

Palisades Views



Volume XXXVIII No. 7

July 2009

Grab your picnic basket

Organizers of the Piasa Palisades Group's summer picnic are trying something a little different this year. Activities will take place on Saturday instead of Sunday and earlier in the day to help people avoid the late-afternoon heat.



The date is Aug. 8. Organized activities will include hiking and canoeing at 10 a.m. followed by a potluck meal at 1 p.m. in Pavilion No. 3 (same as last year).

People are welcome to show up earlier. Beaver Dam is a great place to hang out. The pavilion reservation begins at 8 a.m.

Horseshoes and Frisbees also will be available.

The club will provide burgers, brats and vegetarian alternatives; buns, condiments and freshly squeezed lemonade. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

Carol Klinger and Jim Bensman are leading a campout at Beaver Dam on Friday and/or Saturday night in conjunction with the picnic. People can stay overnight or just check out the Perseid's meteor shower.

Study has good and bad news

By Richard C. Keating
Group member

Every so often, it is useful to see a summary of the status of protected natural habitat on the Earth.

The most habitable landscapes have been grossly altered by human activity, so we can take pride in the growing interest in original landscapes and our long-term role in their protection.

These areas are crucial to the survival of endangered species and for "ecological services" such as watershed protection.

More than 106,000 areas are legally protected worldwide, according to "The Ecological Performance of Protected Areas," a recent study published by University of Sheffield (England) faculty member Kevin J. Gaston and other researchers in the Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution and Systematics.

That includes 19.6 million square kilometers (about 3.8 percent of the Earth's surface or 11.6 percent of the total area of countries and adjacent territorial waters).

This is equivalent to the areas of South America and the Caribbean Sea, respectively!

These statistics are astonishing. But in the next 20 pages, the researchers assess the ecological performance of protected areas and, as

you might guess, we're not home free.

First, in many countries where biodiversity is highest, levels of protection leave much to be desired. There may be little enforcement against resource extraction or even protection of reserve boundaries against outright destruction.

Second, we don't have reliable inventories of biodiversity and its health for reserves in many regions of the world.

In summary, the researchers note that protection and management will be increasingly important concerns. Species and ecosystem loss rates directly correlate with levels of surrounding human population density.

Means must be found to enhance peaceful coexistence, so in the coming centuries we will not just be left with "rock and ice," the easiest habitats to protect.

NOTICE

As is traditional, the Piasa Palisades Group will not hold monthly meetings in July and August.

Meetings will resume the second Monday in September.

Have a great summer!

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Serving the Southwestern Illinois counties of
Bond, Calhoun, Fayette, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison and Montgomery.

Action alert: Help stop bad bill from becoming law

Described by some as “TIF on steroids” and the “worst bill ever,” Illinois Senate Bill 1909 -- the STAR Bonds Financing Act -- gives taxpayer money to private developers to develop on 100-year floodplains because such sites are more likely to remain “underutilized” and “undeveloped.”

To be eligible, a site must be vacant and cover 600 acres or more,

with at least 30 percent in a floodplain.



According to government officials, Illinois is one of the nation’s most flood-prone states, with floods costing more than \$250 million a year.

Development in flood-prone areas already has caused increasing levels of damage and destruction. Floodplain preservation

reduces the number and severity of floods, helps handle stormwater runoff and minimizes non-point water pollution.

Floodplains frequently contain large tracts of wetlands and provide critical wildlife habitat. Wetlands store and filter floodwaters and help recharge aquifers.

