

Variations on a Theme by Dickinson

By Lonnie Morris

*To make a prairie, it takes a
clover and a bee,
One clover and a bee.
And revery.
The revery alone will do,
if bees are few.*

~Emily Dickinson

This lyrical poem often appears in articles about prairie but with all due respect to Emily Dickinson, my response after ten years of working on a prairie restoration is:

*To make a prairie it takes years
and volunteers,
Many volunteers and many years.
And endurance.
The endurance alone will do,
if volunteers are few.*

I began my stint as a restorationist with the vision of a prairie that exists between the lines of Dickinson's poem, a place of botanic beauty and harmonious nature. Romantic notions may be necessary for making a passionate leap into the challenge of wrestling a prairie from manicured turf (the starting point for the Terrace View Prairie project of the Lombard Park District and Lombard Garden Club), but they fail to prepare the well intentioned amateur for the complex task of bringing the members of a prairie community together into something resembling the original without becoming a weedy and wild eyesore. Nature may appear to be a friendly and benign creator of spectacular landscapes, but there are powerful and still mysterious forces at play that hold the upper hand. It takes endurance grounded in the basics of prairie ecology to successfully navigate these complex forces.

Illinois tall grass prairies evolved over thousands of years through the interplay of climate, geology, plants, animals, and humans. By the time pioneers reached the Midwest

continued on next page...



Big Blue Stem, a tall grass native to the prairie

Photo by Lonnie Morris

In this issue...

Variations on a Theme by Dickenson	1-2
Highlights from Party on the Farm	3
Join the River Prairie Group Listserv!	3
Legislative Wrapup	4-5
Superfund	6-9
A Car is a Car is a Car	10-11
Green Fire	12
Floatzilla	13
Calendar of Events.....	14-15
River Prairie Group (RPG) Outings.....	16-17
Join the Bluestem Network	18

DuPage Sierran

Executive Chair: Lonnie Morris

Editor: *Jenny Smiechowski*

Writers: Shannon Burns, Paul Mack, *Lonnie Morris, Jenny Smiechowski, Linda Sullivan*

[Http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg](http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg)

For activities, legislative action alerts, & outings information

We are on Facebook! Check out:

http://www.facebook.com/pages/River-Prairie-Group_of_the_Sierra_Club/96257429851

Dickenson, continued

and emerged from the familiar canopies of the eastern woodlands, they were greeted by a treeless vista. First impressions were powerful. Some were pleased by the openness; others saw a barren, hostile land. Judge James Hall described the Iowa landscape in 1839 by writing, *"The scenery of the prairie is striking and never fails to cause an exclamation of surprise. The extent of the prospect is exhilarating; the outline of the landscape is sloping and graceful. The verdure and the flowers are beautiful; the absence of shade, and consequent appearance of profusion of light, produce a gaiety which animates the beholder"* (*Where the Sky Began*, John Madson 1982).

Whether it was a bleak or joyful landscape was a matter of opinion, but the soil's fertility quickly proved to be a boon for settlers and the prairie's undoing. Before the tall grass prairies were understood or its species thoroughly cataloged, it was mostly gone, plowed under and planted with crops. When European settlers arrived in Illinois, 22 million acres of tall grass prairie covered the northern two thirds of the state. Nicknamed the Prairie State, Illinois has lost 99.99% of its prairie to agriculture and development. The few remaining patches in pioneer cemeteries, railroad prairies and odd bits of untilled land offered glimpses of what a prairie community had looked like and have served as seed sources, providing the necessary material for restoration projects.

With a committed land owner, sufficient resources and skilled staff, a reconstructed prairie can develop into a resilient, evolving native plant community, resistant to invasion by non-natives species and other threats. Morton Arboretum has one of the nation's oldest prairie projects and provides an inspiring example of a successful reconstruction. Under the guidance of Ray Schulenberg, for whom the prairie is named, work began in 1962 on 100 acres of eroded and intensively farmed land the Arboretum had recently acquired. The diligence and care lavished on the planting by Schulenberg and his staff was described as "legendary" by Barry Dredze in a 1998 Chicago Wilderness article. Dredze writes, *"For the first few years, folks crawled around the property with linoleum knives and pocket whetstones, cutting weeds individually from among the native prairie seedlings."* The attention and care has paid off forty years later with a thriving, self sustaining prairie eco-system that is gloriously beautiful in all seasons.

A high quality prairie remnant was accidentally discovered locally by an amateur photographer in the 1970's. Al DePree decided to check out an undeveloped field in his

Downer's Grove neighborhood while looking for subjects for a photography class he was taking at Morton Arboretum. The prairie flowers he photographed caught the eye of the instructor and brought noted botanists and prairie experts Floyd Swink and Bob Betz to the site. After DePree and the Nature Conservancy sorted out the parcel's multiple land owners, Belmont Prairie became an Illinois Nature Preserve and was eventually transferred to the Downers Grove Park District.

This outstanding ten acre area has 150 species of plants with a particularly high concentration of flowers, making it a fascinating place to experience a mature prairie.

Caring for a tiny piece of prairie is a chance to connect with your own special place, shaped by its past and shaping you in return as you create its future. *"What makes a place special is the way it buries itself inside the heart,"* writes Richard Nelson in *The Island Within*, *"not whether it's flat or rugged, rich or austere, wet or arid, gentle or harsh, warm or cold, wild or tame. Every place, like every person is elevated by the love and respect shown toward it, and by the way in which its bounty is received."*

Many volunteer opportunities are available locally. Join Sierra Club member and site steward Bruce Blake on one of the regularly scheduled work days at Glacial Ridge, a unique prairie located on a glacial moraine in Glen Ellyn. Work day dates and more information are available on the River Prairie web site at <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/rpg>

The DuPage Forest Preserve hosts volunteer work days at multiple locations through out the county. More information is available at: www.dupageforest.com/GetInvolved/Volunteer/Natural_Resource_Management.html



Purple Prairie Clover, a perennial native prairie wildflower

Photo by Lonnie Morris

Highlights from Party on the Farm

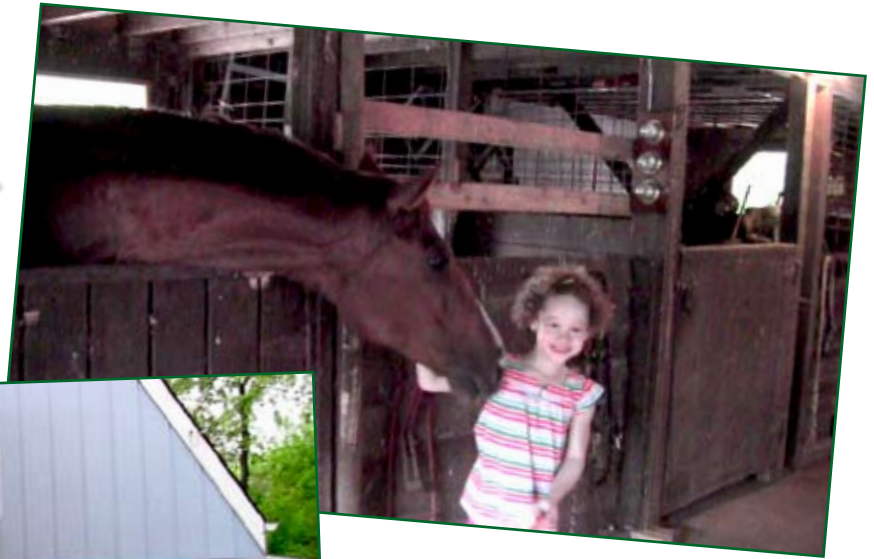


Photo by Lonnie Morris



Photo by Lonnie Morris



Photo by Tom Richardson

Join the River Prairie Group Listserv!

