

# Missouri Valley Sierran

Publication of the Sierra Club's Missouri Valley Group, Nebraska Chapter

June/July 2008

<http://nebraska.sierraclub.org/movalley>

Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet

## June Program

# Learn Latest on Metro Hike/Bike Trails

By Mary Green  
Program Director

Recreational trails, used by bicyclists, runners, and walkers, are increasingly being recognized for

bringing health and recreational benefits to neighborhoods and communities. Omaha has made significant progress over the past decade in developing its trail network, and

currently there are about 80 miles of paved trails in and around the city.

The 3,000-foot Missouri River Pedestrian Bridge, linking Omaha and Council Bluffs, is scheduled to be completed in

November 2008. This bridge provides a link to the American Discovery Trail, and will connect Omaha's Riverfront Trail to Council Bluff's Levee Trail.

From the levee trail, one can get to the Wabash Trace and Lake Manawa.

Local architect Gary Gebhard is a trails activist and president of the Eastern Nebraska Trails Network, as

well as the Nebraska representative for, and board member of, the American Discovery Trail Society. Gary will discuss trail development in the metro area, telling us about the current status of trails, future plans

### Sierra Club Program: Omaha Connections

with Gary Gebhard speaking on trails  
Thursday, June 26:  
Potluck at 6 p.m. &  
Program at 7 p.m.

at Kiwanis Park, Abbott Dr. and Locust St. in Carter Lake across from Eppley Airfield

In case of rain, meet at First United Methodist Church, 69th & Cass streets

**The public is welcome at Sierra Club's educational programs**



for trail development, and where we are in developing the much-needed east-west connections for Omaha trail users.

After Gary's presentation, participants may walk the loop trail around the small lake, or

hike or bike along the Riverfront Trail, which follows the east shore of Carter Lake for about two miles before cutting back to the Missouri River

**See Trails, page 2**

## Advantages are Numerous when Eating Locally

Collaborative effort by Food Choices Committee of the Green Neighborhood Council - (Triletty Wade, Kathy Townsend, Mary Green, Nancy Williams, Katja Koehler-Cole, Daniel Lawse)

"Eat Locally" - But why?

Ask seven Omaha foodies why it's important to eat locally and this is what you'll learn.

Taste & Nutrition: Local produce - harvested close to the "sell date," - is fresher

and more nutritious than national/global food because fewer "in-transit" days are required to bring the food to your table. Choosing locally means you eat kale from Blair, Neb., not California.

Food Security: Good food for all, eating locally is food security at its simplest. Growing and purchasing locally grown/raised produce/meat increases the local food supply - providing greater access to healthy food for residents. For

more information see [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org) or [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) and search "Community Food Systems"

Resiliency: Producing and consuming within one region reduces dependence on external resources. A resilient community indicates a city's/town's ability to be resilient enough - i.e. produce enough food locally - to prevent a crippled economy in the face of food or oil shortages.

**See Locally Grown, page 3**

# Tweak Your Home to Reduce Carbon Footprint

The Green Neighborhood Council is sponsoring a book signing and presentation event. The topic is "The Carbon Free Home" and is a chance to meet the authors.

Mark your calendar to meet the authors of "The Carbon Free Home: 36 Remodeling Projects to Kick the Fossil Fuel Habit" at the W. Dale Clark Omaha Public Library, fourth floor, 15th & Farnam streets at noon on Friday, June 27.

## About the Book

You probably know that energy used in your home produces more global-warming pollution than your car, but what can you do to reduce your reliance on fossil fuels? Maybe you daydream of starting from scratch, building a new, super-efficient, passive-solar, off-grid house"but in reality you've got a roof (and a mortgage) over your head already.

How can you turn your existing house into an environmental asset? One that simultaneously saves you money on utilities and insulates you from the possible shocks of oil costs? Meant as a guide for renovating existing homes, The Carbon-Free Home gives you the hands-on knowledge necessary to kick the fossil-fuel habit, with projects small and large listed by skill, time, cost, and energy saved. For every aspect of your life currently powered by fossil fuels, The Carbon-Free Home offers alternatives you can accomplish yourself to get started using renewable and sustainable sources of power.

