

Palisades Views



Volume XXXVII No. 5

May 2007

The Mississippi River: Dammed but not defeated

If you're interested in the past, present or future of the Mississippi River, you won't want to miss the May meeting of the Piasa Palisades Group. The guest speaker is Brad Walker, Upper Mississippi River Restoration coordinator for Prairie Rivers Network.

Walker is more than a conservationist and environmental advocate. He's a civil engineer who spent more than 20 years managing the construction of major public works projects in the Western United States. He also has a master's degree in geography.

"The Mississippi River continues to flow to the Gulf of Mexico, despite the many dams we have placed in its path," Walker said. "Occasionally, it

reminds us, regardless of the hundreds of miles of levees protecting our developments not too wisely built in floodplain areas, that it is simply tolerating us.



"However, our obsession with river management has taken a toll on the river ecosystems. They have been in decline since the completion of the major dams and levees and are generally continuing to decline, even though we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on restoration efforts over two decades.

"The original primary reason for the construction of the dams -- southward barge shipment of grains -- has been flat or declining over the last couple of decades. Despite this reality, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continuously projects significant future increases in barge traffic and is pushing a major, expensive expansion of the lock system."

At the meeting, Walker will discuss the general condition of the river environment, including a brief history. He also will give an update on the lock-expansion proposal, known as the Navigation and Eco-

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READ THE CALENDAR

Take a little extra time this month to look over the calendar on pages 3 and 4. It's full of fun and interesting activities, including a bike ride, moonlight hike, prairie walk, golf-course tour, kids camp, bird hike, public hearing, plant sale, environmental movie, recycling drive, river symposium, car show, outing to a wolf sanctuary and three clean-ups.

Volunteers rock!

A big "thank you" goes out to the wonderful volunteers who helped make the following events a success:

Water Stewardship Festival in Godfrey — Five volunteers educated 300 fifth-graders on big rivers.

Calhoun Point tree planting — Six volunteers planted 200 hardwood seedlings, working alongside the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Spring recycling drive in Alton — Thirty volunteers processed 200 cars, keeping more than 15 tons (35,000 pounds) of computers and 6 tons of large appliances out of landfills.

Arbor Day Celebration in Godfrey — Four volunteers helped children make "eco-heads" (think Chia Pets using recycled materials).

Two energy film series in Alton — Nine volunteers arranged for seven films to be shown, educating hundreds of people.

Clean Energy Conference — A group of committed college students organized speaking events with Hunter Lovins at Washington University in St. Louis (120 audience members), Principia College in El-sah (220) and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (60).

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MISSISSIPPI

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logical Sustainability Program, which is part of the Water Resources Development Act now working its way through Congress.

Prairie Rivers Network is a non-profit conservation organization founded in 1967. Its mission is to protect rivers and streams in Illinois and promote the lasting health and beauty of watershed communities. It also pushes for improved water-quality standards and review of water-pollution permits.

“We engage citizens and organi-

zations in this effort, providing them (with) the information, sound science and technical assistance they need to get involved, press for better enforcement of the Clean Water Act and educate their local policymakers about the importance of clean water in their communities,” Walker said.

The Sierra Club meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. Monday, May 14, at the First Unitarian Church, Third and Alby streets in Alton. Walker’s talk will be followed by questions, discussion and refreshments.

Mark your calendar!

Palisades Views will have more information next month on “Rolling on the River: Illinois Ride for the Environment,” a fund-raising bike ride along the scenic Fox River in Northern Illinois on Aug. 25. The Favillas are organizing a team! There also will be an outdoor environmental festival. For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.rollingriverride.com/main.php>.

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
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Membership	Gayle Borman	510 Hamilton Blvd., Wood River, IL 62095	254-2250
Chapter Delegate	Bob Larson	909 McKinley, Alton, IL 62002	462-2925
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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

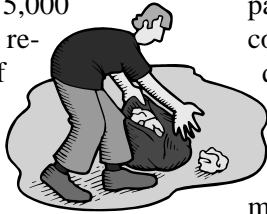
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CALENDAR

Friday through Saturday, May 4-12 River Camp '07, sponsored by Missouri River Relief. In the past six years, more than 5,000 volunteers have removed 341 tons of trash and debris from 336 miles along the river. This year, efforts have been expanded to include nine days of activities in and around Sioux Passage County Park in St. Louis County. Clean-ups, networking, workshops, speakers, music, food and camping at Pelican Island Conservation Area. For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.riverrelief.org/events/rivercamp07>.



Saturday, May 5 Heartland Prairie walk at Gordon Moore Park in Alton, sponsored by The Nature Institute. A two-hour exploration of the native prairie, beginning at 9:30 a.m. From Illinois 140, use the north soccer-field entrance (same side as Alton Mental Health Center). Moderate walking. Wear good shoes and bring binoculars, water, a journal and field guides, if desired. For more information, call Patti Brown at (618) 466-9930.

