



CITIZENS  
FOR  
CONSERVATION

# CFC NEWS

*Saving Living Space for Living Things*

Vol. 32, No. 3, Summer 2013



*Flint Creek Savanna. Photo by Diane Bodkin.*

## **Celebrate a quarter century of restoration at Flint Creek Savanna**

by Diane Bodkin

The very existence of Flint Creek Savanna is one of Citizens for Conservation's greatest accomplishments. We worked hard to purchase the property, raising funds from generous supporters over a three-year period. We worked even harder to restore diverse habitats on the property. We have created one of northeastern Illinois' finest wetland mitigations, a prairie pothole, as well as returning native wildflowers to the oak savannas. We have restored sedge meadows and prairies and Long Pond, the open-water wetland next to our farmhouse headquarters. It has taken time, money, hard work, and dedication; therefore, it is with great pride and a good deal of pleasure that we ask you to join us in celebrating Flint Creek Savanna's 25th anniversary.

On September 7, CFC pays tribute to the property's purchase in 1988. There will be activities for all generations. The day begins with a volunteer recognition breakfast at 8:30 a.m. in the headquarters' parking area — "Breakfast by the Savanna." Festivities for young and older will begin at 1:00 that afternoon with a proclamation by a Village of Lake Barrington trustee.

We will feature walking tours that showcase the prairie, wetlands, meadows, and savanna with five of our CFC experts "in character" stationed along the trail. Patsy Mortimer, Edith Auchter, Tom Vanderpoel, Jim Vanderpoel and Wendy Paulson will explain to our guests what they are seeing at each

*(continued on page 2)*

## Celebrate Flint Creek Savanna *(continued from page 1)*

particular location and what it might have looked like many years ago.

Walking tours in small groups will start at 1:15 p.m. with one long tour through the southern part of the Savanna and five shorter fifty-minute tours at twenty minute intervals. We hope the Barrington High School videographers can capture these experts' knowledge and personalities on video for future viewing.

We will have storyboards, time lines, and helpful brochures placed around the parking area to acquaint visitors with the rich history of the preserve while they wait for their tours to start. There will also be displays and information from other CFC projects.



*Painted turtle laying eggs — one of the living things that thrives in the Flint Creek Savanna habitat. Photo by Diane Bodkin.*

A new feature at this celebration will be a nature photography contest open to CFC members. The subject of the photos will be the living things found at Flint Creek Savanna and other CFC properties. During the celebration we will display the 8x10 prints we accept so that attendees can vote for their favorites. We will frame the winning photo for the photographer as well as feature it in *CFC News* and in our 2013 annual report. (See below for more information.)

Please plan to join us on September 7 to celebrate the anniversary of CFC's largest and most diverse preserve. We are proud of the habitats you are helping us to restore, and we want to share the joy with all of you who have made this possible.

### **Nature Photo Contest planned for Flint Creek Savanna celebration**

All CFC members are invited to enter. The deadline is August 31, 2013. Subjects must be "living things" at Flint Creek Savanna or other CFC property.

The winner will be the People's Choice chosen by those attending our September 7 celebration.

Drop off matted 8"x10" prints, black and white or color, at the CFC office to the attention of Jim Bodkin, or mail prints to him at 13 Turning Shore, South Barrington, IL 60010.

The winner will receive his/her winning photo beautifully framed, and we will print it in *CFC News* and our annual report.

## Encore performance marks first day of Spring

by Annamarie Lukes

On a cold, windy night with snow flurries, dozens of people celebrated the first day of spring by attending CFC's Community Education Committee's encore presentation on Native Trees and Shrubs.

Meredith Tucker shared the many reasons why native trees and shrubs are perfect for our erratic Midwestern weather. Natives have adapted to our climate, our soils, our hydrology, our native insects and our local plant diseases. Native trees and shrubs are low-maintenance for humans while providing food and shelter and breeding habitat for other species, including birds and pollinators.

In the second half of the presentation, Tucker showed photos of the most highly recommended native trees and shrubs in all seasons. For detailed information on the trees and shrubs highlighted in this program, go to: <http://www.citizensforconservation.org/plant-lists/> and select the link for

"Trees and Shrubs."

"Native Trees and Shrubs" is one of four programs the Community Education Committee can present for other groups. To see a description of all four programs and get information on how to schedule a program for your group, go to the CFC website page <http://www.citizensforconservation.org/for-your-group/>.



*Blossoms on native Iowa crab Malus ioensis. Photo by Meredith Tucker.*

## Restoration report

### How CFC conducts burns

In our restoration report of June, 2009, we explained why we burn our natural areas. That report indicated that spring fire removes dead leaves and stalks and does not harm the native plants which are either fire tolerant or even fire dependent. Fire releases minerals which dissolve into the ground from fine ash and improve the soil. The spring sun warms the exposed soil quickly, extending the growing season. At the same time that the fire helps native plants, it hurts introduced cool season grasses by damaging their early growing shoots. Unquestionably fire gives native prairie plants a competitive advantage over most of the non-native, invasive weeds.

