



CITIZENS
FOR
CONSERVATION

CFC NEWS

Saving Living Space for Living Things

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The Earth calls her son home: A tribute to Tom Vanderpoel

by Meredith Tucker

A child said *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.
... The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,
... All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses,
And to die is different from what any one supposed, and luckier.

—Walt Whitman
“Song of Myself”
from *Leaves of Grass*

Tom exemplifies the narration of our great mystical poet Walt Whitman in his *Leaves of Grass*. Without Tom, the seas of native grasses that comprise both Grigsby Prairie and Flint Creek Savanna would still be fallow farm fields overgrown with weeds. He is the heart of those preserves; he is as one with the native ecosystems he helped create. His is the bone and blood from which they are fashioned.



Tom years ago. Photo by Laurel Ross.

Stop by Citizens for Conservation’s headquarters and look around. Tom’s presence is everywhere — in the oak savanna east of Flint Creek, on the island in the pond blooming with swamp rose mallow, in the gravel hill prairies. It is likely that none of this would exist without Tom’s inspiration and knowledge, his ability to see a finished landscape before breaking ground.

Beyond that, Tom devoted his time to the hard work of restoration. He spent countless hours every week planning future restoration tasks, encouraging volunteers, and doing the hard physical



Photo by Tamara Voris.

labor of digging, burning, and picking. He began decades ago with a handful of volunteers that has grown into a sizable crew of regulars and hundreds of occasional volunteers who work on the land twice a week, three times during autumn.

Tom was always there to direct groups to the sites that most needed attention, sites he had walked and assessed. He decided what needed to be done and guided the volunteers in their labors while he worked beside them. He had a long-term vision for CFC's preserves, a mental plan for how work should proceed on each piece of land. His goal was always to help connect large county and state preserves with corridors of open land being restored to native conditions.

Tom envisioned CFC's preserves as providing homes for wildlife that needs high-quality habitat to survive and pathways of that land between preserves, paths to provide creatures with a route from one preserve to another. Insects, amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals would use these smaller preserves and corridors of habitat to expand their territories and to find new home sites. Birds could fly from place to place, but the other creatures needed habitat passages. It was Tom's plan to begin bringing extirpated fauna back to CFC's preserves in the near future.

In addition to his work on CFC's properties and in local forest preserves, Tom gave Citizens for Conservation a presence in the Chicago-area conservation community that it would never have had without him. His love for the organization made him willing to share with groups outside CFC, to promote the native environment far beyond Barrington. Tom shared his knowledge with organizations like Lake County Forest Preserve District, Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Audubon Great Lakes and member organizations of Chicago Wilderness.



Tom at Flint Creek.

He taught the volunteers during restoration workdays. He shared knowledge with other environmental organizations.

He spoke with children in young people's classes and seemed as comfortable with them as with adults. His annual CFC seining trip was an exciting adventure for children who walked through clear, clean creeks each summer to discover what existed there. The species of native fish and crayfish and salamanders have excited countless youngsters over the years. He touched young minds as he touched the earth; both flourished with his help.

His clear and easy style of speech and his depth of knowledge made him a regular speaker at CFC's annual meetings. Much as he tried to avoid giving his annual restoration report and slides, CFC never let him slip away. He drew the adult audience as he drew the children at the seining class.



Tom with Sam Oliver and Patsy Mortimer after accepting BADC award. Photo by Meredith Tucker.

Over the years, Tom received numerous awards for his restoration work and other civic functions. He never flaunted them, but two are of special importance. He was the Barrington Area Development Council's Citizen of the Year in 2009. He also earned an important award at the first Chicago Wilderness Congress in November 2004 where he received the Excellence in Conservation Award in the "Individual Achievement - Volunteers" category.

This was the first year Chicago Wilderness presented the prestigious award. What an honor it was for him to be the first conservationist ever chosen by that organization.

Here are a few of the condolences we have received for Tom. I have dramatically shortened most of them:

"My deepest condolences for the loss of one of your local champions and conservation colleague...I am shocked."

—Stewardship Program Coordinator,
Forest Preserve District of Cook County

"I am sorry to hear of the passing of Tom Vanderpoel and send heartfelt condolences to his CFC family. I will remember our conversations about land management as well as the passion for preservation which he imparted to children and adults alike. I will remember his joyful spirit and the love he had for his family, nature, and Citizens for Conservation. He was the kind of person who inspired others to be better stewards - an individual whose efforts brought people together and built community around green space. So grateful for good memories of a great naturalist."

—April Anderson

"Tom taught me about local flora and the power of restoration. I wouldn't have native plant gardens around my house without him, and I wouldn't know the native woodland plants without the knowledge he gave me. He's going to be greatly missed."

—Bill Hellyer, CFC Summer Intern 2010

"I'm so saddened by this loss. Tom's passion and positive energy were contagious...He helped me with my first graduate study on native wetland plants. He willingly shared his time and knowledge - I'm forever grateful. I will miss seeing him walk our kids through the prairie. He was a great leader and fearless defender. I will carry on his mission as best I can."