We encourage everyone to sign up so you do not miss out on any of our news and activities. Stay up-to-date on the River Prairie Group's latest activities by joining our listserv. The listserv is open to anyone interested in finding out more about our group. The purpose of this list is to announce the activities, meetings, news and special events of the the Sierra Club's River Prairie Group, located in DuPage County, Illinois. The format of the list is for announcement and news distribution only, so members will receive but not be able to post messages.

Anyone interested in subscribing to this list can join in either of two ways:

Go to: <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/IL-RPG-NEWS.html> and click on "Join or leave the list."

or send an email to: Listserv@lists.sierraclub.org

Leave the subject line blank, in the message area type: **SUBSCRIBE IL-RPG-NEWS Firstname Lastname**
(substitute your first and last names)

Sierra Club blow to climate change goes almost unnoticed in Springfield

DuPage legislators play significant role

By Linda Sullivan

The Sierra Club scored a significant blow against climate change in Springfield this spring. The success went almost unnoticed by the media and, as this article goes to press, appears subject to a veto by Governor Quinn. Tucked into the ComEd smart grid legislation was almost every renewable energy and energy efficiency measure for which Sierra Club volunteers lobbied.

While the US Congress wrung its hands over a season of horrific tornadoes, floods and droughts and then tried to block the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating greenhouse gasses, the Illinois General Assembly narrowly passed SB 1652 which actually does something to slow man-made production of the greenhouse gasses that are driving climate change.

Sierra Club volunteers lobbied all through last winter and spring for several separate bills that would remove impediments to renewable energy and energy efficiency and jumpstart Illinois' renewable energy economy. In other years, utilities, comfortable with their dependence on fossil fuels and nuclear energy, were able to tell politicians not to vote for these bills and except for a few courageous legislators, that was that. This year ComEd was asking for a rate hike to invest in the Smart Grid. Sierra Club volunteers were informed at their Issues Briefing last February that this was our best chance to get our greenhouse gas saving bills passed.

Although our bills enjoyed much support among legislators, they, as well as all significant energy-related legislation, languished for much of the Spring while legislative leaders debated and considered the ComEd Smart Grid proposal. In the end, Illinois Sierra Club Director Jack Darin was able to leverage all our volunteer efforts and work with a bipartisan group of legislators to get the sponsors of Smart Grid legislation to include our renewable energy and energy efficiency proposals in the bill.

DuPage Representatives **Michael Fortner** (R-West Chicago), **Chris Nybo** (R-Elmhurst), and **Sandra Pihos** (R-Glen Ellyn) were part of a bipartisan group of



Sierra Club volunteers lobby Rep. Chris Nybo (R-Elmhurst) to support the Sierra Club's bills during Lobby Day in Springfield, April 2011. Nybo has been called one of eight environmental heroes who were responsible for getting ComEd to agree to Sierra Club's energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. Left to right: Stacy Salmon (seated), Rep. Nybo, Linda Sullivan, Tom Richardson, Joan Duggan.

Photo by Jennifer Walling

representatives that championed including clean energy in the package. Said Illinois Sierra Club Director Jack Darin, "Nybo, Fortner and Pihos were instrumental in making the case that renewable energy and energy efficiency measures were a crucial piece of any grid modernization bill that was truly smart."

Rep. Nybo said he was glad to help. "The measures that the Sierra Club wanted included in the bill made sense from an economic and environmental point of view. From the start I have been determined to fight for measures that help businesses and homeowners cut energy costs and bring green jobs and businesses to Illinois."

Rep. Pihos said, "Given that ComEd was closing in on the number of votes it needed to pass its bill, I thought we would be foolish not to leverage all we could get for a green outcome. People are only as healthy as their environment. The long term benefits of this bill will be huge."

Rep. Fortner said he is particularly proud of the work he did to get a net metering component in the final bill. "This will help small and mid sized businesses utilize their roof tops for solar energy," he said.

continued on next page...

DuPage Legislators, continued

The heart of the ComEd bill is the Smart Grid. The Smart Grid is good for the environment in several ways. It allows consumers to cut their energy use as well as their bills by showing them where they are running up their use. It will waste less electricity by encouraging customers to switch energy use to off-peak hours, reducing the need for new power plants. No one has invented technology to store the electricity that is generated and not used, be it from a nuclear plant or a wind farm, yet power plants create the same amount of energy at 2 am when it is not needed as they do at 2 in the afternoon. To incentivize consumers to shift energy use to off-peak hours, energy costs less after midnight. But to realize off-peak savings, people have to have smart meters in their homes and businesses. Delaying energy use until after midnight does more than save money. A smart grid means that fewer power plants will be built, less coal mined and less greenhouse gas pumped uselessly into the atmosphere.

The Sierra Club's position on the Smart Grid was that we need a modernized grid to get to a clean energy future, but that any rate hikes incurred building infrastructure for it must be off-set with savings through renewable energy and efficiency programs. In the end, ComEd and the bill's sponsors agreed, and incorporated the renewable energy and efficiency proposals.

This is what the Sierra Club got written into the Smart Grid bill:

1. A huge impediment to roof-top solar was removed. During sunny days, many solar installations create more energy than they use. This energy net-meters back into the electrical grid and utilities sell it. Owners of the installation are not paid for the electricity they create, but instead get energy credits that are used at night when solar cells are not making energy. Previously, only small installations such as homeowners might have got

a 1:1 credit. Larger installations got half the value of the electricity they net-metered into the grid. The amount of energy that could be net-metered into the grid was capped at one percent of the total amount used. Now larger renewable energy installations will get full value and the total renewables net-metered into the grid can rise to five percent. Every small business, big box store and warehouse in Illinois will be able to cut energy bills by installing solar. That translates into coal that will not be burned and greenhouse gasses that will not be created.

2. The Illinois Power Agency buys power for utilities in Illinois. The Sierra Club's contention is that the most cost effective and environmental response to power needs is to reduce the need for it. The IPA can now buy efficiency if efficiency is cheaper than power. This will hugely incentivize more efficient power use and save the planet much destructive CO2.
3. The utilities have been under mandate to expand renewable energy to 25 percent of the total by 2025 since Sierra Club helped pass the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard in 2007. Although this bill has brought many large wind farms to rural areas of Illinois, suburbs and urban areas have not seen the same economic benefit. Now a percentage of renewable energy must come from smaller distributed sources such as small businesses or homeowner rooftops.

