



Sierra Club

Great Lakes Chapter

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SIERRA CLUB SUES
TO STOP STATE PARK
LOGGING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Sierra Club sued today to halt plans by the state to log trees in Illinois State Parks and Conservation Areas. Motion was filed by the international conservation and environmental organization in Jersey County Circuit Court, Jerseyville.

The Illinois Department of Conservation is accepting private bids for logging rights in a 345 acre tract of Pere Marquette State Park near Grafton in southwestern Illinois. The State Park is Illinois' largest.

"State Parks and Conservation Areas should not be exploited or meddled with for their timber," stated Ted Woodbury of Godfrey, Chairman of the statewide Great Lakes Chapter of the Sierra Club. "Parks are inviolate areas where living things such as trees should be protected and preserved. Protected strongly by Illinois law, parks should be free from man's manipulation by politicians, bureaucrats, or private interests."

Conservation Director David Kenney and the staff of the Illinois Department of Conservation were named as defendants in the Sierra Club's request for a declaratory judgment. The suit charges that Kenney and the Conservation Department may be proceeding with an act for which there is no statutory authorization and which might expose a successful bidder to criminal liability.

(more)

The Conservation Department staff, including Kenney, journeyed to Alton last June to try to justify to a packed meeting room their reasons for proposing the selective cutting of the 345 acres of trees in the eastern portion of the park. The area, which is located near the Pere Marquette Youth Camp, was the scene of a forest fire 4 years ago. The state hopes to earn \$10,000 for the timber sale.

Plans to sell fire damaged trees, according to the DOC, would improve forest management, enhance wildlife habitat, provide timber salvage, and reduce chances of insects and disease.

The Sierra Club and many other conservationists believe that these reasons are not necessary nor defensible in a Park. The suit charges that park loggings are also illegal and clearly against the provisions of Illinois statutes and the intentions of the General Assembly and the citizens of Illinois. The Sierra Club is not only sharply critical of the logging operation at Pere Marquette, but attacks similar planned activities elsewhere. The state refuses to deny intentions to cut timber in the future in other State Parks and Conservation Areas, according to the Club.

"Logging is just the latest incompatible, incongruous encroachment on Illinois State Parks by administrators and politicians," pointed out Robert Freeman of Godfrey, a member of the local Piasa Palisades Group of the statewide Great Lakes Chapter of the Sierra Club. "Increasingly protected parkland is being treated in violation of the statutes by the state as no different than ordinary agricultural and commercial property open for development."

"Allowing logging in a State Park and Conservation Area sets a dangerous and illegal precedent," State Chairman Woodbury added. "This philosophy would give the state the carte blanche to do a lot of destructive tinkering around the state. Under mandates of the Illinois General Assembly and the people there should be exceptional and beautiful areas such as State Parks that for aesthetics, science, recreation, and other features should be left protected and undisturbed by man. State Parks are parks, not tree farms."

APPENDIX

BACKGROUND DATA SHEET: LOGGING IN ILLINOIS STATE PARKS

I. History

There is no authority given to the Illinois Department of Conservation which permits logging in State Parks and Conservation Areas, but recent changes in DOC philosophy now press for such logging practices.

1. A DOC news release of May 10, 1978 announced plans for logging at Pere Marquette State Park, Baldwin Wildlife Management Area, and others. (Emphasis added).

2. After repeated requests for discussions on the proposed logging, a special meeting was arranged at the regional Department of Conservation office in Alton on June 26, 1978 between concerned citizens and DOC staff. Conservation Director Kenney did not deny that other State Parks would be subjected to logging. He stated that the Department of Conservation would have to make the decision.

3. Although the DOC stated that it would probably be a year before any action would be taken on the Pere Marquette site, a team of forestry people were quickly moved into the area, and the trees were marked and tabulated. The board feet were totaled up: 314,000 board feet from 345 acres and 1973 individual trees, which would yield approximately \$10,000 to the state general revenue fund.

4. Bids will be closed on October 14, 1978 with the winning bidder to be announced on October 18, 1978.

II. Destructive, Exploitative, and Illegal Features of State Park Logging

1. Parks are protected natural areas for trees, wildlife, wildflowers, and plants.

2. Parks are established because they are exceptional natural areas that people of Illinois and other states visit and enjoy.

3. Enabling legislation in 1925 which established the Illinois State Park system states:

It shall be the policy of the State of Illinois to acquire a system of State Parks which shall embody the following purposes and objectives:

...To preserve large forested areas and marginal lands along the rivers, small water courses, and lakes for a recreational use different from that given by the typical city park, and so these tracts may remain unchanged by civilization, so far as possible, and be kept for future generations. (Chapter 105, par. 466 Illinois State Statutes) (emphasis added)

III. Refutation of DOC's Excuses for Logging

Illinois' DOC has offered four reasons for logging in State Parks: 1) salvage, 2) sanitation, 3) habitat improvement, and 4) forest rehabilitation.