The Illinois Department of Revenue says STAR Bonds developments

See STAR/page 4

2009 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair	Wayne Politsch	6424 Alpha Drive, Alton, IL 62002	(618) 466-6150
Vice chair/programs	Dave Gocken	435 E. Schwarz, Edwardsville, IL 62025	(618) 656-8304
Secretary	Laura Asher	1406 Liberty St., Alton, IL 62002	(618) 465-8586
Membership	Gayle Borman	510 Hamilton Blvd., Wood River, IL 62095	(618) 254-2250
Political action	Everett Loy	221 Ladd, Alton, IL 62002	(618) 462-5919
Outings/chapter	Jim Bensman	1802 Main St., Alton, IL 62002	(618) 463-0714
Conservation	Virginia Woulfe-Beile	616 E. 16th St., Alton, IL 62002	(618) 465-1842
Personnel	Sandy Wood	1719 Central Ave., Alton, IL 62002	(618) 463-0358
Chapter representative	Joseph Michlitsch	44 Sunset Hills, Edwardsville, IL 62025	(618) 659-0181

OTHER COMMITTEES AND STAFF

Treasurer	Jill Mellenthin	447 E. 15th St., Alton, IL 62002	(618) 465-5490
Outings	Larry Tucker	1822 Park Ave., Apt. A, Alton, IL 62002	(618) 462-0649
Fund-raising	Bob Freeman	4813 Kaskaskia Trail, Godfrey, IL 62035	(618) 466-0656
Personnel	Bob Larson	909 McKinley, Alton, IL 62002	(618) 462-4448
Hospitality	Audrey Wiseman	3941 Sarah Lane, Alton, IL 62002	(618) 259-5997
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CALENDAR

Wednesdays, July 1 to Aug. 26
Prairie walks at Gordon Moore Park's Heartland Prairie in Alton, sponsored by The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Spend about an hour in a restored native prairie, beginning at 6:30 p.m. A guide will identify flowers in bloom. Bring family and friends. The prairie is across Illinois 140 from the main park property. For more information, call Nan Adams at (618) 655-0170.

Monday to Monday, July 6 to 13
Student Environmental Leadership Training, sponsored by the Sierra Student Coalition. Weeklong peer-to-peer training at Pere Marquette State Park near Grafton. Develop skills in grassroots organizing, leadership and communication; network, bond with other students, engage in fun activities and enjoy tasty vegetarian cook-

ing. The subsidized cost of \$200 to \$300 (sliding scale) covers tuition, room and board, local transportation and Sierra Club membership. Limited need-based tuition and scholarships available. For more information, visit the Web site at www.sierraclub.org.

Tuesday, July 7 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight hike at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Explore Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve by the light of the full moon. Meet at 7:30 p.m. at Talahi Lodge, 2213 S. Levis Lane. From Homer Adams Parkway in Alton (Illinois 3), turn right on West Delmar in Godfrey (also Illinois 3), left on Levis Lane and left on South Levis. Bring a friend! For more information, call Sandy Wood at (618) 463-0358.

Wednesday, July 15 Piasa Palisades Group monthly bike ride. Cover about 10 miles on the Schoolhouse Trail, which is flat and paved, in the Collinsville and Granite City areas, including Horseshoe Lake State Park. Break for ice cream at Culver's. Meet at 6 p.m. in the Metro East Park and Recreation District lot (north on Illinois 157 from Interstate 55/70 and left on United Drive). For more information, call Jim Bensman at (618) 463-0714.

Monday, July 20 Piasa Palisades Group Executive Committee meeting. All members are welcome to attend! Meet at 7 p.m. at the Sierra Club office, 223 Market St. in Alton.

Wednesday, Aug. 5 Piasa Palisades Group monthly moonlight

hike at The Nature Institute in Godfrey. Explore Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve by the light of the full moon. Meet at 7:30 p.m. at Talahi Lodge, 2213 S. Levis Lane. From Homer Adams Parkway in Alton (Illinois 3), turn right on West Delmar in Godfrey (also Illinois 3), left on Levis Lane and left on South Levis. Bring a friend! For more information, call Sandy Wood at (618) 463-0358.

Friday and/or Saturday, Aug. 7-8
Camping and stargazing at Beaver Dam State Park, near Carlinville, in conjunction with the Piasa Palisades Group summer picnic (see below). View the Perseid's meteor shower. An "amazing" experience last year. Led by Carol Klinger and Jim Bensman. For more informa-

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NOTICE

You can begin receiving Palisades Views electronically, if desired, saving trees and money on postage and printing.

We would stop mailing paper copies and e-mail notices that new issues have been published. The notices would include links to pdf files on the Piasa Palisades Group Web site.

