

## CFC Eastern bluebird conservation efforts strong in 2019

by Laura Simpson and Barb Laughlin-Karon

CFC's Eastern bluebird monitors made a renewed effort in 2019 to observe and track native Eastern bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) in our area, with the eventual goal of increasing the population of the species. Eastern bluebird populations were precariously low early last century primarily due to the introduction of invasive species such as house sparrows and European starlings. These species outcompete cavity-nesting Eastern bluebirds and are known to destroy nests and eggs and kill nestlings and adults in an effort to take over an occupied nest, thus leading to a loss of habitat and suitable nesting sites for the Eastern bluebird. The introduction of nestboxes has been instrumental in stopping the decline of the bluebird population.

Bluebird monitors Karen Rosene and Diane Bodkin enlisted the help of Barb Laughlin-Karon and Laura Simpson to discuss monitoring needs and to organize a plan to track our local bluebird populations, with the goal of assessing the status of our current nestbox trails this year and making plans for the future based on the data we collect in 2019. Under the experienced guidance of Karen and Diane, Barb and Laura learned about the history of Eastern bluebird monitoring by CFC, connected with the bluebird monitors who have been helping for many years, and were able to recruit 40 new monitors to share in the work and hours required to monitor consistently. The group followed the monitoring guidelines established by the North American Bluebird Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology NestWatch

program and encouraged all the monitors to become certified Cornell NestWatch monitors by completing an online course and quiz, as well as attend monitoring training walks.

CFC maintains three nestbox trails at Flint Creek Savanna, with a total of 38 boxes, at Grigsby Prairie with 20 nestboxes, at Baker's Lake Savanna with two boxes, and we are working with the Lake County Forest Preserve District to assist in monitoring at Cuba Marsh, Heron Creek, Grassy Lake, and other local preserves with the possibility of adding more trails and coordinating future volunteer efforts. All the data we collect is entered into the Cornell Lab of Ornithology NestWatch site—one of the largest citizen-scientist data collection programs in the world, and Lake County will share the data we collect with the North American Bluebird Society.

Our volunteers walked the trails weekly from April through August and took inventory of nest activity, from observing parent Eastern bluebirds scouting for nest sites, to nest building,

counting eggs, and the fledging of young bluebirds. Volunteers also documented other species observed in the nestboxes including the tree swallow, black-capped chickadee, and house wren who may also occupy the nestboxes. This is also valuable information which is recorded and reported (unlike house sparrows and European starlings, these species are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and cannot be harmed or harassed). By observing which boxes successfully fledged bluebirds and which did not, we will begin to take our observations and make recommendations for next season



*Monitor collage by Barb Laughlin-Karon.*

*(continued)*

## Bluebird monitors *(continued)*

with the goal of increasing the numbers of boxes occupied by Eastern bluebirds. This may include moving the locations or directions of some of the boxes, adding predator guards, or pairing boxes for compatible species.

Our dedicated and tireless volunteers put in over 167 hours of monitoring (and still counting) through some challenging weather, pest and habitat conditions and were still able to report in weekly from each trail with data reports. Our monitors ranged in age from



*Bluebird on nestbox. Photo by Barb Laughlin-Karon.*

young families to septuagenarians and we could not have accomplished gathering all this data without their enthusiasm and generous time. In addition to counting nests, monitors were also able to observe and learn about the seasonal changes in native prairie wildflowers and grasses, count snakes, and watch the courtship dance of the sandhill cranes, among other beautiful encounters. It was wonderful to see the spontaneous sharing of sightings and photography, as well as to have the knowledge and expertise of some of our monitors who were able to share identifications of plants and wildlife. Reports were shared in a group chat that allowed each group to communicate week-to-week about the status of each box on each trail. We will continue to assess how this worked, and are meeting with our monitors as the season comes to an end



*Hatchling and eggs in nest. Photo by Barb Laughlin-Karon.*

to get input from the group on their experiences and suggestions for next season.