THERE IS NO NEED FOR LOGGING BASED ON ANY OR ALL OF THE ABOVE PRETENSES:

1. Salvage. Since the trees are in a State Park (as opposed to a State Forest), they were never intended to be converted into lumber. Logging in a State Park or Conservation Area is illegal and is clearly not authorized by the Illinois General Assembly.

Fire is a natural part of the life cycle of a forest. (The DOC bases the Pere Marquette State Park logging need on damage caused by a 1974 fire.) Dr. Roger C. Anderson, Professor of Biology at Illinois State University, Normal, and specialist on Forest Ecology, states that the infrequency of fires in Illinois hardwood forests in recent years has actually hindered the development of oaks in the state. Despite some evidence of the fire still present after several years of regrowth, the burn area is not unaesthetically pleasing by any means.

2. Sanitation There has never been within distant memory an attack by insects or disease on Illinois hardwood forests, according to Dr. James Fralish, Professor of Forestry, Southern Illinois University (Carbondale).

Furthermore, the devastating ice storm during the winter of 1978 caused widespread damage to trees over a large area of Pere Marquette State Park. Yet no attempt is being made to clean up the tons of relatively small diameter, unmarketable wood that lies dead on the forest floor.

3. Habitat Improvement By wildlife habitat manipulation, man tends to favor certain species of wildlife over others merely to further his own self-interested purposes.

Game hunting was introduced into Pere Marquette State Park in 1974 in part because of alleged species overpopulations. But curiously, "habitat improvement" is intended to help increase the numbers of certain species--usually game animals. The proposed logging site in Pere Marquette is in the midst of the area in the park used for game hunting this year and last.

4. Forest Rehabilitation Management, manipulation, and exploitation of trees in a forest for euphemistic "rehabilitation" are foreign, antagonistic, and un-parklike practices in a State Park. These are terms associated with silviculture and the logging industry.

In the absence of strict regulations and guidelines, rigorously enforced, "rehabilitation and management" opens the door to mischievous and illegal intrusions by man in parks and other protected lands.

IV. Other Agencies/Organizations Strongly Oppose State Park Logging

1. Illinois Nature Preserves Commission--an arm of the Department of Conservation itself!

"The Commission opposes large-scale and extensive non-commercial and commercial timbering and salvage operations in State Parks, and in Pere Marquette State Park as currently proposed by the Department of Conservation." Resolution 469, July 21, 1978.

Supporting arguments for the resolution came from George Fell, Executive Secretary, who pointed out that this proposal is an example of the historic confrontation between the philosophies of preservation and those of multiple-use of resources, a conflict repeated many times in many places. "Multiple-use" is a euphemism utilized to defend many consumptive practices which frequently threaten natural and scenic resources.

2. Sierra Club, Great Lakes Chapter (Illinois)
3. Illinois Environmental Council (state coalition of conservation and environmental organizations)
4. Audubon Council of Illinois (National Audubon Society)
5. Piasa Palisades Group, Sierra Club (southwestern Illinois)
6. Various members and officers of the Illinois Audubon Society

V. Other Examples of Exploitation in Illinois State Parks

The most recent logging proposal is only a continuation of a series of intrusions into the sanctuary of State Parks.

1. Game hunting was introduced in State Parks by Governor Walker and has been continued under the Governor Thompson administration.

2. The Illinois Department of Transportation and the Department of Conservation have proposed a large tourism and highway rest stop in a natural area of Fort Massac State Park in Massac County.

3. A four lane divided Interstate is scheduled to precisely bisect Frank Holton State Park in St. Clair County.

4. A controversial multi-boat marina is proposed for construction at Illinois Beach State Park near Zion in Lake County.

5. Snowmobiles are now permitted in many of the northern Illinois State Parks.

6. In Pere Marquette State Park there still remains the rusting, paint peeling remains of an abandoned military missile base of the 1950's.

7. Citizen protest eventually halted the destruction of winter roosting sites of the American Bald Eagle at Pere Marquette State Park caused by the construction of a ski lift by a St. Louis entrepreneur. Site was later moved to a clear-cut area near the proposed

logging operation. Ski lift was later abandoned (1960's).

VI. ILLINOIS RANKS 49TH OUT OF 50 IN STATE PARKLAND PER CAPITA.
FURTHER DEGRADATION OF OUR EXISTING PARKS BY UNWISE AND DESTRUCTIVE
PRACTICES IS UNCONSCIONABLE.