

Canoe Trip Through Cache River Wetlands  
Sponsored by Cache River Joint Partnership  
Saturday, October 16th, 2010

You are invited to join Mike Brown, supervisor of the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, and other staff on a free canoe trip through the Cache River Wetlands. Get a frog's eye view of the wetlands, and see for yourself why this is an internationally recognized natural area. The fall colors will still be "on display", and the weather should be pleasantly cool.

We will meet at 8:00AM near Carbondale, and then gather at the Barkhausen Wetlands Center on Rt. 37 at 9:00 AM. We will then proceed together to the canoe access area. Canoes, paddles and personal flotation devices will be provided. Bring a hat, sun lotion, and bug lotion, plus water. Bring a lunch if you want to join us for a picnic lunch at the wetlands center after the canoe trip. Bring a seat cushion if desired. You can bring your own canoe or kayak, if you prefer.

There will be a 2 hour trip that will go to Eagle Pond and Long Reach. There will also be a 3 hour trip for those who want to see the Diehl Dam, and Buttonland Swamp. **Call Barb (618-529-4824) by Thursday, October 14th to reserve a space. Canoes are provided only if reserved.** Canoes provided by Shawnee Community College

*Disclaimer: The activities on this page 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 they may be of interest to the readers of this publication".*

Sustainable Living Expo and Shawnee Energy Fest  
Saturday, October 9th 9AM - 4PM  
Dixon Springs Agricultural Center  
FREE ADMISSION!!

This is an event for all ages, income levels and interests! Workshops demonstrations and vendors include four tracks: Energy, Local Foods, Conservation, and Survival. Bring the whole family - there will be a kids' activity area. Food and bands for when you want to take a break

Some of the workshops include: "Living Off the Grid", "Energy Audits", "Beekeeping", "Affordable Geothermal", "Forest and Wildlife Habitat Management", "Pond Management", "Wild Edibles", "Disaster Preparedness" and MORE!!

Interested in being a vendor, non-profit exhibitor or participant? To register in advance and for more information and possible transportation arrangements, visit the website at:

[www.shawneercd.org](http://www.shawneercd.org),

**Shawnee Group Executive Committee**

Group Chair/Conservation	Barb McKasson	<a href="mailto:babitaji@aol.com">babitaji@aol.com</a>	618-529-4824
Vice Chair/Treasurer/membership	Cindy Matthews	<a href="mailto:RNC120@gmail.com">RNC120@gmail.com</a>	618-942-2387
Outings	Bob Tyson	<a href="mailto:robkay43@webtv.net">robkay43@webtv.net</a>	618-684-5643
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Secretary	Scott Thorne	<a href="mailto:sleethorne@aol.com">sleethorne@aol.com</a>	
Webmaster	Chris Wiegman	<a href="mailto:chris@chriswiegman.com">chris@chriswiegman.com</a>	

# **Shawnee Trails Quarterly~Fall, 2010**

## **Shawnee Group Sierra Club**

### **Explore, Enjoy & Protect the Planet**

Website: <http://Illinois.sierraclub.org/Shawnee>

Blog: <http://www.shawneegroup.blogspot.com>

#### **ALERT! Coal Combustion Waste Regulations Must be Strengthened!**

Remember on Christmas Day, 2008, seeing the videos of houses being buried by a giant tsunami of black sludge? Ever since the holding pond containing a billion gallons of coal combustion waste at Kingston, Tennessee collapsed, the public and our government officials have suddenly awakened to the environmental and health hazards of coal ash. Studies have now shown that coal combustion waste (or coal ash) are much more toxic than previously thought. They contain dangerous levels of arsenic, selenium, lead, mercury, cadmium, thallium and other toxic materials.

Currently, the federal regulations for coal ash are weaker than regulations for household waste. State regulations are weak or non-existent. The good news is that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently in the process of revising the federal regulations for disposal of coal ash. In fact, the public comment period is taking place right now - and we need your help!

The bad news is that many in Congress have been persuaded by the powerful coal and electric utility industries to push for maintaining the weaker regulations. In fact, our own representatives - Jerry Costello, John Shimkus, and Tim Johnson - have all signed onto letters urging the EPA to keep the weak regulations.

We need to let our representatives know, loud and clear, that the letters they have signed onto are full of misleading information and inaccuracies about the public health risks of coal ash. Contrary to the letters that our representatives signed, EPA's proposals would completely exempt coal ash that's encapsulated from water and safely recycled into construction materials. Also, the letters claim that coal ash is safer than household garbage. Some studies have shown that coal ash dumps are so toxic that they can increase nearby residents' cancer risk to as high as a staggering 1 in 50 - nine times more dangerous than smoking a pack of cigarettes per day.

