



CFC spearheading link-up of area nature preserves, private holdings into north-south habitat corridor

Citizens for Conservation (CFC) is launching its most ambitious conservation initiative in 27 years - a plan to create a single north-south habitat corridor linking existing forest preserves and other protected natural areas in the Barrington area.

As envisioned, the Barrington Greenway Initiative will run a general course from Poplar Creek Forest Preserve south of Interstate 90 northward to Fox River Preserve along Roberts Road near Port Barrington.

It will link existing nature preserves in Lake, Cook and McHenry counties, such as Spring Creek, Grassy Lake and CFC's Flint Creek Savanna.

CFC restoration director Tom Vanderpoel described the endeavor as a land preservation, ecological restoration and education vision that will guide the Barrington area's conservation efforts over the next 25 years.

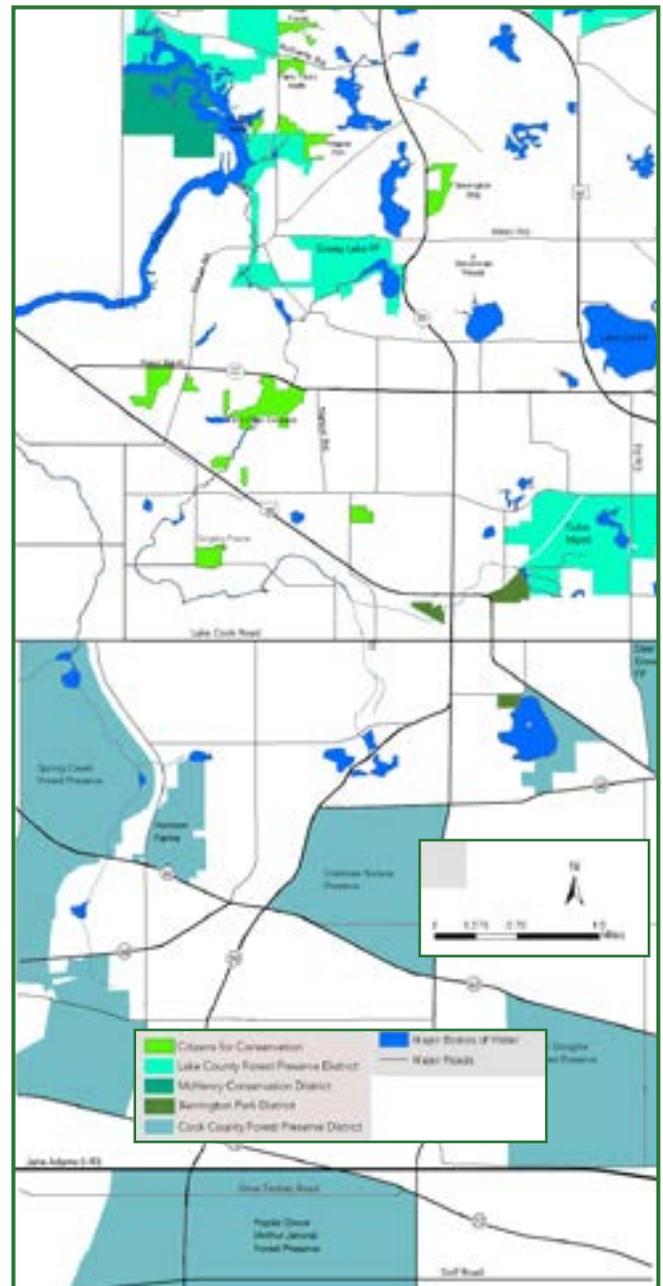
The idea is to have existing preserves act as core conservation areas, with corridors linking them to enable animals to migrate and plants to spread, thereby reducing disastrous fragmentation of their habitat.

"What makes this concept possible is the low density zoning in the Barrington area," Vanderpoel said.

He said CFC will encourage the county forest preserve agencies to buy strategic parcels from willing sellers, and CFC itself will purchase other key parcels that add to its existing preserves and fill gaps in the greenway corridor.

"We'll also encourage homeowners to consider CFC's Habitat Corridors program" Vanderpoel said. "This is where gardening with native vegetation creates safe-haven islands for wildlife passing through to find the large protected sites."

(continued)



Map provided by Rob Neff.

Barrington Greenway Initiative *(continued)*

He said it will be patterned after CFC's 1988 corridor plan to link Grigsby Prairie and the Fox River, a near continuous open space greenway along Flint Creek. That effort eventually protected Flint Creek Savanna, Grassy Lake Forest Preserve, Fox River Forest Preserve, and Lake Barrington's Open Space parcel, a total of 1,700 acres.

"Those ecological restorations won awards from Chicago Wilderness and are templates of how ecosystems can be returned to thriving biodiverse nature preserves," he said.

CFC's effort is coordinated with the 100-year conservation plans of both Lake and Cook counties. One of Lake County's eight "Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas" covers most of the Barrington area (i.e., southwest Lake, northwest Cook and southeast McHenry counties).

To kickstart the initiative and to show CFC's serious intent, CFC is committing \$100,000 to the effort and the private Bobolink Foundation (BobolinkFoundation.org) is donating \$200,000.

