

PRAIRIE FLYER

Newsletter of the Sierra Club Prairie Group • East-Central Illinois • Apr/May/June 2002

Prairie Group General Meetings

Prairie Group meetings are held the second Wednesday of every month, 7:30 p.m. in the Bondurant Room of the Illinois Disciples Foundation, at the corner of Wright and Springfield, Champaign, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, April 10, 7:30 p.m.

Legislative Issues with Jack Darin

Jack Darin, Illinois Chapter Director and lobbyist extraordinaire, will talk about what's happening in Springfield. Come and find out what state legislative action is being proposed this session that will affect where you live, work, and play — and learn what you can do to make sure that the environment benefits!

Wednesday, May 8, 7:30 p.m.

General Membership Meeting - Good Food

Spring has sprung, and we're all looking forward to those fresh flowers and vegetables once again!

This month we'll talk about food — and the opportunities we have locally to buy food that is good for us and good for the earth. Whether it's the Farmer's Market, your local co-op, or community supported agriculture, there are lots of environmentally-friendly choices beyond your supermarket shelves.

Wednesday, June 12, 7:30 p.m.

Summer Potluck!

The Prairie Group kicks off the summer season by having a backyard bar-b-que instead of meeting indoors. Meet other members and enjoy a relaxed evening at the home of Kirstin and Mark Replogle, 715 South Broadway Ave., Urbana.

Bring your own eating utensils, something to grill, and something to share, we'll provide the beverages and the volleyball — other backyard games welcome. Check our website at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/prairie> for details as they are planned.

See you there!

Outings

Mammoth Cave Backpack Trip

Thursday, April 25-Sunday, April 28, 2002

Meet at Mammoth Cave National Park south of Lexington Kentucky on Thursday evening, April 25, 2002. Tour Mammoth cave if you like, then hike a loop, spending Friday and Saturday nights on the trail. Dinner and breakfast provided Friday morning through Sunday morning. Supply your own lunches, snacks and equipment. \$30 to cover expenses. Contact: Jack Kuehn: (217) 356-7206 or j-kuehn@shout.net.

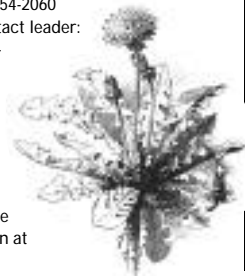
Middle Fork Canoe Trip

Saturday, May 4, 2002, 9:30 a.m.

Canoe Illinois' only National Scenic River, the Middle Fork of the Vermilion. The all-day 12-mile trip will include about 3-4 hours on the water, the remainder on sand bars and visiting prairies, Indian mounds etc. along the way. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the river bridge in Kickapoo State Park (just west of Danville); canoe rentals available at the Park. (Advance canoe reservations recommended: call 217-354-2060

after April 1.) Contact leader: Clark Bullard by e-mail at bullard@prairienet.org or phone 217-333-1097 evenings.

If you are interested in day hikes or service trips, please contact Jack Kuehn at 217-649-8397 or j-kuehn@shout.net.



ONE EARTH, ONE CHANCE®

Letter From the Chair

by George Gore

"Opportunities for Everyone!"

Thank you for your personal commitment to protecting the environment, which is clearly demonstrated by your membership in Sierra Club. Over one thousand members in our local group help protect the environment. Together, we are making a significant difference around the Earth, in the United States, in Illinois and right here in our backyard of East Central Illinois.

Perhaps with the increased threats of more drilling, logging, and mining of our national environmental treasures, you've wondered what else you could do to make a significant difference for the environment? For many of you, it's tough to get involved in distant Champaign meetings. It's equally difficult for the executive committee based in Urbana to track environmental issues elsewhere because we have so many local issues. Having lived in Bloomington/Normal for four years, I remember the never-ending environmental issues that needed the nationally recognized voice of the Sierra Club to speak out locally. In Bloomington/Normal alone, we have over 200 members, which is plenty to sustain a fully funded local group. Scattered throughout McLean, Vermilion, Coles, Livingston, Edgar, Clark, Cumberland, Douglas, Piatt, Ford, and Iroquois Counties are another 300 members. If you're a rural member, the Sierra Club probably seems distant and remote.

Our challenge is finding founding members to help us strengthen the Sierra Club in your county to protect your backyard. Locally, we're all volunteers and none of us are experts in every environmental issue. All you need to make a difference for your local environment is enthusiasm and a desire to learn! We can help you with everything else, such as networking with members in your county, getting expert advice, strategizing, etc. Best of all, you can make a

significant difference in just a few hours a month. Would you be interested in representing your county in our Prairie Group?