—Jennifer Kainz

"Tom's knowledge and passion were impressive and inspiring. His conservation efforts and ability to engage children were incredible gifts to the community. My boys will always remember sowing seeds and seining with Tom."

—Renee Miller Blue

"I'm in shock to hear this news. Tom was a mentor to the entire Friends Fox River Crew. We all looked forward to any time we got with him. Our crew is available to help in any way you might need; just say the word and we'll be there to help. If there are any gaps that we can fill for you, we are happy to drop everything."

—Mike Raczyla, Crew Manager,
Friends of the Forest Preserves

"The Barrington Area Council of Governments notes the passing of Tom Vanderpoel with sadness and deep appreciation. Tom helped guide and achieve a vision to restore the natural areas that define our small region. He inspired people to donate thousands of hours of work while teaching and working alongside them. We are grateful to Tom and his family for their continuous efforts and dedication to environmental protection."

—Janet L. Agnoletti, Executive Director

"Please accept my sympathy on the loss of your colleague and long-time and treasured friend Tom Vanderpoel. He spoke to our Garden Club, and we did seed collecting with him. A lovely, peaceful person with a gleam in his eye. What a gift he was to our community."

—Denise, Country Home and Garden Club



2014 burn at Baker's Lake. Photo by Rob Neff.

"A mentor and visionary, Tom set out to accomplish his plans rather than dream about them. CFC volunteers will build upon his legacy with support from the conservation community."

—Katherine Grover

"To all at CFC, this is most sad news. I was blessed to work with his father in various activities and with Tom. He did so much for so many. Blessings to him and his family."

—Art Rice

"I was so sorry to read your tribute to Tom Vanderpoel... What a huge loss to CFC and to all of us for whom he really made a huge difference. I am a niece of Peggy Grigsby (Richards), loving creator of the Grigsby Prairie, and I learned about CFC through her. It was a huge part of her life! Tom will be missed by all of us!"

—Chris Murata - Denver, CO

"I am shocked and saddened to hear of Tom's passing. He was such a force of nature and an inspiration to the region. My deepest condolences. I hope the many wonderful memories and his legacy offer some solace. In sympathy."

—Kelly Schultz, Lake County Forest Preserve District

"We are so sad and cannot believe this has happened. We truly have lost our mentor, but our efforts must go on, and his legacy will live through all of us and all the lives he has taught and touched."

—Carol and Wes

"I was devastated to hear of Tom's unfortunate passing. He was a great mentor and leader. The conservation world has suffered a great loss. I hope as I continue my education, I can follow Tom's lead about protecting our environment."

—John "Jack" Williams, CFC Summer Intern 2017

Finally, one of the first times I met Tom, he was talking about penn sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*) and explaining its importance to the native oak community of plants. Now I pass on that information to my Habitat Corridors homeowners and have planted the species under some of my own oaks at home.

A few days before he died, Tom and I happened to meet outside CFC's farmhouse and conversed about *Flora of the Chicago Region*, the new Wilhelm & Rericha book. In particular, we discussed all its great information on penn sedge and its interaction with ants and the importance of ants to healthy habitat. I will never again recommend, discuss, or plant penn sedge without thinking of him. Thank you, Tom, for all you have done for natural habitats and for demonstrating your love of creatures great and small. Thank you for sharing your expertise as well as your very self.



Tom in 2011. Photo by Patsy Mortimer.



Editor's Note

Dear Readers:

You will note that this issue of *CFC News* is different. The first five pages are dedicated to Tom Vanderpoel and his legacy, but as you read the entire issue, you will notice that he is everywhere: marching in the parade, participating in the Creatures of the Night class, leading our annual seining adventure, guiding the interns. All this in addition to his herculean restoration efforts.

On behalf of CFC, I would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to the multitude of people and organizations who have offered their support, thoughts, condolences and assistance in the days since Tom's passing. You are all truly appreciated and we know you will be there to lend your support as we move CFC forward.

Many of you have sent us photos of Tom – thank you for sharing them with us. Photos of Tom in this newsletter were taken by Donna Bolzman, Diane Botkin, Sarah Hoban, Doug Johnson, Patsy Morimer, Rob Neff, Laurel Ross, Ralph Tarquino, Meredith Tucker, the Vanderpoel Family and Tamara Voris. I'm not sure who took certain of the photos, so if you are unnamed, I apologize and thank you. Thanks also go to Patty Barten and Donna Bolzman for identifying and supplying photos.

Certain of our regular features are not included in this issue, but will return in the future.

— Leslie Coolidge

Record number of CFC marchers for 4th of July parade

by Gail Vanderpoel

Barrington's 4th of July parade theme was "Celebrating America's Superheroes," so we brought a lot with us. 55 volunteers followed our most excellent float and our banner read, "Nature's Superheroes are Saved by CFC Volunteers." The float contained a life-size sandhill crane created by four volunteers. Our banners were created by John Omiatek, a Chicago art teacher and brother of Juliann LaRocque, our administrative manager.



