



Northwest Illinois Audubon Society

www.nwilaudubon.org

NIAS MONTHLY MEETINGS

Join us the first Tuesday of every month, September through May. All of our meetings are open to the public.

Most meetings are held at the St John United Church of Christ, 1010 Park Blvd., in Freeport.

Most meetings begin at 7PM with announcements, followed by the program at 7:30 and then refreshments.

Check the current newsletter or our website (nwilaudubon.org) for specific monthly details, special events or any changes to the usual time and place.

Please join us!

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Top: Tundra Swan by MDF (Wikimedia Commons)

Text: allaboutbirds.org/

Mid: Black Bear by

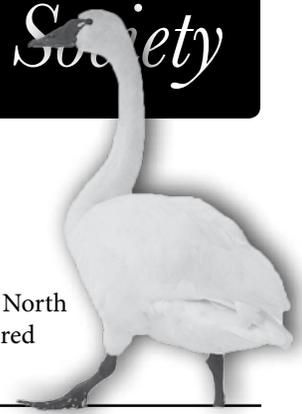
Pearson Scott Foresman

Lower: Migratory Birds by Antranias

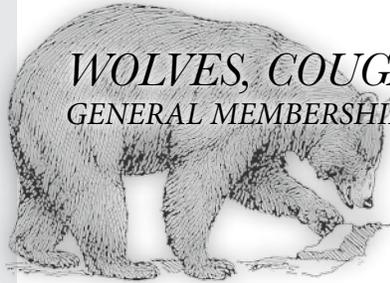
October - November 2015

Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus*

"True to its name, the Tundra Swan breeds on the high tundra across the top of North America. It winters in large flocks along both coasts, and is frequently encountered during its migration across the continent."



WOLVES, COUGAR AND BLACK BEAR SIGHTINGS GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND PROGRAM



October 6 at 7:00 PM
St John United Church of Christ
1010 Park Blvd, Freeport

The program will be presented by Peggy Doty who is an educator with the University of Illinois Extension and will be about large predators in Illinois. There have been sightings of Wolves, Cougars and Black Bears in our state during the last few years. These animals are not planning a covert return and takeover of our communities but rather are simply trying to adjust to changes in their current environments which can send them our direction. This program will discuss the animals themselves and the behaviors that may be playing a part in their attempts to return.

THE MIGRATORY BIRDS OF MAGEE MARSH GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND PROGRAM

November 3 at 7:00 PM
St John United Church of Christ
1010 Park Blvd, Freeport



The program will be presented by Mitch Davis who is an avid bird watcher and amateur wildlife photographer from the quad cities area. He will show pictures from the six years that he and his wife have visited Magee Marsh. This marsh is on the southern shore of Lake Erie and is a gathering point for migratory birds before they make the arduous crossing of the lake during the spring migration. Warblers and other neo-tropical migrants are abundant here during early May which makes for great bird watching and photography.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Donna McKenzie - Dakota | Marjorie Smith - Elizabeth | Charlotte Bourne - Freeport
Dale Heinkel - Freeport | Barbara Luedeke - Freeport
Gail Mitchell - Lanark | Laurie Stitzel - Shannon

CALENDAR CONSIDERATIONS

September 27 - Prairie Seed Collecting at our Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 2-4 p.m. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 1:30. The Preserve is located about 3 miles southwest of Forreton in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. Parking is off of West Grove Rd. *If weather is questionable call Mary at 815-938-3204. See page 3 for information about getting on our seed collecting call list.*

October 2 - Birdseed Sale Orders are due to Tim Smith! *Have you sent yours in?*

October 3 - Aldo Leopold Shack and Leopold Center & International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, WI, 7am departure. *See Field Trips on page 3 for more information.*

October 6 - *Wolves, Cougar and Black Bear sightings*, GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND PROGRAM, 7:00 p.m. St John United Church of Christ, 1010 Park Blvd, Freeport (*see page 1 for details*).

