

## Illinois House honors Tom Vanderpoel

by Alison and Gail Vanderpoel

On May 9, 2018, the Illinois House of Representatives unanimously passed House resolution 1042 “to honor and celebrate the life of Tom Vanderpoel for his many years of dedicated service to his community, Citizens for Conservation and natural restoration.” A number of Tom’s family members were present in Springfield to accept the honor on his behalf. The proclamation came about through the diligent work of 51st District Representative and Citizens for Conservation member, Nick Sauer, who first met Tom over a decade ago at Grigsby Prairie. In presenting the proclamation, Representative Sauer talked about Tom’s tirelessly work restoring Northeastern Illinois’ natural habitats: “the landscape that today, and I would argue 200 years from now, will bear the mark of the great life of Tom Vanderpoel.” Rep. Sauer went on to praise CFC for its continuing efforts in caretaking for the land.

Outside of Tom’s encyclopedic knowledge of habitat restoration, he had a unique ability to motivate volunteers with his approachable demeanor and clear explanations as to daily and long-term restoration goals. Representative Sauer spoke about witnessing this first hand during a CFC restoration workday, describing Tom’s “kind-hearted and humble nature (that) could bring any volunteer in and his ability to empower others kept them involved.” Tom’s leadership qualities encouraged a committed and largely volunteer workforce for CFC.

The proclamation noted many of Tom’s other achievements including countless hours spent planning, encouraging volunteers and doing the actual physical labor; spearheading local initiatives; focusing his passion on local conservation and education, and just doing what needed to be done to keep the Barrington area a representative of the Prairie State. It recognized Tom’s expertise as a great collaborator with other leading minds in restoration, an inspiring leader, a conservation luminary, and his wholehearted dedication to restoring Illinois native landscape. He was often consulted by leading ecologists



*Vanderpoel family with Representative Sauer.  
Photo courtesy of Representative Sauer’s office.*

in Illinois, Wisconsin, the Nature Conservancy, Audubon, the Bobolink Foundation, and many area forest preserves. Representative Sauer went on to say how “Tom’s passion for preservation and restoration went on to transform my district, my county, my region, and in many ways myself.”

The resolution went on to note that Tom’s vision included creating a series of high-quality habitats and connecting preserves to allow native wildlife to flourish. Tom was humble and never sought the spotlight; he just earned it through his stunning seas of grasses and abundant wildflowers at Grigsby Prairie, Flint Creek Savanna, and many more locations.

Sauer ended the presentation on the best possible note by asking the Assembly to recognize Tom’s life not with a moment of silence but with a loud round of applause to recognize that Tom was “a game changer, he was a great man, (with a) great family and great organization, and we are humbled for his life.” Many thanks to Representative Sauer for initiating this great honor to a great man.

## The lilies

The lily family has been taxonomically dismantled in the recent Wilhelm and Rericha *Flora of the Chicago Region* with only three genera still assigned to the family. I have reverted to the broader listing in the first edition of Swink and Wilhelm for the purpose of this review. Consider this a review of the lily-like plants of the field. This family is well represented in both the prairie and savanna.

The bellwort is one of our great restoration success stories—it thrives in all of our prairie groves especially high on the slopes of our little gravel hills. It germinates very well by hand broadcast seeds and should be regarded as one of the most valuable contributions to the BGI savanna seed mix. We have also had considerable success with the native onions; Chicago leek came with many of our early woodland plant rescues, but has also germinated well by seed. Wild onion is very common in the savanna and, of course, nodding wild onion is one of the prairie stalwarts. The City of Chicago is said to have been named after this genus.

There are two native members of the namesake genus of this family. The Michigan lily has established two nice colonies at Flint Creek Savanna and one slowly expanding colony at Grigsby Prairie. A few were remnant at Baker's Lake. This plant more than any other suffers from deer browse—deer leave the flowers alone, but munch on the ripening seed



*Bellwort. Photo by Donna Bolzman.*

pods. It will be very interesting to see how much seed will be produced by the Grigsby colony now that we have protected the prairie with a deer barrier. We have not been able to establish the rare prairie lily at any of our preserves—it has surely been extirpated in the old railroad right of way that was our original source for most of our native seed. We have added this species to the “Sought After Sixty” list and it should be a top target for the Native Seed Gardener Program. Some day, I'd like to repeat at a CFC preserve the exquisite experience

of watching a regal fritillary butterfly nectaring on a prairie lily as I did several years ago at Gensburg Markham Prairie!

Of all the lovely spring ephemeral wildflowers in Illinois, the white trout lily survives habitat degradation best. While it hangs on in invasive-brush infested oak woods, it responds extremely well to buckthorn clearing and prescribed burns. It also transplants well and plant rescues



*Prairie trillium. Photo by Diane Bodkin.*

have accounted for most of our populations. We have had some small amount of germination, which will ultimately be necessary as we restore some of the big groves in the BGI area. The wild hyacinth has become very common in the moist flat areas of both our prairies and our oak groves. This plant was remnant at Baker's Lake—the seed we collected there has multiplied on all of our preserves. We are so happy about its steady progress at our restoration sites that we deem it one of the “Successful Six” of the spring prairie flora.

We have had some success restoring the two false Solomon's seals—the feathery species produces copious red berries and grows well on rocky banks, always present but never dominant. The starry false Solomon's seal produces far fewer berries, but once established becomes an important component of lush wet prairies or rich open savanna. This plant is more common in the high quality remnant than it is in restorations, a trait that earned it a spot on the “Sought After Sixty” list. The smooth Solomon's seal is another berry producer—which might explain its success along country roads—presumably birds eat the blueberry lookalike and the digested seeds germinate under the telephone or tree line. At any rate, it is a welcome feature of the rural roadside that is increasingly smothered by ugly invasives in most of our area.