There are 21 coal ash ponds in Illinois, and 17 of them are over 30 years old, making them far more likely to lack pollution safeguards. These are all "time bombs" that must be defused before another community is buried, or loses its clean water supply. One of the most dangerous coal ash ponds is at Lake of Egypt, about seven miles south of Marion, IL. Another coal ash pond could inundate the Middle Fork of the Vermillion River, the only designated Wild and Scenic River in Illinois, used by many recreationists..

#### **Call Your Representative Today and Urge him to remove his name from the House Letter that advocates for weak regulations for coal ash, and to support regulation as hazardous waste.**

Jerry Costello - (202) 225-5661 (D.C.); 618-233-8026 (Belleville); (618) 529-3791 (Carbondale)

John Shimkus - (202) 225- 5271 (D.C.); (618) 344-3065 (Collinsville); (618) 252-8271 (Harrisburg)

Tim Johnson - (202) 225-2371 (D.C.); (618) 262-8719 (Mt. Carmel)

#### **Coal Combustion Waste Hearing - September 16th in Chicago.**

If you are interested in going to Chicago with other Sierrans, contact Barb (618) 529-4824 or Terri (618) 521-1030 or (618) 683-2222. Also, please check out the CBS 60 Minutes story at: <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6775608n&tag=related;photovideo>

## **Shawnee Group Programs ~Fall, 2010**

**Newsletters Are Quarterly: Save This Page, Mark Your Calendar!**

**Shawnee Group Programs** are held at **7:30 PM** in the back meeting room at the **Carbondale Township Office at 217 East Main St. in Carbondale**. Parking lot is behind the building, and is best accessed from Monroe St., just West of Marion St. and the first street south of Main St. Enter the meeting room through the green door off of the parking lot. Front door will be locked. Free and open to the public!

**Warming Waters and Fragile Frogs - September 9th - 7:30PM at the Carbondale Township Meeting Room** - Marj Brooks will share the results of her research on the effects of increasing water temperature on the metabolic rate of amphibians and insects, including sensitivity to pollutants.

**Marjorie L. Brooks, Ph.D.** is an assistant professor at SIU-C. She was a postdoctoral associate at the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS) from 2006-2008 and a recipient of an EPA-STAR Doctoral Fellowship from 1999 to 2002. Marjorie is interested in the effects of multiple, abiotic stressors such as climate change, UV radiation, and heavy metals on aquatic biota and foodwebs in the Arctic and in Illinois.

**Dinner before the meeting:** You are all invited to join the speaker and Sierra Club members at 5:45 at Tequila's Restaurant, 100 N. Glenview Dr. in Carbondale

**A Birding Trip to Trinidad with John and Martha - October 14th - 7:30PM - Carbondale Township Meeting Room** - John Schwegman will take us on an armchair birding trip into the wilds of Trinidad, with narration and photos of the many beautiful species of birds on the island of Trinidad.

John is a lifelong naturalist who had a long career as a botanist with the Illinois Department of Conservation and IDNR. He was instrumental in forming the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, and has been serving on the board of the commission. Since his retirement, John has continued to study wildlife, including mussels, dragonflies, birds and plants. Lucky for us, he also enjoys sharing his photography and stories.

**Dinner before the meeting:** Great Wall Super Buffet on frontage road off of Rt. 13 and next to University Mall at 5:45PM

**Nature's Highlights from the Pantanal to the Falklands - Nov. 11th - 7:30PM - Carbondale Township Meeting Room** - George Waring will take us to the Pantanal of Brazil, Iguazu Falls, bird and penguin colonies and more on a pictorial trip through South America.

**George Waring** is now a Professor Emeritus at SIU-C. He was a zoology professor at SIU where he taught and led research into animals and animal behavior for 40 years. George is also a worldwide traveler, with many stories to tell.

**Dinner before the meeting:** Hunan Restaurant at 710 E. Main St. in Carbondale at 5:30PM

## **Shawnee Group Outings~Fall, 2010**

**Mark your Calendar and Save this page. This is a Quarterly Newsletter**

Details also online at: <http://illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee> and then click on "Shawnee Group Outings" near the top of the page

**NOTE: When you see that an outing has two pickup locations, we will leave the first one at the exact time noted. If you are running late, we cannot wait and inconvenience people at the second location: You have the option of making haste to next pickup point.**

**NEW RULE:** Starting with the October hike, if there are not at least 3 people who have contacted the outing leader by 8PM on the evening preceding the hike, then the hike is CANCELLED. If you need a reminder of the hikes, contact Bob (robkay43@webtv.net) to be on his group email list, if you are not already on it.