## About the Authors

Stephen and Rebekah Hren live in Durham, N.C., where they are both involved with renewable energy, natural building, and edible urban gardening.

Rebekah works with Honey Electric Solar as a professional designer/installer of photovoltaic systems and domestic solar hot-water systems. Stephen is a professional restoration carpenter, focusing on ante-

bellum houses. He teaches natural-building classes and workshops at the local community college, and in any spare time works with Bountiful Backyards, an edible-landscaping cooperative.

Presentation sponsored by Neighborhood Energy Savings Program, Neighborhood Center for Greater Omaha, 115 S. 49th Ave., (402) 561-7583.

## Dedication Planned for 14-Acre, Bluff-Top Sarpy County Prairie

Tom Dickerson and Patty Shanahan, along with Wachiska Audubon, are dedicating their native bluff-top prairie at 7 p.m. on Sunday, June 29. Surrounded by bur oaks and shagbark hickories, this 14-acre grassland is one of the few bluff-top prairies remaining on the eastern Platte River. The property contains most of the tallgrass prairie species such as compass plant, lead plant, butterfly milkweed, scurf-pea and other species. When conditions are right, there is a large population of western white-fringed prairie orchids.

Tom and Patty built their home next to the prairie about 25 years ago intending to keep the prairie undeveloped and intact. They want to keep it that way after they are gone. They

have given Wachiska Audubon a conservation easement on the property and the responsibility for insuring that their prairie will always remain the natural gem it is today. The dedication ceremony will last about an hour, with refreshments served afterward, and everyone will have an opportunity to meet the family, tour the prairie, and enjoy views of the Platte River.

To get to the Dickerson/Shanahan Prairie from Omaha, go south on 84th Street until it curves to the west and turns into Platteview Road, (about six miles east of Springfield). Just past the curve, turn south on 87th Street. Go a half mile toward the river and watch for the flags or balloons that mark the entry road into the Dickerson/Shanahan property.

Continued from page 1

## Join Potluck, Talk on Trails

levee.

All Sierra Club members, families, children, and friends, are welcome to come to the potluck dinner, or you can come out just for the program.

For the potluck, please bring a dish to share, your own beverage, and a folding chair if you have one. Sierra Club will provide plates and utensils.

For the program, please bring a folding chair if you have one.

For more on Kiwanis Park,

go online to [www.omahaice.org/ice\\_kiwanis\\_Park.html](http://www.omahaice.org/ice_kiwanis_Park.html)

In case of inclement weather, meet at First United Methodist Church, 69th & Cass streets, with potluck at 6 p.m., program at 7 p.m. Call to confirm: 556-1830, 415-1081, or 551-9480.

Sierra Club programs are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Mary Green at 556-1830, or [mary.green@nebraska.sierra-club.org](mailto:mary.green@nebraska.sierra-club.org)

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## Locally Grown Food Available at Several Farmers Markets

**Economics:** Purchasing food from local farmers/ranchers who direct funds back into the community builds a sustainable economy. When you pay a local grower/rancher, you are paying for the production of your food - not for packaging, long-term storage, or long-distance transportation. And when food is in season and plentiful, it's usually inexpensive, too!

**Bio-diversity:** Liberating your food choices from a commercial market, dominated by a few hybrid varieties, means you have more decision-making power about what varieties of fruits and veggies and even meat that you eat. A dwindling agricultural gene pool creates concern about the vulnerabilities of monotypic crops, as typified for example in the Irish potato famine.

**Lifestyle:** Gardening creates connections - connections between people and nature, consumers and producers, and residents and their community.

Growing food for yourself/family/friends/consumers can engender a sense of awe and it's fresh-air exercise.

**Peak Oil:** Peak oil is the concept that oil is a finite natural resource and the world is running out of cheap, easily accessible oil. If your food was 1) grown with commercial chemical inputs, 2) harvested with oil-dependent equipment, 3) transported long distances via trucks/ships, and/or 4) wrapped in petroleum-based packaging - then your food is oily! Growing and eating local food can reduce our oil dependence and mitigate effects of "peak oil."