The trillium genus is loved by wildflower gardeners for its well-defined flowers and attractive tripartite foliage that seems to float on top of a long slender stalk. The prairie trillium is a stalwart of the oak savanna. It is one of the few beautiful native wildflowers that survived the overgrazing of our oak woods and it has been easy to restore by transplant and broadcast seed. The large-flowered trillium probably prefers a shadier forest than our prairie groves, though we do have a few scattered around, while the ill-scented trillium is remnant at Baker's Lake and Steyermark Woods. It is another of the “Sought After Sixty” so a major push should be made to develop a seed source. It is perfectly suited for the extensive cleared oak woods of Cuba Marsh and Grassy Lake Forest Preserves. The BGI area should have a thousand times more of

this plant than we do. Will it come from seed the way prairie trillium does? We won't know until we beef up the amount of seed we collect.

We end this essay with another great success story: the common carrion flower. It is very easy to pick the attractive clusters of hard blue berries and it germinates very well. I can often tell if a cleared savanna parcel has received CFC savanna mix if I see the foliage of common carrion plant.

We have not attempted to restore two members of the lily clan even though Barrington is well within their range: the colic root is specialized to sandy acidic prairies while the false asphodel is restricted to bubbling fens. If we ever found ourselves in control of such specialized habitat we would love to add these two attractive plants to the list.

— Jim Vanderpoel

### Notes from the Restoration Manager

After the slow start to the growing season, our prairies and savannas have been off to the races! All of this new life popping up has kept the CFC volunteers and interns extremely busy.

We had the opportunity to rescue some local plants from future road widening and a park installation. From Wright Woods, we were able to rescue two pickup truck loads of Penn sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*), graceful sedge (*Carex gracillima*), wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*) and some other native woodland species. Six truckloads of riverbank sedge (*Carex emoryi*) and chairmaker's rush (*Schoenoplectus pungens*) were rescued from Phil's Beach in Wauconda. Well over 10,000 individual plants were saved from destruction and will now have a happy home throughout CFC holdings.

CFC volunteers have been busy planting all of these rescues and other native species in our preserves. Ten workdays have been spent planting approximately 7,250 plants! Two of these workdays were BGI events, one at Galloping Hill and one at Cuba Marsh where Lake County Forest Preserves graciously donated 1,700 wetland plants.

The interns have been busy chasing down reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) in some strategic areas of Flint Creek Savanna and Flint Creek South. Continued follow up of this nasty invasive species will ensure the future integrity of the sedge meadows we are planting.

Seed collection season has been off to an early start as we have already gathered seed from 16 native species. The focus of seed collection so far has been on the spring ephemerals that pop up in late March and April and are gone already by the middle of May. We are a far way from the 217 species collected last season but are off to a good start!

— Kevin Scheiwiller



Kevin at Grigsby burn. Photo by Steve Barten, DVM.

### Welcome New Members!

Farah Abid	The Moller Family
Suzanne Batridge	Thomas Moore
Pam Beatty	Nancy Morrison
Liz Bromet	Megan Mosier
Mary Buchan	Christina Novak
The Coulter Family	Kathy Paczynski
Dale and Rayanne Coy	Shelley Radin
Paul Efroninis	Ann Riebock
Carol Elkins	Carole Ringstrand
Joseph Fitzgerald	Christopher Roach
Julie Flowerday	Robert Ryan
Jeff Gardner	Kevin Seibert
Edward Goeden	Kourtney Sellers
Matt and Diane Kerekes	Marc Sinclair
Fred Kocian	Joshua Sissman
Stacey Laschen	Frances Steffen
Keanan Leahy and Lauren Preisen	Susan Stolz
Anita Lichtenberger	Alex and Elizabeth Strobl
Janet Linhart	Judi Stuck
Paul Loethen	Mary Teschner
Christine Lunt	Suzanne Tobias
Lara Lutz	Skip and Becci Tonigan
John Mariani	Mike and Sara Tyler
Sally Martin	Amy Venditti
Jackie McGrath	Gilbert and Marie Voisin
Richard Miletic	Sarah Voska
Elaine Moffitt	Scott Weinberg
	Todd Williams

# Plant sale succeeds despite challenges

by Ginger Underwood and Diane Greening

William Wordsworth wrote, “Nature never did betray the heart that loved her.” But Midwestern springs are much tougher than English ones, and Nature sorely tested the hearts of the CFC Plant Sale Committee this year. The cold and snowy April meant many plants did not emerge from dormancy in time for the sale. The sudden warmth of February caused others to emerge too soon—and get beaten back by cold in March and April. As a result, the nurseries who supply our plants cancelled many species, and sent some they probably should not have.



Plant sale setup. Photo by Patty Barten.

Despite these challenges, the annual Native Plant, Shrub and Tree Sale was once again a rousing success. Pre-sale orders topped last year at 275. Over 18,000 plants and 515 trees and shrubs were delivered, organized and then sold to help populate yards from Barrington to the North Shore, Chicago, Rockford and Wisconsin. Thirty-one people were inspired to become new CFC members. Nearly 2,000 volunteer hours were spent preparing for the sale, unloading trucks, pulling pre-orders, tallying orders, advising customers on plant selection and taking payments. All of our volunteers were wonderful... untiring, enthusiastic and fun to work with. Space limits us



Jeanette Burger. Photo by Ginger Underwood.

from listing you all, but here are just a few of the people who went above and beyond this year.

