

Palisades Views



Volume XXXX No. 8

August 2011

Former Green Party candidate to lead workshop in Collinsville

By Dick Worthen
Group member

Sierrans are invited to attend a Democracy and Environment workshop with David Cobb from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 20, at the Collinsville Area Recreation District office, 10 Gateway Drive in Collinsville (Splash City).

Cobb is a lawyer and a dynamic speaker. He ran as the Green Party candidate for president in 2004 and served with Piasa Palisadea Group

member Dick Worthen on the national Sierra Club Corporate Accountability Committee.

Cobb lectures and organizes environmentalists and others to oppose the U.S. Supreme Court's decision that gives "personhood" to corporations. If you think corporations have too much power and don't know what to do about it, this is the workshop for you.

Cobb enthusiastically shares a message of hope for all of us in these days of political and environmental stress. Everyone is encouraged to attend. To register, please call Worthen at (618) 465-0183 or e-mail him at rworthen@ameritech.net.

Picnic is Aug. 13

Would you like to get better acquainted (or reacquainted) with other Piasa Palisades Group members?

Come to the summer picnic on Saturday, Aug. 13, at Beaver Dam State Park, near Carlinville.

We'll start gathering around 11 a.m. for hiking and other activities then eat a potluck meal in Pavilion No. 4. Some people may camp that weekend (see the CALENDAR for more information).



WANTED

PEOPLE INTERESTED IN BULK VINEGAR — A Sierra Club member would like to purchase a large quantity of full-strength (20 percent) vinegar to mix with liquid soap and use as a vegetation killer. He needs others to join him, as the minimum order is four 55-gallon drums at \$165 each plus shipping. Shelf life for cooking is 18 months. If interested, please contact Ron at trimmer@charter.net.

Leopold film will be shown in February

By Rich Keating
Group co-founder

On a cold winter weekend, Dick Worthen and I drove north to Madison, Wisc. to attend the premiere of "Green Fire," a documentary on the history of Aldo Leopold and his enduring contribution to a land ethic.

It was wonderful experience. On the drive back, we hatched a plan to bring the film to metro-east audiences.

I recently was informed by Grant Andree, coordinator of the Southern Illinois University Arts and Issues series, that the film will be shown at SIUE on Feb. 3.

As exciting as that news is, I also learned that pre-eminent conservation historian Curt Meine will accompany the program as a speaker.

I own a copy of Meine's "Correction Lines: Essays on Land, Leopold, and Conservation" (Island Press, 282

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Finding optimism despite environmental bad news

By **Wayne Politsch**
Group chair

Summer in Southwestern Illinois is an invitation to enjoy the great outdoors.

Explore Heartland Prairie in Alton or hike in the woods anywhere. Ride on one of many bike trails. Take an early-morning canoe trip on Piasa Creek. View the sky on a starry night.

Other possible activities include gardening or bird-watching in

your own back yard. Nature's beauty and mystery can stir passion and renew body and soul.

What to do during the excessive summer heat wave? It's a good time to catch up on reading. I recently stopped by a Borders bookstore to take advantage of its liquidation sale.

In the environmental section, I noticed stacks of books with titles such as "Collapse," "Countdown to Global Catastrophe," "Emerging

Water Scarcity," "World Without Ice Caps" and "Peak Oil," just to name a few.

Throw in a few more books dealing with nuclear contamination and shrinking glaciers, and you have a laundry list of risks confronting the human species in the 21st century.

One of the books explained that scientists internationally, after studying hundreds of satellites orbiting Earth, have concluded that 15 of the

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AUGUST CALENDAR

Friday, Aug. 5 Screening of “Fresh,” a new documentary by Ana Sofia Joanes that celebrates “food architects” around the country who are boldly reinventing our food system with sustainable-agriculture initiatives. Show time is 9:30 p.m. at Alton Riverfront Amphitheater (film runs 72 minutes). Come early for a special evening Farmers and Artisans Market that begins at 6 p.m. Locally grown produce, baked goods and handcrafted items. Free. For more information, call Christine Favilla at (618) 462-6802.

Saturday, Aug. 6 Great River Rendezvous Kayak Race and Social Paddle with activities in Grafton and at Piasa Harbor, Alton Marina and Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area in West Alton, Mo. Race will begin at noon at Grafton boat ramp and end about 3:30 p.m. at Riverlands Way pavilion. Other activities include a social paddle, clinics and seminars from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Register at www.greatriverwatertrail.org or call (314) 518-0950.

Wednesday, Aug. 10 Piasa Palisades Group monthly bike ride. Leisurely, 10-mile loop with some hills on the Heritage, Goshen and Nickel Plate trails. Take a new side trail to get ice cream at Culver’s. Meet at 6 p.m. in the first parking lot at Miner’s Park, off South Main near the covered bridge in Glen Carbon. Google N38 44.947 W89 58.996 for a map. Helmet required. For more information, contact Jim Bensman at (618) 463-0714 or jbensman1@charter.net. In case of questionable weather, including extreme heat, call if you are not on the outings listserv.