"With this \$300,000 as an incentive, CFC has persuaded both Lake and Cook County Forest Preserve Districts to bring their own resources to projects that will make a significant contribution to conservation," Vanderpoel said. "We also hope it will be a model for private and public monies to advance conservation in effective ways."

Notably, the Barrington Greenway Initiative will embrace the reintroduction of native wildlife as well as the restoration of native vegetation.

"Many native species are at risk of disappearing from our landscape," Vanderpoel said. "With the ingenuity and will of man, this doesn't have to be. CFC wants this project to be a model on how to incorporate wildlife into habitat restorations."

Pointing to efforts by Lake County Forest Preserve District and others to bring back and stabilize imperiled populations, he said "CFC wants to help and expand the scope significantly." He said the reintroduction of native wildlife would be "a thrilling aspect to our vision and give deep satisfaction to volunteers."

"Volunteers will play a central role and be pivotal to long-term success," Vanderpoel said, noting that a volunteer recruitment day this spring is expected to bolster the organization's stewardship groups.

Accordingly, he said, CFC is looking to double the size of current restorations over the next five years. Not only will native vegetation and wildlife benefit, but it will bring

ecosystem services to the community, such as groundwater protection, flood and erosion control, and carbon sequestration.

"We'll do these restorations with CFC techniques on a greater scale than we've ever tried," he said, explaining that the techniques bring efficiency to the process that saves precious resources, such as taxpayers' money and volunteers' time.

Vanderpoel commented on CFC's legacy of 3,500 acres protected, 500 acres under ecological management, and 10,000 children educated using preserves.

"Our intention is to set in motion a plan that will inspire the community and cement the Barrington area's reputation as a green oasis, principally done with volunteer citizens from the community. The Barrington Greenway Initiative has begun, so help us make it a resounding success."

Craftsbury Sign

CFC's restoration teams have been hard at work at the Craftsbury Preserve. Active restoration started with bucktorn-clearing and then seeding. CFC's task now is to control invasives while prairie restoration begins; eventually, wetland restoration will be added to help make the site healthy again and become part of the Barrington Greenway Initiative. And in October, the site became more recognizable when it got its own sign.



Photo by Ralph Tarquino.

Sam Oliver named as consultant to CFC Board of Directors

Sam Oliver, longtime CFC staff director, has been named a consultant to the CFC Board of Directors. She retired as staff director in August 2015.

Restoration Report

The carrots

The carrot family (*Umbelliferae*) is well represented in all our restored habitats: savannas, marshes and prairies. CFC has been consistently successful at restoring this family by spreading hand-collected seed. Sometimes it takes years, but every species we've sown has established nice populations in our preserves.

One of CFC's points of pride is our success restoring spring flora. A stalwart of our spring mix is golden alexander. Each May we enjoy thousands of these bright yellow flowers in the wet prairie, wet mesic prairie and moist open woods. The heart-leaved alexander is much less common, yet we have at least a dozen thriving colonies of this rarity on the dry clay slopes of both Grigsby Prairie and Flint Creek Savanna.

The yellow pimpernel, another lover of clay slopes, is common at Grigsby and Flint Creek, but its heartland is Baker's Lake Savanna. It is not common at other restoration sites; indeed, it's no exaggeration to say that the many pounds of yellow pimpernel seed we collect is the leading source of seed of this species for the entire Chicago Wilderness area. Collection day at Baker's Lake is nice duty because the oak savanna is very pleasant that time of year and the seed exudes a refreshing celery aroma. (Domesticated celery is another family member.)



Yellow pimpernel close-up. Photo by Patsy Mortimer.

Cow parsnip pulls double duty. Its huge white umbels provide a dramatic picture in the otherwise dull early summer oak woods, and it makes great fodder for deer. The deer browse this species so heavily that they leave harder to restore species alone. As our restoration director says, "cow parsnip falls on its sword" for the other vulnerable species.

Three other family members also adorn one of the oak groves at Flint Creek Savanna in late spring — sweet cicely, honewort, and black snakeroot, each of which comes easily and without requiring any special management effort.



Profusion of yellow pimpernel. Photo by Patsy Mortimer.

Great angelica, another early summer bloomer, lives in fens and other calcareous habitats. This beautiful plant, with its eight inch flowers, is extremely successful in restorations. It is one of the few plants that's more common in our restored marshes than in local remnants.

Perhaps the family member most familiar to Illinois prairie enthusiasts is the rattlesnake master. This classic prairie denizen is the exception that proves a key rule of restoration ecology: the more conservative the species, generally the harder it is to restore.

Rattlesnake master, one of the most conservative plants around, is one of the few that bend that rule. I've never seen this species growing wild in any but a high quality remnant prairie. You must be patient; it takes at least 10 years. But this plant will become abundant in a well-managed wet mesic prairie restoration. This is great for insect pollinators because they go wild for this unshowy flower! There must be something alluring in its nectar or pollen. If you want to study the local fauna of bees, flies, wasps and pollinating beetles, you'd do well to go to the prairie on a hot late July day when rattlesnake master is peaking.