October 10 - A Night of Exploring the Milky Way, Saturday, 6-8 p.m. "A night of exploring the Milky Way" at the Doug Firebaugh Observatory, Park Hills Golf Course, 2892 W. Stephenson St., on Saturday, October 10 from 6-8 p.m. Jim Dole, director of the observatory and astronomy instructor at HCC, will lead an introduction and observing session of celestial objects visible in October. Among the objects that you can expect to see (weather permitting) are the major constellations, double stars, star clusters, and planetary nebulae. *This event is open to all ages. In case of inclement weather, the event will still be held, but with a modified program in the observatory.*

October 11 - Prairie Seed Collecting at our Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 2-4 p.m. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 1:30. The Preserve is located about 2 miles south of Leaf River on Leaf River Rd. *If weather is questionable, call Mary at 815-938-3204. See page 3 for information about getting on our seed collecting call list.*

October 14 - "Talking About the Issues" monthly discussion session 7-9 PM at the home of Richard Benning; 704 N Davis St in Davis (815-865-5279). The first hour will focus on the two creation accounts in Genesis and how they impact peoples' views and behaviors concerning the natural world. The second hour will be the customary discussion of whatever issues are brought forth by participants. All are welcome to attend these issues discussions. Carpool from the Staples parking lot in Freeport at 6:30 PM or call Richard for directions.

October 15, 16, 17 - Birdseed Pickup and Delivery. We can always use more help. Check the flyer you received in the mail or on our website for details. *Call Mary at 815.938.3204 to volunteer.*

October 17 - Kid's Fall Nature Walk at Oakdale Nature Preserve, 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. We will lead a hike around Oakdale and look for birds and other fall creatures. We will have binoculars for the kids to use and nets/jars to collect any critters we can find. Meet in the parking area of the Newell Tract, the part of Oakdale on the west side of Crane's Grove Road. *Leaders: Juliet (201-233-0946) & Carol Redmore*

October 21 - Last Campfire of the year at Elkhorn Creek. Prairie stroll at 5:30 p.m., with the campfire to follow at 6 p.m. S'mores and water will be provided. Bring a lawn chair and flashlight. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 5 p.m. The Preserve is located about 3 miles southwest of Forreton in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. Parking is off of West Grove Rd. *If weather is questionable, call Mary at 815-938-3204.*

October 23 - Work Session at Elkhorn Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 10 a.m. - noon, with optional lunch after at a nearby restaurant. We'll be primarily working on lopping larger Multi-flora Rose that we skipped in the summer so as not to disturb nesting birds. Water, snacks, tools, gloves and directions provided. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 9:30. The Preserve is located about 3 miles southwest of Forreton in the southeast corner of West Grove and Freeport Rds. Parking is off of West Grove Rd.

October 24 - Campfire Raindate (*see October 21*)

October 27 - NIAS Potluck and Reflections for Elkhorn Creek and Silver Creek Preserve Volunteers at 5:00 p.m. We'll gather at the home of Randy and Nancy Ocken (815-938-3506). Bring a dish to pass; beverages will be provided. After supper we'll discuss 2015 preserves stewardship and consider ideas for 2016. Any and all preserve volunteers from prescribed burns, brush cuts, seed collecting or any other activity - are welcome to participate. Carpool from the Staples lot at 4:30 p.m. or call Ockens for directions. *Please RSVP to Ockens if you plan to attend.*

October 29 - A Conservation Conversation will be held at Amigo's Restaurant on the corner of Galena and Clark in Freeport. Join us at 5:30 for some Mexican and/or American fare and some friendly conversation about conservation. Newcomers are welcome. *Please join us!*

November 3 - *The Migratory birds of Magee Marsh*, GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND PROGRAM, 7:00 p.m. St John United Church of Christ, 1010 Park Blvd, Freeport (*see page 1 for details*).