At press time, Governor Quinn was considering SB 1652, and he has expressed major concerns about the bill's impact on electric rates. Hopefully Governor Quinn, who has long been a champion of both consumer protection and clean energy, can use his position to further improve the bill from a consumer perspective. That would give us a major leap forward for clean energy in Illinois, and a huge blow against climate change.

Upcoming River Prairie Group Elections

The annual election for Executive Committee will be held this fall with three open seats.

To be qualified to run for River Prairie Executive Committee, one must be a Sierra Club member in good standing (currently paid membership) and available to attend the six annual meetings.

Executive Committee members vote on budgetary matters, endorsements and policy positions. Executive Committee members also participate in Group administrative responsibilities, serve on committees and represent the Sierra Club to the local community.

If you're interested in being considered for nomination, please contact **Joe Pokorny**, nominating committee chair, at rpgsierra@comcast.net.

Qualified candidates will be announced and ballots made available in the October issue of the DuPage Sierran.



A Tale of Two Cities:

Comparing Superfund Cleanup Efforts in West Chicago, IL and Picher, OK

By Shannon Burns



*Photo taken from http://tarcreekmovie.com/Chat_Pile,
Tar Creek Superfund Site*

West Chicago, IL and Picher, OK have something in common: both towns are home to Superfund hazardous waste cleanup sites. A comparison of the two community's Superfund cleanup efforts was the focus of an Earth Day program hosted by the Wheaton League of Women Voters (LWV) at Wheaton College.

On April 16, 2011 the group hosted a screening of the film "**Tar Creek**", along with a panel discussion that included Jim Smith, member of the Thorium Action Group (TAG) in West Chicago and Tim Fischer from Region 5 of the US EPA.

According to Missey Wilhelm, President of the Wheaton LWV, "...the LWV has a strong position on protecting the environment. The League also promotes an educated citizenry that is actively involved in working with local governments. "**Tar Creek**" highlighted the breakdown of cooperation between the citizens in Ottawa County, OK and the government." Contrasting Picher, OK's experience with that of citizens in West Chicago, IL, Wilhelm noted that "The Superfund site cleanup efforts in West Chicago, while not completely resolved, resulted in a much more positive outcome for our community."

West Chicago: Kerr McGee Superfund Site

In 1967, Kerr-McGee purchased a West Chicago plant that had been in operation since 1932: The Rare Earth Mining Facility. This facility, which closed in 1973, extracted radioactive elements from ore. Since the extraction process is never 100%

continued on next page...

Superfund, continued

efficient, the plant inevitably left behind waste material called "tailings" or "chat". These left-behind tailings contain small amounts of the extracted element (in West Chicago: thorium, radium and uranium) plus other metals and acids.

Waste material from any mining operation is hazardous if improperly managed. In the case of Kerr McGee, tailings were used throughout West Chicago and Warrenville in landscape projects and construction fill. Additionally, storm water runoff from the Kerr McGee site carried dangerously high levels of Thorium through a storm sewer to Kress Creek, and from there, to the West Branch of the DuPage River. Consequently, there were two distinct modes of contamination in West Chicago and Warrenville: fill material and streams. West Chicago residential neighborhoods, along with Reed-Keppler Park and the local sewage treatment plant, were contaminated with Thorium.

In 1976, high levels of thorium were discovered in West Chicago soils. The area was declared a Superfund site and added to the list of National Priorities in 1990. Ultimately, the cleanup effort involved local citizens, the EPA, Kerr McGee and the DuPage County Forest Preserve (which assisted in restoration of natural areas along the river). According to Tim Fischer, Region 5 of the US EPA, the residential and Reed-Keppler Park portions of the cleanup have been completed. *"The Kress Creek/West Branch DuPage River Site was divided into eight sections for cleanup. To date, seven of the eight sections have been cleaned up, representing 4.5 of the 7 miles of creek and river that were impacted. Cleanup work on the final section will begin in June of this year. Depending on the availability of Department of Energy funding going forward, this final section could be completed as soon as 2014"* said Fischer.

As Fischer notes, funding is an ever-present concern. In a recent Naperville Sun Article, DuPage County Board member Jim Healy noted that recent EPA Superfund budget cuts will have had a local impact: \$10 million in federal funds is still needed to complete removal of radioactive thorium from the West Branch of the DuPage north of Naperville.

Tar Creek, Oklahoma

Tar Creek, OK has been called the "greatest American Tragedy that no one has ever heard of."

Located in the far northeastern corner of Oklahoma, Tar Creek is in Ottawa County and consists of five mining towns (Picher, Cardin, North Miami, Commerce and Quapaw). The area consists of 40 square miles and includes land that belongs to 10 tribal nations, including the Quapaw. Due to extensive mining by the Tri-State Mining District that began in 1900, much of the area's watershed and land is contaminated with lead, zinc and cadmium.

Listed as a priority Superfund site in 1983, the area remains un-restored: 75 million tons of lead "chat" remain above ground in high piles that can be seen from miles away. Contaminated, acidic ponds cover nearly 800 acres. Approximately 35% of children living in the area exhibit abnormally high levels of lead in their blood. Tar Creek itself is dead: No fish live in the acidic water. Today, 28 years after being labeled an EPA priority site, Tar Creek remains on the priority list.

In the Tar Creek area, EPA cleanup efforts have included soil removal from 1700+ residences, relocation programs for families with children under the age of 6, a buy-out program for families with homes in the area, and plugging of at least 38 contaminated wells. Cleanup efforts are hampered by the sheer magnitude of the problem,

continued on next page...

A note about Superfund

West Chicago/Warrenville and Tar Creek are only two of many sites in the United States that are contaminated by hazardous waste. Although the exact number changes periodically (new sites reported; existing sites restored) EPA Superfund statistics are scary: 1300+ sites total in the United States. Fifty of these sites are in Illinois, with five of them located in West Chicago. Of the five DuPage County Superfund sites, all but one are connected to the Kerr McGee manufacturing plant in West Chicago. The fifth site is in Warrenville, at the Blackwell Forest Preserve's landfill.

Superfund, continued

as well as by lack of funding. To date, no mining companies will take responsibility for their role in polluting the area. This means that the expense of cleanup rests solely on the EPA Superfund.

Although there is hope for Tar Creek (the area was awarded funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009) cleanup efforts are hampered by the sheer magnitude of the problem, as well as by lack of funding and lack of agreement on what – and how – needs to be done to completely resolve the area's toxic waste problems.

Comparing Tar Creek and West Chicago

Even a cursory comparison of the Tar Creek Superfund Cleanup in Picher, OK to the Thorium Cleanup in West Chicago shows disparity in the final cleanup results. Why the difference?

Some differences in the two projects are straightforward: The Thorium problem in West Chicago/Warrenville involved a smaller contamination site compared to contamination at Tar Creek. Thus, the West Chicago/Warrenville problem was easier to manage: cleanup was a more straightforward process. Lines of responsibility were clear and the affected community was homogenous.