This report explains how we burn our preserves. The Restoration Committee has developed time-tested strategies and tactics. We try to burn at least part of each of our major restoration projects every year, but we never burn all of any one preserve. Fire, while good for native vegetation in general, has been shown to damage insect populations. That same research has shown that insects can repopulate a burned site as long as part of their habitat is unburned.

Our next strategic decision is timing. We try to burn as soon as possible after the snow has melted. We want to burn before early growing plants like hepatica and bloodroot come up and before hibernating animals become active. This goal is always balanced against optimal burning conditions; if it's too cold or too wet, the plants will not burn. We also have to evaluate the wind. We will not burn if the wind is too strong or if it is coming from a direction that will prevent our minimizing the amount of smoke that will blow across a road or towards the neighbors.

Once we have determined our burn strategy, the whole team moves into action. We apply for our burn permits at the beginning of the year, so they are already in place. Next, we notify the local fire department and preserve neighbors. The phone callers next must call and raise the burn crew, which has already been put on alert.

When the callers have accomplished their mission, the field burn team assembles at the site. The burn leader splits the team into two lines; each line has a drip torch operator, at least one backpack sprayer, a group of rakers, and a group of flappers. The drip torch operator starts a line of fire by dropping burning oil on the dried grass; the rakers move ahead of the flame to push



*Drip torch operator Patsy Mortimer starts a line of fire. Photo by Donna Bolzman.*

flammable material away from tree trunks, poles or signs; the flappers' job is to tamp out any flames that are moving away from where we want to burn; the backpack sprayer, whose apparatus weighs fifty-five pounds when full, backs up the flappers by extinguishing the burn line when it gets too hot or starts moving too quickly.

The first burn line we ignite is the back burn. The back burn starts against a natural firebreak like a creek or a trail, on the windward side of the target area. As the line of fire separates, the windward side is extinguished by the flappers and backpack sprayer while the other side of the flame is allowed to burn slowly against the wind creating a swath of burned ground which will deprive the main fire of fuel.

The headwind line begins to burn well after the back burn creates the fire break. Workers extinguish the side of the fire that burns against the wind and allow the windward line to burn rapidly towards the firebreak. The two lines eventually meet at a prearranged point, and the headwind fire burns until it reaches the back burn firebreak and the fire burns out. The backpack sprayers put out any hotspots that remain inside the burned area.



*Back burn line against a trail firebreak. Photo by Donna Bolzman.*

The key concern of all of the crew is safety. The burn leader and all of the crew are constantly monitoring for wind shifts and spot fires. Conducting a prescribed burn is the most physically exhausting of all of our restoration activities. CFC appreciates all of the contributions of the burn teams. Their safety record is exemplary, and we simply cannot accomplish restoration without controlled burns.

— Jim Vanderpoel

## Discarded Christmas trees live again at Baker's Lake

by Patsy Mortimer

Every spring herons return to Baker's Lake to nest, and every year Citizens for Conservation volunteers, Forest Preserve District of Cook County police, and Crabtree Nature Center staff take Christmas trees to the island for the birds to nest in. The Village of Barrington and local Christmas tree sellers supply the trees.



*Early arriving cormorants and great egrets circle the Baker's Lake rookery as the first boat approaches the island. Photo by Jim Bodkin.*

During cold winters the lake freezes solid enough for workers



*Volunteers pull boats loaded with Christmas trees ashore. Photo by Jim Bodkin.*

to drag the trees across the ice, but the last two mild winters have required the use of boats after the spring thaw. Twenty people, including eleven CFC volunteers, spent over fifty hours hauling, positioning and pruning 200 trees on the island.

Great egrets proliferate nesting on the old and new Christmas trees on the perimeter of the island while increasing numbers of cormorants crowd out great blue herons and the state-endangered black-crowned night herons. Over 300 pairs of birds nest on the island. Look for a report on definitive numbers after the June nest count.



*New trees surround old nests. Photo by Jim Bodkin.*



*Christmas trees are ready for the 2013 nesting season. Photo by Jim Bodkin.*

## Soil basics and creating compost: a fertile discussion

by Mary Stubbs

For its final 2012-13 program, CFC's Community Education Committee presented "Soils and Composting" with speaker Sharon Yiesla. Ms. Yiesla has a B.S. and M.S. in horticulture and works at the Morton Arboretum.

Ms. Yiesla explained soil types (sand, silt and clay), structure (the arrangement of soil particles), and texture (particle coarseness). These qualities affect soil's ability to absorb and store water. Clay soil is the best soil for water retention because it has smooth, sticky particles. This may relieve Barrington residents who bemoan their clay soil because of septic system and planting difficulties. Sand is the soil which most poorly retains moisture.

The second section of the program detailed ways to make and use compost at home and encouraged gardeners to use it to enhance any soil type. Ms. Yiesla made the subject accessible with two words: "brown" and "green." These refer to carbon and nitrogen sources. The brown materials rich in carbon include dried leaves, twigs, straw, and so forth while the green nitrogen sources include fresh grass, fruit and vegetable waste. Compost should contain almost equal amounts of brown and green. Remember not to add any fats to a compost pile: no meat or dairy products.