The carrot family probably reaches its zenith in early August in sedge meadows. Though not closely related, water parsnip, cowbane and water hemlock are practically indistinguishable in appearance, and they bloom in the same habitat at the same time of year. This raises the question: why do we see this duplication? Is there some subtle but unnoticeable difference in our habitats? Will these species eventually sort themselves out into some more specialized subset of the sedge meadow? Do we need our seed mixes to be more specialized? We still have a lot to learn about restoration ecology.

The Barrington area is within the range of prairie parsley and meadow parsnip, two very attractive and conservative species in the carrot family that we've never seen in our collecting area. Keep your eyes out for them. We'd love to add these two to our strong roster of the carrot family.

— Jim Vanderpoel

Local grade schoolers learn to love our restored prairies

by Edith Auchter

Once the school year resumed in September, some of the local preserves began teeming with more life than usual. Specifically, 1,150 second and third graders from School District 220, along with teachers, chaperones and school “nature ladies,” traipsed through CFC’s Flint Creek Savanna and Grigsby Prairie or Spring Creek Forest Preserve’s Galloping Hill Prairie.



Discovery walk through the prairie. Photo by Tom Auchter.

The Nature Lady program, funded by The Garden Club of Barrington and Little Garden Club of Barrington, historically has had third graders visit Grigsby Prairie. Since 2009, fourth graders have visited local preserves as part of an award-winning collaboration between District 220 and CFC. Recent adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards has shifted these programs down to second and third grades.

Second graders hike the preserves, pausing at signposts with illustrated descriptions of about two dozen species of plants typically encountered. They learn to identify native plants and the features that enable them to survive prairie, savanna and wetland environments, such as pollination and seed distribution. For example, some seeds disperse by wind, some by hitching onto passing animals, and some by surviving a bird’s digestive tract. Students are encouraged to



Collecting seed. Photo by Tom Auchter.

experience nature through touching, smelling and listening. Many thanks to the Nature Ladies who lead this program.

Third graders have three activities during their visit as citizen scientists: a discovery walk, measuring and sketching activity, and seed collecting. They learn about the tiny amount of original prairie remaining in Illinois, the Prairie State. They learn why restoration of native habitats is important and how the work requires thousands of hours of labor by CFC volunteers. Many thanks to all our volunteers for making this field trip a favorite for many students!

Upcoming Events

Community Education Programs

Continuing with CFC’s tradition of sponsoring useful public education on natural habitats and earth-friendly yard practices, we’re offering these upcoming programs.

January 14: The Dazzling World of Dragonflies and Damselflies, by Marla Garrison, Biology Dept., McHenry County Community College.

February 11: Living Soils, by Jeff Weiss, Horticulture Dept., College of Lake County.

March 11: Native Shrubs as Habitat and Host Plants, by Connor Shaw, owner, Possibility Place Nursery.

April 8: Personal Land Restoration, by Ders Anderson, Greenways Director, Openlands.

All programs are held Saturday mornings, 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Barrington Village Hall. Pre-registration required at CitizensForConservation.org. Attendance is \$10 per program; CFC members admitted free. Sign up for CFC eUpdate for more information as it becomes available.

Youth Education Classes

February 19 – The Great Backyard Bird Count – 1-3 p.m. Open to all ages and parents. Fun event to observe, identify and count birds. This event is part of world-wide data collection by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society.

March 11 – Bird Refuge Visit – 1-3 p.m. Open to Elementary and Middle School students. Visit a local rehabilitation center to learn how injured birds are taken care of.

Stream seining class nets kids' enthusiasm for native habitats

by Gail Vanderpoel



Whole group getting ready to begin. Photo by Sarah Tucker.

It was a perfect summer day, and the stream was so clear we could see fish swimming around us as we waded upstream. The water was an ideal temperature, and the bottom was mostly sandy which made for easy walking.

The occasion was CFC's Youth Education annual stream seining outing one afternoon last July on the Kishwaukee



River near Marengo. Led by CFC restoration director Tom Vanderpoel was a group of 12 youngsters and 14 parents and grandparents.

Clear water for seining. Photo by Sarah Tucker.

The long drive was worth it as we seined one of the few Grade A rivers in Illinois. We spotted at least 17 species of fish. Among the more conservative species were: northern hog sucker, fantail darter, banded darter and hornyhead chub.



Using the net along the bank. Photo by Sarah Tucker.

Tom, who has been seining since he was a boy, demonstrated how to use the seine, a long net stretched across the stream, to capture fish without hurting them. He explained that the Kishwaukee is a diverse habitat thanks to its high water quality and the continuing efforts of the McHenry County Conservation District to improve the watershed.

Excitement grew as we deployed the seine nets. "We've got a big one!" "Here's a bluegill!" "What kind of fish is this one with the whiskers?" "I can't believe we caught a northern pike!" The netted fish were placed in a gallon jar of water to be identified and viewed more closely before being released.



Looking at a bluegill. Photo by Sarah Tucker.

There were other creatures as well. Black and white widow skimmer dragonflies danced on the banks, and we saw green darners and ebony jewel wing damselflies. We caught many crayfish, including one 4 inches long. We found empty



We caught a lot of crayfish. Photo by Sarah Tucker.

mussel shells, and left one live mussel undisturbed. We saw raccoon tracks on the banks, evidence that they were enjoying the good food source provided by the river.

