

## ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION ALERT

### **HELP SAVE THE CACHE RIVER – AGAIN !**

**What is going on?** The same drainage district that drained the wetlands of the Lower Cache River in the 1970s is making a new assault. The three commissioners of the Big Creek Drainage District #2 are threatening to severely damage the 30-year effort to restore this remarkable area. Last April, the drainage district removed a dam that since 1982 has held water in the swamp lands. The state replaced the dam in July and filed an injunction to keep it in place. Now the drainage district wants to drain another part of the swamp. The state has filed a second injunction to try to prevent this action.

Southern Illinois Audubon Society is actively involved in demanding that the drainage district reverse its destructive plans. For many years SIAS and its members have also donated money to restoration projects; co-founded the fund-raising Birding Blitz and the educational Bird Fest; worked on clean-up, trail maintenance, and bird-count activities; and served on the Citizens Advisory Committee to Save the Cache.

**Why send a letter?** The drainage district commissioners need to understand they are being watched. They must remain accountable for their actions and cooperative with the goals of the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and The Nature Conservancy, who manage extensive land holdings along the river. You may want to point out that:

- The Cache River is internationally recognized for its importance and diversity.
- The district has taken a stance that this is a “local” issue. Remind them that \$41 million has already been invested in protecting this region through federal, state, and private funds. Every one of us has a stake in the Cache River.
- The Cache River is an environmentally important area that attracts a growing number of outdoor enthusiasts who hunt, canoe, hike, fish, bike, and come to enjoy the outstanding diversity of wildlife, trees, and plants there.

**Now ... to whom?** Send your letter to the chairman of the Big Creek Drainage District: Danny Thurston, 819 Sandusky Road, Pulaski, IL 62976. For more information and to help in other ways, call Laraine Wright, (618) 457-8769. Thank you!