**September 19th (Sunday) - Mike Petit Acres Hike, Pomona, IL-** Meet 1:00 PM at Leady's Feed store on Rt. 127, just South of Old Rt. 13 in Murphysboro, or call for directions. This private acreage is adjacent to Clear Springs Wilderness. We will hike along a pretty cliff line and formations. Observe new footbridge construction. Discuss the Landowner Conservation Stewardship Program incentives. Pets must be leashed. Bring lawn chairs for our social setting at the cabin after the hike. Leader is Bob Tyson at 684-5643. (Advanced beginner level)

**October 17th (Sunday) - Garden of the Gods Wilderness Hike, Herod, IL -** Meet 9:30 AM at Murdale Shopping Center big sign in Carbondale, or former Wal-Mart parking lot in Marion. We will hike the River to River Trail from the Hitching Post trailhead for 2 miles in and out (4 miles total). Limited to 10 hikers-RSVP required. This section traverses a backbone between ravines, double-stacked cliff line, and 3 observation points above the valley. Discuss the value of protected wilderness. Leader is Bob Tyson at 684-5643. More info on this trail can be viewed at <http://shawneegroup.blogspot.com> (scroll to Hitching Post Trail).

**November 14 (Sunday) - Bell Smith Springs Hike, Eddyville, IL -** Meet 9:30 at Murdale Shopping Center big sign in Carbondale, or 10AM former Wal-Mart parking lot in Marion. During leaf-off, we enjoy continuous rim top views into the canyon as well as cliff formations from the base trail. A visit to the natural bridge will depend on creek levels. Learn about the logging controversy in the 1980s. Leader is Bob Tyson at 684-5643. RSVP is required. More info about this area can be viewed at <http://shawneegroup.blogspot.com>.

**December 12 (Sunday) - South Atwood Ridgetop Hike, McClure, IL -** Meet 1 PM at the Murphysboro Ranger Station on W. Walnut just west of Murphysboro, or at 1:40PM at the gas station on the square in Jonesboro. The road to the trailhead thru steep pretty canyons during leaf-off is worthwhile even without the outing. This hike is 2 miles total. We will have great views as we continue to ascend the mountain on this old Forest Service road. We will also discuss volunteer opportunities within the Shawnee National Forest. Leader is Bob Tyson at 684-5643. RSVP is required. More info on this trail at <http://shawneegroup.blogspot.com>

# **Shawnee Trails Quarterly~Fall, 2010**

## **Shawnee Group Sierra Club**

### **Illinois Chapter- State Legislative Update**

Governor Quinn has signed the solar energy bills HB 6202 and HB 5429 that Sierra Club was instrumental in bringing about. These new laws will remove many barriers that have kept individuals and businesses from installing solar energy on buildings in Illinois. They would:

1) prevent any homeowners' association, deed restriction or covenant from prohibiting a solar energy system installation 2) set up a study of electricity metering programs in other states.

Net metering allows people with a solar electric system to put electricity into the electric grid, thereby lowering the need for battery storage and lowering their electric bill even further.

Another Sierra Club priority bill, HB6099, has passed both houses. HB 6099 would restrict the use of phosphorus by professional applicators to turf grass. This will help lower the amount of phosphorus draining into our waterways and causing excessive algae blooms. These blooms use up oxygen needed by fish and other aquatic life, and also has caused the "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico.

This caps a legislative session where we made a great deal of progress in a very difficult political environment, and at the same time beat back a host of bad ideas. Stay up-to-date with bills that are important to natural areas, clean air, clean water, energy and more at the Illinois Chapter website at: <[illinois.sierraclub.org](http://illinois.sierraclub.org)> Click on "legislative" on the left sidebar for status, fact sheets, etc., for the Illinois Chapter priority bills. The Illinois legislature will be back in session in Mid-November.

### **Nominations Now Open for Shawnee Group ExCom Elections**

Our next quarterly newsletter will list names and bios for the candidates for our Shawnee Group Elections. Any member of Shawnee Group can nominate himself or herself to run in the election. You must be a current, paid up member to run.

You must also submit a short biography and statement relating to why you are qualified to help Shawnee Group, what issues most concern you, how familiar you are with Sierra Club's purpose and goals, and what you may hope to accomplish or contribute. This statement must not be more than 150 words. The nomination information will be in the Winter 2010-2011 Quarterly Shawnee Trails, along with ballots.

Nominations must be submitted by October 15th, 2010. Send your name, phone number, Email address and bio/ statement by Email or regular mail to:

Shawnee Group Sierra Club, P.O. Box 117, Carbondale, IL, 62903 or Email it to [babitaji@aol.com](mailto:babitaji@aol.com)

**---→ Please Open Me Up to find the alert with information on an important phone call to your Congressional Representative and a hearing on proposed federal regulations on Coal ash, plus the dangerous waste lagoon here in Southern Illinois. ←--**

The meeting on this issue will be held at the Marion Library on Thursday, August 26 at 6:30PM.