Audience members asked excellent questions. They wondered how long it takes to create compost (several months), whether it can be used as mulch (yes), and how best to enclose it (inside or outside a bin). There was also some discussion of the many helpful animal organisms that break down plant material into beautiful, crumbly rich compost.

The knowledgeable gardeners (most of the audience) all learned something new about soil and composting, and they left eager to revitalize their present piles or to build new ones.

Citizens for Conservation's Board of Directors congratulates Boy Scouts Matt Reiser and Alex Zuhlke for receiving their Eagle Awards by completing projects for CFC. Matt did an incredible job building our exterior kiosk while Alex did a great job installing a drainage system to carry rain from behind the shed, under the parking lot, and into rain barrels near the silo. Thank you!

**Correction:** In the Spring, 2013 "Notable Natives," I incorrectly stated that ragweed is a non-native species. In fact it is a native annual that is nonetheless noxious and aggravates allergies. The Editor

## Seasonal Tip

### The case for summer bird feeding

Should we feed birds only during the cold weather when natural foods are scarce or hidden by snow and ice? There are compelling reasons to keep birdfeeders full all year long. Primarily, the food we provide will help sustain energy levels of adult parents while they forage for other food for their young.

If you are concerned that the birds will become dependent on your feeder or will stop gathering insects, berries or sap during the breeding season, don't be. Birds find varied and abundant natural foods to provide their young with necessary protein. 95% of birds can feed only insects to their hatchlings. Adults come to feeders just to supplement their own natural diets.

Sitting at my computer writing this, I am watching various finches, black-capped chickadees, a nuthatch, a rose-breasted grosbeak, even a too-large woodpecker trying to pilfer feed from the smaller birds. The entertainment and education they provide us are good reasons to feed them during the summer months, and the advantage is all ours. These birds connect us to the natural world. Take your laptop or newspaper outside and join them; the bird songs are priceless.

If you feed bread to wild birds, please be sure it is whole grain and preservative free. Breads that are not good for us are also not good for birds.

Don't forget the orioles. I halve oranges and place them on the wire fences protecting my young trees from the deer. Adding a natural jelly to the orange segments makes them irresistible.

In the fall don't be concerned that feeding birds will somehow interfere with migration. Their powerful migratory urge is triggered by day length; your feeder will not cause a bird to forego migration. It might just give a needed energy boost to visiting migratory species.

To avoid spreading disease, clean feeders regularly – biweekly according to [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org), a website associated



Red-bellied woodpecker at feeding station. Photo by Diane Bodkin.

with Cornell University. Wash in soapy water and soak in one part bleach to nine parts water. Rinse carefully, and then enjoy the avian show all year long.

— Karen Rosene

## CFC youth pow-wow teaches about area's Native Americans

by Pat Winkelman

With clouds threatening rain and strong winds blowing soil into the air, some fifty people enjoyed learning about Native Americans in the comfort of Camp Reinberg's dining hall. CFC sends a special thank you to Cuba Township for its grant to pay the class honorarium and to the volunteers of Deer Grove who helped secure the location. We also thank the Forest Preserve District of Cook County for generously providing Camp Reinberg for this special class, a fitting location which had served as a Native American pow-wow site many years ago.

Jon Jordon of Spirit of the Eagle greeted audience members with "Tanyán yahípi" or "welcome" in the Lakota Sioux native tongue. Everyone learned that the name "Sioux" comes from "Nadowe Su," Algonquin for "little rattle" or the rattling sound a snake makes before striking. "Lakota" means allies, friends, or those who are united.



Jon Jordon teaches from a full-size tipi. Photo by Diane Bodkin.

Participants were eager to learn about the beautifully decorated, full-size fifteen-foot tipi standing in the room. Women built the tipis, using about twelve buffalo hides to cover each one. Four to six people could sleep in the enclosure. Jordon explained what items were usually found inside the tipi and how it was decorated inside and out.

Jordon described how every part of the buffalo was used by Native Americans. They made the fat into soap and the stomach into a cooking pot. The bladder became a water container. They tanned the hide and made clothes and bedding while horns became drinking vessels and buffalo hair became thread or rope. They used buffalo dung as fuel, ribs for children's sleds, and rawhide for lacrosse stick nets.

The class ended with participants learning the story of how the opossum lost the hair on its once beautifully bushy tail because he was vain and how even today the opossum plays dead as a defense against predators.

## More successful collaborations

When School District 220 asked CFC to help find a muralist to make something wonderful happen on the huge blank wall in the entrance to their relatively new Early Learning Center, we could not have imagined a more intriguing challenge. CFC board member Ginger Underwood suggested we approach artist Susan Hanson, a CFC member who lives in the community, illustrates children's books and is no stranger to the art of creating murals. At the first meeting with Principal Barbara Romano, sparks of understanding and mutual admiration flew, and before the meeting ended, we knew there was a great philosophical match and that the theme of the mural would be "The Seasons." It would fit perfectly with the Early Learning Center's environment, inside and out.