Local agencies, including the DuPage County Forest Preserve, aided by the involvement of the Sierra Club, maintained ongoing involvement in the project. In fact, as cleanup efforts progressed, the Sierra Club's River Prairie Group (RPG) stepped in and assumed the role of project watchdog, attending public meetings, reviewing documentation, and performing random water tests for leaked radioactive thorium and radium. According to Paul Mack, Technical Advisor to the RPG, the group's role was crucial: *"We were not just an independent testing agency, but often the only testing agency, as little or no radiological water testing was performed by the project itself."* Seventy-six million Superfund dollars later, the Sierra Club's RPG data remains the cleanup project's only public record of radiological water testing.

Compared to the Thorium found locally in West Chicago's soil and water, Tar Creek's lead contamination was pervasive throughout several towns and large segments of the



Photo taken from <http://tarcreekefilm.com/Sludge Pond, Tar Creek Superfund Site>

surrounding Ottawa County. Compounding the problem, chat piles above ground spread contamination via wind. Lead leaked into the water supply and surrounding soil, and serious erosion throughout the area made it difficult to prioritize project cleanup efforts. The high degree of contamination also made it difficult to prioritize cleanup efforts; cost to complete cleanup of such a large-scale contamination was a nearly impossible-to-imagine figure.

Although the objective details of both projects explains the difference between the relatively successful cleanup in West Chicago/Warrenville and the failed efforts in Oklahoma, maybe part of the problem with the Tar Creek cleanup efforts are the result of a subtle social prejudice. Compared to the Tar Creek area with its median income of \$19,700 and median home value of \$20,700, West Chicago/Warrenville is an affluent Chicago suburb: Median income is \$63,000 and median home value is \$241,000. Additionally, 80% of the contamination in the Tar Creek area is located on Quapaw Tribal land: No one has to be reminded that America has not dealt fairly with Native Americans. Oklahoma is not mainstream America: It's easy to overlook a sparsely populated, poor rural area's problems.

continued on next page...

Superfund, continued

What have we learned?

Both the slow progress at Tar Creek and the successful cleanup efforts in West Chicago/Warrenville highlight lessons for everyone. It is critically important for the entire local Community to be involved; groups such as the League of Women Voters and the Sierra Club play a critical part in providing education and focus for citizens who want to become involved. Local agencies, such as the DuPage County Forest Preserve and The Conservation Foundation, help to connect community concern with EPA remediation efforts by assisting in post-cleanup restoration.

For example, the DuPage County Storm Water Commission is putting together a comprehensive river restoration on the west branch of the DuPage River that includes portions of the contaminated sites. According to Brook McDonald, President and CEO of the Conservation Foundation, *"While this is not part of the thorium removal project, it does enhance the river and extend the restoration in areas not impacted by the thorium. The Conservation Foundation is partnering with the county to help generate funds and private partnerships so that this work can move forward."*

The lesson learned from Tar Creek's lead problems and West Chicago/Warrenville's thorium contamination is a simple one: We all share an obligation to be aware, to stay involved, and to do something to help. With one in four Americans living within three miles of a contaminated site, these environmental problems impact everyone. And it really does take a village to create a solution!

Spotlight on EPA Funding

Funding for Superfund is an ongoing problem; lack of sufficient funding has forced the EPA to delay cleanup of many hazardous sites. In some cases, the Agency has resorted to cheaper, but less effective solutions. Although the EPA attempts to obtain money from companies responsible for the contamination, these companies are often bankrupt or no longer exist. For example, in January 2009, about three-quarters of the way through the current project, the West Chicago/Warrenville West Branch cleanup's guarantor (Tronox) filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. This action brought local remediation efforts to a temporary standstill. With Tronox floundering, the West Branch cleanup has continued in fits and starts. The Tar Creek funding issue presents a different but equally serious problem: some mining companies simply refuse to accept responsibility for problems they created.

A 2007 Center for Public Integrity investigation found that Superfund is "short of money, thus creating a backlog of sites" that continue to menace the environment and health of citizens. In 2010, the EPA allocated \$243 million dollars for Superfund cleanup. While this sounds like a lot of money, conservative estimates indicate that between \$335 and \$681 million will be needed for future cleanup of toxic sites. This shortfall in needed funding will negatively impact cleanup efforts in both Tar Creek and West Chicago/Warrenville.

What you can do.

Funding remains one of the greatest obstacles to timely cleanup of toxic sites. It is up to each of us to constantly remind our elected officials that funding for the EPA, and for Superfund, must remain a high priority.

A Car is a Car is a Car

By Paul Mack

When a “green” peer discovers that I drive a small, economy car, they invariably get excited and ask, “What’s your gas mileage?”

It is a question that I have come to dread, because the conversation always follows the same path: I shrug and answer, “About 34 mpg,” and they exclaim, “THIRTY-FOUR? Wow! That’s great!”

I’ve got news for you, folks: it’s not great. It’s crap.

Thirty-four mpg would have been great back in 1955 and maybe even in 1968. But in 2011, it is nothing more than a grim reminder of at least four forces that have conspired to keep fuel economy low over the past several decades: a business-friendly environment in Washington, the intransigence of an industry whose single-minded pursuit of profits has nearly led to its own demise, an entitlement mentality among consumers, and, regrettably, the inability of environmental activists to counter those forces.

At the risk of sounding like a crusty, old man (an inevitability, I admit), allow me to remind the complacent, 34-mpg-is-pretty-good crowd of some of the technological achievements that have occurred during the same time period. Telephones and cameras have evolved to surpass anything that science fiction ever imagined, the two converging into a ubiquitous, pocket-sized device more powerful than yesteryear’s refrigerator-sized mainframe computers. Space shuttles blast into orbit so often that they no longer make the news; so ordinary have their flights become, in fact, that the program is being retired. Two robots were flown 300 million miles to Mars, where they have been operated via remote-control for several years. An iPod is smaller than a deck of cards and holds 40,000 songs – about 4000 vinyl LP’s. And – not a wealthy industrialist or brilliant scientist – but an ordinary sixth-grader can snap a photo of his basketball team and email it to a relative 12,000 miles away – all in less than 30 seconds. And, so on. But, gosh darnnit, it is simply impossible to build an efficient vehicle fleet.

(Warning! The remainder of this article requires you temporarily forget that Honda, Toyota, and Datsun (Nissan) produced cars in the mid-1970s that achieved 35-50 mpg.)

This isn’t to say that attempts at efficiency have not been made. The past decade has seen the reluctant emergence of the hybrid car, an unnecessarily complex contraption that gets modestly better gas mileage than a regular vehicle. Although hybrids are touted as a revolutionary technology, they actually amount to little more than the tweaking and cobbling together of three components whose underlying technologies are each over a century old. When all of the fanfare and backslapping is removed, all that remains of a hybrid is technology more retro

than high-tech, integrating a gasoline engine (circa 1870s) with an electric motor (circa 1880s) and some batteries (circa 1890s) to produce a vehicle significantly more comfortable than a stage coach and slightly faster than a steam locomotive. Without a doubt, the integration of these three components qualifies as clever technology, but revolutionary it is not. And, short of some intervening revolution in technology, the car of tomorrow will look and behave pretty much like the one sitting in your driveway today, given the complacency of government, industry, car buyers, and – let’s face it – environmentalists.