**Jeanette Burger** accepted the new position of “Label Czarina” thinking she’d have to organize a few hundred of the little tags that go into each pot or plug. As it turned out, we needed 12,000 new labels this year! She rose to the occasion and got it done,

finding two sources to print the tags, and even hand-writing some as last minute nursery cancellations created new needs.

Our volunteer drivers picked up plants, trees and shrubs from nurseries from Batavia to Evansville, Wisconsin. **Jim and Tamara Voris** brought in 1,700 plants using their horse trailer, **Larry and Ben Washow** hauled 3,500 in their car trailer, and **Peggy Simonsen** went to two nurseries with her



Bob Oliver, Charlie Keppel and Ed Plum. Photo by Ginger Underwood.

nifty electric hatchback. And at the very last minute, when one of the nurseries cancelled some shrubs on us, **Steve Smith** jumped in Tom Vanderpoel’s old truck, and picked up replacements in Spring Grove without hesitation.

The restoration crew dug up scores of gorgeous Virginia bluebells and celandine poppies to contribute to the sale. These woodland plants were at their peak during the sale and sold out quickly. They were all donated from



Julie Zuidema. Photo by Ginger Underwood.  
**Gail Vanderpoel’s** property.

**Julie Zuidema** recruited, encouraged and fed all 98 volunteers who make the sale possible. Of course, **Marcia Share’s** famous tuna salad and **Carol Hogan’s** equally famous pasta salad were on the table! Julie along with **Jim Bodkin** and friends **Betty Hoebbel, Candy Quinn** and **Sandy Washburn** drove around greater Barrington, placing all the road signs that direct people to the sale. And after the sale, risked their lives again by recovering them.

**Dave Underwood** created the e-commerce website that makes it easy for 275 people to order their plants in advance. He also lent his technical skills in running the credit card payment system and processing the refunds necessitated by the harsh weather.

**Barb Cragan** and her membership committee grilled free hot dogs for members on Friday which was great fun and festive.

**Jenny Drecoll, Barb Cragan and Jessica Underwood** were again our devoted cashiers, welcoming the crowds with friendly smiles. They are a great trio... their 3<sup>rd</sup> year together at that post!

We could not have made the plant sale as large as it is without the generous loan of the space by **Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital** and the cooperation of their grounds crew led by



*Tom Benjamin and Barb Cragan. Photo by Ginger Underwood.*

**Bill Fritts, Heinen's** donated 450 boxes used to fill orders, and **Melissa Washow** picked them all up and organized them at CFC. Melissa fills the garden orders which is a challenging task!

Two men who are always tirelessly helping at the sale, year after year, from start to finish, quietly just working away doing everything imaginable that's needed, are **Ralph**

**Tarantino and Jerry Maynard.** Their work truly makes a huge difference with the management of the sale.

**Ginger Underwood and Diane Greening** were the co-chairs of the hard-working Plant Sale Committee, which also included **Melissa Washow, Peggy Simonsen, Sarah Hoban, Julie Zuidema, Barb Cragan and Sam Oliver.**

Thanks for shopping with us again this year and helping to make the sale such a success. And an even bigger thanks from all the living creatures that thrive on the natives you have provided for them in your yards!

We are looking for someone who Ginger could pass the plant sale baton on to. It's been nine years and the sale has grown enormously into one of the biggest and best in Illinois. It's been tremendously rewarding and a huge learning experience. The committee is so reliable and capable of all the challenges involved - it's a finely tuned machine. We have many moments of laughter throughout the season. The many volunteers involved with the sale are the best. We are at the point where the sale runs itself. Please contact Ginger (847-331-3568) if you would be interested in running the overall sale or would like to try running the tree and shrub department of the sale.

## Upcoming Events

### Youth Education Classes

July 14: Seining the Creeks of Illinois, 1-4 p.m. (Ages 6-18) – Put on your wading shoes and help us scoop up fish, frogs, crayfish and other aquatic creatures in large nets. Observe snails, mussels, water insects and much more to learn what makes healthy water ecosystems. Have fun and stay cool as well!

\*Parents are welcome to attend and must accompany children under age 12.

July 28: Night Creatures: Moths and More, 8-10 p.m. (Ages 6-18, Adults welcome) – Join our local entomologist as he uses special lights to attract moths and other night insects we can view up close. Listen and look for owls, and locate bats with a special echometer ultrasonic device. No fee in celebration of International Moth Week.

August 11: Butterflies on the Prairie, 1-3 p.m. (Ages 6-14) – Take a walk at Flint Creek Savanna to find many species of butterflies and caterpillars. Get up-close looks at Monarchs in our butterfly tent! Parents welcome to attend.

Please visit our website: [www.citizensforconservation.org](http://www.citizensforconservation.org) or call 847-382-7283 to register or if you have questions.

The Youth Education Committee looks forward to getting young people excited about nature all year long, and we hope to visit with you, guide a nature tour or experience the great outdoors with young people of all ages!

### Fall Native Tree and Shrub Sale

August 13 – August 31: – Submit preorders for Fall Native Tree and Shrub Sale.

September 15: – 9:30 a.m.-noon – Pickup preorders at CFC Headquarters.

### Barrington Greenway Initiative Explore and Restore Series

July 14: 9-11 a.m., Grassy Lake Summer Hike

August 25: 9-11 a.m., Penny Road Pond Summer Hike

September 22: 9-11 a.m., Seed collecting

See CFC website ([www.citizensforconservation.org](http://www.citizensforconservation.org)) for details.