*Artist Susan Hanson shows Early Learning Center students the foxes she has just added to "The Seasons" mural she is painting at their school. Photo by Diane Bodkin.*

The Early Childhood program is a state-mandated program serving children from three to five years old throughout the district. The students have been involved from the beginning of the mural project, and some have even painted at easels while Susan was working. The artist is committed to painting only the **native** plants, shrubs, trees and animals that are found here and is using her own research in addition to suggestions and guidance from Ginger and from Tom Vanderpoel. She has visited and photographed CFC's Flint Creek Savanna for additional inspiration.

Stopping by the Early Learning Center to watch progress on the mural is an experience in itself. Even a Buddhist monk from a temple in Chicago where Susan painted extensive murals has come to see her work here. Because interaction with the children is an essential component of the project, Susan will continue painting the background this summer and will create the animals when students return in August.

Funding for the mural is through shared costs between the District 220 Educational Foundation and the Early Learning Center Parent-Teacher Organization.



*BMO Harris-Barrington volunteers install native plants during a Day of Service at Flint Creek Savanna. Photo by Bob Lee.*

Another fine collaboration, this time between CFC and BMO Harris-Barrington took place recently when thirty-nine enthusiastic folks (including their President) spent a Day of Service at CFC headquarters doing a variety of jobs, from forming grapevine wreaths to be used in Youth Education projects to weeding seed beds for the Native Seed Gardener program to planting many flats of native plants. This is certainly not the first time that BMO Harris-Barrington has chosen to work with CFC volunteers to accomplish much-needed work. Their help is greatly appreciated and always welcome.

— Sam Oliver

## CFC grateful to receive grants from area foundations

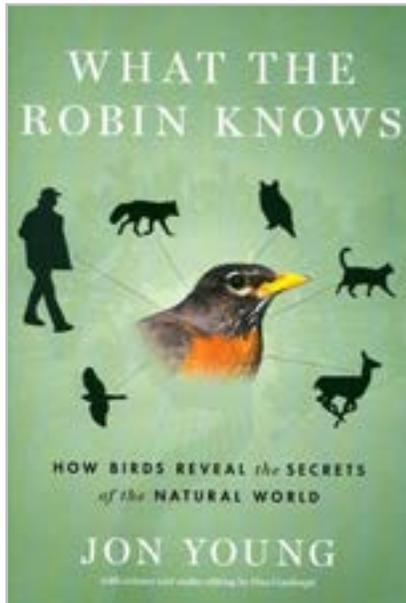
Citizens for Conservation is most grateful to the following foundations for their generous grants for our conservation projects.

The Oberweiler Foundation will fully fund our four fulltime interns for Summer, 2013, with a grant of \$16,188. Oberweiler has funded CFC's interns for many years, allowing us to accomplish a tremendous amount of restoration work each summer and to provide experience, education, and inspiration to these fine college students. Thank you Oberweiler Foundation for your ongoing support.

Barrington Area Community Foundation (BACF) has granted \$1500 in seed money to CFC's Community Education Committee to help develop its Habitat Corridors initiative. This innovative program is in keeping with CFC's efforts to acquire and restore contiguous land to provide habitat for native birds and other struggling plant and animal species. We believe property owners can substantially contribute to the effort by implementing sound ecological practices on their own properties. Habitat Corridors will involve mapping, educating local homeowners, producing educational print materials, and publicizing the purpose and evolution of this on-going project. Thank you Barrington Area Community Foundation for your support.

## A good read

### **What the Robin Knows: How Birds Reveal the Secrets of the Natural World** by Jon Young



The robin knows just how high it must fly to get out of reach of a cat. (To fly any higher would be a waste of precious energy.) The robin knows from the alarm calls of other birds when a Cooper's hawk is approaching and it's time to fall silent. The robin knows the pathways routinely taken by ground animals that share its territory. By watching and listening to the robin, one can learn much of what the robin knows.

Jon Young believes that common backyard birds are the key to a deeper understanding of the natural world. Young is a naturalist, tracker, and teacher. Drawing on scientific research and years of observations, he reveals with captivating examples how birds are part of a vast web of communication.

All animals must be aware of approaching predators in order to survive. Birds are the early warning system — first to sound the alarm — and there is increasing evidence that other animals respond to bird vocalizations. The robin is particularly expressive in both behavior and vocalizations, making it an ideal bird to study.

Young describes the common types of bird vocalization: songs, companion calls, adolescent begging, territorial aggression, and alarms. He teaches how to enter the natural world gently, rather than as a threat (or “bird plow”), sending a rush of birds up and away. He encourages journaling and quietly sitting and getting to know specific birds in a yard or natural area. The book includes exercises to develop observational skills. An appendix links examples in the text with audio files of bird vocalizations available online.