The EPA lists approximately 27 different hybrid models for 2011, and of those, nearly two-thirds achieve less than 30 mpg. Only four get better than 40 mpg. Consumer Reports performs real-world driving tests, and their May 2011 report revealed only one vehicle (Prius) surpassing 40 mpg. Like I said, it helps if you forget that Honda, Toyota, and Datsun produced cars in the mid-1970s that achieved better than that – and with a lot less hype, complexity, and cost.

So, you might ask, **what about the Prius?** In April 2011, the Prius attained a milestone, surpassing the one million mark after a decade of sales. That is certainly a lot of Priuses, but with 250 million cars on America’s roads, it only works out to 0.4%. At that rate, it will take another 2490 years to achieve the dream of an all-hybrid nation. Clearly, the Prius is not the eco-salvation that environmentalists touted it to be.

The consumer culture in which we are immersed influences us in many ways, and in particular, in the making of fads. Planned obsolescence compels us to trade-up a cell phone or television every couple of years, and a short attention span fostered by immediate gratification imbues us with the restlessness to pursue an upgrade. Environmentalists are not exempt from fads, and as hybrids grow more mainstream they simultaneously become more passé, shifting our slitting attention to the electric car, The Next Big Thing.

Electric cars, however, are poised to be just as underwhelming as their hybrid brethren, the dream of an all-electric America requiring a suspension of disbelief similar to that of an all-hybrid America.

Expense and limited range aside, the primary obstacle to widespread adoption of electric cars is the electricity itself. No nation produces enough electricity to power a significant fraction of its vehicle fleet. Cars use a tremendous amount of energy – regardless of whether it is gasoline or electricity – and the generating and distribution capacity simply does not exist, and will not for any time soon. As it is, the US must import electricity from Mexico and Canada just to make ends meet, and even then, brownouts during peak summer months are not unheard of. Adding a sizable fraction of electric cars to the mix would bring the system down, equivalent to each electric car owner installing a second central air-conditioning unit in their home.

continued on next page...
07/07/2011



A Car is a Car continued

This electrical limitation is implicitly acknowledged in the call for charging cars at night. While nighttime charging would lessen peak daytime loads, the suggestion ignores three issues. First, electrical generators are traditionally throttled-back in the evening, and there is little discussion of the impact on reliability from running aging machinery all-out 24/7 (the average coal plant, for example, is 44 years old). Second, consumer behavior being what it is, can we really expect a driver whose battery is running low at 3:30pm to be a good cub scout and wait until 8pm to recharge it? Third, the US uses a crap load of gasoline. That's right – a crap load. **How much is a crap load** you ask? 8 million gallons per day? 15 million gallons per day?? 35 million gallons per day??? Actually, it is more in the neighborhood of 379,000,000 gallons each day. 379 million. Every day. That's a crap load of gasoline, and if everyone starts driving electric cars, that crap load of gasoline simply morphs into a crap load of uranium, coal, and natural gas.

What about solar you ask? **Couldn't I just convert my home to solar and have a truly zero-emission vehicle?** Various homeowners I have met over the years in Illinois and Wisconsin paid about \$20,000 for a basic (1.5 kW) solar installation. With that, it would take about 3 sunny days to fully charge an electric car – and during that time, everything else in your house would be off.

Why is it so difficult to switch from gasoline to electric? Laziness? Sure. Complacency and intransigence in government and industry? Of course. But, it is also because gasoline is such a fantastic fuel that everything else (currently) pales in comparison. Simply put, the energy density of petroleum is unmatched for mobility. Consider this: 6 pounds (1 gallon) of gasoline can propel a regular car about 30 miles (and ethanol, about half that many), whereas 6 pounds of high-tech batteries can propel an electric car about 1 mile.

What about ethanol? you might ask. In 2005, the Bush administration's Energy Policy Act included an ethanol mandate for progressive increases in the amount of ethanol added to gasoline each year until 2022, when it will reach a nine-fold increase over 2006 levels. In addition to being a can't-lose business proposition, the mandate creates a double windfall for the agricultural industry, both sides of which are financed by taxpayers, first in the form of subsidies (45 cents/gallon) and then in the form of higher food prices. In a classic case of supply and demand, when farmland that once grew grains for humans and livestock is diverted to grains for ethanol production, the food supply drops and prices rise. Throw in the inflationary effect of Wall Street speculators, and food prices rise even higher. Plus, commodity prices tend to rise and fall together, so the diversion of corn to ethanol factories does not just drive up the price of corn flakes and corn-fed beef, but also other grains as well, as they are enlisted to pick up the slack. The statistics I quoted

in these pages a few years ago deserve repeating: National Geographic reported in the June 2009 issue, *"The corn used to make a 25 gallon tank of ethanol would feed one person for a year... Federal mandates for corn-based ethanol soaked up 30% of the 2008 US crop, helping send corn prices over \$8 a bushel last year – triple the 2005 price... such 'agflation' hits the poorest billion people on the planet hardest, since they typically spend 50%-70% of their income on food."* Environmentalists are sometimes accused of valuing nature over people, and their ambivalence on the ethanol front lends credence to those voices. I do not envy a driver who must explain to a starving mother in Sudan that they just burned 30 pounds of corn to buy a really cute sweater from the outlet mall.

You might ask so, **what is the solution?** The short answer is: stop looking for simple solutions to complex problems. The longer answer is: some unforeseen technological revolution aside, there is no magic bullet to wean the US off of fossil fuels. Hybrid and electric cars offer modest improvements over regular vehicles, but it is crucial to understand that the hype and hope invested in them is less about efficiency than their promise to carry us over this "hump" with little or no change in lifestyle. In the 1992 movie *Wayne's World*, Dana Carvey stared into the camera and groused, *"I fear change!"* and he could have been speaking for every one of us; drivers who are, on the one hand, beginning to realize that the days of inexpensive, carefree driving are drawing to a close, and on the other, desperately clinging to an unsustainable and unaffordable lifestyle predicated on driving 4200-pound minivans and 4600-pound SUVs at whim and 300-horsepower pickup trucks and sports cars for fun and virility.

And, the "hump", we are beginning to realize, is not a hump but the prelude to a new era of tight oil supplies, high prices, and climate change that hybrid and electric cars cannot alleviate in a reasonable time or meaningful way. Walking, bicycling, and efficient mass transit offer the greatest and most rapid savings, but changes in behavior could offer additional savings as well.

As of March 2011, a grand total of about 1660 electric cars (Nissan Leaf and Chevrolet Volt) had been sold. *Woo-hoo*. The 250 million cars on America's roads are not going away any time soon, so retiring our entitlement mentality towards driving is a more realistic means of mitigating their harm than promoting dreamy visions of their wholesale retirement by hybrid and electric vehicles. The other option, of course, is the do-nothing, business-as-usual plan, where strong demand sustains record-high prices for gasoline, leaving consumers with little money to spend on the goods and services that could foster an economic recovery, while an outrageously high military budget presses the nation further into debt to assure our access to expensive oil. We tried one of these strategies, and it worked for a little while. Maybe it is time to try a different one.