CFC float. Photo by Ralph Tarquino.

Along with the crane, our float contained drawings of other great native superheroes: the smooth green snake, bobolink, and Blanding's turtle. We also had native sedges surrounding the crane and many tall sunflowers; thanks to Jim and Tamara Voris for loaning us their wagons for our float.



Our marchers spanned a wide variety of groups and ages. New guests this year included Planet Heroes of Barrington Middle

School-Prairie Campus, whose club is dedicated to helping save the planet. We got to know this special group of hard-working students during our Earth Day celebration where they helped us plant sedges at Cuba Marsh Forest Preserve. Special thanks to Jim Bartlett and Traci Kalas, their teachers and sponsors. Other young people included eight or more high school students, a 2-year-old in a wagon, and a Junior Naturalist from this summer's camp. Many CFC Board members joined the ranks, along with CFC members, and our college interns.



Back of float. Photo by Ralph Tarquino.

Some of our many marchers handed out CFC t-shirts to parade goers. The shirts featured a sandhill crane with a red cape on. They were much sought-after and we ran out quickly, although we had nearly 500 to give away. We left parade watchers with a final message about what we do, "We take out the bad guys." This banner was on the back of our float to honor all the hard work we do pulling, chopping and digging weeds and invasive plants to restore native ecosystems. We hope our float inspires many more youth and adults to join us in our efforts!

Barrington area bird hikes this Fall

Cosponsored by Audubon Great Lakes and Citizens for Conservation

Get out and enjoy fall migration with Barrington area naturalist Wendy Paulson. Walks are free and open to the public though spaces are limited and RSVPs are required. Good walking shoes are strongly recommended for these walks. Don't forget your binoculars!

Before you head out, please be sure to check the Citizens for Conservation website for any last minute changes or cancellations.

Fall walks began in September. The remaining dates are:

***October 13, 8:00 a.m.** — Baker's Lake/Younghusband Prairie (entrance on north side of Dundee Road, east of Prairie Middle School)

***October 20, 8:30 a.m.** — Flint Creek Savanna (CFC Headquarters) 459 W.Hwy. 22

November 3, 8:30 a.m. — Cuba Marsh (park in parking lot off east side of Lake Zurich Rd. just south of EJ&E RR tracks. Lake Zurich Road runs between Rt. 14 and Cuba Road)

*indicates a more strenuous hike

Please RSVP to: Matt Jaccarino at mjaccarino@audubon.org or (312) 453-0230, Ext. 2010 and let us know how best to contact you should that be necessary.

Welcome New Members!

Nancy Allen	Marci Moss
Charlotte Blome	Lisa Moynihan
Cindy Blue	Maggie Nolan
Tom Brotz	Lili O'Connell
Heather Brown	George Peirce
H. Chang	Michael Pollack
Don Chapman Family	Jon Ragan
Julie Culleton	Ringers Landscaping
Brigitte Dunlop	Piper Rothschild
Dennis Gardino	Ann Russell
Colin Hawthorn	Nancy Russell
Diana Kent	Samantha Sayre
Mary Keyser	Christine Smutney
Mat Klein	Mary Stupen
Jack LeVan	Claire Sullivan
Diana Loots-Gans	Barbara Wagner
Linda Maselli	Sharon Whitaker
Joanne Metler	Amy White
Ken and Laura Migalski	Jessica Wollmuth
John Milas	Diane and George Zelcs
Rob Moore Family	

News from Habitat Corridors

Cuba Township bestows grant on Habitat Corridors

CFC's Habitat Corridors is extremely grateful to Cuba Township for the grant it presented to us. We made good use of the \$1,200 they gave us.

Habitat Corridors used part of the grant to mail a letter to residents in three areas of the township, areas in which the properties border Flint Creek or a CFC preserve. Former CFC intern Kyle Boatright volunteered his time to pull the targeted property owner names and addresses from the Lake County property tax database.

We mailed 102 letters and received a positive response from five people indicating an interest in having a volunteer visit their properties. This is considered a good response to such a mailing. Habitat Corridors volunteers have visited all of the interested homeowners.

Habitat Corridors spent the remainder of the Cuba Township grant to fund one mailing of our *Habitat Corridors et cetera*. We delivered extra copies of that newsletter to the Cuba Township office for its use.

— Meredith Tucker

CFC celebrates Moth Week with Creatures of the Night class

by Gail Vanderpoel

In case you didn't know, Moth Week is held from July 22 through July 30. It is an international holiday celebrated by entomologists throughout the world learning, observing and documenting these beautiful and fascinating creatures. CFC was fortunate in having a moth expert, Rich Teper, present us with a vast amount of information and opportunities to study moths and other insects for our class on the night of July 22.