Our NestWatch data shows that we observed 60 total nestboxes, recorded 75 nesting attempts by any species, found a total of 216 eggs, 119 young hatched, and 76 birds eventually

fledged. By species, we fledged 53 tree swallows and 23 Eastern bluebirds across all of the trails. Grigsby Prairie has had the greatest success with Eastern bluebirds to date.

Our primary goal this year was to assess where we are successfully attracting and fledging Eastern bluebirds and where we need to make changes based on the data we've collected to increase/improve our chances. We also hope that this year's monitors have had good experiences as part of this citizen-science project, and will continue with us as this monitoring effort evolves. We will always welcome new monitors and look forward to expanding the program next spring. Look for more information as we begin to plan for next year!

## Notes from the Restoration Manager

It's been another exciting summer across the entire Barrington Greenway. If you came out to a workday, then you know what we spent most of the workdays doing: planting, planting, planting! A few focused projects demanded a large amount of wetland and savanna plugs to be installed at many sites. At Grassy Lake, volunteers, interns, staff, and conservation corps installed over 20,000 wetland species. This planting is meant to help speed up the process of the sedge meadow restoration we have been working on collaboratively with the Lake County Forest Preserves. CFC volunteers installed around 10,000 wetland sedges here at home as part of our continuing streambank restoration. Overall, about 50,000 plants were installed at projects across the BGI; great work everyone!



*Kevin Scheiwiller. Photo by Kathleen Leitner.*

We are now in the full swing of seed season. At the beginning of October, we have currently collected roughly 180 different species of seed. That is a great start, but we have a way to go to reach our record last year of 264 species. We have also set a goal of collecting 500 pounds of seed this year, while maintaining the same amount

of diversity as last year. We can use all the help we can get to reach this goal, so please come out and join us at one of our many workday opportunities: Wednesdays 5 to 7 p.m., Thursdays 9 to 11 a.m., Saturdays 9 to 11 a.m., and Sundays 3:30 to 5 p.m.

— Kevin Scheiwiller

## Restoration Report

### BGI tour

On August 18th, we were out fulfilling one of the Barrington Greenway Initiative's goals, which is to increase community awareness and attract new volunteers by conducting the "Explore and Restore Series". Each month we announce a special restoration workday or preserve tour. I had the pleasure of leading the August Butterfly and Pollinator Hike at Grigsby Prairie, CFC's most scenic prairie restoration. The day before the tour, I scouted the route and enjoyed a great showing of butterflies in perfect weather and had high hopes for a great turnout and great butterfly viewing.

Sunday I woke to steady rain.

The rain continued through the morning, but the weather cleared and by the scheduled 1:00 p.m. start time we had a small but enthusiastic mix of long-term CFC members and newcomers.

We walked the one-mile loop trail, which our Restoration Manager, Kevin Scheiwiller, had been kind enough to mow for us, and ended up seeing fourteen species of native butterflies. One introductory note on the weather preference of butterflies—they like the temperature warm, but not muggy; they like a gentle breeze, but not a stiff wind; and they like sun and detest rain. In other words, they prefer the exact same weather that people like. The mugginess did not prevent us from seeing a fine list, but the butterflies didn't fly as high or as actively as they had the previous day when the weather met their demands for perfection. We noted both dark and yellow morphs of the tiger swallowtail; we saw far more native clouded sulphurs out on the prairie than the generally far more common invasive European cabbage white, because the invaders like weedy host plants while the natives eat native members of the pea family. We saw the diminutive eastern tailed blue butterfly, which people overlook because from a distance they take it for a bug, but if you look closely at this tiny insect it looks just like a regular butterfly. We saw both the painted lady and American painted lady feasting at the same clump of spotted joe-pye weed. We observed two not-so-common prairie specialists—the common wood nymph and the common buckeye. We spotted four species of skipper thanks partially to the eagle-eyed Amy Venditti, who would make a splendid butterfly monitor. We had a particularly committed crowd this day, but I would also like to mention that the wonderful photographs used to illustrate this article were from fellow walker, Ellen Smatlak, who was able to



*Pennsylvania leatherwing beetle converging on silver spotted skipper. Photo by Ellen Smatlak.*

beautifully capture these constantly moving subjects. And, of course, we were graced by a number of monarchs, which appear to have benefitted from people planting new milkweed, but also remember that adult monarchs need lots of nectar to build energy reserves for their long flight to Mexico—milkweeds are only part of the story of monarch conservation.