November 5 - Work Session at Silver Creek Biodiversity Preserve, 1-3 p.m. We'll be working primarily on uprooting honeysuckle and setting some boundary posts and signs. Water snacks, tools, gloves and directions provided. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 12:15. The Preserve is located about 2 miles south of Leaf River on Leaf River Rd. *If weather is questionable, call Mary at 815-938-3204.*

November 7 - Audubon Council of Illinois (ACI) meeting in Champaign, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Contact Rex (408-390-3970) or Mary (815-938-3204) for agenda and carpool information.

November 8 - Field Trip, Tundra Swans on the Mississippi. *See Field Trips on page 3 for more information.*

November 10 - NIAS Board Meeting at St John UCC, 7-9 PM

November 13 - Prairie Seed Processing at the Neinhuis Deluxe Heated Shed! Join us from 7-9 p.m. for a fun evening as we prepare our seed collection for planting. No experience is necessary and refreshments will be provided. Seed processing is sort of like a botanical quilting bee with lots of good conversation. Anita and John live at 3350 S. Mill Grove Rd., Pearl City, about 8 miles west of Freeport. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 6:30 or call Anita for directions at 815-443-2401.

November 15 - "Talking About the Issues" monthly discussion session, 1:30-3:30 p.m. (*NOTE AFTERNOON TIME!*) at the home of Mary Blackmore, 9024 W. West Grove Rd., Forreton (815-938-3204). The first hour topic will be "Arctic Drilling;" call Mary for a copy of the topic reading. The second hour will be the customary discussion of whatever issues are brought forth by participants. All are welcome to attend. Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 1 p.m. or call Mary for directions.

November 19 - A Conservation Conversation. Held at Amigo's Restaurant on the corner of Galena and Clark in Freeport. Join us at 5:30 for some Mexican and/or American fare and some friendly conversation about conservation. Newcomers are welcome. *Please join us!*

November 20 - Prairie Seed Processing and Potluck Lunch, 9 a.m. *Details same as November 13 except for this morning work session, bring a dish to pass and table service for lunch after our work.*



Aldo Leopold Shack and Leopold Center & International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, WI

Saturday, October 3, 7:00 a.m. departure

Leader: Chris Kruger 815-238-9259

Travel with us to Baraboo, WI to tour the Aldo Leopold Shack and Leopold Center. Many consider Leopold to be the greatest conservationist of the 21st century. Visit the land that inspired "A Sand County Almanac," and tour the Center that continues his legacy. In the afternoon, we will visit the nearby International Crane Foundation. This non-profit organization is dedicated to the research, education, habitat protection, captive breeding, and reintroduction of cranes. For more information, check out www.aldoleopold.org and www.savingcranes.org. **A limited number of spaces available. Please confirm with Chris ASAP so we can arrange guides and carpool.**

Carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 7 am. Bring a sack lunch. Admission fee \$17 for both. Please bring cash and we will collect before we get there to save time. Dress for the weather, multiple layers and rain gear, long pants, and closed toe shoes are strongly recommended. Expected return time by 6 pm. Contact Chris Kruger at 815-238-9259.

A Night of Exploring the Milky Way,

October 10, Saturday, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

"A night of exploring the Milky Way" at the Doug Firebaugh Observatory, Park Hills Golf Course, 2892 W. Stephenson St., on Saturday, October 10 from 6-8 p.m. Jim Dole, director of the observatory and astronomy instructor at HCC, will lead an introduction and observing session of celestial objects visible in October. Among the objects that you can expect to see (weather permitting) are the major constellations, double stars, star clusters, and planetary nebulae.

This event is open to all ages. In case of inclement weather, the event will still be held, but with a modified program in the observatory.

Field Ornithology (BIOL 119) will be offered at Highland Community College for Spring 2016.

The course is worth 2 credit hours for college credit, but is open to all students. The course is designed to introduce bird species to the students with local field trips within the area. The lecture portion will meet Wednesday evenings from 6-6:50 p.m. and labs will be Friday mornings, scheduled from 8 am to 9:50 am. Note, some labs require early morning times to reach travel destinations for ample birding time and there may be occasional labs that run past 10am as well.