One can read this book simply for entertainment. Even read casually, it will deepen the reader's sensitivity to bird behavior. But also it can be a guide to a deeper level of understanding. Use it to enhance a time of quiet bird watching with a child. Try one or two of the exercises to expand your enjoyment of the natural world, or dive in to learn “deep bird language” and all that our backyard birds can teach us.

— Sharon Pasch

## **Rich color and calm accompany bird walkers with Wendy**

by Diane Bodkin

If you haven't been on one of Wendy Paulson's bird walks, you're missing a wealth of birding and conservation education from a world-renowned naturalist. Not only that, it's free. Enjoy refreshing your senses outdoors in nature, and share the camaraderie of other enthusiasts.

Tour members have had some truly exceptional experiences like seeing a newborn fawn curled up against a tree trunk less than a foot off our woodland trail (lying so still that only its ears moved). There was the thrill of seeing a bobolink through the scope so close you felt you could touch it and the sight of an elegant cedar waxwing which capped a wonderful morning of bird watching.



*Newborn fawn spotted on a bird walk around Penny Road Pond. Photo by Diane Bodkin.*

Participants saw the awesome blue of an indigo bunting, the bright orange of a Baltimore oriole, and intense red of a scarlet tanager. They watched a grasshopper sparrow as he called and experienced leaving a woodland trail to enter into a stunning panorama of lush grasslands, evidence of the restoration efforts of thousands of volunteer hours.

It's all there at Spring Creek Forest Preserve and other Barrington area natural areas. Wendy is sponsored by Citizens for Conservation and Audubon Chicago Region. We hope to join her again next year.



*Bird walkers at Spring Creek Forest Preserve. Photo by Diane Bodkin.*

## CFC Committee gives program on using native plants at home

by Mary Stubbs

Twenty-six enthusiastic people braved a chilly pre-spring day to hear about native plant alternatives in the suburban landscape. CFC's Community Education Committee presented speakers Meredith Tucker and Peggy Simonsen, long-time CFC board members and native plant enthusiasts, who have "walked the walk" through tireless work in their own naturally landscaped yards. They are dedicated to creating a generation of people who honor and enjoy the unique richness of our Northeastern Illinois ecosystems.

Peggy explained the origin of lawns and our love affair with them as well as describing how they fail to function naturally in the Prairie State. Lawn grass makes it difficult for rain to infiltrate the soil, requires harmful chemicals, uses polluting gas-powered maintenance equipment, and places a drain on the increasingly scarce water supply. Last summer's drought should be a constant reminder about water conservation.



*Dwarf larkspur, heart-leaved golden Alexanders and Virginia waterleaf. Photo by Meredith Tucker.*

providing the names of the plants (including Latin names) and their habitats. The colorful slide show prompted questions and shared experiences from the audience members.

We hope that you are enriching your property with native plants. When your neighbors praise your gardening, please share your knowledge with them!



*Great blue lobelia and wool grass in rain garden. Photo by Meredith Tucker.*

Meredith explained the value of native plants to our environment. They are easily maintained without irrigation, fertilizers or pesticides, and they provide enormous ecosystem services to our pollinators and birds.

While the speakers described many beautiful native plants, where they thrive, and what wildlife they attract, audience members could follow along on a handout

## BACOA award to Karen Hunter for years of service to CFC



*CFC board member Karen Hunter. Photo by Joe Rush, courtesy of Barrington Area Council on Aging.*

CFC recently honored Karen Hunter by nominating her as its representative for the Barrington Area Council on Aging (BACOA) Hall of Fame. In May, 2013, BACOA introduced Karen and honorees from other Barrington organizations at a recognition tea attended by many members of the Barrington community.

Mistress of Ceremonies Sam Oliver introduced Karen to the large group of honorees and their guests who listened as Sam read her long list of accomplishments and service to CFC and the community. At the end everyone was amazed at all she has done on our behalf! A few of these achievements include her being President of Citizens for Conservation for three years, establishing the Annual Native Plant Sale and chairing that event for thirteen seasons. She also acted as chair of CFC's Development Committee and initiated its annual appeal program. Over the years Karen has volunteered as a restoration worker and as a CFC Conservation@Home representative. She helped to establish CFC's Community Education program. A complete list of her successes and service to CFC would fill this page!

Thank you, Karen, for supporting CFC for more than twenty years. You surely deserve this award for your excellent service to CFC and your personal commitment to preserving and improving the natural environment.



*Wild sweet William in shade garden. Photo by Meredith Tucker.*

# Seventeenth annual plant sale a victory for native flora and fauna!

by Ginger Underwood

CFC's 17th Annual Native Plant, Shrub and Tree sale was a record breaker in all respects. We enabled over 15,385 native grasses, forbs and ferns to be find homes in local soil to attract and sustain both native insects and birds. Over 217 native trees and shrubs now help to feed and shelter local resident and migrating birds and other wildlife, especially pollinators.



Shoppers at the plant sale. Photo by Jan Sauer.

Our volunteers were the best of the best! We had someone for every task from printing plant photos to cleaning the shed, from publicity to setting up the tables and signs.