# Earth Day Celebrations

by Gail Vanderpoel

If there's one day, or actually several days, in April we work extra hard to encourage people to get out and enjoy nature with us, it's April 22 and thereabouts for our annual Earth Day Celebrations. This year, we involved 17 CFC volunteers, 600 young people, and 70 adults in our activities which began April 18 and concluded on April 27.

- Events began on April 18 with Cub Scout Troop 183 from Grove Ave. and Hough Street Schools. They learned about what CFC does to help preserve the Earth. The boys planted milkweed seeds, examined animal bones and skulls we have found in the field, and met Hunter, the great horned owl.
- April 19, we celebrated our restoration volunteers with a breakfast at CFC and then planted legume seeds at Flint Creek South.
- April 20, Kara Stengren, science teacher at BMS-Station campus, walked her students over to view birds and plants at Baker's Lake and pick up trash. This has become a yearly tradition.
- April 21, we had an awesome turnout for our second year of planting Penn sedge at Cuba Marsh for Earth Day. At least 48 people attended, including eight high school students and many families with children. Everyone enjoyed the lunch afterwards and they earned it by planting 1,200 sedges!
- On April 22, the actual Earth Day, Luke Dahlberg, former CFC intern, gave a fantastic tour of Flint Creek Savanna. We saw 21 species of birds as well as garter snakes, turtles, rue anemone, shooting stars and hepatica, and learned many great facts about plants and animals. Did you know the trout lily only flowers once every eight years? Or May apples are eaten by

possums, raccoons and box turtles? Or a golden-crowned kinglet weighs the same as two pennies? We were happy to have two of our neighbors from Savannah Subdivision join us.

- We visited Countryside School on April 26 and had outdoor nature stations with all the students in grades 3-5, 250 in total. Students learned about butterflies, made clay footprints of Illinois mammals, went on a nature scavenger hunt, and gathered milkweed seeds to take home for planting in their own yards.
- April 27, Dawn Keller brought her raptors from Flint Creek Wildlife Rehabilitation to present to 300 Hough Street students. All the students were wearing their green environmental awareness t-shirts. Their mascot is the Hough Street Hawks so they were excited to see a live red-tailed hawk. They also got to see a young barn owl and a turkey vulture. This activity was funded by a grant from the Barrington

Junior Women's Club, so special thanks to them as well as all the parent volunteers who helped coordinate the school activities.



Dawn Keller shows her red-tailed hawk to Hough Street School students. Photo by Gail Vanderpoel.

All these spring events brought home what CFC is all about: environmental awareness, working to improve local environments, gathering

new volunteers and stewards for natural areas, and just appreciating the world around us. On the back of the Hough Street School green t-shirts there is a quote from Chief Seattle, "The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth." Remember to celebrate and honor that idea all year long.



Many people gathered to help plant sedges at Cuba Marsh for Earth Day. Photo by Donna Bolzman.

## News from Habitat Corridors

As a change from my usual practice of urging readers to sign up for Habitat Corridors visits, I will describe two visits I made this spring. They were quite different from each other, and I hope they entice you to consider scheduling an appointment.

I visited a couple in a residential neighborhood in Arlington Heights. Most of the homes there are on small city lots, but the homeowners I visited have a double corner lot with many planting possibilities. The couple had not yet moved into this house which explains the lack of native species in the yard. Wife Karen understands the value of native plants and their ease of maintenance. They plan to make their yard completely native eventually.



Unripe hazelnuts. Photo by Meredith Tucker.

They will remove a magnolia but will keep a catalpa (not native here but just south of us). I recommended ground covers [Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*)], shrubs and forbs for their property. They want a privacy hedge on the north lot line along the street. I suggested blackhaw (*Viburnum prunifolium*), American cranberry (*V. trilobum*) and American hazelnut (*Corylus americana*). Karen already



Prairie smoke gone to seed. Photo by Meredith Tucker.

had a huge list of plants she wanted to order, but needed some guidance because she is from California and not entirely familiar with our natives.

We discussed a future rain garden as well as how to keep circles of mulch around their trees. She was a prolific purchaser from CFC's plant sale pre-orders and bought many more species at the sale itself. I have no doubt that in a year or two I will be visiting their property again to award a sign.

The other larger yard I will mention was really a re-visit. I went to see Linda's property for the first time about three years ago.

These homeowners are making great progress turning five acres of lawn grass with lots of black walnut trees (*Juglans nigra*) into an earth-friendly habitat. In front of the house, they have planted several oaks (*Quercus*, spp.) and a hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*). On the somewhat shaded east side of the house, they have added various native shrubs.



Royal catchfly. Photo by Meredith Tucker.

In the huge back field, they have installed a gravel path and plan to edge it with prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*) and wild petunias (*Ruellia humilis*). I suggested interspersing the path plantings with clumps of royal catchfly (*Silene regia*) and white wild indigo (*Baptisia alba*) which will love the open, sunny location.

They have built two large "hoop houses." They grow their own vegetables in one; in the other, they start seedlings. Linda picks seed from all her native plants and germinates them inside. I agreed with her that this may be a better way to start a prairie than with seeds sown outside since those are sometimes difficult to grow with weedy competition. Because they are planting such a large area, buying plugs would be very expensive.

They are thinning the large number of black walnuts on the property and planting a variety of other native trees and shrubs. The amount of work they are undertaking is massive, but both Linda and her husband love it. I awarded them a well-earned sign.

I will end with my familiar refrain: if you would like a free visit from one of our volunteers, please contact [info@habitatcorridors.org](mailto:info@habitatcorridors.org). As you see, the size and condition of the property aren't important. We'd love to see your yard and make recommendations.