To start eating locally visit farmers markets in Omaha

Omaha Farmers' Market -- Downtown, 11th & Jackson streets - Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. -- [www.omaha-farmersmarket.com](http://www.omaha-farmersmarket.com)

Village Pointe Farmers' Market -- 168th Street & W. Dodge Road- Saturdays, 8 a.m.

to 1 p.m. -- [www.votereal-food.com](http://www.votereal-food.com)

Omaha Rockbrook Farmers' Market -- 10744 W. Center Road. - weekdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Benson Farmers' Market -- Military Avenue & Maple Street, Saturdays 8 a.m. to noon

Bancroft Street Farmers' Market -- 2702 S. 10th St., Sundays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cirian's Farmer's Market -- 4911 Leavenworth St., (402) 551-1879

For Nebraska markets, go to [www.agr.state.ne.us/pub/apd/produce.htm](http://www.agr.state.ne.us/pub/apd/produce.htm) or [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)

Join a Food Co-op Visit the Nebraska Food Co-operative - [www.nebraskafood.org](http://www.nebraskafood.org) - to find a variety of local meats, cheeses, eggs, and baked goods.

Join or start a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Visit [www.csacenter.org](http://www.csacenter.org) or [www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/c](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/c)

[sa/csa.shtml](http://sa/csa.shtml). The Alternative Farm Systems Information Center defines a CSA as a "community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farm becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the grower and consumer providing mutual support and sharing responsibilities and benefits of food production."

**Community Gardening** allows you to cultivate food on a nearby plot of land with other food-interested folks. You can learn and grow side-by-side with neighbors and friends. Omaha's community gardens include the City Sprouts garden at 40th & Franklin streets ([www.omahasprouts.org](http://www.omahasprouts.org)), the Gifford Park Community garden at 35th & Cass streets. ([www.giffordparkomaha.org](http://www.giffordparkomaha.org)), and 13 BIG Garden Project gardens ([www.gardenbig.org](http://www.gardenbig.org)). To find out more about com-

See Tastiest, page 4

## Missouri Valley Group Sierra Club Officers

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*Secretary, Urban Sprawl & Transportation Chair*

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\*Voting Members of the Executive Committee

**Vacant Positions: Eco-Kids, Endangered Species/Wildlife, Conservation,**

# DEET Still Best, but Other Bug Repellents Out There

From the Editors of  
E/The Environmental Magazine

DEAR EARTHTALK: Is it true that the DEET used in most mosquito repellents is toxic? If so, what problems does it cause? And what are some non-toxic alternatives for keeping mosquitoes at bay? -- Tom Pollack, Oakland, Calif.

DEET is commonly known as the king of mosquito repellents, though not everyone is keen to slather it on their skin. A study conducted in the late 1980s on Everglades National Park employees to determine the effects of DEET found that fully one quarter of the subjects studied

experienced negative health effects that they blamed on exposure to the chemical. Effects included rashes, skin irritation, numb or burning lips, nausea, headaches, dizziness and difficulty concentrating.

Duke University pharmacologist Mohamed Abou-Donia, in studies on rats, found that frequent and prolonged DEET exposure led to diffuse brain cell death and behavioral changes, and concluded that humans should stay away from products containing it. But other studies have shown that while a few people have sensitivity to DEET applications, most are unaffected when they use DEET products on a spo-

radic basis according to the instructions on the label.

The upside of DEET is that it is very effective. A 2002 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found that DEET-based repellents provided the most complete and longest-lasting protection against mosquitoes. Researchers found that a formulation containing 23.8 percent DEET completely protected study participants for upwards of 300 minutes, while a soybean-oil-based product only worked for 95 minutes. The effectiveness

See Bug Spray, page 5

Continued from page 3

# Tastiest, Freshest Alternative is to Grow Your Own Food

community gardening visit [www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org).

Be a Local Food Advocate: Talk to the managers at your local grocery store and restaurants, members of the school board, representatives of your city, and your local corrections system. Explain to all these folks why choosing locally produced/raised food is important and see how you or your organization can work with them to begin buying local!