Some volunteers handled mailing or unloading trucks, scheduling or signing up volunteers. They managed watering, putting out road signs, counting, more watering, sorting, educating, cashiering, additional watering, feeding us, parking cars ... and clean-up! We had a magnificent team full of determination, energy, knowledge and fun.

This year we had a large variety of plants from which to choose for our pre-sale orders: fifteen woodland wildflowers, eight ferns, twenty-four grasses and sedges, seventy-nine forbs, twenty-five shrubs, and twenty-three trees. The orders piled in!

The 750+ hours of volunteer labor paid off big time with record-breaking sales, and the profits are being put toward the best use ever—*saving living space for living things!* I send a big thank you to everyone who helped in so many ways and



Karen Hunter counts plants at check-out. Photo by Jan Sauer.

also to those of you who did such a great job of shopping at our sale. We have some loyal customers who travel thirty-five miles every year! A huge bonus to the sale is that thirty-six enthusiastic new members joined CFC. Without all of you, none of this would happen! Thank you so much!

## Volunteer Portrait

### Bryan Hughes

I grew up in Oak Park, but during my “at-home years,” we lived in a building without land. Then my first adult home was a townhouse in Schaumburg where I never had to do yard work. About seventeen years ago my wife and I moved to a house on a three-quarter acre lot in the Barrington area. I found yard work to be very rewarding and great exercise, so our beds have expanded ever since.



Bryan Hughes sows seeds at a workday. Photo by Jim Bodkin.

A few years ago I received a mailer from Citizens for Conservation. Their mission statement, particularly “stewardship of the land,” really caught my attention. My wife and I enjoy the outdoors, and gardening is our primary hobby so we became members. When the membership renewal came, I decided to check the box to volunteer.

CFC introduced me to the tallgrass prairie and just how beautiful the prairie can be. I remember Jim Vanderpoel pointing out plants and saying that the really “showy” things are not native, that the prairie has a subtle beauty. I learn something new from Tom, Jim, Gene and other volunteers at every workday.

During the week I work in the Graphic Systems Division of Fujifilm as a Product Marketing Manager. I am pretty much locked inside looking at a computer screen most of the day which makes me value my restoration time outside with CFC.

People are like the plants that grow in the prairie; diversity is the key. I enjoy interacting and working beside people from different backgrounds, perspectives and age groups. I know how I want burn piles to look; thank you, Cliff. I work harder when Gail and Carol are around just to keep up with them. I wish I had had the volunteer spirit of Julia and Ryan when I was their age. And, Tom is right; I am surprised at the huge difference a small group of people can make in two hours on a Saturday morning.

At the Grigsby burn a few weeks ago, Ralph and I walked the perimeter after the fire burned out, and he summed it up perfectly. He said he wanted to experience all the aspects of what CFC does. The prairie burn was the only “season” we had not seen. I hope to see many more. Thank you everyone at CFC. It's been a pleasure participating and learning from you. You are a great group to work with.

— Bryan Hughes

## Notable Natives

### North American Robin

With its apparently relentless good cheer, the North American robin *Turdus migratorius* is one of our most abundant and beloved songbirds. The world almost lost this friendly and beautiful backyard bird from DDT contamination during the 1960s, but strong conservation efforts have restored its population. A member of the thrush family, it now inhabits every state in the U.S. and every province of Canada. (If one is tempted to question its identity as a thrush, one need only look at a juvenile; its heavily spotted breast links him to the rest of the thrush clan.)

There are seven subspecies of this migratory songbird. The robins that breed here will move south to Florida and Mexico in the winter while those from Canada migrate to Illinois and surrounding states in cold weather. Note how much wilder the winter residents seem than the semi-tame summer inhabitants.



*Robin catches insect. Photo by Diane Bodkin.*

The robin builds a nest of grasses with a layer of mud in the middle and an interior lining of fine grasses. One can see female robins with dirt-streaked breasts during nest construction since they press against the muddy lining while forming the nest's cup.

Robins breed soon after migration and are one of the first local species to lay eggs, as early as April and into July for a second brood. They like to nest in bushes and small trees in woodlands and open farmlands, to say nothing of local yards. "Robin's egg blue" is named for the gorgeous color of their eggshells.

After breeding season, robins form small groups during the day to gain security from predators like cats, hawks, and snakes. At night, they assemble in large flocks to roost in trees. They are one of the last birds to sing at twilight, and at dawn, the robin's song is the first one hears.

As non-seedeaters, robins gobble up earthworms and other invertebrates such as beetles, caterpillars, and grubs. They use their eyes to hunt but also utilize hearing and smell. They eat berries and other fruits and thoroughly enjoy bathing in puddles and birdbaths.

These common birds are under threat from West Nile virus but also from a cause residents can control — the use of

lawn chemicals. Lawn insecticides enter the robin's main food source, invertebrates, especially earthworms, whose populations are also affected. In addition, while robins hop merrily across yards, their belly feathers pick up toxins that are directly transferred to eggs and nestlings with sometimes deadly consequences. Please just spot spray for weeds if you must, and do not include pesticides in lawn treatments!

