of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Korte Stadium (near the church and

portable toilets). For more information, call Jim Bensman at (618) 463-0714 or send an e-mail to jbensman1@charter.net.

Friday, June 22 Summer Solstice Celebration at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. An evening of poetry, ponderings and a taste of the season while meandering through the garden. Meet at 7 p.m. by the white barn at Oblate Ecological Initiative, 4300 Levis Lane. Bring a summer-themed dessert to share. No fee. Please let organizers know you're coming by calling (618) 466-5004.

Friday through Sunday, June 22-24 Canoe trip on the Eleven Point River, one of the most beautiful rivers in Missouri. Drive down Friday evening and camp or stay in cabins or

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Palisades Views

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and about Sierra Club
members.

To submit a newsletter item:
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Edwardsville, IL 62025
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palisadesviews@gmail.com

**DEADLINE FOR JULY:
SATURDAY, JUNE 23**



CALENDAR

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a motel. Get an early start floating on Saturday, camp Saturday night on a gravel bar along the river and leave on Sunday in time to

get home at a decent hour. For

more information, call Jim

Bensman at (618) 463-0714 or Larry Tucker at (618) 462-0649.



Saturday, June 30 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight hike at

Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve, 2213 S. Levis Lane in Godfrey. Meet at 7:30 p.m. at Talahi Lodge. Take Godfrey Road (Illinois 3) northwest about 2 miles from Homer Adams Parkway (Illinois 111). Turn left on Levis Lane and veer left on South Levis. Bring a friend! For more information, call Sandy Wood at (618) 463-0358.

Sunday, July 29 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight hike at

Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve, 2213 S. Levis Lane in Godfrey. Meet at 7:30 p.m. at Talahi Lodge (see directions above). Bring a friend! For more information, call Sandy Wood at (618) 463-0358.

Sunday, Aug. 12 Annual Piasa Palisades Group summer picnic. Gather at Beaver Dam State Park near Carlinville, one of Illinois' best-kept secrets with its

BLUFF

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gered or threatened species of plants and animals, including the American bald eagle, Indiana bat, Eastern prairie fringed orchid, prairie bush clover and decurrent false aster. It's part of the largest flyway in North America for migrating birds and contains undisturbed areas reflective of pre-settlement forest (less than one-tenth of 1 percent survives in Illinois today).

The Conservation Fund facilitated acquisition of the property from Adams Development Co. with a loan from its Mississippi River Revolving Fund. Great Rivers Land Trust has launched a fund-raising campaign to repay the loan. Two private foundations have pledged significant donations, and several St. Louis corporate foundations have expressed interest in providing support.

Lewis and Clark Community College Foundation will hold title to Palisades Preserve, and Great Rivers Land Trust will hold a conservation easement. Great Rivers Land Trust and National Great Rivers Research and Education Center will develop a land-management plan.

fishing lake, wooded campground, walking trails and marsh overlook. Picnic hours are 2 to 6 p.m. Canoeing and boating will be followed by a barbecue and potluck meal at Pavilion No. 3 and a walk on the trail around the lake. Bring plates, utensils and a covered dish. Meat and veggie burgers provided. For more information, call the Sierra Club office in Alton at (618) 462-6802 or visit the Web site.

Saturday, Sept. 15 It's Our River Day in Alton. Save the date for spectacular organized activities that promote education, recreation and conservation of Illinois waterways. Alton is one of many communities across the state to participate in the annual event, sponsored by the Illinois lieutenant governor's office. For more information, visit the Web site at www.cleanwaterillinois.org.

BIKE

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can always peddle farther!

Beyond the ride, other weekend activities include a post-ride party, environmental festival, organic cookout, live music, camping, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, Nordic walking, flycasting, birding, water-sampling, bug-hunting, star-gazing and socializing around bonfires with other environmentally minded people.

The Sierra Club is seeking volunteers to operate an informational and environmental-art booth at the event (free camping, food and T-shirts). To contact Favilla, call the Alton office at (618) 462-6802. For more information on the event, visit the Web site at <http://www.rollingriverride.org/main.php>.

DID YOU KNOW?

— That Piasa Palisades Group co-founder **Richard Keating** is a member of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission? It's a significant contribution to environmental protection in Illinois.

— That Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee member **Bob Larson** now serves as vice chairman of the Illinois Chapter Executive Committee? Congratulations (or sympathy) for taking on the extra responsibility!

Camps teach children about rivers

Lewis and Clark's College for Kids has teamed up with the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, RiverWatch and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to offer three new summer camps for children ages 10 and above.

"Kids will get wet, get dirty and go wild as they learn about the environment and explore life along the river and in the area's natural water resources," according to a press release.

Camps include The Stream Team from 9 a.m. to noon July 16-20 at Lewis and Clark Community College

in Godfrey (ages 10-14); H2O-Oh! from 8 a.m. to noon July 18-22 at National Great Rivers Museum in East Alton (ages 11-14); and River Ranger Camp from 9 a.m. to noon June 11-15 (ages 10-12) and June 25-29 (ages 13 and up) at Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton, Mo.

Fees are \$59, \$39 and \$39, respectively. This includes classroom instruction and field trips.

"Kids who have the opportunity to participate in enrichment activities like (these camps) are more likely to become environmentally conscious adults," said Vera Bojic, RiverWatch coordinator.

To enroll for camps, call LCCC Enrollment Center at (618) 468-2222. For more information, call the LCCC Continuing Education department at (618) 468-2824 or visit the Web site at www2.lc.edu/continuingeducation/college4kids.html.