Instructor will be Biology instructor Juliet D'Souza (NIAS board member & education chair), 815.599.3414

To register, go to www.highland.edu for more information.

Kid's Fall Nature Walk at Oakdale Nature Preserve

Saturday, October 17, 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Leaders: Juliet (201-233-0946) & Carol Redmore

We will lead a hike around Oakdale and look for birds and other fall creatures. We will have binoculars for the kids to use and nets/jars to collect any critters we can find.

Meet in the parking area of the Newell Tract, the part of Oakdale on the west side of Crane's Grove Road.

Tundra Swans on the Mississippi

Sunday, November 8, 2:00 p.m.

Leader: Mary Blackmore 815-938-3204

After a nesting season on the high Arctic, Tundra Swans (formerly Whistling Swans) migrate south, many using the Mississippi flyway before veering east to coastal estuaries. During fall migration Tundra Swan flocks can number in the hundreds, a truly impressive sight (and sound!).

Join us at Spring Lake at 2 p.m. or carpool from the Staples lot in Freeport at 1 p.m. We'll plan to check out several additional sites downriver for Tundra flocks and other birds, and be back in Freeport around 5:30.

FALL PRAIRIE SEED COLLECTING SIGN-UP

It's not too late to help with prairie seed collecting. With the exception of Sept. 27 and Oct. 11, scheduled seed collecting days, we collect on short notice as weather permits. To get on the call list, contact Mary at 815-938-3204. When called, join us if you are available, or if not, we will catch you another time.

No experience? No problem! Seed collecting is an easy, leisurely task. Novices are welcome. There will always be a leader to point out which plants to pick seed from. Water, snacks and equipment will be provided. Wear long pants and long sleeves. It's a fun way to spend a couple of hours on nice fall afternoons. We hope you can join us!

DON'T FORGET TO CLEAN YOUR FEEDERS!

Birds can get sick from leftover bits of seeds and hulls that become moldy, as well as from bird droppings on feeder trays. Therefore, you should clean your feeders about once every two weeks - more often during times of heavy use. For best results wash your feeder thoroughly in soapy water, then soak or rinse it in a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water. Dry the feeder thoroughly before refilling. Also remember to clean the ground below your feeder to prevent accumulation of waste. Moldy or spoiled food is unhealthy not only for birds but for your outside pets.

REMEMBRANCES OF KEITH

Keith Blackmore, ecologist and founding member of our Chapter, passed away on Tuesday July 21 at his home in Forreston. For many of us, Keith is the person who opened the gate and pointed us down the path toward better preserving and protecting our natural world. Every conversation with Keith could deepen and strengthen your understanding. Whether sitting across from him at an Audubon potluck, working by his side at Elkhorn Creek, or listening to his stories and insights at one of the campfires, spending time with Keith could give you a deeper appreciation of our Earth and a stronger sense of our membership in its natural community.

Photo by Chris Kruger

Martha, the last Passenger Pigeon, died in captivity in 1914. In 1947 Aldo Leopold wrote in his Sand County Almanac, "Men still live who, in their youth, remember pigeons. Trees still live who in their youth, were shaken by a living wind. But a decade hence only the oldest oaks will remember, and at long last only the hills will know."

That passage reminds me of Keith Blackmore, a giant of a person who loved everything about the natural world. This is how Leopold's words remind me of Keith:

As long as people live who knew Keith, his memory will live on; When all those people are gone, the prairie grasses and flowers and all the living creatures will remember, but a few decades from now, only the Bur Oak trees will remember, and at long last the hills will know. Earth will remember him.

– Lynda Gibson Johnson

I am finding so many things to remind me of Keith as the semester starts. I miss his insightful (and yes, biting cynicism) comments at opening days, the conversations I used to have with him on our twice a week dinners before our evening classes, discussing the hopeful signs we're seeing in a few bright students and our dismay at the indifference shown by so many.