CFC is a great place to see the butterflies mentioned above, as well as others like the viceroy, the black dash and various fritillaries. I have found that visiting remnant prairies with a knowledgeable guide has been one of my best sources of education over the years and I would recommend to anyone interested in butterflies and natural area restoration that they should become very familiar with the best remnants to serve as models for what to shoot for in the restoration process. A great starting place would be to visit Chiwaukee Prairie in southeastern Wisconsin, and Wolf Road Prairie in the west suburbs, and the greatest of all, Gensberg Markham Prairie right off US 294 before it merges with US 80. These three natural areas were all preserved by the fluke of being subdivided just before the Great Depression, and the bankruptcy of the developer. It seems appalling that prairie only survived in the Chicago area by accident. No one thought to save even a little parcel of the native landscape so that future Illinoisans could see the beauty that greeted the pioneers. Well, CFC and its partners cannot change the past, but we are going to bring back some of the plants and wildlife for people to enjoy well into the future.

— Jim Vanderpoel



*Photo by Ellen Smatlak.*

### Welcome New Members

Jill Hartwig

Brett Addams

Jim and Gayle Booth

Mary Bottie

Amy Call

Rachel Forsyth-Tuerck

Lydia Freeman

Mark Gibson

Pier Giulianotti

The Laughlin-Karon Family

Mike and Jean Meyer

Jeff Schnaubelt

Diane Siekmann

Dawn Suchomel

Janet Angel Welch



# Ignite the Night

by Ginger Underwood with photos by Bob Lee

Everyone seemed to be really enjoying themselves eating a great dinner, listening to good music, horse-drawn wagon rides, raffle prizes, telescopes, kids with flashlights in the dark, gorgeous owls and hawks, lots of laughing and seeing old friends, and, of course, the roaring fire with the full moon above. The weather was perfect!



A huge thank you and shout out to the wonderful volunteers who made it all happen and the generous people who donated all the great raffle prizes. From our many cookie makers to the fabulous bonfire, ITN was a huge success. Of course, there would be no ITN without our major sponsors—The Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Barrington Hills Park District. We had over 500 people attend and had only 6 pounds of waste thanks to Mindful Waste—something to be proud of! Drinking wine in paper glasses was worth it!

The photos from ITN say it all. Thank you to Bob Lee who definitely caught the spirit of the night. Thanks for coming and supporting ITN!





## Youth Ed's busy summer

by Julia Martinez

Youth Education's summer was filled with activities.

Moth Week and Butterflies on the Prairie were both very popular. Rich Teper, our go-to entomologist, generously brought hundreds of specimens to share with the attendees. Rich set up two insect survey sheets with bright lights. The sheet farther from the bright lights of the hospital overwhelmingly attracted more insects. Countless notable insects were attracted, one highlight being the mantis fly. It looks like a mantis/fly hybrid! Luckily, the light did not attract mosquitoes and we enjoyed a beautiful summer night.

Jim Vanderpoel led a fruitful butterfly walk for our Butterflies on the Prairie event. Before the hike, we discussed the life cycle of butterflies with attendees. We had a large group of people and saw many butterflies. Rich Teper joined and took a survey



*Attracting insects. Photo by Patty Barten.*

of butterflies during our hike. We saw a cabbage moth, painted lady, red admiral, pearl crescent, wood nymph, little wood satyr, monarch, black swallowtail, and eastern tailed blue. The weather was very sunny and inviting; we could not have asked for a better day for spotting butterflies.

Fred Fest was August 17. This annual event attracts families from all over the Barrington area. We invited children to make clay mammal tracks and take home a prairie poster to color. We brought skins and skull replicas for children and adults to see what sort of large mammals live in the area. Despite rain, many families came out to enjoy the day and support the forest preserve. Many took home information about upcoming events.