Rich came to CFC last year and requested permission to observe and collect moth specimens at Flint Creek Savanna. He provided us with nearly 50 different insect species and gave us the beginnings of our own moth collection for our "museum room" upstairs in our headquarters. For our July class this year, Rich shared displays of moths and other insects he has collected in his many years as a self-taught entomologist. Rich shared this about his history:

"I started studying insects when I was in 6th grade. I was amazed at the diverse shapes, colors, patterns, mimicry and life cycles. I was one of those geeky science kids. Back in 1968, my insect presentation took me to a first place finish in the State Science Fair. Recently, I seem to have focused on moths. People usually think of them as drab night flying pests. Moths

can be extremely colorful with cryptic patterns and a wide range of shapes and sizes. They outnumber butterfly species 15:1. Moths are important pollinators and serve as food for bats, birds and other animals. I feel that the study of moths and other insects in the prairie can provide us with data that can be an additional tool in our management practices."

Using mercury vapor lights with a sheet in front of them, we observed the following moths:

Virgin tiger	Lesser grapevine looper
Harnessed tiger	White-speck
Banded tussock	Crocus geometer
Four-lined borer	Honest pero
Straight-lined plagodis	Ipsilon dart
Painted lichen	Carrot seed
Celery looper	Master's dart
Giant eucosma	Skiff
Virginia ctenucha	

June, water, ground, rove, longhorn, lady and grapevine (the large scarab) beetles, damselflies and shield bugs were also found.

In addition, we searched for another amazing night creature: bats. Tom Vanderpoel explained about our newly acquired Echo Meter Touch 2 PRO. The device is an ultrasonic module which plugs into an iPad or iPhone and picks up the echolocation patterns of bats flying overhead. It then identifies the species of bat. We recorded two species on this outing: the hoary and big brown bats. As with insect biodiversity, the presence of bats is due to our restoration providing good habitat for these unique flying mammals. Bats eat mosquitos, so we definitely appreciated their presence.

Although we never heard an owl hooting, we did hear frogs croaking and the whirring sound of toads singing. In addition, we saw lightning bugs flashing in the darkened vegetation, and caught a glimpse of a praying mantis as we began our walk down the trail. There are many things to appreciate at Flint Creek Savanna, and we found amazing signs of life buzzing around us by coming out after sundown. Citizens for Conservation looks forward to continuing our partnership with Rich Teper as he shares his wealth of information and helps us in identifying some very plant-specific species of insects.



Rich Teper sharing his collection. Photo by Donna Bolzman.



Please join Citizens for Conservation for

Ignite the Night!

A NIGHTTIME FALL FESTIVAL

Music, dancing and a blazing bonfire under the stars.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 5 - 10PM

Ticket Price includes

Cookout Dinner from 5 - 8pm • Beer and Wine • Huge Bonfire

Narrated Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides

Native Wildlife • Stargazing • Raffle • Flashlight Tours for Kids

Live Music by

**Dave Andersen and the I-Lites
with Henry Heine & Dana Underwood**



**Tickets \$50 in advance, \$65 at the door
\$25 for teens 13 to 20 years old
\$10 for children 12 and under**

**Special thanks to the Forest Preserves of
Cook County and the Barrington Hills
Park District for their support!**

Event will take place **RAIN OR SHINE** at the Barrington Hills Park District Riding Center / Spring Creek Forest Preserve at 361 Bateman Road in Barrington Hills.

**Please purchase tickets online at
CitizensForConservation.org
Questions? Call 847-382-7283
Tickets will be held at the gate**

Upcoming Events

Ignite the Night

September 30 – 5:00 p.m. – Barrington Hills Park District, 361 Bateman Road, Barrington Hills.

Youth and Young Adult Education Classes

October 14 – Tie Dye & Nature Art, 1-3 p.m. – Use natural plant dyes for tie dying and create artwork using feathers, leaves, seeds, pods and other natural materials. This class is for middle and high school students.

Classes meet at Citizens for Conservation, 459 W. Hwy. 22, Barrington.

Class fees: Members free; non-members \$5/child. Parents welcome to attend for free.

More info at CitizensForConservation.org or 847-382-7283

2018 Community Education Programs - Save the Date!

Plan ahead and save these dates for CFC's Community Education's winter programs. As always, we will present pertinent topics of interest by presenters who are experts in their fields. All programs are held at the Barrington Village Hall on Saturday mornings, starting at 9:30 a.m. for coffee and conversation; presentations begin at 10:00 a.m.

January 20 – Barrington Area Birds–From Natural Areas to Your Backyard, by Judy Pollock, Bird Conservation Consultant, Living Habitats.

February 17 – Become a Citizen Scientist, Panel of monitors for birds, bumblebees, butterflies and plant bloom times.

March 17 – Planting Wet Areas in Your Yard, Meredith Tucker, naturalist and Chair of CFC's Habitat Corridors program.

April 14 – The Value of Ants, living with and loving them, Sean Menke, PhD, Associate Professor of Biology, Lake Forest College.

Natural History Society of Barrington

Meetings will be at Lake Barrington Woods, Lake Barrington at 7:00 p.m. For more complete descriptions of programs, see www.naturalhistorysociety.org.