— Meredith Tucker

# Suburban otters

by Marcy Krause

I fell in love with river otters when I was a zookeeper at the Hutchinson Zoo in Kansas. I was lucky enough to care for a rambunctious pair, Kyra and Willy. They were always excited in the morning, diving off the waterfall, running to meet me at the door. Kyra would retrieve items that had fallen into their pool for us, whether it was a cell phone or a sippy cup. Willy would follow her everywhere, always just a step behind. It was impossible not to love them. When I moved to Chicago and discovered all the natural spaces so close to the city, I was sure there had to be river otters here. I joined a team of wildlife biologists from the Forest Preserves of Cook County in October 2015 to try to find their whereabouts. I volunteered my time tracking these animals by looking for prints, scat and other telling signs. I have not yet seen a river otter in the wild, but they have left tracks to tell me they are here!

The North American river otter (*Lontra canadensis*) is a member of the mustelid family (think skunks and badgers)



Otter tracks. Photo by Marcy Krause.

and the only river otter in North America. It is found mostly along waterways, feeding on fish, crayfish and bivalves. Among their many interesting behaviors is a latrine dance (<https://youtube/nOWot9sKgu0>), in which they shake their tail up in the air as they defecate. These latrine sites assist in marking territory,

as river otters are typically solitary. A female will be seen with her pups, but the male does not assist with raising young.

River otters were once abundant in Illinois, until unregulated trapping and habitat loss caused a major decline. Although the trapping of river otters was closed in the 1920s, water pollution kept numbers down. The species was listed as endangered in Illinois in 1989. A reintroduction plan released 346 river otters into south and central Illinois in the 1990s. Restored habitat and improved water quality assisted in reestablishing river otter populations. They were removed from the Illinois' Endangered Species List in 2004. By 2009, there were an estimated 11,000 river otters living in Illinois.

Few of us imagine these charismatic creatures sneaking through our backyards. But thanks to the efforts of local wildlife biologists, we have discovered that they are doing just that! The Forest Preserves of Cook County was able to trap one in southern Cook County in the winter of 2015 (<http://fpdcc.com/the-return-of-urban-otters/>). The river otter was taken to Brookfield Zoo, where a radio transmitter was surgically implanted. After a short recovery, he was released back where he had been found. Wildlife biologists are currently tracking the animal, collecting data on his whereabouts. Thanks to him, we know there are other river otters in the area!

Do you  
love river  
otters?



You'll be  
happy to  
hear they are literally  
in your backyard. Chris  
Anchor recently reported

at the Wild Things Conference that three river otters have been seen (and another one is being tracked) near Crabtree Nature Center! This is great news for the river ecosystems near Barrington, because river otters are considered indicator species. They are a sign of good water quality and a healthy habitat. River otters will also eat Asian carp, an invasive species that has moved into Illinois waterways.

Kyra and Willy.  
Photo by Marcy Krause.

Do you want to help river otters be successful in their suburban environment? You can start by volunteering for CFC restoration workdays! You can also become a citizen scientist. If you see a river otter, report it! iNaturalist ([www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org)) has an easy-to-use app that allows you to report species sightings, including river otters. Snap a picture, if you can, and share your observations with the world. There is great potential for the North American river otter as a suburban species. Having a community already on their side is beneficial for conservation action. With your help, North American river otters can become a part of the Barrington community! I look forward to the day that I spot one during a hike in the Forest Preserves!



Marcy Krause is an educator at the Field Museum and avid supporter of local conservation. She did her work on river otters while getting her Master of Arts in Biology through Miami University in Oxford, OH. She can be contacted at [krause.marcy@gmail.com](mailto:krause.marcy@gmail.com).

Otter monitoring.  
Photo by Marcy Krause

Editor's Note: I was thrilled when Marcy reached out to me to ask if she could contribute an article on river otters to CFC News. One morning last November, I discovered a gentleman with an antenna at the end of my driveway. I asked what he was tracking and he said river otters. I live across the street from Spring Creek Forest Preserve and the tracker was picking up an otter in the lake across the street, so they are in our area.

## CFC installs new signs

by Steve Smith

If you have been driving around Barrington lately, you may have noticed that CFC has installed new signage at many of our key properties. These signs provide recognition of the investment and support from



*Photo by Patty Barten.*

CFC's many volunteers, donors, sponsors and members and in doing so, advocate for more and better open green space to be delivered by CFC through its Barrington Greenway Initiative for people in the Barrington area.

This photo shows the new sign on Rte. 14 just west of Cuba Rd. This highlights CFC's newly purchased property and cooperation with the Village of Lake Barrington who owns the wetland behind CFC's new right of way.

## Fall Native Tree and Shrub Sale starts August 13th

by Linda Krauss

The greatest feeders for wildlife are native trees and shrubs. Offering these natives on your property is one of the best things you can do to support the birds and butterflies by providing food and shelter. In addition, they provide the backbone of your landscape, one that raises your property value, reduces energy and adds beauty to our lives. Remember, "Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago." Warren Buffett

CFC's 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Fall Native Tree and Shrub Sale starts August 13. Visit [www.citizensforconservation.org](http://www.citizensforconservation.org) to learn about and choose among the many native species available.

Order online. If you prefer a printed order form, please download one from the website or contact our office at 847-382-SAVE or [cfc@citizensforconservation.org](mailto:cfc@citizensforconservation.org) and one will be sent to you. Ordering ends August 31.

Pick up your order at CFC Headquarters on Saturday, September 15 from 9:30 a.m. to noon.

10% discount for all CFC Members.

This sale is PREORDERS only. Trees and shrubs will not be available on September 15 for sale to the general public.

## CFC receives grants

by Peggy Simonsen

Again this year, CFC has received generous grants to support our work.