Youth Education has less events outside of summer, but we look forward to the Great Backyard Bird Count in February!

## Save the dates! Exciting new winter programs for 2020

by Peggy Simonsen

CFC's Community Education Committee has planned four new presentations of value to homeowners and conservationists. Be sure to mark your calendars and come to learn about these interesting topics.

### **January 18, One Drop at a Time with Marcus de la Fleur.**

Marcus will discuss sustainable stormwater management and beneficial landscaping practices in yards. He is a Registered Landscape Architect and owner of the design and consulting firm de la fleur LLC in Chicago. He has a horticultural degree from the School of Horticulture at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and obtained his Masters in Landscape Architecture at the University of Sheffield. Marcus has contributed to the design and management of multiple sustainable projects, some of them LEED registered or certified.

### **February 22, The Battle for Our Wetlands with Kevin Scheiwiller.**

Kevin will discuss how to use warrior sedges to combat wetland invasives and rebuild a functioning sedge meadow. If you have ever attempted to take on the wetland thugs such as reed canary grass, cattails, or phragmites, you know how difficult your restoration efforts can be. Kevin is the Restoration Manager for Citizens for Conservation. He has a degree in Environmental Science from Loyola University Chicago and has worked in a variety of ecosystems around the Chicago region and as an ecological restoration consultant.

### **March 14, Vanishing Edens: Biodiversity in a Changing World with Michael Jeffords.**

Michael will discuss how current pressures are affecting the biodiversity of plants, pollinators and other wildlife that are interdependent and on which we depend. Michael is the retired education/outreach director for the Prairie Research Institute, Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) at the University of Illinois and was staff photographer for The Illinois Steward magazine. He is co-author of Exploring Nature in Illinois, A Field Guide to the Prairie State.

### **April 18, Living with Beavers with Chris Anchor.**

Chris will discuss his research on beavers in our area. He is Senior Wildlife Biologist, Forest Preserve District of Cook County. He has been a long-term partner, supporter, and teacher with the Cook County Coyote Project which began in 2000. Years of research contribute to his broad understanding of many wildlife species, making him the "go-to" person to provide extensive insight into their behavior and habitats. He has been with the FPDCC since 1981 and in his current position since 1986.

Programs start at 9:30 a.m. with coffee and conversation, with the presentation from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. They will be presented at the Barrington Village Hall, 200 S. Hough St, Barrington. Look for more information at [Citizensforconservation.org](http://Citizensforconservation.org) and by email later in the fall.

## Volunteer Portrait

### Emma Landenberger – BHS Student Liaison

In 2011, CFC received the following note from a Countryside student:

“Thanks for letting us come to the prairie. I learned that you have to manually wick weeds and set the prairie on fire. I also learned that there are different kinds of prairies. I did not know that chipmunks make such a high pitch call. There are lots of invasive plants in prairies.

I enjoyed collecting seeds because it helps the prairie. I loved catching grasshoppers, they tickle your hand. I also enjoyed drawing the plants, especially when you said we should draw them so if an alien wondered what it was, they would know. I wish I could come again.”



Emma Landenberger.  
Photo by Lila Franklin.

Well, that wish has come true, as the note's author, Emma Landenberger, is our new Barrington High School (BHS) Student Liaison. However, Emma told me that our recent volunteer fair is what brought her back to CFC. She and her dad attended the fair and she has been joining workdays since last fall.

Emma has had an immediate impact working with the team at BHS TV to create a segment on CFC. BHS TV visited Flint Creek Savanna and interviewed Emma, Kevin Scheiwiller and Larry Anglada. They introduced CFC to BHS students and encouraged them to volunteer.

Emma is a senior at BHS and plans to study molecular biology and environmental science in college.

Emma welcomes hearing from potential student volunteers and is reachable at [e.landenberger@att.net](mailto:e.landenberger@att.net).

Welcome to the CFC team, Emma!

— Leslie Coolidge

## Another successful Fall plant sale

by Linda Krauss

The 2019 Fall Native Tree and Shrub Sale was one for the record books. Over the last three years, the total number of woody plants sold grew from 177 in 2017 to 245 in 2018 and 393 this year!