October 19 – “Wetland Birds” by Brad Semel, Natural Heritage Biologist with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Brad will provide updated information on his work with terns, sandhill cranes and wetland bird surveys.

November 16 – Program to be determined.

Afternoon at Rush Creek

by Gail Vanderpoel

Citizens for Conservation held their annual seining class on July 8. We explored Rush Creek this year; it is a tributary of the Kishwaukee River, which runs through McHenry County. The seine is a type of net which is stretched across a creek to catch



Kids with interest. Photo by Sarah Tucker.

fish. As we scooped up our nets, we found many native fish in the fast-moving coldwater creek. Ten young people, ages 7-18, along with five adults joined our lead fisherman Tom Vanderpoel to explore a healthy habitat for 13 species of fish. Our catch for the day included the following:

Bluntnose minnow	Stoneroller
Redbelly dace	Stickelback
Blacknose dace	Rainbow darter
Common shiner	Black-sided darter
Creek chub	Sand shiner
White sucker	Hognose sucker
Redhorse sucker (which we saw but did not catch--it was one foot long!)	

The dace and darters are more conservative fish that signal higher water quality. After examining our catches, we of course released them



Kids jar seining. Photo by Sarah Tucker.

to move downstream along with some of our shoes which kept getting pulled off in the swift currents we encountered in some areas.

As we stretched the nets across the creek, we discovered many things about the native fish. Before you get a close look at them, which we did by putting them in a jar, they all just look kind of brown. But, when you hold them up in the sun, you



Seining 2017. Photo by Sarah Tucker.

find a wide variety of colors - especially on the rainbow darter. We saw turquoise, reds, silver, yellow, orange and greens as we carefully viewed the fish. Each type of fish has some specific marking like a spot or stripe to help identify it. We also saw green frogs, dragonflies and crayfish which we learned how to hold without getting pinched: right behind their eyes on the sides of their heads.

As we walked, we could feel varying temperatures, currents and changes in the bottom of the creek. Some areas are very muddy, while others contained more rocks. Teamwork helped us many times as one group would walk in a line to drive the fish into the net. Someone always had to have a jar of water ready to hold the fish we temporarily captured. The seiners had to poke the bottom of the creek with the poles on either end of the nets while moving through the creek and deciding when to pull up the net. It was a great day to be in a cool, shady, shimmering creek discovering animals few people ever see!

Two weeks discovering biodiversity

by Gail Vanderpoel

Beginning and Junior Naturalist campers spent June 12 –23 exploring Citizens for Conservation's Flint Creek Savanna



Beginner Naturalists. Photo by Tom Benjamin.

searching for all types of animals. The first week's camp for 4 – 6 year-olds focused on daily “Habitat Hunts.” Campers took nature hikes looking for mammals, birds, bugs and water creatures, and learned about the differing plants found in wetlands, prairies and savannas. Week two took Junior Naturalists, ages 7 – 10, out to observe and record

“Biodiversity in Every Direction.” These young naturalists kept a daily list of animals we found categorized by their classes: reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals and fish, along with a very large groups of invertebrates including insects and shellfish. Both weeks we realized these animals wouldn’t be living at Flint Creek without some very special plants.

Beginning Naturalists searched for mammal bones and other natural materials Native Americans used in their daily lives. They were then treated to Native American stories told by local storyteller Jeanne Hanson. Tuesday we visited water habitats as we observed the wetlands and sat on the rocks and waded in Flint Creek; we discovered duckweed, dragonflies, water bugs, frogs and tadpoles, and found mussel shells. We also got up close to a painted turtle captured near the road by one of our volunteers. Wednesday we looked for animal homes, imagined living under or in a giant oak tree, and created our own miniature homes from mosses, bark and sticks. Thursday was our day to meet birds including Juli LaRocque’s pet canary as we discussed bird songs, eggs and nests. We saw bluebirds, a robin, purple martins, tree swallows, geese, red-winged blackbirds, a hawk, a great egret, and a killdeer sitting on its nest (on the ground)! Finally we celebrated all the plants that give our animals shelter and food. We compared varying plants in wetlands, prairies and wooded areas and planted acorns, adopted milkweed seeds, and made bookmarks with pressed flowers and leaves.

Junior Naturalists began with a search for water biodiversity with a lesson on invertebrates as indicators of good water quality. We waded Flint Creek using nets and a trap to capture damselfly larva, baby crayfish and many other water inhabitants along with a mud minnow. Day two we met Lizzy Hucker’s pet Nelson’s milk snake and learned how to handle snakes and about how they shed their skins as they grow. In the wild, we saw a garter snake and two Dekay’s brown snakes, and campers also found several shed skins. Day three our birdwatching (and listening) found approximately 40 birds of nine different species; we dissected owl pellets to discover what raptors eat. Day four we searched to find mammal tracks, scat (poop), possible dens and homes, bones, and even found a tree branch with beaver teeth marks. While looking for animal tracks at the creek, we found turtle egg shells too. Our last day we continued discovering biodiversity getting a close look at sandhill cranes and finding a shrew under a log. We heard chorus frogs and toads singing after the morning rain.