Some of the streambank was either bare and eroded or covered with non-native reed canary grass that had displaced native vegetation. Still the river was teeming with life, and some good water vegetation such as potamogeton was found in certain areas.

As we headed back upstream, some of the children laid down and let the current carry them. We hope that someday our local Flint Creek will run as clear as the Kishwaukee, filled with many species of native fish, mussels, turtles...and children shouting with glee!



A mussel shell. Photo by Sarah Tucker.

Welcome New Members!

Jared Andersen
Renee Blue
Cathy Brady
Tom Britton and Debbie MacLaughlin
Richard Chambers
Kathryn Edinger
Thomas Gooch
Robert Henehan
Mary Beth Holsteen
Jayne Jaderholm
Dwight Jensen Family
Susan Koenig

Eric Lin
James and Leslie Potter
Kevin and Lynne Richardson
Cheryl Robinson
Karen Robinson
Michael and Carol Rolfs
Anne Schmitt
Dorothy Schofield
Mark Shultz
Lisa Stamos
Stacey Vrame
Andrew and Liz Wolfram
Len and Pat Zolna

Snakes, lizards and more keep CFC class attention level high

by Gail Vanderpoel

Few of CFC's educational programs draw the rapt attention of children and their parents like our Reptiles and Amphibians class featuring living frogs, toads, turtles, lizards and snakes.

With 11 creatures in tow, Rob Carmichael, founder and curator of the Wildlife Discovery Center in Lake Forest, presented a fascinating program in November at the Barrington Hills Riding Center that drew adults and 19 young people, ages five through 17.

Because being able to see some animals in the wild can be challenging, the program was special in that we could get close and even touch unusual creatures as well as those we might well encounter in our own preserves.



Girls and snake. Photo by Sarah Hoban.

Mr. Carmichael presented many interesting facts about reptiles and amphibians, and he emphasized the importance of us doing what we can to save endangered animals, such as restoring their habitats. Here is some of what we saw and learned:

- The American toad is an amphibian native to Illinois. Toads, though smarter than frogs, do not have the ability to jump like frogs. Wet your hands before picking up any amphibian to protect its sensitive skin.
- The tiger salamander, one of the largest salamanders in the U.S., is also an Illinois native amphibian. They tend to live under logs.
- The ornate box turtle, a reptile, can tuck its head completely inside its shell, closing itself off for protection. Turtle shells are made of bone and keratin.
- The Burmese mountain turtle is one of the few that builds an actual nest and protects its eggs.
- The alligator snapping turtle, a southern Illinois native, wiggles its red worm-like tongue to attract fish to swim inside its mouth.
- The garter snake, an Illinois native reptile, eats small rodents and birds. Unlike most snakes, it gives live birth instead of laying eggs.

- The fox snake, another Illinois native, mimics rattlesnakes by vibrating its tail when threatened. It is sometimes killed for being mistaken for a rattlesnake.
- The Indian python, not native, is a constrictor that swallows its prey whole. Snakes grow continuously, which is why they shed their skin.
- The Gila monster is a venomous reptile found in the southwestern U.S. It has warning colors so other animals will leave it alone. A drug derived from its venom helps control some types of diabetes.



Gila monster. Photo by Sarah Hoban.

- The Asian water monitor lizard, a reptile, was the largest animal exhibited. Sometimes weighing more than 20 lbs., it is a good swimmer and has very sharp claws.



A tortoise. Photo by Sarah Hoban.

- The American alligator, a reptile, belongs to the order crocodylians. It has a four-chambered heart and can divert blood to its jaws or tail. They are most closely related to birds.

Mr. Carmichael opened his living natural history museum in 1996. CFC thanks him and the Barrington Hills Park District.

Native Tree and Shrub Sale puts more native plants into our area

by Linda Krauss

With a total of 61 trees and 116 shrubs sold, CFC's annual Fall Native Tree and Shrub Sale once again realized its objective of getting more native plants into the community.

Our top-selling shrub species were Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) and Gray Dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*). The most popular trees were River Birch (*Betula nigra*) and Serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*).

In conjunction with the Fall sale, as well as the larger sale of native plants in the Spring, Meredith Tucker and Annamarie Lukes of CFC's Habitat Corridors program spend countless hours visiting homes and giving talks in the community. They provide ideas on how to use native plants in yards and properties. Their free consultations are highly recommended.

We are grateful for the hundreds of volunteer hours that make the sales successful. While CFC does make a small profit from the Fall sale, the biggest benefit is getting these native trees and shrubs into our neighborhoods, creating even better habitat corridors for all living creatures.

CFC 'green snake' float draws cheers in 4th of July parade

by Gail Vanderpoel

A float featuring a bright green 10½ foot long paper mache green snake highlighted CFC's enthusiastic contingent in Barrington's Independence Day parade last summer. With 28 members, volunteers and youngsters marching, it was CFC's largest-ever turnout for the annual event.



Green snake float. Photo by Ralph Tarquino.