I must say a bright spot has been the joy I feel in spending time with Audubon folks. I think each of us has absorbed a little bit of Keith into their persona, and when a group of us are assembled it's almost like we can resurrect him momentarily. I enjoyed the campfire earlier this month and seeing everyone at the memorial.

– Steve Simpson

Keith was one great man who so generously shared his knowledge with others. An amazing man who will be missed.

– Teresa Smith

Keith was a hero of mine. He's the one that sent me on my life's journey back in high school. I really don't know where I'd be right now had I not had his summer class when I was a junior in high school. He's been a wonderful teacher and inspiration all through my life. He touched so many lives both through his teaching at HCC, but also with his interactions in Audubon. Gonna miss that guy!!

– Laura Dufford

Keith lives on in our hearts and our minds and in each thing we do for our precious planet.

– Rex Sides

Keith was an inspiring figure – not only in your community – but also across the Audubon network. A true environmentalist, he will be missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

– Audubon Chicago Region

REMEMBRANCES OF KEITH

It was good seeing all your faces yesterday at the memorial service. It was such a beautiful service and the speakers were so perfect with their words.

Some of you saw me get pretty emotional and although I was embarrassed a bit to cry in public, I know that the tears were not only about Keith as a person, but also about Keith as an inspiration. I know I cried because if Keith can inspire these hundreds of people in the room to be better stewards, who do we have to take his place? I worry all the time about the future of our planet and I wish that I could inspire people the way he did.

I hope that we can continue on his legacy as members of Audubon. As stated yesterday, "What would Keith do?"

– Juliet D'Souza

He took the road less traveled by... and that has made all the difference. We will miss his presence so much on the prairie but will always feel that big spirit near.

– Kara Gallup

For many of us, Keith is the person who opened the gate and pointed us down the path toward better preserving and protecting our natural world. Every conversation with Keith could deepen and strengthen your understanding. Whether sitting across from him at an Audubon potluck, working by his side at Elkhorn Creek, or listening to his

stories and insights at one of the campfires, spending time with Keith could give you a deeper appreciation of our Earth and a stronger sense of our membership in its natural community.

– Lynn Feaver

When one is an adult one thinks that the time for mentors and role models has passed. Keith however, for many of us young and old was just that, our role model, teacher, mentor and guide. He was the almost perfect model of how to live one's life. He was a teacher his whole life, 24/7. And we learned so much from him. We've often asked, "What would Keith do?"

– Patty and Chuck Wemstrom

"What will you do with your one wild and wonderful life?" asked Mary Oliver. We all know what Keith did with his—he lived it fully, richly, and joyfully, this one life on this earth that he loved. Now let's make sure that we listen to "What would Keith do?" to preserve this earth on this planet in our own wild and wonderful lives.

– Carol Redmore

He was such a wonderful teacher and what I learned in his classes has traveled with me over the years.

– Susan Servatius

Keith was a great teacher and friend. Whether we were birding in Big Bend, Outer Banks or around the wetlands here, Keith and Mary would show us the birds, plants, butterflies or whatever we saw. Keith would always give us the Latin name for the plants, and I would say, "Keith, would you give us the common name for the rest of us"... He would smile and tell us. He will be missed by all of us.

– Anne Straight

I will greatly miss him, and miss his help on identifying birds and plants for me.

– Somer Bozovsky

A great man, very inspiring. The Earth and its creatures thank him.

– David C. Olson

Keith was truly a great teacher who encouraged you to think beyond the textbooks. I truly enjoyed the give and take in his classroom. If you could support your position with facts and intelligence, you earned Keith's respect whether he agreed with you or not.

– Cindy Carter

Truly a great teacher. When I made the decision to go to college it was Mr. Blackmore's Biology class during my first semester that awakened my love for learning. Enjoy your walk in the woods. I will never forget you.