River council to meet in Elsah

Sierran Dick Worthen, a citizen member of the Illinois River Coordinating Council, has informed us the council will meet at 1:30 p.m. Aug. 16 at Principia College in Elsah.

Meetings last a couple of hours. Toward the end, the state's lieutenant governor always encourages public comments.

"I urge the Piasa Palisades Group to make sure some environmental things are mentioned," Worthen said.

For more information, call him at (618) 465-0183.

WANTED

CONTRIBUTORS — Palisades Views invites Piasa Palisades Group members to submit news items, feature stories, letters to the editor, poetry, cartoons and other artwork, environmental tips, quotes, classified ads and whatever else you'd like to share (see page 3 for information on when and how to do it). This is YOUR newsletter.

WELCOME

The following people recently joined the Sierra Club and the Piasa Palisades Group:

Clinton Bantz of Hartford, Maude Bradley of Pleasant Plains, Beverly Dawn of Jerseyville, Carol Holbert and Betsy Keigher of Glen Carbon, Sonja Kershaw of Alhambra, William Maupin of Grafton, Erika Huszar, Ben Shashek and David W. Havis of Edwardsville, Alfred Tarrant of Palmyra, Kendra Wallace of Carlinville, Penelope Schmidt of Alton, Marlene Bradley of Plainview, Amy Brock of Roxana, Bobbi Bennett of San Jose and Melvin McCann of East Alton.

Pat Pfalf of Godfrey is a continuing Sierra Club member who recently transferred into the group.

VOLUNTEER

The Piasa Palisades Group would like to help Downtown Alton with a recycling initiative. If you can pick up paper and aluminum from local businesses on the first and third Tuesday of each month, this would help get it off the ground! If interested, call Christine Favilla at the Sierra Club office in Alton at (618) 462-6802.

TAR

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will approve the permits.

This would allow huge amounts of disturbing mixtures of toxic gases and volatile organic materials to be discharged in the air and water, exceeding thresholds established by federal standards.

It's one thing for a wealthy corporation to take an economic gamble to turn tar sands into fuel. It's entirely another thing for it to run an uncontrolled experiment in our backyard, gambling with the health and well-being of Southwestern Illinois residents.

It's time to get serious about America's huge appetite for fossil-fuel energy. As citizens and consumers, we are beginning to show symptoms of "energy fatigue," but we must have a voice in energy issues.

It will take time to transition to abundant, clean and renewable energy sources. Sierrans realize that demand, not just supply, is a vital key in the energy equation. We must lead the charge to use less energy in more efficient ways.

“Carbon offsets” used to fight global warming

By **Dave Gocken**
Group member

It seems we finally have reached a tipping point on global warming. The United States has been dragging its feet, but perhaps the naysayers are being marginalized to the point that both the public and private sectors will do something substantial to reduce carbon-dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases.

Recently, I have read two related articles in publications I receive – Mother Jones and Co-Op America – which give a little detail and structure on reducing our carbon emissions.

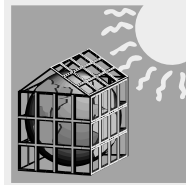
There seems to be a hierarchy similar to “reduce, reuse and recycle” for solid waste. With carbon emissions, the hierarchy is reduction through renewable energy or energy efficiency or sequestration through such strategies as deforestation.

Everything helps, but experts favor reduction over sequestration, just

as it is preferable with solid waste to reduce and reuse rather than recycle. Recycling is a good thing, but unfortunately, it has caught on much more than reducing and re-using.

The long and short of it is, we need to reduce our individual carbon emissions by driving less, setting our thermostats lower in winter and higher in summer and doing all the other things we have known about for a long time.

Now comes something called “carbon offsets,” which are designed to supplement rather than supplant primary CO₂ reduction strategies. There are companies that allow you to calculate your “carbon footprint” (tons of carbon you are personally responsible for) and purchase offsets to reduce the impact.



The companies will invest your payments in projects for renewable energy, energy efficiency or sequestration. The idea is to get you as close as possible to “carbon neutral.” Tufts University has researched and rated these companies for the public.

One of the easiest and very beneficial actions we can take is switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs. If all 300 million Americans switched just one bulb, the United States would save more than \$8 million in energy costs, reduce annual CO₂ emissions by as much as that sequestered by 3 million acres of trees and keep two million cars’ worth of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere, according to Mother Jones.

Editor’s note: Below are findings from the Tufts University study on carbon offsets. These seven companies were either “recommended” or “recommended with reservations.”

| COMPANY NAME (WEB SITE) | BASE COUNTRY | EMISSIONS CALCULATIONS | SAMPLE PROJECT | PRICE PER TON OF CO ₂ OFFSET |
|---|---------------|---|--|--|
| Atmosfair (atmosfair.de) | Germany | “Excellent” | Large-scale solar cookers in India | \$17.30 |
| Climate Friendly (climatefriendly.com) | Australia | “Excellent” | Wind farms in Australia and New Zealand | \$14.50 |
| NativeEnergy (nativeenergy.com) | United States | “Very good” | Wind farm on the Rosebud Sioux reservation in South Dakota | \$12 |
| MyClimate (my-climate.com) | United States | “Acceptable, but emissions likely underestimated” | Micro-hydropower systems in the Indian Himalaya | \$18 |
| CarbonCounter (carboncounter.org) | United States | “Too low” | Reforestation in Oregon’s Deschutes River basin | \$10 |
| Carbonfund (carbonfund.org) | United States | “Too low” | Low-income, solar-powered housing in Chicago | \$5.50 |
| TerraPass (terrapass.com) | United States | “Too low” | Converting cow manure to electricity in Minnesota | \$10 |