Our marchers wore T-shirts emblazoned with "CFC 45 Years Strong - Restore, Educate, Protect Barrington Area" and carried signs heralding CFC's many contributions to the Barrington area's quality of life, such as helping to preserve a total of 5,000 acres of natural habitats.

The float design, conceived by CFC president Tom Crosh, honored the green snake, a small reptile native to Illinois. Our model snake, surrounded by native sedges and mounted on a wagon, drew cheers as we passed.

Butterflies on the Prairie class draws kids, parents to savanna

by Gail Vanderpoel

A variety of native butterflies and moths habituate CFC's expansive Flint Creek Savanna preserve, making it an ideal site for CFC's summertime Butterflies on the Prairie program for youngsters as well as adults. 16 children and their parents attended the class. Julia Martinez, one of our high school science teachers, led the class. Tom and Jim Vanderpoel helped locate and identify butterflies.



Group on the trail. Photo by Christine McMorris.

Activities included coloring butterfly pictures, making "mud pies" to attract butterflies, a felt board presentation about the life cycle of butterflies and taking a nature walk to observe butterflies. We saw a tiger swallowtail, pearl crescent, Peck's skipper, eastern tailed-blue, monarch, and common sulfur on the walk. In addition to the butterflies, we saw a milkweed tussock moth caterpillar. The children also enjoyed seeing a doe and two fawns, a chorus frog and many insects. We



Julia Martinez with praying mantis. Photo by Christine McMorris.

caught a big praying mantis, milkweed beetles, and grasshoppers. Children adopted painted lady butterflies to take home at the end of class; they also took milkweed seeds to plant in their yards for monarchs and other butterflies.

Next summer CFC is presenting a night-time class with a moth expert. We hope you will join us for this and all of our upcoming classes. We welcome "kids of all ages."

Habitat corridors alliance embraces Chicago region

Those of you with certified habitat in your yards are pioneers in the Chicago area! There are a few other conservation organizations like Citizens for Conservation that have programs to encourage homeowners to create or improve habitat on their properties, and now there is a movement to expand and map habitat corridors throughout the Chicago area.

A group of individuals from five organizations have begun a new consortium called the Chicago Area Living Corridor Alliance (CALCA). The idea grew out of a session at the Chicago Wild Things conference in 2015, where participants expressed interest in CFC's Habitat Corridors program, Wild Ones' similar efforts, and McHenry County's Wildflower Propagation and Preservation Committee (WPPC) that sponsors a mentoring program with similar goals. A key area of interest is an area-wide mapping system to show all the preserved properties in the Chicago area, including large preserves and individual properties. The goal is to create, expand and map a landowners' network of native landscaping and ecological system restoration in the Chicago area, and thereby show the gaps where more emphasis is needed to expand habitat.

Now, in addition to CFC, Wild Ones and WPPC, representatives from The Conservation Foundation that originated the Conservation@Home program and Sustainable Futures are serving on the executive committee of CALCA.

We have formed committees to develop the organization further: Mapping, Criteria, Outreach, Marketing and Organization Development. The Mapping Committee has identified ecological maps that already exist in the area so CALCA can add our layer of data to best take advantage of existing resources. The Criteria Committee has gathered the various resources used by existing programs to synthesize standard guidelines for individuals or groups for future habitat development. The Outreach Committee is identifying numerous other organizations (besides homeowners) that have or are developing programs to increase habitat for birds and butterflies. (For example, the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum and the Field Museum are establishing butterfly habitat on their properties). The Marketing Committee so far has been communicating by email and will be creating a website, Facebook page and other communication materials. The Organization Development Committee is headed by an attorney who has filed for not-for-profit status and incorporation, with all the details those entail. If you have an interest or expertise in any of these areas, we welcome your input and involvement. If you would like to help with any of the committees, or just be on the email list to keep informed of the progress of this new alliance, please contact chicagoregioncorridor@gmail.com.

Stay tuned, this initiative is expanding faster than any of the founders expected. Doug Tallamy, author of "Bringing Nature Home" and initiator of the "backyard national park" concept is aware of this area-wide effort and tells us that he knows of no other metropolitan area that is establishing such an alliance. It is fitting to further this project in the Chicago area, which has the greatest biodiversity of any metropolitan area of the country, so it is worth all our efforts to maintain that biodiversity on privately-owned lands. Thanks for your personal contributions to this expanded habitat!

— Peggy Simonsen

Kids catch the excitement at CFC's summer camps for budding naturalists

by Gail Vanderpoel

"You've changed my child's life." "Luke is so excited to be coming back to camp." "My daughter says this is the best camp she's ever gone to."

Those were among the comments by parents whose children attended CFC's popular Conservation Camps last summer at Flint Creek Savanna.

And the kids? "I see a purple martin," one shouted. "I caught a tadpole!" "I see rattlesnake master!" And on and on. The camps are so full of discovery that everyone gets excited.

We held two five-day camps running 2-½ hours a day. The first, called Beginning Naturalists, for 4-to-6 year-olds, drew 13 children; the second, Junior Naturalists, for 7-to-10 year-olds, had seven campers.