Grow Your Own Food: Land doesn't need to be "set aside" to produce crops. You can plant a kitchen garden ([www.kitchengardeners.org](http://www.kitchengardeners.org)) or a square-foot garden ([http://howto.wired.com/wiki/Build\\_a\\_Square\\_Foot\\_Garden](http://howto.wired.com/wiki/Build_a_Square_Foot_Garden)) - a modified style of Biodynamic & French intensive gardening. Better yet, become a permaculturist. Developed by Australians Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, permaculture - permanent culture and permanent agriculture - includes good practices from many disciplines and systems, and offers them as an integrated whole, a sustainable earth care system. Bill Wilson of

Midwest Permaculture explains, "Permaculturists can grow food just about anywhere, repair environmentally damaged lands, design lovely and long-lasting green buildings, produce power, run successful, people-oriented businesses, and build authentic community -- all by using the same fundamental permaculture principles and applying a Permaculture Ethic: Care of People--Care of the Earth--Share the Surplus." ([www.midwestpermaculture.com](http://www.midwestpermaculture.com))

Don't limit yourself - try locally value-added foods such as flour! Visit [www.agr.state.ne.us](http://www.agr.state.ne.us) and click the "Food & Meat Directory" link under "Brochures."

Please attend the Monthly Green Living Workshop: Green Your Eating - 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, July 26, 2008, at Village Pointe Farmers' Market - (south side of Village Pointe Shopping Center, 168th Street & W. Dodge Road) Learn what questions to ask your local growers, see a demonstration by chefs of the Metropolitan Community College Institute of Culinary

Arts, and be introduced to food storage - and sign up for a chance to win Green-Food prizes. RSVP to Trilety Wade at [trilety@hotmail.com](mailto:trilety@hotmail.com).

The event is free and open to

the public. Sponsored by the Green Neighborhood Council of the Green Omaha Coalition ([www.greenomahacoalition.org](http://www.greenomahacoalition.org))



## Sierra Student Coalition

From Activism through Generation E, the Coalition's own newsletter, to outings worldwide, students can enjoy being part of a team that's working to preserve and protect the Earth and its wildlife.

[www.ssc.org](http://www.ssc.org)

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Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968 or visit our website [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

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## Bug Spray Alternatives Less Toxic to People and Insects

of several other botanical-based repellents lasted less than 20 minutes.

But a number of new concentrations of botanical repellents that have hit the market since are reportedly better than ever. In 2005, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) granted approval to two healthier alternatives to DEET -- picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus -- for protection from mosqui-

toes. Picaridin, long used to repel mosquitoes in other parts of the world, is now available in the U.S. under the Cutter Advanced brand name. Oil of lemon eucalyptus is derived from eucalyptus leaves, and is the only plant-based active ingredient approved by the CDC for insect repellents. It is available in several different forms, such as Repel Lemon Eucalyptus, OFF! Botanicals, and Fight Bite Plant-Based

Insect Repellent.

Some other good choices, according to the nonprofit National Coalition against the Misuse of Pesticides, include products containing geraniol (MosquitoGuard or Bite Stop), citronella (Natrappel), herbal extracts (Beat It Bug Buster) or essential oils (All Terrain).

Another leading nonprofit, Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA), likes Herbal Armor, Buzz Away and Green Ban, each containing citronella and peppermint as well as various essential oils (cedar wood, lemongrass, etc.). PANNA also lauds Bite Blocker, a blend of soybeans and coconut oils that provides four to eight hours of protection and, unlike many other brands, is safe for kids.

For more information: Go to <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/347/1/13> for "Comparative Efficacy of Insect Repellents against Mosquito Bites;"

National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP), [www.beyondpesticides.org](http://www.beyondpesticides.org);

Pesticide Action Network North America, [www.panna.org](http://www.panna.org).

Send environmental questions to: EarthTalk, c/o E/The Environmental Magazine, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881; submit it at: [www.emagazine.com/earth-talk/thisweek/](http://www.emagazine.com/earth-talk/thisweek/), or e-mail: [earth-talk@emagazine.com](mailto:earth-talk@emagazine.com). Read past columns at: [www.emagazine.com/earth-talk/archives.php](http://www.emagazine.com/earth-talk/archives.php).