This is an educational meeting on the issue, and on the proposed federal regulations that may or may not reduce the dangers to public health and safety - depending on public response and the resolve of the U.S. EPA. For more information: Barb - 618-529-4824 or Terri 618-521-1030

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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



**Shawnee Group**  
**P.O. Box 117**  
**Carbondale, IL 62903-0117**

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## **ALERT!! MURPHYSBORO RANGER STATION IN JEOPARDY**

by Bob Tyson

In between our last newsletter and this one, USDA announced a plan to reorganize Shawnee National Forest, which could close the Murphysboro ranger station. The notice gave the public one day to respond. Protests were initiated by Sierra Club, the Murphysboro mayor's office, tourism commission, and vendors to the Regional Forester Office and Representative Costello. Prior to this newsletter deadline, I asked the "damage control" unit at the Shawnee Forest Headquarters in Harrisburg to let us know the status of this proposal. There has been no response so far

In August, I inquired with the mayor and also Costello's office and looks like neither think a fight is worthwhile. Costello never received much response on the issue. Please call Costello's office to protest

If this closure becomes final and the Shawnee has no plan B, here are some ramifications:

1. Response time from Jonesboro will increase by 45 minutes for lost hikers and putting out forest fires in Jackson County.
2. Non-resident hunters need to look at maps-you can't do this by phone to Jonesboro. GPS coordinates at the office were only developed for official trailheads.
3. You will drive 25 miles for wood permits.
4. There have never been any buyer prospects for the closed ranger station at Elizabethtown. Murphysboro is also a depressed area, so prospects of a sale are nil.- a waste of tax dollars!
5. Most of the trail volunteers come from Jackson County. Are they going to drive 25 miles to assemble for workdays?
6. We are trying to promote tourism and 'get people outdoors". Trail info for hikers will be on a kiosk in Murphysboro. If all questions are answered on the existing board, why is the public calling or emailing me from the website/blogsite?

### **How you can help! Call NOW!**

Representative Costello - (618) 529-3791 or (618) 233-8026

Shawnee National Forest Headquarters:  
1-800-MYWOODS

Subscribe to our blogsite for alerts, updates and more!

<http://shawneegroup.blogspot.com>

### **SHAWNEE BLOG SITE UPDATE:**

<http://shawneegroup.blogspot.com>

Subsequent to our last newsletter, the following trails for self-adventure are added: Rocky Bluff trail and Lake Glendale trail. Hit the "subscribe" button to be notified when new items appear. Between our blog and our website, we have 85 trails

<http://illinois.sierraclub.org/shawnee/unclebob/adventures.htm>

### **ADOPT-A-TRAILHEAD VOLUNTEERS**

This is a reminder to turn in your timesheets to ranger Pearson by Sept 15 as the federal fiscal year ends on the 30th. our in-kind time contribution is equivalent to matching funds to augment the next budget year.

### **TRAIL NEWS FROM THE FOREST SERVICE - SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST**

#### **MISSISSIPPI BLUFFS DISTRICT (West side)**

**Volunteer work dates are:** Sept 11, Sept 25, Oct 23, Nov 6, Nov 1, Nov 20. There is a "women in the wilderness" event for Oct 9-12 - Call 1-800-MYWOODS for more information.

For all events, meet 9:45 at the Murphysboro Ranger Station and bring lunch, water, gloves, and appropriate footwear. Tools and helmets are furnished. Each event ends at 5pm. Prior to any date, call 687-1731 to verify if it is still on. Kelly Pearson is the contact person for this.

#### **Accomplishments as of July 26 on trails:**

1. 82 miles of trail maintenance is completed in both wilderness and non-wilderness., including fallen trees.
2. Completed a retaining wall structure on the Cedar Lake trail between Boat Dock Rd and Landreth Rd.
3. Trail brushing is complete on Cove Hollow, Kinkaid Lake trail, little Cedar loop trail. ( Bob's note: I think I lost 5 lbs working on Cove hollow)
4. Trail brushing and cleanout of drainage structures from Bald Knob to Clear Springs on the River to River Trail.
5. trail re-surfacing on the Buttermilk Hill trail from the parking area to the bottom of the hill.
6. new construction on a section of King Hollow trail to meet up with Clear Springs trail. Still dealing with downfalls. Anticipate king Hollow to be open to public by Oct 1.

#### **HIDDEN SPRINGS DISTRICT (East side)**

No volunteer trails work days have been determined yet. Trails Updates:

1. Indian Kitchen Trail in Lusk Creek Wilderness is rerouted by adding switchbacks in an attempt to curb erosion. this will add a half mile to the trail.
2. rock house crossing over Lusk Creek repaired. Old Guest Farm crossing reopened and dealt with erosion on the banks. Work also taking place in Secret Canyon and Saltpeter Cave crossing in the wilderness.
3. Work done between Peter Cave and Jackson Hole-no details.
4. Thacker Hollow: hauled in a half mile of gravel on an abandoned road just off Karber Ridge Rd.