PROGRAM

The River Prairie Group
and
Just Views

PRESENT

**Green Fire:
Aldo Leopold and A Land Ethic
For Our Time**

Friday, October 14th

At 7:20pm

Naperville Unitarian Church
S 535 Old Naperville Road
Naperville

ABOUT THE FILM

A joint production of the Aldo Leopold Foundation, the US Forest Service, and the Center for Humans and Nature, *Green Fire* explores the life and legacy of famed conservationist Aldo Leopold, and the many ways his land ethic philosophy lives on in the work of people and organizations all over the country today. The film shares highlights from Leopold's life and extraordinary career, explaining how he shaped conservation and the modern environmental movement. The film also illustrates Leopold's continuing influence, exploring current projects that connect people and land at the local level. Meet urban children in Chicago learning about local foods and ecological restoration. Meet ranchers in Arizona and New Mexico who maintain healthy landscapes by working on their own properties, and with their neighbors, in cooperative community conservation efforts. Meet wildlife biologists who are bringing threatened and endangered species, from cranes to Mexican wolves, back to the landscapes where they once thrived. And learn how Leopold's vision of a community that cares about both people and land ties all of these modern conservation stories together, and offers inspiration and insight for the future.

Visit www.greenfiremovie.com to learn more about Aldo Leopold's life and legacy, the people and places in the film, and how you can get a copy of *Green Fire* to show in your community!



Aldo Leopold, circa 1940.

Leopold's Legend Lives on in Green Fire

By Jenny Smiechowski

Environmental activist, writer and philosopher Aldo Leopold is the subject of a new documentary film entitled *Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time*. The film, which is being released as a joint production of Aldo Leopold Foundation, the US Forest Service, and the Center for Humans and Nature, will play Friday, October 14 at 7:20 pm at the Naperville Unitarian Church.

Leopold is best known for his classic environmental manifesto *A Sand County Almanac*, written on his farm near Baraboo, Wisconsin. *Green Fire* is the first film ever made about Leopold, and aims to show environmentalists how they can apply his timeless wisdom to their present-day efforts.

Leopold is revered to this day for his simple and insightful interpretation of man's responsibility to nature. His environmental philosophy is best defined by this classic quote from his book: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

For more information on the life of Aldo Leopold and the film *Green Fire* visit: www.greenfiremovie.com

FLOATZILLA



20 AUGUST 2011



**Hosted by
River Action**



Quad Cities Mississippi River Paddlesports Festival!

- A Guinness World Record sanctioned attempt to amass the world's largest raft of canoes and kayaks—record is 1,619 in 2010.
- Guided paddles on the Quad Cities Water Trails
- Beginner-friendly paddling lessons and programs
- \$10 per paddler, includes event t-shirt & boat decal

**For more info, www.floatzilla.org
A River Action hosted event**



Calendar of Events

Saturday, July 2 – Churchill Woods/Glacial Ridge Prairie Restoration

9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Meet at Walnut Glen Park, 860 Walnut Street, Glen Ellyn

Would you like to help restore a local prairie, woodland or wetland? The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has several restorations going on. One of these is at the Churchill Woods/Glacial Ridge Forest Preserve in Glen Ellyn. We are looking for volunteers to help remove invasive plants, collect and plant native seed. For more information: Contact Steward **Bruce Blake** at **630-629-2520** or **Rllnstns1@aol.com**.

Wednesday, July 27- Green Drinks – Naperville**

7:00 pm, Location TBA

Every month people across the globe who are interested in environmental issues meet for informal sessions known as Green Drinks. Green Drinks – Naperville is just one of 750+ of these chapters worldwide. It's a lively mixture of people from business, NGOs, academia, our community and government. Our evenings start at 7:00 with networking, at 7:30 we have a conversation-starter presentation, followed by more networking. The July 27th meeting will focus on the topic: *How will we travel?* Check the web site for location at: www.greendrinks.org/naperville.

Saturday, July 30- 2011 – Chase the Moon Midnight Bike Ride**

10:00 pm – 3:00 am, Warrenville Commons Shopping Center, Route 59 & Batavia Rd, Warrenville

Join other bicyclists, members and friends of The Conservation Foundation for the *2011 Chase the Moon Midnight Bike Ride*. Chase the Moon is a ride, not a race. Dedicated bicycle enthusiasts will be able to ride a 20 mile route, while more recreational participants can shorten the route to as little as 2 miles if desired. Nocturnal riders will start at the Warrenville Commons Shopping Center and have the opportunity to travel the typically limited-access roads at Fermilab under a star-filled sky, and enjoy a healthy breakfast at the end of the ride. Chase the Moon is presented by and all proceeds benefit The Conservation Foundation, a private not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving open space and cleaning up rivers and streams in Northeastern Illinois. COST: \$35/rider for TCF members, \$40/rider for non-members Registration is required

Saturday, August 6 – West Chicago Prairie Guided Tour**

8:00am-11:00am, West Chicago Prairie, West Chicago

West Chicago Prairie features wet and mesic prairie, sedge meadows, bur oak savanna, woodlands and glacial potholes. Part of the West Chicago Prairie is designated as a Nature Preserve. Wear long pants & sleeves, sturdy shoes, insect repellent and bring water. Sponsored by the Wild Ones. For more info visit: <http://for-wild.org/chapters/dupage>

Saturday, August 6 – Churchill Woods/Glacial Ridge Prairie Restoration

9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Meet at Walnut Glen Park, 860 Walnut Street, Glen Ellyn

Would you like to help restore a local prairie, woodland or wetland? The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has several restorations going on. One of these is at the Churchill Woods/Glacial Ridge Forest Preserve in Glen Ellyn. We are looking for volunteers to help remove invasive plants, collect and plant native seed. For more information: Contact Steward **Bruce Blake** at **630-629-2520** or **Rllnstns1@aol.com**.

Saturday, August 20 – Quad Cities Mississippi River Paddlesports Festival**

9:00 am, Lake Potter, Rock Island

This festival is a Guinness World Record sanctioned attempt to amass the world's largest raft of canoes and kayaks (record is 1,619 in 2010). It will also include guided paddles on the Quad Cities Water Trails and beginner-friendly paddling lessons and programs. The cost is \$10 per paddler, which includes an event t-shirt and boat decal. Festival hosted by River Action. For more info visit: www.floatzilla.org.

continued on next page...

Calendar of Events, continued

Wednesday, August 31 – Green Drinks – Naperville**

7:00 pm, Location TBA

Every month people across the globe who are interested in environmental issues meet for informal sessions known as Green Drinks. Green Drinks – Naperville is just one of 750+ of these chapters worldwide. It's a lively mixture of people from business, NGOs, academia, our community and government. Our evenings start at 7:00 with networking, at 7:30 we have a conversation-starter presentation, followed by more networking. The August 31st meeting will focus on the topic: *How will we build and make things?* Check the web site for location at: www.greendrinks.org/il/naperville.