Cuba Township has provided funds for a thousand sedges being planted in Flint Creek Savanna South as we continue restoration of the wetlands in that preserve. Once our restoration volunteers remove the invasive reed canary grass, it is imperative to plant native wetland plants to replace the invasives and keep them from returning.

We thank the South Barrington Garden Club for funding supplies for our newly built Rare Plant Nursery at CFC headquarters, built with a grant from the Barrington Area Community Foundation last year. With the significant expansion of planting beds, our volunteer gardeners needed more tools, netting and gravel for paths. These beds are growing conservative native plants for seed to contribute to the biodiversity of our restorations and our work with the Barrington Greenway Initiative.

The Barrington Junior Women's Club has provided funds for CFC's Youth Education to collaborate with Countryside School to plant a butterfly garden. Students and teachers learn about Monarch butterflies that need milkweed plants to lay their eggs and all butterflies that need flowers for their nectar. The BJWC grant also supported a program we provided to Hough School to learn about the habits, habitat and importance of raptors, with live owls and hawks as stars.

Once again, a grant from the Oberweiler Foundation supports our four interns for the summer. These are college students who are majoring in restoration ecology or related fields. While they provide essential help with CFC's restoration and summer youth camps, and collaborate with our partners, they learn hands-on skills for their future careers.

CFC thanks the Garden Club of Barrington for a grant supporting our efforts to get milkweed plants to as many homeowners as possible. Through our native plant sale, where we discount the cost of all the milkweeds, our goal is to expand the habitat that Monarch butterflies must have to lay their eggs and raise their larvae.

We are excited to announce a very generous grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation for a major, 18-month restoration of CFC's Craftsbury Preserve. This includes a three to one match for up to \$21,000, plus additional funds based on 400 hours of volunteer work, and for publicity about the grant and our work, for a possible total of \$27,000. This will allow us to contract for major brush removal so our volunteers can concentrate on the follow-up work that is essential to quality restorations.

Citizens for Conservation greatly appreciates the trust and financial support from these organizations to further our mission of Saving Living Space for Living Things.

# A wet, but wonderful, bird walk

by Leslie Coolidge

The Spring bird walk series with Wendy Paulson has recently concluded. While each walk is distinct, one stands out as special for me as it was both spectacular and tested our determination to the bone.



*Birding group. Photo by Steve Barten, DVM.*

The morning of Monday, May 21 dawned with heavy rain. I questioned the sanity of a bird walk, but since it was close by, I thought I'd go check in. To our collective surprise, ten intrepid birders arrived at Crabtree Nature Center and boy were we in for a treat. We left our spotting scopes behind and soon had to abandon our binoculars as well, although some of us did take shelter under umbrellas. I found I enjoyed the experience of having to rely on nothing but my own senses to enjoy the birds. We began under the trees



*Baltimore oriole. Photo by Steve Barten, DVM.*



*Scarlet tanager with seed. Photo by Steve Barten, DVM.*

by the Visitor's Center where there was lots of activity by a variety of warblers and vireos that also seemed to be taking cover from the elements. We continued on and enjoyed wood ducks and a female hooded merganser on the water. In another tree stand, we had a beautiful view of a pair of towhees. Then we saw a female Wilson's warbler which was a life bird for me. It began to rain even harder, so we headed back. Half the group departed, but the other half took the path to the blind

overlooking the lake and were we ever glad we did! First, we spotted 18 white pelicans across the lake. Then we focused nearby and got very close up views of a blackpoll, a bay-breasted and a Cape May warbler just outside the opening. A kingbird put on quite a show for us and we watched a scarlet tanager and an eastern phoebe as we enjoyed having a roof over our heads. We were tempted to stay for hours, but finally headed back with a deep sense of satisfaction. Absolutely fabulous birding on an awful weather day!

These photos are just a sampling of the spectacular images captured by our talented photographers on walks on days when the conditions were more favorable.

We hope you will consider joining us for our Fall bird walk series. These walks are jointly sponsored by Audubon Great Lakes and CFC.



*White-crowned sparrow. Photo by Steve Barten, DVM.*



*Blackburnian warbler. Photo by Tom Auchter.*



*Olive-sided flycatcher. Photo by Tom Auchter.*



*...not a bird! Photo by Steve Barten, DVM.*

# Junior Naturalists Camps have enthusiastic participants

by Gail Vanderpoel

This year's camps had lots of enthusiastic support from parents and returning children. The Beginning Naturalists Camp, June 11-15 for 4-6 year-olds, had six returning campers from a total of 15. Many of them brought younger siblings this year as well. The same was true of the next week's Junior Naturalists Camp, June 18-22 for 7-10 year-olds. This week had seven returning participants, with three new members. In addition, a total of eight different adult volunteers facilitated the two weeks of classes held from 9:00-11:30 a.m. daily.



Photo by Bob Lee.

The Beginning Naturalists Camp had the better weather, but a LOT of mosquitoes. However, parents and children made the best of the situation; four children showed up with mosquito head nets (purchased at Cabela's) on Day 2! We started the week with Wetland Day looking for frogs, dragonflies and other wetland inhabitants. We took nets and jars and caught many snails, a green frog and a very big crayfish. For Woodlands Day, we walked through the oak grove, and we planted acorns to grow new trees since some are 200 years old. For Bird Day, we started by meeting our real special (taxidermy) stuffed great horned owl, Hunter. Throughout the week, we saw many red-winged blackbirds, purple martins, barn swallows, a bluebird, a red-tailed hawk and some goldfinches perched on a thistle plant. On Prairie Day, we walked to a large open field of grasses, released milkweed seeds to the wind, and saw an Indian paintbrush blooming. We noticed many insects, which the children enjoyed viewing through their bug magnifiers. Each day we read nature stories, colored pictures, and sang songs about what we had discovered. On the last day of camp, the campers put on a show for their parents. Costumes included frog masks, red-winged blackbird



Photo by Tom Benjamin.

wings, oak trees, and a large variety of insects with wings and antennae.