– Steve McDaniel

REMEMBRANCES OF KEITH

I met Keith 25 years ago as a student in his biology and ecology classes at Highland. Not the best student, I bombed the ecology bird test and found myself sorting the college's trash for extra credit with Keith's garbology study. I was also encouraged to attend some Audubon programs were he talked me into a student membership with NIAS. I often teased Keith about that bird quiz, but now realize what a gift it was. I will always appreciate all that I learned from Keith, all the great natural areas we explored, and all the wonderful people he introduced me to along the way. May Keith continue to inspire us all to explore, conserve, and enjoy our natural world.

– Chris Kruger

Keith was a very special man. Every time I was able to spend time with him I learned something new. He will be sorely missed.

– Gary Gordon

Through adage and observation, ecological philosophy or botanical perception, rare is a day that doesn't evoke Keith's voice.

– Dan Barron

It is with great sadness when you lose a mentor. I was, and always will be, challenged to make a positive impact without leaving a footprint. It is upon his shoulders that I am able to see farther today.

– Scott Web

We have lost a wise leader!

– Sheila Baum Wyeth

In recent weeks, Mary Blackmore has forwarded many donations that were received in Keith's memory to the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society. In her note to the Board, Mary stated:

"Keith's connection to our Chapter began in the mid-70's and was a huge part of his life. He strongly believed in the force of good that our Society is. He very much enjoyed the work that he did and cherished the friendships he had with his fellow volunteers. Please use this money however you see fit."

Our Board is considering a number of ways to direct these donations to the kind of work that Keith would support, and that would pay tribute to his life in a permanent and on-going way. Your suggestions are welcome.

Thank you all.



Photo by Dan Barron

KIDS & FAMILIES

NEW PROGRAM

Wildlife Wednesdays

At the Freeport Public Library, Audubon board member and Education chair, Juliet D'Souza is hosting a monthly series called Wildlife Wednesdays. During the program, she will provide a special story time with activities related to the theme that month. She will also bring specimens of critters. Appropriate audience is two- to seven-year olds.

For October:

Batty for Bats

October 7, 10:30 - 11 a.m.

For November:

Birds and Beaks

November 4, 10:30 - 11 a.m.

Future dates to be determined!

UPCOMING EVENTS

(see Field Trips on page 3 for more details)

A Night of Exploring the Milky Way

Saturday, October 10

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

We will host "A night of exploring the Milky Way" at the Doug Firebaugh Observatory, Park Hills Golf Course, 2892 W. Stephenson St.

Kid's Fall Nature Walk at Oakdale Nature Preserve

Saturday, October 17

9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

We will lead a hike around Oakdale and look for birds and other fall creatures. We will have binoculars for the kids to use and nets/jars to collect any critters we can find.

WEBPAGE

Don't forget to check out our Kids and Families section on our webpage at:

<http://www.nwilaudubon.org/kids-families.asp>

On the webpage, you will find the following resources:

- A beginner birder section, featuring a different species for each edition.
- Nature's Book Nook, sharing our picks for young readers.
- A family activity.
- Links to useful websites and resources to get your children involved in nature.
- Beautiful photos of interesting species for your children to learn about previous editions of our "Kids and Families" issues for you to revisit.

Stay tuned for next month's newsletter for holiday gift ideas!

NEW binoculars!

Eagle Optics provided us with a great matching deal and now we have 11 quality pairs of binoculars for kids to use for our nature walks and other events!

TOWARD A

COOLER PLANET

*46th in a Series,
by Dan Barron*

TAR SANDS OIL, PART I

Beneath the endangered boreal forests and wetlands of Alberta Canada lies the world's third largest oil reserve, the Canadian tar sands. Tar sands refer to a substance called bitumen, which consists of petroleum soaked sandstone. Procuring oil from the "sand" is done through enormous strip mines, or if the reserves are too deep "in-situ" methods are used resulting in widespread fragmentation and disturbance.