Saturday, Aug. 13 Annual Sierra Club picnic at Beaver Dam State Park near Carlinville. Join us for this free and fun event! Meet from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Pavilion No. 4. The club will provide grass-fed and vegetarian barbecue and hand-squeezed lemonade. Bring a side dish or something sweet and your own reusable plates, silverware and cups. Please, no disposable Styrofoam, plastic or paper. Other activities will include canoeing, hiking and washers. All ages welcome. Please RSVP to Virginia Woulfe-Beile at (618) 977-2319 to give us an idea of how much barbecue to cook. For directions and more information about the park, visit <http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/parks/r4/beaver.htm>.

Sunday, Aug. 14 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight hike. Explore Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville by the light of the full moon. Meet at 8 p.m. Level terrain. Open to all. For more information, call trip leader Gayle Borman at (618) 254-2250.

NON-SIERRA CLUB ACTIVITIES

Wednesday through Wednesday, Aug. 3-10 “Coming Home to the Sacred Universe” retreat at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. Focus on nature and spirituality. Rituals on the land, input from presenters, time for individual and group contemplation and meditation, optional discussion circles and vegetarian meals in a mindful atmosphere. The cost is \$550. For more information, call (618) 466-5004 or visit www.lavistaelc.org.

Tuesday, Aug. 16 “Amazing Caterpillars” program at Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville. Ecologist June Jeffries will talk about their life, history, identification, survival tricks, special relationship with native plants and how to look for them. Meet from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Space limited. Registration required. Appropriate for adults and children 8 and older. Fee is \$3. For more information, call (618) 692-7578.

Saturday, Aug. 20 Democracy and Environment workshop with David Cobb (see related article). Meet from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Collinsville Area Recreation District office at Splash City. For more information, call Dick Worthen at (618) 465-0183 or e-mail him at rworthen@ameritech.net.

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Palisades Views

is a monthly publication for and about Sierra Club members.

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**DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER:
SATURDAY, AUG. 27**



CALENDAR

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Saturday, Aug. 27 Get Outdoors

Saturday program on insects at Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville. Learn about insects, their parts and how to tell the temperature by listening to cricket chirps. Hours are 10 a.m. to noon. Free. For more information, call (618) 692-7578.

Saturday, Aug. 27 Spider Walk and Nocturnal Insect Identification program

at Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville. Hours are 8 to 10 p.m. Brief introduction followed by walk to the observation tower. We will set up to attract night-flying insects, and participants may assist in catching them. Space limited. Registration required. For more information, call (618) 692-7578.

FILM

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pages). If you want read a beautifully written history of our civilization's evolving attitudes toward nature and conservation, it's the best.

Meine covers all the bases. The book really is a course in Western attitudes toward nature. He weaves together a who's who of conservation history, including Thoreau, Muir, Olmstead, Pinchot, Teddy Roosevelt, E.O. Wilson and all the others.

Meine points out that success in appreciating the natural world, in all of its complexity and intrinsic worth, requires that we change ourselves, not just the land.

The other book you should read before the February program is Leopold's "A Sand County Almanac," the posthumously published essential classic that strongly influenced our modern environmental attitudes.

OPTIMISM

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planet's 24 ecosystems have been seriously degraded.

We are about to pass on to the next generation a serious ecological debt of degraded water, air and soil, as well as biodiversity loss.

Each year, the world seems a bit more dangerous, divided, hotter and dryer.

Scary facts about worldwide trends can lead to pessimism, denial, apathy and hopelessness. There are few reasons to be positive about the future or expect people to get personally engaged.

However, when you join organizations like the Sierra Club and meet people working to restore Earth systems, you can't help but feel optimistic and motivated.

I remain hopefully pessimistic. I'm inspired by local people and organizations working on environmental issues in Southwest Illinois. A few examples:

— United Congregations of Metro East and local churches have taken on the twin issues of "racial reconciliation" and "caring for the Earth creation." They have helped get Alton, Edwardsville and Glen Carbon to sign on as "cool cities" to reduce fossil-fuel use and lower carbon footprints.

— The Nature Institute in Godfrey and Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville have restored land for public enjoyment and research. They also provide nature-related learning experiences for thousands of children each year.

— Some area residents have been instrumental in prairie and woodland restoration. Others are educating the public on native plants, birds and river issues. Still others are starting local community-

supported gardens and farms. They are unsung environmental heroes.

— A world-class river research center now is operating in a LEED-certified building a few miles up the Great River Road from Alton. It is connecting scientists and citizens from the Mississippi River headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico. The goal is to understand and restore natural processes of the river.

Now you might be asking, "What can I do starting Monday morning?" It depends ...

If you are a parent, grandparent or child, a good place to start is in a park or your back yard. Many children are suffering from "nature-deficient disorder." They've never caught lightning bugs or crawfish in a creek, heard owls hoot or crickets chirring away on summer nights.

If you are a baby boomer, you may have the time, wisdom or money to make a difference politically. Many boomers keep track of what is going on with Congress and corporate money. They have the skills to turn things around. They vote. They know how to knock on doors and write letters to senators and representatives.

It's a moral issue whether we hand over to the next generation a cleaner, more livable environment.

Enjoy the summer. Connect with people in your community. Walk gently on the Earth.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The Fifth Annual Mississippi Earthtones Festival will be held on Saturday, Sept. 17, at Alton Riverfront Park with a river clean-up, bands, arts and crafts, vendors, food and beer.