One can encourage this fine species to forage and nest in the yard. Plant native bushes and trees such as serviceberry, chokecherry, blackberry, dogwood, crabapple, and hawthorn, to name a few. Robins also need a supply of over-wintering berries such as black chokeberry or winterberry to eat on their spring arrival. Put out some chopped fruit like apples and raisins, and perhaps set up a mealworm feeder. Keep your cats inside, and don't use herbicides on lawns. To receive the most enjoyment from the robins, make sure your birdbath is nice and fresh for lots of splashing fun!

— Virginia Black

### President's Comments

#### Planned Giving Initiative

Citizens for Conservation is launching a planned giving campaign. We have been honored in the past to receive major donations of land and financial contributions designated in benefactors' wills and estate trusts. Our new planned giving campaign will formalize the process to encourage more of our supporters to designate CFC as the recipient of elements of their estates.



These contributions may come from IRAs or 401ks, benefitting donors with tax deductions. Benefactors may donate land to CFC to protect it in perpetuity and perhaps to restore it. In addition, people who know us trust that CFC will manage financial donations frugally to contribute to our mission of "Saving Living Space for Living Things."

People tend to support the organizations whose work they believe in, whose values represent their values. I expect that you, as a member and friend of CFC, value the protection and restoration of natural lands in the Barrington area. You have shown that you value our superb landscape restorations, outreach and education to inform and benefit the community and excite children as the next generation to support nature. We know you value protecting natural areas in our beautiful countryside.

There is little open, ecologically valuable land still available for purchase in the Barrington area, but there is a great deal of privately owned land that can be protected from development by donations to Citizens for Conservation. Look for our planned giving brochure soon, with details about how you can plan to leave a lasting legacy that represents your values.

— Peggy Simonsen, President

# CFC Youth Ed provides hands-on KidFest projects

by Pat Winkelman

On Saturday, May 4, from 11am - 3pm at Barrington's Citizens Park, three local non-profit organizations featured the second annual Barrington area KidFest to celebrate June as Leave No Child Inside month. CFC volunteers participated in the fun-filled event which included a Kite Fly and Family Nature Fest. Sponsors of the free, family-oriented event were the Barrington Breakfast Rotary Club, Barrington Park District, and Leave No Child Inside of the Greater Barrington and Lake Zurich area.

As an early and on-going member of the local Leave No Child Inside initiative, Citizens for Conservation provided Youth Education volunteers who gave more than 1,500 participants the opportunity to learn about mammals of Illinois and have hands-on experience with mammal pelts and skulls. Children could make mammal footprints out of clay, and little ones tried their hands at a mock archeological dig after which they placed the bones they found on a deer skeleton poster.



Children dig for bones and place them on a poster. Photo by Tom Benjamin.

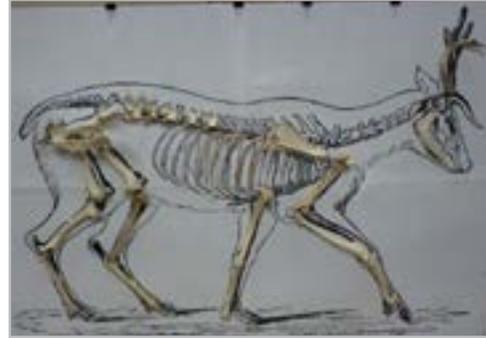
In addition to learning about mammals, children enjoyed over twenty outdoor and/or nature-based activities including tree climbing, archery, larger-than-life weaving, and bug-a-palooza. There were slack-lining, butterfly habitats, outdoor fun with Scouts, speed and agility games, learning to live with wildlife, experiencing "Leave No Trace," and making mighty oak note cards. Children could try pond critter collecting, foreign language games, making butterflies, birdhouse magnet coloring, and mural painting.

On behalf of Citizens for Conservation and Leave No Child Inside, Eagle Scout candidate Tommy Mitoraj of Troop 29 provided sixty blue bird houses for children to build and take home to supply new homes for our local blue bird population.

CFC sends a special thank you to CFC Youth Ed volunteer Doe Crosh, Girl Scout Gold Award candidate Katie Tipsword, along with Barrington High School student volunteers Grace Kurcab,

Grace McGovern, and Rosie Simoes for their tireless efforts to share a bit of nature with children and caregivers visiting CFC's tent.

We couldn't have done this without them!



Deer poster with bones in place. Photo by Tom Benjamin.

**(Note:** The Greater Barrington & Lake Zurich Area Leave No Child Inside Initiative is looking for a paid associate to work four hours a week to engage partners, provide outreach to new allies, handle event promotion and coordination, and to sustain the local movement to reconnect children with nature. Contact [emilian.geczi@chicagowilderness.org](mailto:emilian.geczi@chicagowilderness.org))

## Upcoming Events

### **25th Anniversary Celebration of CFC's Flint Creek Savanna**

Saturday, September 7, CFC pays tribute to the property's purchase in 1988.