The framework below gives opportunities for everyone to get involved. As the number of leaders grows, we would also provide more funding to help with organizing costs. With seven organized leaders, a local group should be nearly ready to establish itself as an official group within the Illinois Chapter and National Sierra Club.

# Leaders	Status	Goal
1	Delegate	Monitor environmental issues in your county and send alerts
3	Task Force	Add Chair, two activities (conservation, outings, membership, or political)
5	Committee	Add the other two activities
7	Pre-Group	Speak on behalf of Sierra Club for issues within your county

Perhaps you have a burning passion for a specific environmental issue (sprawl, air, water, energy, GMOs, etc.)? We need members to monitor what's happening and take action to help solve such specific environmental problems. Also, if you want to get directly involved with the existing group based in Urbana, check out some potential positions at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/prairie/contacts.html>

Just reading your local newspaper and letting us know about environmental problems would help tremendously. Taking action together, we can make a significant difference for the environment. Would you help us?

I look forward to your suggestions, ideas, and concerns about how we can achieve a better environment. Please e-mail me at geo_gore@yahoo.com

Would you like to volunteer for the Prairie Group, or offer ideas for the Prairie Flyer? E-mail geo_gore@yahoo.com

Champaign County Planning

On Friday, February 8, 2002 Dick Bishop (Political Chair) and Alice Englebretsen (Communication Chair) met with Frank L. DiNovo, Director with the Champaign County Department of Planning and Zoning. Our timing was most fortuitous in that the county is rewriting the County Zoning Ordinance. Given the County's review of zoning issues, a wonderful opportunity for public input will be forthcoming. In particular, DiNovo mentioned the issues of water runoff regulations in the county, and that the County is in the process of drafting a long-term plan. The County is working with the municipalities of Champaign, Urbana, and Rantoul, and the University of Illinois in this effort. Look for notices of public hearings.

It's been long recognized that there is a need for a coordinated and long-term plan for land use involving other government entities along with the County. The County's Rural Land Use Goals and Policies are more than 20 years old, so a review process is very much in order. The need for a joint effort in design-

ing long-term land use policies is necessary since under Illinois law, the municipal communities have jurisdiction over land use planning and land subdivision in the unincorporated areas falling within approximately one mile of their corporate limits. The County does retain jurisdiction with respect to zoning, nuisance and floodplain regulations.

The Rural Land Use Policies cover issues on the best use of farmland, preserving unique soils, protection of property rights, compatibility with agriculture, suitability for site development, business and non-residential uses, and most importantly conservation of natural areas. One idea being discussed is to establish a buffer around stream-connected conservation and recreation lands. Public hearings will be announced for sometime this Spring.

To receive local notices and alerts on the county zoning issues, subscribe to the Prairie Group e-mail list serve. See the notice elsewhere in this newsletter on how to subscribe.

Ongoing Activities

Help with Restoration Work Days

Prairie Grove Volunteers coordinate restoration activities in several local natural areas. Contact them through their website: <http://www.prairienet.org/pgv/index.html> or contact regional volunteer coordinators Donna and Gary Beland at gardonbee@hotmail.com.

The Prairie Greens

The Prairie Greens of East-Central Illinois meet at 7 p.m. the first Tuesday of each month. For more info about their several e-mail lists and other meetings: greens@prairienet.org or www.prairienet.org/greens.

Event Reports

Slide Show from Costa Rica

The membership meeting of January 9 featured Daniel Lindstrom and slides he took on a trip to Costa Rica. The variety and plenitude of flowers, both cultivated and wild, was truly remarkable.

Winter Hike at Forest Glen

On Saturday, January 19, four of us hiked in the Forest Glen County Preserve in Vermillion County, 8 miles east of Westville, south of Danville. It was a delightfully warm day and hiking conditions were excellent, in contrast to last year when we had six inches of fresh snow. We spent three hours exploring some trails in the woods that weren't included last year, and even made a sizable cut off trail, using a compass to make sure of our direction. I urge everyone to try out this grand place at various times of the year. It is less than an hour from Champaign-Urbana. Preserve custodians have worked for many years to establish a native prairie, which blossoms profusely in the summer, in addition to more than 20 miles of hiking trails through the woods.

The Prairie Group Website, E-Mail, and Listserv

The Prairie Group website is: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/prairie>. Check this site for new updates on activities and information.

If you want to keep up with the latest opportunities to get involved, sign up for our listserv (group email system) by going to <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives> and scrolling down past many Sierra Club listservs to click on "IL-PRAIRIE-ALERTS." On the next screen click on "Join or leave the list" then fill in blanks for "Your e-mail address" and "Your name." Then select the listserv settings you want (the default should be fine for beginners) and click on the "Join the list" button. You should get an e-mail response to finish confirming your subscription.