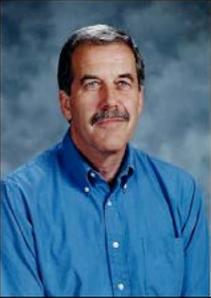
Photo by Tom Benjamin.

Junior Naturalists got to learn about many types of nature science including entomology, herpetology and ornithology. Monday, we viewed a fantastic collection of beetles, moths, butterflies and bees presented by Rich Teper, a.k.a. the Moth Man. Rich explained how he first got interested in studying insects as a child, how he catches and mounts new insects for monitoring, and many interesting facts. Tuesday was Bird Day, and the highlight seemed to be dissecting owl pellets (regurgitated like a cat's hairball), to discover bones and skulls of the owl's prey: mice, shrews, voles, birds, etc. We also got to view a barn swallow nest in our barn and practiced how to do a bird count. Wednesday, we made life size clay footprints after a trail walk to look for prints in the mud and for mammal bones. We accidentally learned that spiderwort produces natural purple dye and many of the children went home with some temporary purple tattoos on their faces and fingers. We discussed some night animals, focusing on bats and how they use echolocation to find their insect prey. The campers played a game called "Bat and Moth" and experienced using their own echolocation sense while blindfolded. Thursday, Larry Anglada led the class, teaching the children about macroinvertebrates found in wetlands. We collected water boatman, dragonfly nymphs, lots of snails, water beetles and a baby crayfish. Larry, a retired Environmental Science teacher, helped the children use a microscope to view our catches in more detail. Each child got to adopt a small pet to take home and release. A very rainy Friday, June 22, gave us the opportunity to learn about snakes from Dr. Steve Barten, a local herpetologist. The campers had tons of curious questions and enjoyed touching the cool smooth skin of three live snakes. They learned why snakes shed their skins and that there are no venomous snakes in the Barrington area.

The Junior Naturalists program and materials were originally developed by Wendy Paulson, former Chairman of the Citizens for Conservation Education Committee and a well-known birder, conservationist and naturalist. The books were a project to encourage children to notice the wonders of nature all around them in all seasons. It is a continual source of joy to be part of the enthusiasm children have when discovering the world around them. We hope adults and children will join us for the remainder of our summer classes and keep being citizen scientists in their favorite nature preserves or their own back yards.

# CFC awards inaugural Joe Cragan Conservation Scholarship

by Larry Anglada



**CITIZENS FOR CONSERVATION – JOE CRAGAN CONSERVATION SCHOLARSHIP**

Citizens for Conservation is proud to offer this scholarship in honor of Joe Cragan, former teacher and chairman of the Guidance Department at Barrington High School. When not at BHS, Joe devoted much of his time to environmental efforts. This scholarship was awarded to BHS graduate Karen Portillo who will continue her interest in conservation and the environment studying environmental engineering at UIC.

**\$20,000 (\$5,000 a year / renewable for 4 years)**



*Karen Portillo. Photo by Patty Barten.*

As the premier conservation organization in the greater Barrington area, we are proud to now co-sponsor a college scholarship intended for a student pursuing a degree in an environmentally related field. Through the generous donation of the Cragan Family, we awarded our first scholarship this year to a Barrington High School (BHS) Senior – Karen Portillo, who will be majoring in civil engineering at University of Illinois at Chicago with an interest in environmental

sustainability. She is a very thoughtful young lady with a lot of poise who came highly recommended by staff at BHS. She is very excited to have received this award. We will follow



*Barb Cragan, Karen Portillo, Larry Anglada and Kathleen Leitner. Photo by Patty Barten.*

her journey through college with a lot of interest. She recently attended a CFC Board meeting to receive the first installment of the scholarship. Congratulations Karen!

As we begin considering students for next year's award, we will be actively looking for students who share our vision and are willing to

attend our workdays as a participant in the restoration process with the idea of them continuing on in the field.

# Meet our 2018 college interns

by Larry Anglada

We are excited to start another year with our interns. They will again be instrumental in helping our restoration goals within our properties and with our partners in BGI. This ten week program is again being made possible through the generous support of the Oberweiler Foundation who has now partnered with us for 16 years in developing these young students.



*Ben, Spencer, Sarah and Hayley. Photo by Larry Anglada.*

**Sarah Strack** is a returning intern from last year and will be a tremendous help in our understanding of how things were done last year as well as a source of positive energy. She is majoring in Environmental Science at Miami University in Ohio.

**Ben Davies** is attending Rock Valley College in Rockford with the expectation to transfer this year and major in Conservation or Ecology. He has been attending workdays all winter and is already knowledgeable about what we do.

**Hayley Ban** began attending our workdays at the insistence of her sister who is a student at Fremd High School. She enjoyed it enough to become one of our interns this year. Hayley is a junior at University of Illinois majoring in Biology.

**Spencer Henry** grew up and lives very near our Flint Creek Savanna and has wandered here many times over the years. He was a Barrington High School intern last year and was excited to continue this year as a college intern. He is a sophomore at University of Illinois majoring in Biology.

## Articles welcome

Do you have an idea for an article for *CFC News*? We welcome submissions on topics of interest to CFC members. If you'd like to submit an article, please direct your idea to our editor Leslie Coolidge at [cfc@citizensforconservation.org](mailto:cfc@citizensforconservation.org).