Tar sands production requires massive amounts of energy and water to produce steam, which is needed to loosen the oil from sticky bituminous sands. This process releases more greenhouse gases than any other method of oil extraction. Water used during extraction becomes contaminated with heavy metals, hydrocarbons and other toxic carcinogenic substances, which as a result must be stored in large toxic tailings "ponds" (lakes). As production from tar sands has grown so have the size of these toxic lakes, which as of 2013 covered over 30 square miles of Alberta. These tailings ponds directly harm the health and livelihood of indigenous people, fish, birds and other native inhabitants.

The danger from tar sands isn't only present in Alberta. Once extracted, tar sands oil must be moved to refineries, either via train or pipeline, many of which run directly through highly

sensitive areas. Downstream the threat from tar sands oil looms over the sanctity of North American fresh water ecosystems.

In the Midwest the Mississippi River valley is home to a high number of diverse animal and plant species, some of which are endangered or species of concern. The river valley is also a major North American flyway for migrating birds. Despite the sensitivity of this region many trains and pipelines carry dirty crude oil through wetlands, lakes, streams and rivers. Moving these substances through risky and isolated areas makes rapid response almost impossible.

(to be continued in part II)

GOING SOLAR?

Part III: Types of Residential Solar

By Josef Appell



Here's a picture of my display at the August 22-23 Illinois Renewable Energy Association Fair: The motor home with solar panels, powering LED lights and a 12v refrigerator, thus eliminating the fossil-fuel refrigerator. A solar generator powers all the lithium powered garden and lawn tools; lawnmower, cultivator, chainsaw, weed wacker, hedge trimmer, blower, and Dyson vacuum cleaner. (No gas, oil, spark plugs, oil/air/fuel filters, or maintenance for 5 years...PRICELESS!) Three E Bikes (charged by the Sun) that augment errands and recreation, minimizing fossil fuel vehicle use.

A quick note before getting into the types of residential solar systems: the 30% government tax rebate expires the end of 2016, so you have a little bit of time to work this out – but there's a lot to do:

FIRST THINGS FIRST: SITE ASSESSMENT

The very first step is to have a site assessment done. Failure to do so will result in decreased performance, as shading can occur, and trees that do not appear to be a problem now, can be in a few years. Also a good site assessment will help you assure that PV (Photo-Voltaic) panel orientation is optimized.

PLACEMENT

There are two choices for PV placement: roof or ground. The advantages of roof mount are: theft/vandalism deterrence; no loss of yard space; prolonged life of shingles (the roof MUST be in good shape before the install); and, for some people, better aesthetics. The advantages of ground mount are: easier snow removal, and the ability to adjust the tilt angle throughout the year.

TYPES of SYSTEMS

The most common type of system is "Grid-Tied." This uses the grid as a "battery," where you store excess during the day, and draw from it at night. Permits are required.

The most common misconception is that "ComEd will pay you." What you earn are credits, and ComEd calls them to be cleared twice a year... times that are most advantageous for them! This is called Net Metering, and may require that a second meter be installed. Also, utility companies are increasingly

moving towards "time-of-use" charges, where they charge a higher rate during peak usage hours. Many of them do not pay you at this higher rate, but rather at their standard cost.

There is one option for "making money" and that is to sell REC's, Renewable Energy Credits, which are also known as renewable energy certificates. RECs are electronic certificates only and are composites of various data sources. They identify pedigree characteristics of the particular generator such as: location, the emissions output of the generator, the fuel the generator uses to produce electricity, and the date the generator went online, also known as its vintage. This involves a lot of paperwork, and a very large system, as you must have surplus to "sell." Be aware that some utility companies are starting a surcharge for new solar/wind installations. This is being opposed by Clean Energy, but it is too soon to know how this will play out.