8:30 a.m. Volunteer recognition breakfast in the headquarters' parking area.

1:15 p.m. Walking tours in small groups begin with one long tour through the southern part of the Savanna and five shorter fifty-minute tours at twenty-minute intervals.

Displays and activities throughout the afternoon.

### **Youth Education Classes**

Saturday, July 13, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Meet at CFC headquarters. [Botany on the Prairie.](#)

Saturday, August 24, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Meet at CFC headquarters. [The Metamorphosis of Butterflies.](#)

Saturday, October 26, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Meet at Sunnyhill/ Carpentersville. [Whooo Goes There?](#)

### **Youth Education Camp**

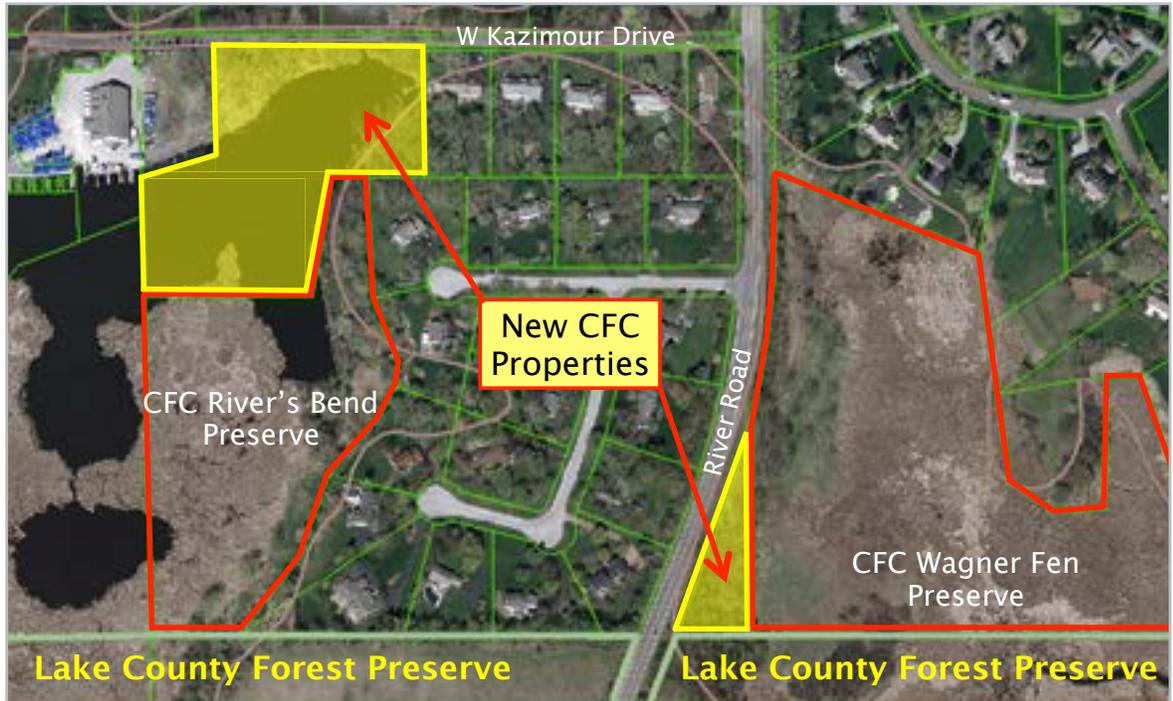
July 15 - 19, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. Meet at CFC headquarters. [Beyond the Lab: Field Explorations for Curious Children](#), a Leave No Child Inside and STEM-oriented camp for children entering first and second grades. Camp fee is \$100 for CFC members and \$150 for non-members. Find registration forms on the Youth Education page of CFC's website, <http://www.citizensforconservation.org/youth-education/>.

# CFC's latest land acquisition expands its River's Bend and Wagner Fen preserves

by Alberto Moriondo

This spring Citizens for Conservation acquired a 5.7-acre parcel in Lake Barrington, a nice reward for our continuing efforts to preserve natural lands. The property, owned by longtime CFC supporter Jack Lageschulte, expands our existing River's Bend and Wagner Fen preserves as outlined on the accompanying map.

The parcel along W. Kazimour Drive completes CFC's existing River's Bend preserve which was donated by Jack Lageschulte in 1979. It will allow easy access to the whole property. Similarly, the small triangle on River Road protects highly valuable Wagner Fen from potential development. Both CFC preserves are adjacent to Lake County Forest Preserve properties, allowing for coordinated efforts to preserve and manage these natural lands.



Map image courtesy of Alberto Moriondo with map detail by Lake County GIS.

Since 2005, CFC has successfully secured almost 100 acres of open space around Barrington. In doing so we have worked independently as well as with private entities and local governments. With this new addition, CFC has 409 acres under management, and over the past forty-two years we have helped protect more than 3,200 acres in the Barrington Area Council of Governments (BACOG) area.



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