There are many people I want to thank for this year's success. Matt Hokanson joined Barbara Overbey and me on the Fall Plant Sale Committee this year. He has been a wonderful addition and a great help in every aspect of the sale.

The marketing was expanded this year to include social media, thanks to help from Patty Barten and Sarah Hoban. Wayne Schild, Judy Springer and the mailing ladies made sure the postcards were mailed on time and information was posted around town. Dave Underwood updated and maintained the online ordering system making the whole sale possible. Kevin Scheiwiller's work with Smart Farm and the Village of Lake Barrington secured large orders and his stepping in to help unload the truck was much appreciated. In addition to Kevin, Juli LaRocque, Alicia Timm, Melissa Washoe, Jerry Maynard and Marty Lubawy worked like a well-oiled machine. They unloaded the delivery truck in 40 minutes and had all the plants sorted in two hours! Well done. Finally, Sue Gorr, Dinnie Dickenson and Erin Hokanson helped customers pick up their plants on a rainy Saturday morning.

The Committee also wants to thank our customers for shopping with CFC. Together we all added 393 native plants to our neighborhoods, creating better habitat corridors for all living creatures.

## Upcoming Events

### 2020 Community Education Programs - Save the Date!

All programs are held at the Barrington Village Hall on Saturday mornings, starting at 9:30 a.m. for coffee and conversation; presentations begin at 10:00 a.m.

**January 18 – One Drop at a Time with Marcus de la Fleur**

**February 22 – The Battle for Our Wetlands with Kevin Scheiwiller**

**March 14 – Vanishing Edens: Biodiversity in a Changing World with Michael Jeffords**

**April 18 – Living with Beavers with Chris Anchor**

**Barrington Greenway Initiative Explore and Restore Series**

**November 9, 9 a.m. - Noon, Spring Creek Seed Distribution**

**December 14, 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Solstice Bonfire + End of Year Celebration**

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

**Art Night Out - Paintings of the Midwest and Maine by Jim Root**

**November 21, 6 - 8 p.m., Barrington White House**

Join CFC supporter Jim Root for an evening at the Barrington White House. Free Barrington Cultural Commission event.

# Summer intern reflections

A few thoughts from two of our 2019 summer interns:

*Dane Dalton is attending Iowa State and majoring in Environmental Science.*

After changing majors my sophomore year, I was worried that I would end up not liking the environmental science major that I had selected as much as I thought I would. After doing some volunteering at CFC, attending the shorter winter internship with Kevin, and going through the first week of the college intern program, I knew that I had made a good decision.

I had never had a job that I looked forward to. Getting up at 6 a.m. has always been a struggle for me, and I was concerned whether I would be able to wake up at that time every day. After meeting the other interns and getting to work outside every day, I fell in love. I would be lying if I said that it was easy, but none of us minded. The hottest days when we were the most tired were when we did the most bonding.

While the internship was a lot of fun, it was also very educational. I gained so much knowledge from Kevin. He showed us that restoration is more than just a job—it is an art. There is so much trial and error going on, there is prioritization of tasks due to time constraints, and time is always a constraint. He also showed me how much you can learn from a remnant as well as restored areas. I remember going to Busse Woods with Kevin and Jim Vanderpoel and being exposed to the diversity of a well restored area and how insects and birds can also be an excellent indicator of how a restoration is progressing. While this was a small trip, and Kevin and Jim were mostly bird watching, it really spiked my excitement for what we did during the internship. Seeing how passionate everyone in the field is has put restoration on my radar for potential careers after college.

*Emily DeJesu also attends Iowa State where she is studying Biosystems Engineering.*

Working as an intern for CFC was one of the most rewarding and educational experiences I have ever been a part of. Before this internship, I genuinely thought cattails growing in a wetland were a sign of a healthy ecosystem. Oh, was I wrong! My parents have always complained about the overgrown wetlands across the street from our house (which is all cattails

and reed canary grass) but I always loved looking out over it and seeing the Fox River. Now, I just want to get over there with a backpack sprayer and turn it into a wetland sedge meadow!