The Beginning Naturalists camp focused on a different ecosystem each day: wetlands, woodlands, gravel hills, prairies, and gardens. The Junior Naturalists camp had longer hikes and covered various subjects: biology, Audubon and ornithology, beekeeping and entomology, Native Americans Day with Lewis and Clark and Sacagawea, and What is a Naturalist? — using author Rachel Carson as the example.

Beginning Naturalists campers enjoyed catching a crayfish in Flint Creek, spotting a mussel shell on a rock (probably left by a raccoon), and having six tiger salamanders to release in our preserve. We also had fun on a "senses walk" where we felt soft and rough leaves, smelled Illinois roses, saw bright red Indian paintbrushes and beautiful bluish purple spiderworts, and listened for the songs of our favorite birds.

Junior Naturalists campers practiced observation skills by preserving flower and leaf specimens, spotting birds and describing their behavior, using nets and microscopes to observe water creatures, learning about honeybees from a local beekeeper, and hiking far and wide to explore new territories.

(continued)

Kids catch the excitement at CFC's summer camps *(continued)*

Experiences included tasting sweetflag iris leaves, painting our faces with clay pigments, watching caterpillar chrysalises metamorphize into butterflies, catching tadpoles and frogs, learning why bluebird houses are important and how we maintain them, birdwatching, planting, bug-catching, eating foods of Native Americans, and so much more.

We watched milkweed seeds wafting, smelled decaying wetland soil, caught countless insects, painted round rocks into ladybug paperweights, examined a deer skeleton left by coyotes, and realized that bird nests are complicated to make, unless you're a bird.

We hope you'll now want to sign up your child, grandchild, niece or nephew or any child for next summer's camps. In the meantime, please look up our Citizens For Conservation Youth Education Classes online at : www.citizensforconservation.org/youth-education or call us at 847-382-SAVE (7283). We want kids to catch the excitement that comes from discovering nature!

Summer internships for collegians offered by CFC

by Ralph Tarquino

Four college students spent 10 weeks last summer laboring in our preserves and engaged in the ancillary work of CFC operations – all part of our Summer Internship Program.

Designed for collegians focusing on environmental sciences or conservation, the internships provide paid hands-on experience in CFC's proven restoration management methods and philosophies. Interns perform diverse tasks such as preparing seed beds, planting plugs, gathering and cleaning seed, removing non-native invasive plants and selectively applying short-lived herbicide.

CFC habitat restoration expert Tom Vanderpoel establishes the daily agenda and provides practical instruction in restoration management and techniques. The interns also assist in CFC's youth education activities and our Native Seed Gardeners program. They help maintain and manage CFC properties and assist in organizing and leading volunteer work sessions as needed.

The internship program has been funded through grants from the Oberweiler Foundation, for which CFC is grateful.

CFC is planning to offer the intern program again for the coming summer. Candidates should be currently enrolled in college, preferably in an area of study in environmental science or a related field. Email resumes to Ralph Tarquino at cfc@citizensforconservation.org.

Wesley Collins is continuing his coursework in Agricultural Business/Studies at Iowa State University.



Wesley Collins

When coming into this internship, I knew I'd learn a lot and be working outside which is what I was looking for. Now that the internship is over, I realize it has meant so much more to me. I have always had a strong interest in conservation and restoration, but this experience took my interest and increased it tremendously.

I learned the things I thought I was going to learn through this job, but I also learned so much more. Overall this internship taught me more than the multiple Conservation and Environmental Science courses I have taken. I must have learned more than 25 species of plants, including different sedges, grasses, and prairie flowers/plants. At first it seemed intimidating with all the Latin names and such, but after 10 weeks of hands-on experience with these plants, it becomes second nature.

The people that I met throughout this internship are people I hope to work with in the future for many reasons. First, my co-workers were fantastic. We all had a passion for what we were doing and very rarely had issues. Lona and Chris came into the job with much more experience than I had which helped our group a lot. Lona had experience with conservation and working with plants. Chris had been an intern for CFC the year before so he kept us updated with things to watch for and what was fun and relaxing work. Last but not least, Shannon was a great person to work with, always in a good mood and ready to complete any task even if it meant being the only one spraying in a herbicide suit for 3 hours on an 85 degree day.

Tom Vanderpoel was also a fantastic man to work with. His knowledge of restoration ranges from birds, butterflies and mammals to almost every plant we ran across in the field; it was really amazing. Seeing the different techniques and things he has learned through trial and error over the years was very cool. I can't wait to keep learning new things from him by attending future workdays.

All the other volunteers that were there every day whether it was 90 degrees or pouring rain inspired me and helped me learn a lot. It's hard work, and it's awesome that we have people like them to come out and do this hard work for our environment.

Overall, I think that this was one of the best ways I could have spent my summer. I learned so much and met some great people I hope to see in the future on volunteer workdays.

Thank you for this opportunity. It's something that will stick with me forever.

(continued)

Summer internships *(continued)*

Chris Groenhof is attending Northern Illinois University, pursuing his interest in History and Environmental Science.



Chris Groenhof

As a returning intern, I was excited to see what another summer working for CFC had in store. I am very glad to say now, at the end of the 10 weeks of internship, that this year has been even more rewarding than last. Whether we were removing invasive species of plants or collecting seeds of beneficial plants to sow, never was there a dull or wasted moment.