Our two summer camp groups, Beginning Naturalists and Junior Naturalists, learned a great deal about habitats and biodiversity this summer. They really connected with animals’ life cycles, behaviors, and characteristics and celebrated each animal we were able to observe, catch (and release), or verify its previous whereabouts. They learned that different habitats contain different types of animals and that if you go off the trail looking for a specific animal, you may find something you weren’t expecting. Flint Creek Savanna is a great outdoor classroom due to years of restoration. Please join us to enjoy and learn at our future classes and events.

Summer interns reflect

by Gene Branson

CFC offers a Summer Internship Program which provides college students focusing on environmental sciences or conservation a hands on learning experience. The objective for the program is for the students to gain an understanding of the proven restoration management methods and philosophies employed by CFC.



Building new beds with Tom. Photo by Ralph Tarquino.

During 2017, the interns completed a diverse set of tasks relating to land stewardship including: preparing seed beds, planting sedge and other plugs, seed gathering, removal of non-native invasive

plants (particularly sweet clover, reed canary and garlic mustard) and selective herbicide application.

The program activities were coordinated by Tom Vanderpoel. He established the daily tasks to be completed, along with practical hands-on instruction in restoration management techniques. The interns engaged in CFC’s youth education programs and also assisted with our local Native Seed Gardeners program. The interns were responsible for helping maintain CFC properties, assisting staff with conservation land management projects and assisting with the organizing/leading of workday volunteer activities as needed.

Funding for the 2017 program was provided through a grant from the Oberweiler Foundation. CFC is grateful for this funding, as we could not accomplish the goals of our mission without the support of organizations like the Oberweiler Foundation. For the summer of 2018, CFC is again planning to offer the intern program. Candidates should be currently enrolled in college with preferred area of study in environmental science or a related field. Interested candidates should email a resume to cfc@citizensforconservation.org. Attn: Intern Chair Gene Branson.

Mickey Cardenas is studying Natural Areas Management at College of Lake County.

This summer I learned a lot about restoration work. Working with Tom Vanderpoel and the other four interns made the summer really interesting. Having four other interns made the eight hour day seem like a four hour day. It was nice to see the different backgrounds of the interns and see how they could incorporate restoration techniques into their field of study. Doing this work has increased my interest and made me want

to do this work as a future career even more. Being out in the field and learning all the different plant names was one of the toughest parts.

I really enjoyed helping lay out what was essentially the groundwork for a restoration project, whether that was spraying pesticide, pulling invasive plants, collecting seeds or planting plugs. I enjoyed it all.



Mickey Cardenas

There’s a lot of satisfaction that comes with the internship because we are doing this for a good cause. Being able to see the work of past interns and volunteers every day is a joy because the work being done does make a difference. Everything from new species of plants in an area or new wildlife is a spectacular sight to see at the end of the day. One of the best parts of the internship was working with the volunteers twice a week. Every one of them loves the work and wants to improve the environment and the results are there to prove it. This was a really great way to talk with other people who had been in the conservation field for many years and to meet new people who are just getting started in the field.

We were able to go to the seed nursery at Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve and learn about their methods of seed collecting and compare it to the way CFC collects and stores seeds. I was able to see two different, but similar, storing methods. It was amazing to see the amount of seed that is collected and ordered for all the different sites. My favorite part of the internship was finding a new species that had not been sighted in Lake County at Cuba Marsh.

Overall this internship was a really great opportunity. I learned so many conservation techniques and methods that I will be able to use in the future. The biggest take away I got from this internship was that having a plan down on paper and actually implementing that plan can produce two very different results. Not every site is going to have the same restoration solution to it and this internship really put that into perspective.

Joe Moynihan attends Texas Tech University where he is studying Landscape Architecture.

I was introduced to horticulture and gardening at a young age by my grandmother. My interest piqued, I decided to pursue a degree in Landscape Architecture. During high school, I worked for a garden center and started to become aware of the importance of preserving our environment and planting some native species in our gardens. This internship provided me a plethora of information about the consequences of

conservation, restoration and sustainability which will be a huge asset in my chosen career.

A key idea the experts from CFC demonstrated this summer was the importance of planning a project before actually starting the job. This became evident in my discussions with Tom



Joe Moynihan

Vanderpoel: I was curious to know how he determined which area was ready to round up and start conserving as a new site. He explained how he carefully planned each site and specifically chose when to work on each area of the site. He advised that it is best to begin in spaces with high elevation and then move to areas that contain a decent amount of remnant species. Throughout the summer it became evident that when conserving a site, some good plants are killed in an effort to rid an area of all the invasive or “bad” ones. That is simply the way nature works, and with any luck, the good plants will be strong enough to push back and return the next summer. I witnessed this result in multiple zones where all the plants were killed the previous year. When we returned to those specific places this summer, the good plants grew back and the invasive plants were gone or the numbers significantly reduced.