Saturday, September 24 – Moving Planet

11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Bike the route of your choice, Illinois Prairie Path, Great Western Trail, Salt Creek Trail or streets to Ruggard Gazebo, on the Prairie Path at Ardmore in Villa Park. Music, speakers, exhibits. Check the RPG web site for additional details.

Saturday, September 24 – Green Fair**

**10:00 am – 4:00 pm, Cantigny Park,
1S151, Winfield Road, Wheaton**

Cantigny and SCARCE will host the second annual Green Fair. The event will celebrate what's working in our community – for people, businesses and the environment. The Cantigny Green Fair line-up includes eco-activities for kids, a local and organic Farmers Market, cooking demos, live music, a "FashionEcoNista" show and so much more.

**Wednesday, September 28
Green Drinks – Naperville****

7:00 pm, Location TBA

Every month people across the globe who are interested in environmental issues meet for informal sessions known as Green Drinks. Green Drinks – Naperville, which was founded in February 2010, is just one of 750+ of these chapters worldwide. It's a lively mixture of people from business, NGOs, academia, our community and government. Our evenings start at 7:00 with networking, at 7:30 we have a conversation-starter presentation, followed by more networking. The September 28th meeting will focus on the topic: *How will we govern ourselves?* Check the web site for location at: www.greendrinks.org/il/naperville.

Friday, October 14 – Green Fire Screening

**7:20 pm, Naperville Unitarian Church,
4 S 535 Old Naperville Road, Naperville**

The River Prairie Group and Just Views will jointly host a free screening of a new film called *Green Fire*, the first full-length, high definition documentary film ever made about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold. The film explores Aldo Leopold's life in the early part of the twentieth century and the many ways his land ethic idea continues to be applied all over the world today. (The facility is provided at no cost and the program is free of religious content).

Wednesday, October 26 – Green Drinks – Naperville**

7:00 pm, Location TBA

Every month people across the globe who are interested in environmental issues meet for informal sessions known as Green Drinks. Green Drinks – Naperville is just one of 750+ of these chapters worldwide. It's a lively mixture of people from business, NGOs, academia, our community and government. Our evenings start at 7:00 with networking, at 7:30 we have a conversation-starter presentation, followed by more networking. The October 26th meeting will focus on the topic: *How will we waste less?* Check the web site for location at: www.greendrinks.org/il/naperville.

***Indicates activities that are not sponsored nor administered by the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has no information about the planning of these activities and makes no representations or warranties about the quality, safety, supervision, or management of such activities. They are published only as a reader service because it may be of interest to the readers of this publication.*

River Prairie Group (RPG) Outings

Note: All local Group outings are offered at cost. Longer and more expensive outings require deposits (ask leader about refund policy). Including updates on those below, new RPG listings, and offerings from other local Groups, current listings are on the internet at: illinois.sierraclub.org/outings. Contact the leader or assistant indicated for more information and outing requirements..

For up-to-date information, visit: illinois.sierraclub.org/outings

Jul. 9 (Sat.) Kayak/Canoe the Scenic Kishwaukee River, South East Rockford, IL

Kayak or Canoe the scenic Kishwaukee River, Rockford IL. The Kishwaukee River was named for the Potowatomi Indian word meaning "river of the Sycamore". Long ago, the Potowatomi Indians carved their canoes from the large Sycamore trees found in the valley and used the river to transport their goods for trade. Today, the Kish maintains a class "A" rating from the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources making it one of the three highest water quality river systems in the state. It has often been described as a "unique aquatic resource comparable to a stream without human disturbance". The cost of \$50 (\$35 for canoe) per person includes kayak/canoe, paddle and life jacket rentals, transportation to put-in spot and Sierra Club fees. Leader is **Paul Saindon**, assistant leader is **Karen Willden**. To sign up, email Paul at paul@pauls.us or call **815-310-0001** (after 5 pm).

Jul. 22-24 Canoeing The Upper Iowa River, Decorah, IA

Enjoy a canoeing weekend through a clear, meandering river. This river is ranked as one of the top scenic spots in America. The river features 100 foot bluffs, rising from the river's edge. Natural springs are frequent and eagles, hawks and heron are common along the towering rock formations. We will arrive Fri. night and base camp both Fri. & Sat. nights on river-front sites. Our camp includes hot showers and flush toilets. The cost of \$85 includes group meals, canoe rental and camp fee. \$5 discount for SC members. Limit 18 people. Leader is **Chris Lazzari**. Assistant leader needed. To sign up, call Chris at **630-863-3347** or e-mail him at clazstar@hotmail.com.

Aug. 6 (Sat.) Summer Hike at Indiana Dunes State Park, Chesterton, IN

Enjoy a summer hike (or swim) along the wooded trails in the 1,800-acre forest, and then continue on and over the dunes walking along the beach on one of the world's greatest lakes. Limit of 25. Leader is **Paul Saindon**, Assistant leader needed.. Email Paul at paul@pauls.us or call **815-310-0001**.

Aug. 27-Sep. 4 Teton National Park, Jackson Hole – Signal Mountain – Driggs, (ID), WY

Nine days (8 nights) in the spectacular Tetons; 4 nights in Signal Mountain Lodge Cabins, 4 nights in Driggs, ID. Hikes along Jackson Lake, Jenny Lake, Phelps Lake and 3 awesome canyons learning

about abundant wild life. The scenery is beyond description. Cost: \$530, payable in advance, includes lodging, Sierra Club donation and Jenny Lake boat shuttle. Not included: meals, transportation and park admission. Limit 12. Leader: **Joe Pokorny** Assistant Leader: **Paul Silverman**: **847-392-3433** / marshallgp@aol.com

Sep. 4-10 Glacier National Park Day Hikes, East Glacier Park, MT

Seven days (6 nights) in beautiful Glacier National Park. Learn about the effect of global warming on glaciers. Cost \$360, payable in advance; include 6 nights lodging & two Medicine Lake boat rides. Not included: meals, tips, park entry fee, or transportation. Amtrak goes to East Glacier, MT. Limit 12. Photos at: www.nps.gov/glac/photos.htm Leader: **Joe Pokorny**. Assistant leader: **Paul Silverman** **847-392-3433** / marshallgp@aol.com

Sep. 10 (Sat.) Biking and Prairie Seed Collecting, West Chicago/Geneva, IL

In the morning we will collect prairie plant seeds at the West Chicago Prairie, while learning from the steward about the history of this prairie, as well as the plants we'll be seeing. We will then bike on the Geneva Spur of the Prairie Path to Geneva, for lunch at one of the many restaurants there. After lunch we'll bike a bit of the Fox River Trail and then back to the prairie. Cost \$3. Leader **Steve Carrow**. To register contact Steve at **630-293-4988** or email stephencarrow@sbcglobal.net. See the link below for info on the West Chicago Prairie: <http://home.comcast.net/~wcpsg/>

Sep. 16-18 Bike and Hike Washington Island, Door County, WI

Join us for a biking/ hiking low stress adventure on secluded Washington Island located 6 miles off the tip of the Door County peninsula. We will bike on uncrowded paved roads around the island and the next morning we will bike over to catch the passenger ferry to primitive Rock Island State Park where we will explore some of the 10 miles of hiking trails. Approximate cost of \$130 includes lodging Friday and Saturday at a historic resort serving Scandinavian breakfasts. Please note: The group will meet late morning on Friday to catch the ferry over to the island or you can catch a later ferry (last is 6pm). Meals, ferry to Washington Island and incidentals are NOT included. Leader is **Mike Davis**. Assistant leader is **Berni Kolasa**. Call Mike at **815-331-3042** for more details and to reserve your spot.

continued on next page...