This is optional. We want you to read the newsletter! If the print version works best for you, don't do anything.

If the electronic method sounds good, send your name, mailing address and e-mail address to Christine.favilla@sierraclub.org.

Palisades Views

is a monthly publication for and about Sierra Club members.

To submit a newsletter item:
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**DEADLINE FOR AUGUST:
 SATURDAY, JULY 25**



Appreciative public turns out for recycling

By Sandy Wood
ExCom member

Piasa Palisades Group recycling drives in Collinsville and Jerseyville were successful, although turnout wasn't as high as it was in Alton, where trucks were full before people had dropped off all their electronics, computers and appliances.

Great volunteers showed up in each community, including a neat group of recent Jerseyville High School graduates earning community-service scholarship credits. Fortunately, the weather was not as hot in Jerseyville as it was in Collinsville the weekend before.

Staff person Christine Favilla again scored well for the Sierra Club and the environment with her networking, hard work and volunteer support (sandwiches, water, etc.). We heard plenty of "thank yous" from people bringing their old TV sets.

Chapter anniversary

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Sierra Club's Illinois Chapter. The Piasa Palisades Group celebrated its 25th in 1997, so we are still young at 37.

ExCom members Sandy Wood and Virginia Woulfe-Beile are collecting stories about the group's history. If you have any, please e-mail them to swood@piasanet.com.

Book group

Rich Keating is helping to organize a Sierra Club book group, an idea that has surfaced occasionally over the years. Environmental authors could range from Henry David Thoreau to John Muir, Al Gore to William Least Heat-Moon. Talk to Rich about your ideas for readings and meeting times and places.

WEB SITE

The Illinois Department of Agriculture has an interesting Web site. Among other things, you can find information on the emerald ash borer, a new pest that threatens the survival of all species of ash in Eastern North America.

Visit the site at www.agr.state.il.us/eab/ and click on "Reforestation" then "Central Illinois list" or "Southern Illinois list."

This will identify tree species that people should consider planting as part of landscaping.

Questions often arise about what kinds of trees are best suited to this area, as opposed to what nurseries are pushing in any particular year. The state lists seem to be well-considered, even if a bit heavy on cultivars.

CALENDAR —

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tion, contact Klinger at ciklinger@yahoo.com or (618) 288-5630.

Saturday, Aug. 8 Piasa Palisades Group summer picnic at Beaver Dam State Park, near Carlinville (see related notice). Organized activities include hiking and canoeing at 10 a.m. and a potluck meal in Pavilion No. 3 at 1 p.m. Show up earlier if you want. Horseshoes and Frisbees will be available. The club will provide burgers, brats and vegetarian alternatives; buns, condiments and fresh-squeezed lemonade. Bring plates and eating utensils and a side dish or dessert to share. For more information, call Gayle Borman at (618) 254-2250 or Bob Larson at (618) 462-4448.

WANTED

The Nature Institute in Godfrey is seeking volunteers to work at Heartland Prairie at Gordon Moore Park in Alton.

Activities range from maintaining trails to clearing woodland to guiding walks.

Learn how to eliminate aggressive invasives, maintain healthy prairies and woodlands and identify grasses and forbs.

Volunteers meet from 9 a.m. to noon once a month (usually the first Saturday). For more information, call Nan Adams at (618) 655-0170.

STAR —

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could cost the state \$15 million per project per year. Multiple sites could be eligible.

Such projects would be unwise at any time, but especially now that the state faces an enormous deficit and severe budget cuts. They also could harm nearby communities, financially and environmentally.

Senate Bill 1909 has passed in the Illinois Senate and House and is on its way to Gov. Pat Quinn. He has been a longtime champion of protecting river ecosystems and managing floodplains wisely.

The bill promotes sprawl, rewards private developers for irresponsible development on the backs of taxpayers and goes against everything we have learned over the years about floodplain management.

Call Quinn at (217) 782-0244 or (312) 814-2121 and ask him to protect communities, the environment, wildlife and taxpayer dollars and deny special funding for private developers by vetoing the STAR Bonds Financing Bill.