When doing any project in the environment, specifically in relation to conservation, it is very important to do a complete job. It cannot be done half-heartedly; it needs to be one hundred percent. Exhaust every effort and be thorough. A great illustration of this is evident when attempting to eliminate invasive species from an area. If even a very small number are missed, they will seed. The aggressive plants will be back the next year, seemingly even more hearty and numerous than before.

This internship helped me genuinely understand the importance of conservation: we cannot overlook or worse, altogether forget, the effects that failed conservation will have on the environment. It has taken CFC over 30 years to achieve the conservation level they are currently at on many of these sites. The magnitude of the CFC work is apparent when one contemplates that with man’s help, it has taken 30 years to achieve what they have. What can nature do to combat this without man’s help?

My time at CFC also helped me to understand the value of not only the plants but also the creatures in the ecosystem. The “perfect prairie” can be made and filled with plants, but it will never survive without the right animals and insects. All animals and insects play a significant role in the ecosystem, and if just one is extracted, the entire area could

be in ruins. This is seen with the rising deer population. Many years ago, people decided predators were not good to have in Barrington. Without predators, the deer population increased tremendously. As a result, more native and rare plants were eaten. This in turn provided opportunity for invasive species to gain a foothold.

Lastly, while working with CFC, I learned the importance of building good relations with the community around you. This organization always takes into account what the neighbors will think and how their efforts will affect the community or the home owners before starting a new project. This is something I will need to cultivate and learn to consider as I plan on starting my own landscaping business after I graduate and receive my degree and certification. Keeping the community in mind will ensure I create landscapes the community will truly enjoy.

Sarah Strack attends Miami University in Ohio where she majors in Biology with a co-major in Environmental Science.

There aren't very many jobs that give you the chance to work outside all the time. Many people spend hours locked away in offices, typing away on computers or talking on phones. Of those few jobs that are outside, there are even fewer that make you feel like you are actually doing something important. My internship with Citizens for Conservation proved to be the rare opportunity to give me both of these chances.



Sarah Strack

I first found out about the organization through my mother, who convinced me to come volunteer with her. That summer changed what I wanted to do with my life and propelled me into the world of environmental science. It was a field that had always interested me, and yet one I had never considered for a career. Fast forward two years and here I am, an intern with hopes to work in conservation in the future.

The experience was a combination of manual labor and on-the-job learning. It introduced me to various species, whether they be plant or animal, and taught me about the difficult choices that come with running a nonprofit organization, especially one involved in conservation. Was it more important to remove cattail from an area or plant while the soil was soaked with rain? Should volunteers be sent to weed an area or would it be better to spend money to spray it? These and many other

dilemmas face those in charge, and I realized above all else the need to properly weigh one's decisions.

I know that I will always look back with fondness when thinking of the things I have done with CFC. I helped teach the children's camp and foster a love of nature in a future generation. This internship has educated me on how to properly spray for invasives as well as the importance of knowing the specific environment each native plant needs. I was even able to plant the plugs that will one day stitch the land back to its natural state. CFC allowed me to be a part of such a wonderful positive change in my community, one that I've seen reflected in not only the abundance of wildlife, but the abundance of joy it has created.

The job was at times hard, usually sweaty, and definitely led to a multitude of mosquito bites and tick scares; yet despite these difficulties, it is the most rewarding work I've ever done. Never before have I seen my work have such an immediate positive impact on my surroundings. I have watched fields yellow with parsnip and sweet clover turn back to green within a matter of hours. I've seen expanses of cattails turn brown and then green with native sedges. It's inspiring to see what dedication can do, and that is truly what sets CFC apart. There is such a tight knit community of people who care here, and their passion has allowed them to reshape the land around them.

Sarah Voska is majoring in Sustainable Management at University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

My background in environmental work has always been more on the policy side - I started out working with the Tower Lakes Lake Committee campaigning for No Phosphates and gathering support for a dredging project that ran from 2012 to 2016. I later got involved with Food & Water Watch's GMO labeling campaign and now work with Care About Climate doing capacity building and environmental education on an international scale. My experience meant nothing because I clearly had no idea what I was getting myself into when Carol Hogan and a prior intern (Katie Badskey, 2014) recommended I intern at CFC this summer!

I had never worked on ecology projects, never succeeded in growing my own garden, and basically knew nothing about plants. I had no clue what I was doing. As Tom Vanderpoel led us around the property that first week, pointing out plants that are good or bad, I was lost. As he left us with our first assignment, I tried to reassure myself: "Ok, the flower with



Sarah Voska

the yellow blossom he said pick the yellow flowers, they're bad." I looked up and saw three types of yellow flowers within a 20 foot radius of my spot in the path. Drat.

After pulling a couple of the wrong plant, I finally found the right plant: yellow sweet clover! I started finding it everywhere I went - along roadsides, in my own backyard and in the vacant lot down the street. Soon, I was able to recognize other prairie plants - both natives and invasives - around my home and community. It was so exciting to finally be able to distinguish one plant from another! As the weeks went on, we watched the prairie transform before our eyes, growing taller and sprouting up new colors every day.