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### Fixing farming

Despite the attention given to organic and sustainable farming, the global food crisis will be dealt with by large farms and genetically modified crops, reported a CNN Money carried in CheckBiotech.org. Agriculture already uses more than half of earth's habitable land, and farming is the largest threat to biodiversity, so farmers must become more productive and get more output from less land. It is better for the earth's inhabitants to intensify agriculture instead of spreading out. Bigger companies can better achieve that goal because they can more easily spread standard practices that help get the biggest bang for the smallest buck. It's much harder to change the individual habits of 6 billion consumers.  
(CheckBiotech.org, May 22, 2008, <http://www.checkbiotech.org>)

**The Missouri Valley Sierran**  
*is published about 10 times a year by the Missouri Valley Group-Nebraska Chapter of the Sierra Club*

<p>Send articles and correspondence for the newsletter to: <a href="mailto:MoValSierraNews@yahoo.com">MoValSierraNews@yahoo.com</a> Phone: 402-981-7819</p> <p>Mail: Missouri Valley Group – Sierra Club P.O. Box 4664, Omaha, NE 68104.</p> <p>The Omaha office is at 5170 Leavenworth St. Omaha, NE 68106. Phone: 402-551-9480 Fax 402-551-9490.</p>	<p>Address changes for members should be sent to: Sierra Club Member Services P.O. Box 52968 Boulder, CO 80322-2968</p> <p>The Sierra Club's main national office is at: 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor San Francisco, CA 94105 Phone: (415) 977-5635.</p> <p>Web sites: National: <a href="http://www.sierraclub.org">http://www.sierraclub.org</a> Local: <a href="http://nebraska.sierraclub.org/movalley">http://nebraska.sierraclub.org/movalley</a></p>
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*June/July 2008*

## ***Events***

Tuesday, June 17, 7-9:45 p.m., at Northside Church, 5555 Larimore (three blocks north of Ames Avenue), Sam Daley-Harris will speak on starting an Omaha RESULTS Group focused on creating political will to end global poverty. Contact Gina Sheehey at 740-9007 to RSVP or with any questions. For more info, go to <http://www.results.org>.

June 20-22, Custer, Wis., 19th Energy Fair, for renewable energy education, with about 20,000 fair attendees each year. This is the nation's largest and longest-running energy education event with over 250 exhibitors, over 200 workshops, the Clean Energy Car Show, and keynote speakers Jim Hightower and Torbjom Lahti. This event offers a way to learn about sustainable living and clean living while connecting with others. For more information, call MREA at (715) 592-6595 or visit [www.the-mrea.org](http://www.the-mrea.org).

Thursday, June 26, Potluck at 6 p.m. & Trails Program with Gary Gebhard at 7

p.m., at Kiwanis Park, Abbott Dr. and Locust St. in Carter Lake across from Eppley Airfield. In case of rain, meet at First United Methodist Church, 69th & Cass streets. The public is welcome at Sierra Club's educational programs.

Friday, June 27, Noon to 1:30 p.m., Meet the authors of "The Carbon Free Home: 36 Remodeling Projects to Kick the Fossil Fuel Habit," at W. Dale Clark Omaha Public Library, fourth floor, 15th & Farnam streets.

Sunday, June 29, 7 p.m., Dedication of the Tom Dickerson and Patty Shanahan native bluff-top prairie, about half a mile south of Platteview Road on 87th Street.

Sunday, June 29, 7 p.m., Meeting of the Missouri Valley Group Executive Committee at the Sierra Club office, 5170 Leavenworth St.

Sunday, July 27, Hike at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, about five miles along four short nature trails and various

dirt roads in order to observe wildlife. Don't forget binoculars, dress appropriately for the conditions. Be prepared for ticks and mosquitos. Bring water and snacks. A carpool will meet at the King Kong across from Rosenblatt on 13th Street (exit 454 on I-80) by 8:15 a.m. If not carpooling, be at the DeSoto visitor's center by 9 a.m. There is an entry fee of \$3 per vehicle. Return should be around 2 p.m. If you plan to attend please contact MVG Outings Leader Bob Goetschkes before the trip and leave your phone number: bobby-goetschkes@hotmail.com or (402) 614-4788. For more info go to <http://midwest.fws.gov/desoto>.

To list an event or activity in this space, e-mail the particulars to [MoValSierraNews@yahoo.com](mailto:MoValSierraNews@yahoo.com), or mail it to 5170 Leavenworth St., Omaha, Neb. For more information, call Scott at 981-7819 or Cammy at 551-9480.