A second type of system is "Off-Grid." It is common in mountain and remote areas, where it may cost \$25K or more to bring power lines in. Be aware that some communities have laws against this. Just ask the widow in Florida who spent a month in jail because she refused to move out of her "condemned"

house after she went off-grid. Bottom line, check the ordinances before you consider this option. Also, plan on a backup generator, as there are "solar dry spells" throughout the winter. Know that the battery back-up system will exceed the cost of the PV panels.

A "Hybrid" system utilizes both, although the smaller battery bank is designed for temporary, blackout conditions. A hybrid system will automatically switch to battery back-up when the grid goes down, and will provide power to a few essential circuits only...lights, furnace, refrigerator, etc. Not A/C!

IN THE END...

The best way to learn about what type of residential solar is best for you is to visit and talk to actual owners. You're in luck! National Solar Tour Day is October 3rd. So if you are not going on the Leopold Shack and Crane Foundation field trip, plan on attending one or more of these sites. The schedule isn't out yet, but there are several good spots in the Oregon IL area.

Questions/comments?
revoxltd@hotmail.com

Would you like to join Audubon as a NEW Member or give a GIFT membership?

Two types of membership are available:

1. Northwest Illinois Audubon Society and National Membership

includes this local newsletter, local mailings and the national "Audubon" magazine.

___ Individual \$20 ___ Senior Citizen \$15 ___ Student \$9

Prices listed are for NEW national memberships only and DO NOT apply to renewals.
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2. Northwest Illinois Audubon Society Local only Membership

includes this newsletter and other mailings from our local chapter. ___ Local Only \$15

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Newsletter Editor | Dan Barron

1706 Johnson St - La Crosse WI 54601

815-541-3261 - dan@beewise.us

THANK YOU!



Butterfly Festival Volunteers

Thanks to the following people for helping with the Butterfly Festival at Elkhorn Creek on Saturday, July 25:

Kara Gallup – beverage server and cookies, loaned us her tent

Anne Straight – greeter and brought cookies

Laura Dufford – cookies and greeter

Richard Benning – lead tours and brought the nets

Juliet D'Souza – brought cookies and lead tours

Dave Derwent – lead the 1:00 tour

Anita Neinhuis – brought cookies

Lynn Feaver – set up tents and clean up, mowed the trails

Chris Kruger – loaned us his tents and coolers, helped with clean up

Tim Smith – set up the tents and clean up

Rex Sides – set up tents and clean up

Austin Sides – set up tents and clean up

Terri Clark – loaned us her tables and chairs

Mary Blackmore – made initial phone calls for the Porta Pots and the tour leaders

Teresa Smith – brought beverages and cookies and helped serve

Alice Akins for preparing a deluxe breakfast at her home for Elkhorn Creek workers on July 28. *It was terrific, Alice!!*

Prairie Work Session volunteers from July 15 through August 18:

John and Anita Nienhuis

Randy and Nancy Ocken

Judy and Harlan Corrie

Fred and Carol Redmore

Kara Gallup

Anne Straight

Mary Blackmore

Lynn Feaver

Juliet D'Souza

Sterling Taylor

Sandy and Lynn Feaver for hosting in their home the annual NIAS board retreat.

Recent Field Trip Leaders:

Richard Benning, Laura Dufford,

Chris Kruger and Pam Steinhaus.

Harlan Corrie for repainting the Elkhorn Creek signs.

BIRD SEED SALE ALERT

This year's Bird Seed Sale will be held October 15-17. If you can help with sorting orders or delivering seed, please call Mary at 815-938-3204.

BINOCULAR DONATIONS WANTED

Good quality binoculars that could be used for field trips, particularly for our children events. We have field trips with children throughout the year and many of them do not have their own binoculars. We would like to give the children the opportunity to learn how to use binoculars and have more fun on our nature walks! You can bring donations to Juliet D'Souza at any of the next meetings. Any questions, please send them to nwilaudubon@gmail.com.

**Northwest Illinois
Audubon Society**

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Freeport, IL 61032-0771

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