As I looked out the window on the train downtown, I saw with new eyes the ecology that had been right in front of me for so long. I tried to jot down notes on CFC's work and the important, keystone species, etc. Just last month, I attended a conference in China as a presenter, and loved engaging with the environment by exploring the wetlands around the conference center. My team included two Nepalese, a Malaysian and an Egyptian. Our countries have such diverse climates; it was great to see how our experiences have determined our understanding of the ecology. The Egyptian - from a coastal desert on the Mediterranean - had never seen or heard cicadas before. The Malay - from the tropical rainforest - didn't recognize some of the clover and other herbaceous plants from temperate climates, and I was fascinated by the different Eurasian trees that I'd never seen before. Just two months ago, I would not have paid much attention to the landscape, but this time I felt like I knew what features in the plants to look for to identify them. As a naturally curious person, I really have enjoyed how much I've learned through this internship.

As a youth environmental activist, I often hear complaints that we're "stuck fixing a planet our parents and grandparents messed up." Many youth feel that previous generations are to blame for the 86% of climate change that is anthropogenic, through burning fossil fuels, rapid industrialization, rampant car usage, etc. But CFC volunteers have shown me that our parents' and grandparents' generations are working to protect our planet. CFC and Lake County Forest Preserves both have long term strategic planning that far exceeds the lifetimes of their board members. CFC members are sequestering carbon in our soil and protecting and filtering clean waterways to balance the macronutrients. They (you!) are working hard to make sure that 50, 100 years out, the world is livable. I am so inspired by the selfless dedication of CFC's volunteers and members. I have never seen a greater willingness to help, or a greater selflessness to pour time and effort into these projects where they may not see the fruits of their labor. The restoration will take another 20 years or more, and the impact of each volunteer who came to plant a sedge or kill some buckthorn will endure.

John "Jack" Williams is majoring in Biology at the University of Miami.

When I arrived for my first day to intern for Citizens for Conservation, I was not entirely sure what to expect. After living in Illinois for my whole life, I thought I at least had a basic understanding of the ecosystems that make up the Chicago area. To my surprise, I was more familiar with the wildlife of Southern Florida after only three years of school than that of my own home state. I never considered that Illinois used to be covered in savanna, of all things, with the wide assortment of flowering plants. What I initially thought was going to be a summer of just weed pulling and seed picking became an invaluable learning experience.



Jack Williams

While certainly not the coziest of summer work opportunities, it still felt rewarding knowing you're making a positive impact on the local environment. My coworkers and I have had to wade through mud, survive onslaughts of mosquitos, crawl in the dirt for low bearing seeds, prick our hands on thistle, carry herbicide and tools great distances, and even dive into a pond to secure a rogue floating island. While these tasks were certainly daunting, we would always laugh it off knowing our efforts were making a difference. It also made me appreciate the dedication of the volunteers, who give up their own time to help restore the ecosystem to what it once was.

What I was most excited to see every day was the wildlife. The sandhill cranes were a sight to behold anytime we saw a pair fly overhead. It was beautiful seeing bumblebees swarm the wild flowers during the early hours of the morning.

However, my favorite animals to spot, and my coworkers can confirm my love of them, were the snakes. It was a joy helping out with the kid's camp and finding Dekay's brown snakes under the snake boards. Some mornings, I would even look around the nursery before the start of the workday to try and catch a glimpse of the large garter snakes taking in the early sunlight.

Over the course of the summer, I learned a plethora of valuable information. I can now identify various native plants and their seeds, as well as the most ruthless of weeds and invasive plants. I learned some of the best techniques for conservation and restoration and already I'm seeing the difference made on sites we worked on during the first few weeks. The experiences and friends I've made will follow me for the rest of my life and inspire me to look into pursuing ecological and conservation related sciences.

President's Comments

He was not unlike a great conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The composition, well studied, the musicians in place, the audience waiting with anticipation. The only thing left to do was to pick up the baton and play the score.

Dedicated to the cause of "*Saving Living Space for Living Things.*"

Determined to succeed, he was a doer, unrelenting in mission.

A visionary...imagining how a restoration will look before the transformation begins.

Undeterred by outside distractions, relentless in pursuit.

These are only a few words I can use to describe my dear friend and mentor Tom Vanderpoel.

His willingness to teach, inspire and marvel at nature. His understanding that restoration is a series of small victories that stretch over weeks, months and years. The details of his leadership manifest in the prairies, wetlands, and savannas. All characteristics of the man we have had an opportunity to know.

This indelible blueprint is embedded within the hearts of us all.

Thank you Tom Vanderpoel!

— Tom Crosh



Tom Crosh and Tom Vanderpoel. Photo by Ralph Tarquino.

Volunteers needed

Volunteers are the lifeblood of CFC. To achieve our ambitious restoration goals, we need to recruit additional volunteers. Regular workdays are scheduled every Thursday and Saturday from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. In addition, during September and October, Sunday workdays are scheduled from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. for seed harvesting. Please join us at CFC Headquarters.



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