The first of many great things about this internship is the gratification of doing a job that is truly beneficial for the environment. This sense of satisfaction is further enhanced by the fact that I've been able to see the results of the interns' efforts and the volunteers' hard work in the many areas we helped restore last year. Besides seeing the fruits of our efforts from last year, this year has had many new experiences to offer — working with new species of plants like toothwort and spring beauty as well as witnessing more and more wildlife living in our restored areas.

Another great aspect of the CFC internship is the diverse group of volunteers and workers I've had the pleasure of conversing with and working alongside. Each is extremely passionate about the work they do, and each brings with them a desire to improve the environment.

The chance to talk to professionals such as Kelly Schultz, the nursery coordinator at Lake County Forest Preserve District, was also a good way to see how other conservation work is done and gain a further appreciation for the intricacies of the trade. My fellow interns were also a pleasure to work with, keeping the times of more intense labor manageable.

In the end, this internship was once again a great opportunity to do my part in restoring the environment as well as to learn important conservation techniques that I may employ at any stage in my life. I would most definitely recommend volunteering at CFC if one is at all interested in meeting interesting characters and truly making a difference in Barrington.



Shannon Riechers

Shannon Riechers is continuing her studies in Ecology at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas.

During this 10 week internship at CFC, I have learned the complexity of the ecosystem. I have witnessed firsthand how complex, yet simple, Mother Nature has made our ecosystem. Every plant and animal

forms a community helping each other thrive. Once that community is destroyed, restoring it to its natural state can be very difficult.

CFC's three core goals are to restore, educate and preserve. I've been able to contribute my share to each of these core values. The main part of my internship was learning how to restore the prairie to its natural state.

My fellow interns Chris, Lona and Wesley and I have done numerous jobs such as working with herbicides, planting plugs, collecting seeds, and pulling invasive species to restore the land. When we herbicide, we use various chemical mixtures that target specific invasive plants and try to prevent damage to the native plants. We collected seed from a variety of native plants. We have drawers full of prairie and woodland plants. Bellwort, shooting star, panicgrass and Jacob's ladder are a few of the many seed species we collected.

Pulling invasive plants is one of my least favorite jobs, however, often we do that job with the volunteers who come every Thursday and Saturday. Their enthusiasm about conservation is contagious; it makes the workdays much more fun and lively. It's amazing to see how much the volunteers can accomplish in a few hours of pulling invasive plants. A few we pulled were dame's rocket, sweet clover, and parsnip. I struggled to pull dame's rocket because it's such a beautiful flower -- until I remember it can be replaced with an even more beautiful native flower, such as phlox, that will help the ecosystem.

My favorite task was planting plugs, especially wetland sedges. I enjoyed planting varieties of plants in all the different terrains we faced. Mud made the experience very interesting; I loved working in mud. The days when the volunteers helped us plant were very enjoyable.

Another one of CFC's core goals is to educate the public about the importance of conservation for our ecosystem. With all the knowledge I gained from Tom Vanderpoel and other dedicated volunteers, I can now share what I learned about conservation with others.

One way I got to share my knowledge was through Habitat Corridors, a CFC program that educates local people on how they can help restore the land. I got to participate in one of the home visits giving advice on what they can plant to attract wildlife to their backyard. I also got to teach children at CFC's conservation camps. Summer camp was clearly my favorite two weeks. I enjoyed seeing the kids' reactions to all the interesting things nature can show them, especially their enthusiasm for catching frogs and tadpoles.

After restoring an area to as close to natural habitat as we can, we want to preserve all our hard work. We maintain the native species and try our best to keep out the nonnative invasive plants.

There are a few small remnant native patches on CFC pre-

(continued)

Summer internships *(continued)*

serves; they were never destroyed. I enjoy looking at them because I get to see a glimpse of how Illinois looked before it was settled and farmed.

We once had beautiful prairies and now we're trying to preserve what's left, restoring what we can. CFC does a great job preserving and restoring, and educating the public about the importance of conservation and what it can do for the community. I am so glad I had this internship to help inspire me to go forward with my studies. I'm hoping to start a career in this field of work.

Lona Sweet is completing her course work and requirements for an Associate of Applied Science in Horticulture at the College of DuPage.



Lona Sweet

I had an interest in ecological restoration from volunteer experiences and a drive to learn more from the best. So I was thrilled to be welcomed by CFC as an intern. I was able to see crossover points from my education and how I could apply some of my learning to the work experience as a summer intern.

My taxonomy class helped with plant identification and understanding the plant life cycle for seed collecting and the best time for herbiciding invasive species. Scouting ought to be an ongoing activity as learned in my greenhouse management course.

To become as familiar with Flint Creek Savanna or any of the other CFC properties as Tom Vanderpoel would be impossible, but weekly walks, taking notes and being aware when walking to a work site were key and the details are most important. For example, were invasive species present; how developed were the plants; were the seeds ready; where was that plant now that the grasses are three feet tall; etc.

The anticipation of a plant growing to bloom was always rewarded by the prairie's overnight change of color with the bright pink of cone flower or yellow of compass plant or that one spot of red or orange from some rare species.