If you have any problems, please e-mail me at geo_gore@yahoo.com

MEETING BRIEFS : Report on the Sprawl Workshop

by Richard L. Bishop

Those who attended the Sprawl Workshop December 8, 2001 with Brett Hulsey, Midwest Coordinator of the Sierra Club Challenge to Sprawl, agreed that the event was a big success. There were ten of us on the bus tour, including out-of-town guests Brett and Jack Darin and Jen Hulsey from the Illinois State Chapter Office. One notable attendee was Brett's friend, Cynthia Hoyle, who just moved here in August, and was active in the Sierra Club in Stillwater, OK.

The bus tour began on campus, then took us to East Urbana where we had a walking tour through a residential neighborhood that demonstrated the effects of sprawl, then to the new development which demonstrated affordable housing — designed with smart growth features such as narrower streets, smaller lots, and services such as hauling and delivery in the back.

After a quick bus transfer at the new Illinois Terminal Building, the bus tour then routed us to North Prospect and Market Place Mall, which was

another demonstration of commercial development and urban sprawl. The buses ran on time, and one driver was so kind as to hail us to the correct side of the street and then called ahead so we wouldn't miss our connection.

After lunch we were joined at the Illinois Disciples Foundation by Urbana City Planner Rob Kowalski. He brought along his display of excellent posters of the City's design plans for renovation of downtown Urbana. Brett then led the afternoon discussion session, which was lively and informative.

Thanks to all for making this workshop a huge success. Now we need to fulfill that success by following up with activities that will prevent our area from suffering more extensive damage from sprawl. In particular, we should support Rob Kowalski to implement his marvelous plans for Urbana and we should work for better coordination between the county and the cities. A comprehensive County Plan is badly needed.

New Officer Biographies

George Gore, Prairie Group Chair

George is a Life Member of Sierra Club who grew up next to a woods and creek in Morris, IL. He earned degrees in engineering science and economics from Vanderbilt and then served as a Navy Supply Officer stationed in Japan, Hawaii and Scotland. Seeking more meaningful work, he earned another degree in business education to become a high school science and business teacher. He moved from the Sangamon Valley Group in Springfield to the Prairie Group in Urbana to pursue a graduate degree. He also serves as Chapter Membership Chair and as a member of the Chapter Executive Committee.

Richard L. Bishop, Political Chair

Dick grew up on a farm in southwest Michigan and attended college in Benton Harbor and Cleveland. In 1959 he was awarded a Ph.D in mathematics from MIT. Since then he has been a professor of mathematics at the University of Illinois, as Emeritus Professor since 1997. He continues to pursue mathematical research and travels widely, mainly to mathematical conferences. He has five children and nine grandchildren, and his wife Dolores has gained con-

siderable renown in Champaign County as a dog trainer and instructor of dog obedience and tracking. Dick joined the Sierra Club in 1998 and became a member of the Prairie Group Executive Committee in 2001. He commutes to the University mainly by bicycle, averaging about 50 miles per week that way.

Alice Englebretsen, Communications Chair

Alice has been a Sierra Club member for over 20 years and lived in Colorado, Quebec, Canada, and in Illinois for the past 21 years. For many years, she's had a strong interest in environmental issues and was active in many events in all the places she lived. Her favorite way to vacation is to go on Sierra Club Service Trips; she is taking her sixth service trip to the Coastal Wildlife Refuge in Florida, Feb. 17-23. Since her retirement from the administrative information systems department at the University of Illinois, she's been able to devote more time to her passion in environmental issues. In Sept. 2001 she became a member of the Prairie Group ExComm, as newsletter editor and webmaster. Alice has two children living in Chicago and Montreal, and will be a first-time grandmother this summer.

Member Survey

Please take a moment to send the Prairie Group your views on the following questions:

What local, regional, and/or global environmental issues are most important for you? _____

Would you consider volunteering with the Prairie Group to work on one or more of these issues? _____

Are there people or organizations you can recommend that the Prairie Group work with to pursue any of these issues? _____

Other comments/suggestions? _____

Name/Phone/E-mail: _____

Please return to: geo_gore@yahoo.com, or Sierra Club Prairie Group, PO Box 131, Urbana, IL 61803.

Executive Committee Members of the Prairie Group (ExComm) Website: www.sierraclub.org/chapters/il/prairie

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Secretary OPEN
Chapter Delegate, Alternate OPEN
Conservation Chair OPEN
Publicity Chair OPEN
List-Server Chair OPEN
Environmental Education Chair OPEN
Fund-Raising Chair OPEN

All OPEN positions are available now.
If interested please contact Jim Beauchamp
at j-beauch@uiuc.edu or at 217-344-3307.

† elected or appointed to ExComm for 2001-2002
* elected or appointed to ExComm for 2002-2003