River Prairie Group (RPG) Outings, continued

**Sep. 23-26 Porcupine Mountain Wilderness –
Fall Color Hikes, Ironwood, MI**

Three day hikes at the Porcupine Mountain Wilderness in Michigan's Upper Peninsula with hiking and views unlike any other in the Midwest. Towering virgin timber (pines, cedar, hemlock, oak, maple), secluded lakes, waterfalls and miles of wild rivers and streams make a visit to the "Porkies" a trip to remember. Cost: \$150 includes: 3 nights lodging, 3 breakfasts & Sierra fee. \$5 member discount. Full payment required in advance. Limit 12. Leader: **TBD**. Assistant leader: **Paul Silverman 847-392-3433/marshallgp@aol.com**

**Sep. 30-Oct. 2 Backpack Manistee River Trail,
Manistee, MI**

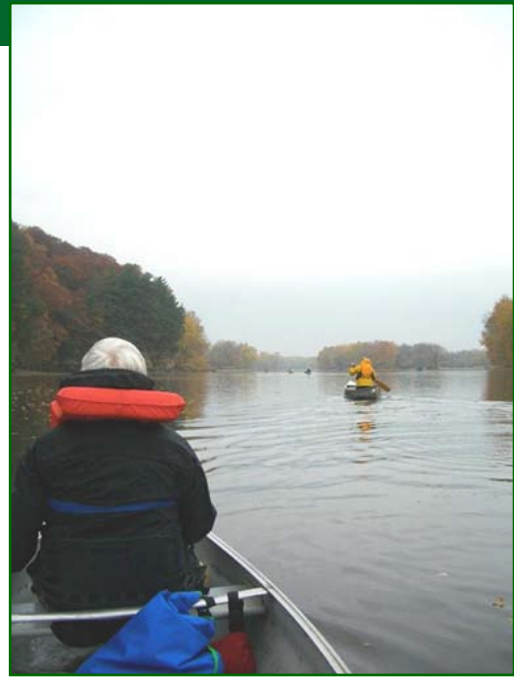
Join us as we backpack through an old-growth hardwood forest, enjoying scenic views of the Manistee River and spectacular fall colors. We will backpack a 22 mile loop formed by sections of the North Country and Manistee River trails. We will start on Friday and finish up around early afternoon on Sunday. The area is about 5-6 hours from Chicago. Skill: Adv Beginner. Cost: \$45. Contact the leader **Joseph Pratola** at jpratola@yahoo.com or **773-344-5287** after 5 pm. Limit 12. Assistant needed

**Sep. 30-Oct. 2 Cycling, Hiking, & Camping
in Park County Indiana, Park County, IN**

Join us in Park County Indiana for a weekend of cycling, hiking & camping. We will cycle on the roads of this area well-known for their covered bridges. We will ride 2 loop routes covering between 30 – 35 miles. Camping will be at Shades State Park which has several hiking routes available. We will do 1 or 2 hikes. Come out & enjoy the early fall here just before the mobs arrive for the Covered Bridges Festival. \$40 cost includes 2 breakfasts, dinner Saturday night & camping fees Sat. night. Limit 15. Leader is **Mark Ginger**. To sign up, contact Mark at **847-699-0329/bubbleman@earthlink.net**. Assistant Leader needed.

Oct. 1-5 Canoeing Ozark's Current River, Salem, MO

This is a National Sierra Club trip down the Current River in the Ozark's of Missouri. The Ozark National Scenic Riverways was established by an act of Congress in August 1964. The Current River flows across the southeastern flank of the Ozark Plateau. The plateau is mostly limestone and when the glaciers came down the land was thrust upward. The acidic water formed sinkholes, underground lakes, caverns, caves and a spring system that feeds the river today. The river is mostly spring fed that makes this river crystal clear, great for swimming, soaking, fishing or just lounging. Cost \$495 – Club membership required. Contact the national office or leader **Ed Gacek** at backcountrybound@comcast.net
Note: National Sierra trip number 11209A



*Canoeing the Rock River, Oregon, IL
Photo by Janice Bradford*

**Oct. 14-17 Shawnee National Forest
Fall Color Hikes, Harrisburg, IL**

Day hikes and fall colors in spectacular wilderness areas in Shawnee National Forest southeast of Harrisburg, IL: Garden of the Gods, Lusk Creek, Indian Kitchen & Heron Pond on the Cache River. For photos of the area visit: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/shawnee/recreation/photo/east/> and <http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/parks/r5/cachervr.htm>. The mix of trees can provide an unequalled autumn spectrum of color. Maple, gum, and dogwood produce brilliant reds, beech dress in yellow, oaks are scarlet, and pines sprinkle the palette with green. Learn "Why Leaves Turn Color." We'll be staying at a local motel. Cost is \$135 and includes lodging & 3 breakfasts. Limit 10. Leader: **TBD**. Assistant leaders: **Paul Silverman 847-392-3433/marshallgp@aol.com**

**Oct. 27-30 3-Day Backpack
at Hoosier National Forest, Story, IN**

A moderately paced fall color adventure of backpacking, camping, and hiking through the forested hills of south-central Indiana. Learn how this area of early settlement was converted over the years into a vast national forest. We arrive Thursday evening and camp in the area. Covering about 8 miles on each of 3 days (Fri-Sun), we'll backpack into the national forest on Friday, camp by a stream, spend the middle day hiking and exploring this vast wilderness area and backpack out on Sunday. Suitable for beginners in good physical condition and for experienced backpackers too. Limit 14. Cost is \$50. Leaders are **Fred Weber** and **Paul Saindon**. Call Fred at **630-469-6826/fredaweber@hotmail.com**

*For up-to-date information visit:
illinois.sierraclub.org/outings*

Join the Bluestem Network, *The Official Lobbying Network of the River Prairie Group!*

You'll receive a call whenever the Sierra Club Phone Tree Network is activated with an environmental action alert. Bluestem is generally activated on a monthly basis. Upon receiving the phone call notification, members can access the environmental action alert by two ways: receiving it at an email address or by checking the RPG Web page. The action alert instructs members how to place a call to elected representatives and the position that the Sierra Club has taken. A phone call to elected officials has proven to be the most effective way to have an impact on public policy. *To join, clip and mail the application to Linda Sullivan, 302 W Windsor Ave, Lombard, IL 60148.*

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

IL County _____

Sierra Club Member? Yes No

Home phone number _____
(required to join)

Answering machine? Yes No

Email address _____
if you wish to receive action alerts via email