I respect not only the CFC effort to restore but, more importantly, to educate people of all ages from the Youth Education programs, Community Education, Habitat Corridors program, prairie walks, and the introduction by Tom at the beginning

of a volunteer workday on what the plan for the day was and, more importantly, why. Engagement and education are tied together and this has the potential to fuel a passion.

Attending a home visit with Meredith Tucker of Habitat Corridors was inspiring. The message that making a few slight changes in our own landscapes can make a difference for the betterment of the environment is a strong one - one I have used since in my own neighborhood. Supporting this message with the plant sale offerings makes the change process easier for the home owner.

The delight of the children at camp this summer over catching frogs, chasing butterflies or the "scratchy" leaves of the compass plant was contagious. I was amazed at how many plants they already knew in the prairie from their camp experience and believe their knowledge and love of the environment will become so much more as they mature.

Our education was enhanced as well by participating in workdays at Grassy Lake and with Lake County Forest Preserve interns under the guidance of Carol Hogan and Wesley Wolf. This was a key demonstration of partnership. A follow-up tour to the Lake County Forest Preserve Native Seed Nursery with Kelly Schultz, LCFP Nursery Coordinator, was invaluable for comparison purposes and to see how CFC and the Lake County mission merge.

Perseverance is the key to success in any project. The dedication of the Native Seed Gardeners and Katherine Grover assisting in the production of the more difficult to grow natives is being rewarded by the sightings of some of the plants in the prairies. The volunteers demonstrate their perseverance and their passion for restoring the native habitats each workday.

The other aspect of any successful project is partnership and working together. CFC is an amazing group of individuals that work together in so many different ways to "save living space for living things." It was a pleasure to be a part of this great organization and I am very grateful for the opportunity and the education.

The biggest personal reward from this internship experience for me was to stand on the "bridge that leads to nowhere" on the east side of Flint Creek Savanna and look to the west and see the efforts of the interns and those of the volunteers over the past 10 weeks. What started out as a field of living and dead reed canary grass, cattails, thistle and other weeds is now full of various sedge, sweet flag and iris plugs. I look to the east and see meadow of sedge and other plants and the beauty as it sways in the breeze and then squint looking back to the west. I can see the same beauty after a few years and a bridge that leads through the savanna. It gives me hope and pride in our collective contribution.

My internship with CFC was an invaluable experience. It enhanced my knowledge of the restoration process and intensified my passion for the prairie and my desire to take care of it. Thank you Tom and CFC!

President's Comments

Most of the Barrington area lies within two tributary watersheds of the Fox River – Flint Creek and Spring Creek. The Flint Creek/Spring Creek Watershed Partnership is a collaboration of public and private partners who want to ensure watershed-wide efforts to improve water quality, plant and animal habitats, and natural drainage infrastructure. CFC has been a member of the Flint Creek/Spring Creek Watershed Partnership since its inception in 2005.

CFC has excelled in land restoration for 30 years. With demonstrated leadership, dedicated volunteers, and a practiced plan of continuous action, we have transformed degraded land. One need not look any further than the amazing wetlands transformation now occurring at the Flint Creek Savanna.

The Flint Creek/Spring Creek Watershed Partnership now stands at a critical juncture. It needs to re-engage partners, solidify funding, determine meaningful projects, engage volunteers, and plan for the long haul. As a member of the Partnership, CFC offers experience and expertise, a model to emulate, and can help the Partnership create its own successes. With need of direction, what could be better for the Partnership than knowing it can call upon the best – Citizens for Conservation!

— Tom Crosh



Tom Crosh. Photo by Donna Bolzman.

Volunteers needed

Volunteers are the lifeblood of CFC. To achieve our ambitious restoration goals, we need to recruit additional volunteers. Workdays are scheduled every Thursday and Saturday from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. Please join us at CFC Headquarters.



OFFICERS

Tom Crosh, President
James Vanderpoel, Vice President
Karen Rosene, Secretary
Edith Auchter, Treasurer

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER

Juliann LaRocque

MANAGING & COPY EDITORS

Leslie Coolidge
John Schweizer

LAYOUT & GRAPHICS EDITOR

Chad Collins

STAFF WRITERS

Sandra Alguire
Robert Cantwell
Sharon Pasch
Carol Rice
Karen Rosene
Meredith Tucker
James Vanderpoel

BOARD

Tom Benjamin
Gene Branson
Leslie Coolidge
Barbara Cragan
Bryan Hughes
Doug Johnson
Annamarie Lukes
Alberto Moriondo
Wayne Schild
Peggy Simonsen
Steve Smith
Ralph Tarquino
Meredith Tucker
Ginger Underwood
Thomas Vanderpoel

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

Diane Bodkin
Donna Bolzman

PROOF READERS

Leslie Coolidge

100% RECYCLED

Citizens for Conservation

Saving Living Space for Living Things

For membership information, visit us or call at:
Office: 459 W. Hwy. 22 Phone: 847-382-SAVE
www.CitizensforConservation.org

Citizens for Conservation
459 West Hwy. 22
Barrington, IL 60010

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Barrington, IL
60011
Permit No. 80