Sunday, May 6, 13, 20 and 27 Bird migration hikes at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Edna Alexander, naturalist and National Audubon Society member, will talk about migrating songbirds at Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve. Meet at 8 a.m. at Talahi Lodge (see directions for the moonlight hike). Moderate walking. Wear good shoes and bring binoculars, water, a journal and field guides, if desired. For more information, call Patti Brown at (618) 466-9930.

Tuesday, May 8 Public hearing on ConocoPhillips permit in Hartford. The oil company wants to expand its refinery. The Sierra Club is concerned about decreasing air quality and its affect on the health of local residents. Meet at 7 p.m. at Hartford Elementary School, 110 W. Second St. For more information, call Kathy Andria of the American Bottom Conservancy at (618) 567-0233 or e-mail her at kathyanandria@gmail.com.

Wednesday through Friday, May 9-11 Meeting of the Waters symposium in St. Louis, sponsored by non-profit organizations, government agencies and educational institutions. Discuss and experience the Mississippi-Missouri confluence. The kick-off includes a reception and tours of Alberici Enterprises headquarters, one of the "greenest" buildings in the world, followed by a lecture and book signing by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Other activities include indoor workshops at University of Missouri-St. Louis and outdoor workshops around the confluence. Registration required. Fees vary. For more information, call (314) 516-5655 or visit the Web site at [www/umsl.edu/meetingofthewaters](http://www.umsl.edu/meetingofthewaters).

Monday, May 14 Piasa Palisades Group monthly meeting. Brad Walker of the Prairie Rivers Network will be 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.

Thursday, May 17 Clean-up and tour of Robert P. Wadlow Golf

Course in Alton. Volunteers will remove litter from a section of stream before taking a leisurely hike. The Sierra Club has been working to prevent the golf course from being sold by the City of Alton and developed into a commercial area. Non-golfers will get a chance to see why this beautiful open space should be protected. Meet at 6:30 p.m. (rain date is May 24). For more information, call Larry Tucker at (618) 462-0649.

Saturday, May 19 Outing to the Wolf Sanctuary, officially known as Wild Canid Survival and Research Center, in Washington University's Tyson Research Center, 20 miles southwest of St. Louis. Sierra Club members visited in the 1970s and saw pups being fed by their parents in a large fenced area. Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the Alton office to carpool.

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Palisades Views

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**DEADLINE FOR JUNE:
SATURDAY, MAY 26**



CALENDAR

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We'll stop for lunch, a restroom break and hike before going to the center. The entrance fee is \$7 per person. We need a minimum of 10 people. If interested, call Larry Tucker at (618) 462-0649 or the office at (618) 462-6802 by May 14.

Monday, May 21 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, May 22 Piasa Palisades Group monthly bike ride. Cover about 10 miles on trails in the Edwardsville and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville area. Stop for ice cream afterward. Bring a light. Meet at 6 p.m. in the N-1 parking lot at Longfellow Avenue and Troy Road (Illinois 159), near Market Basket. For more information, call Jim Bensman at (618) 463-0714 or send an e-mail to jbensman1@charter.net.

Friday, May 25 "Green" matinee series in Alton. The last film is "Out of Balance: ExxonMobile's Impact on Climate Change." It examines the influence of the largest company in the world on governments, citizens and the media and offers challenging, large-scale ideas on how to stop global warming. Show time is 1:30 p.m. at Senior Citizens Plus Center, 260 N. Rodgers Ave. Admission and organic popcorn are free. Beverages available for 50 cents to \$1.50. For more information, call Christine Favilla at (618) 462-6802.

Thursday, May 31 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight hike at

Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve, 2213 S. Levis Lane in Godfrey. We'll start our summer hours on the second full moon in May (blue moon). 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.



Friday, June 1 Computer/electronics recycling drive in Jerseyville, sponsored by the Sierra Club. Hours are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at a location to be determined. Volunteers are needed for two-hour shifts (free lunch and T-shirts). Web Innovations and Technology Services in St. Louis will refurbish items to train and educate underserved members of the community; transform them into usable components or recycle them at a licensed facility. For more information, call Christine Favilla at (618) 462-6802.

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. We'll take a very easy hike to an old dump (ravine) and pick up litter and debris. Hours are 10 a.m. to noon. Afterward, enjoy other center activities. 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 (see directions for the moonlight hike). 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 (see directions for the moonlight hike). 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. Time to be determined. Hybrid owners and other volunteers will receive free T-shirts. For more information, call Christine Favilla 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.