# Ben and Alice Hammer, farewell

by Meredith Tucker

Two old bay Arabian horses... lemonade... talent... kindness – those are my thoughts when I remember Ben and Alice Hammer. I am deeply saddened by their recent demise in a Texas car accident. They were merely passengers.

I remember first meeting Ben when I often saw a car at the barn where I board my horses; its license plate was “Preben.” I saw Ben and occasionally Alice with their horses Razz and Lily. My immediate reaction was that they were really nice people.

In June 2007, Annamarie Lukes and I visited the beautiful Hammer property in Fox River Grove for Conservation@Home. It was a 3/4-acre wooded lot with native grasses sown under the trees and not far from the Fox River. Their property backed up to conservation land.

Whenever the village allowed him to do so, Ben worked on the conservation land. He removed all the buckthorn in a neighborhood clogged with it. He also removed garlic mustard and any other invasive non-natives he recognized. Eventually Ben began donating his time and talents to Citizens for Conservation.

One often saw the “Preben” plate in the parking lot when he began volunteering for CFC.

Ben’s considerable talents as a home inspector bore fruit for CFC as he repaired electrical problems and plumbing and did odd jobs at the old farm house. He and Tom Benjamin worked as House and Grounds Chairs. As Tom says, “I learned very quickly how talented he was in carpentry, electrical and mechanical issues. His tool box was not over-filled with new gadgets but had the basics, and he was an expert in using them.”

Ben was well-known and well-liked by everyone; Alice was an intelligent, good person whom we rarely saw because she was working in Chicago while Ben was volunteering for CFC and running his own home inspection business. CFC people who knew Ben are eager to share their memories of him. Here are just a very few of the remembrances:



*Ben and Alice spreading seed from horseback at Spring Creek. Photo by Diane Bodkin.*

“Ben was a great go-getter, fix-it guy around CFC headquarters. He was easy to talk to, and I certainly enjoyed his company. How tragic....” Carol Hogan

“There were never kinder, gentler people. The bluebirds knocked on their windows when they needed more mealworms.”  
Meredith Tucker

“What an awful loss! He was a wonderful, kind, generous man. He and Alice shared so much love for the natural world.”  
Peggy Simonsen

“This is very sad news indeed. Ben was a friendly, gentle and skillful fellow whose company I enjoyed. He left an enduring legacy to CFC in the form of our

subtly arched (self-draining) red brick sidewalk. Rest in peace, Ben and Alice.” John Schwiezer

“This is such a tragic loss.... I knew Ben quite well from the many times we encountered each other at CFC.... He was always kind and willing to help. A lovely man.” Donna Bolzman



*Ben. Photo by Donna Bolzman.*



*Alice. Photo by Donna Bolzman.*

“What a shock! The world just lost two beautiful people.”  
Tom Benjamin

“This is very sad news. Ben was such a gentleman, and they were a remarkable couple....” Sam Oliver

“Ben had a great sense of humor, was hard working, and took on responsibilities without hesitation. He was so respected and such a nice man....” Tom Crosh

Donna Bolzman reports that Ben learned brick laying from his father in Denmark. After leaving the Barrington area, Ben followed CFC on Facebook and occasionally commented on a pretty photo of a preserve or one of the CFC house, especially if he recognized a project he had done there. He was proud of what he had contributed to CFC with his skills.

As I compile these remembrances everyone so willingly shared, I note that the single word which comes up most often is “nice.” It’s a small, unexceptional word, but the Hammers were anything but ordinary. They were wonderfully talented and generous, and, yes, they were nice. What could be better?

## President's Comments

Since joining the CFC board of directors at the 2018 Annual Meeting on March 8, I have taken the opportunity to engage in many workdays organized by CFC or our BGI partners including: a Grassy Lake clean-up day; a Flint Creek Savanna burn; sedge planting in Cuba Marsh; and the CFC plant sale—all in less than three months' time! What a great way to learn about the different CFC activities and how they benefit our ecosystem. I continue to be amazed at the level of knowledge and dedication possessed by the many volunteers and board members of CFC, but particularly the generous spirit with which they share their knowledge and passion. A CFC workday is not only a great way to be outdoors, it's a lot of fun!

I've also had the great fortune to have a tour of Grisby Prairie with Jim Vanderpoel. Jim not only knows all the plants and where they are likely to come up, he knows which birds and animals like them, and why they like them. This 44-acre prairie project, started in 1987, is CFC's first habitat restoration and is known throughout the state for its collection of rare plant and bird species. Nesting birds include meadowlarks, bobolinks, grasshopper sparrows, sedge wrens, kingbirds, Savannah sparrows, red-headed woodpeckers and bluebirds. Grisby provides habitat for 175 species of native plants in wet, mesic and dry prairie and in wetlands.



*Kathleen Leitner. Photo by Patty Barten.*

As many of you may have noticed, we have a new protective barrier around the perimeter of Grisby Prairie. This barrier will keep deer out of the prairie, thereby protecting our rare native plants from becoming their lunch. The sun will dull the patina of this new fence by the end of summer, making it much less noticeable. There are 34 pedestrian entrances to this barrier, along with five vehicle access points. These access points are locked at the recommendation of the Barrington Hills Police Department. We are also in the process of taking down the old chain link fence. This is a slow process as we need to cut down all the vine growth in that fence before it can be removed, but we will get it done. Feel free to come out and join our work crews, but in the meantime, please enjoy walking inside Grisby Prairie while we work on the outside.

— Kathleen Leitner

## Volunteers needed

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

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