I have learned more than I ever expected working with Kevin and all of the volunteers this summer, and could not be more grateful. Now I'm not going to say it was all rainbows and butterflies. Some days were really tough. Carrying backpacks full of herbicide through brush and plants taller than us, wearing long sleeves, pants, boots, goggles, and rubber gloves in 95 degree heat really taught me to appreciate air conditioning. Most other days, we would come home with cuts, bruises, ticks, chigger bites, burns and so many other strange marks on our bodies, but I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Every day I felt blessed to be outside helping to restore natural sites that I pass by every day and doing it with an amazing group of interns made it even more special. There is no feeling quite like driving by a site that has had so much positive visible change and knowing that we are responsible for the work that has been done.



*Summer interns with Kevin Scheiwiller and Larry Anglada. Photo by Leslie Coolidge.*

We have also had the chance to meet so many interesting and inspiring people. I could list everyone who's had a positive impact on us, but that would take up the whole page. Every "regular" that has showed up to the workdays along with all of those who Kevin introduced us to have been incredible. I always found myself surrounded by people with the same passion for the environment and people who I could learn so much from.

I am so grateful for the time spent with these knowledgeable and passionate people because they have collectively lit a fire in me by showing me how many people there are out there with this overwhelming passion for the environment.

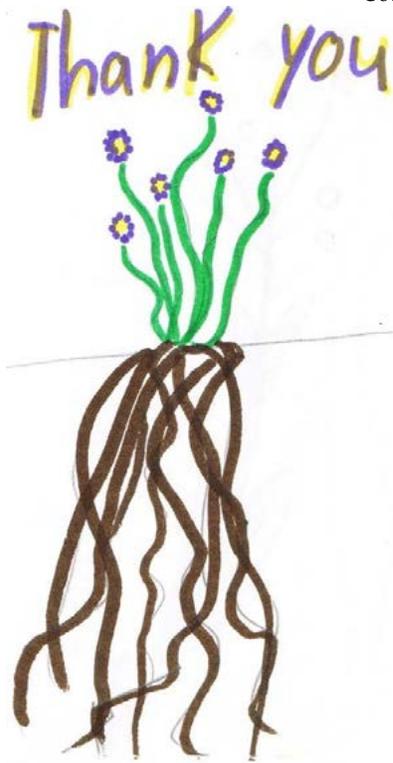
This internship has really helped me learn a lot about myself and what I want for my future. I now have so much more respect for people like Kevin who do outdoor work all year round knowing how difficult it is. I don't know that I can personally do this, but I do have so much appreciation for the amount of hard work it takes to create change. I want to continue to make change and work hard for what I care about. More than anything, I want to continue to shape my career around my passion for the environment. This internship is just the beginning, and I am so grateful for my amazing summer working for CFC and cannot wait to attend workdays for years to come.

# Nature + Fun = Learning Science Standards

Photos by Tom Benjamin, Barb Laughlin-Karon and Alison Vanderpoel

Compiled by Edith Auchter, coordinator and field leader

The fourth-grade prairie field study took place in our prairies the last two weeks in September. This award-winning collaboration between Citizens for Conservation and Barrington Community School District 220 is in its eleventh year and would not be possible without our wonderful volunteers. Thank you!



Fantastic discoveries include a baby snapping turtle and argiope!



Citizen scientists at work

Learning the importance of gathering data and making observations.



Fourth graders participate in prairie preservation.



Fourth graders summarize what they found on guided discovery walks. They learned about how soil, plant structures, insects, and animals all work together in nature. The importance of prairie plant root systems in cleaning the air and water was also discussed.



## For success, find the right native for the habitat

For years when I wrote or spoke, I repeated the oft proclaimed statement that native plants take care of themselves and that if one plants them, they will need little maintenance. However, over many years on my own property and in conversation with others, I have learned that all gardens, even naturalized plantings, need maintenance.



Profusion of closely packed native forbs. Photo by Meredith Tucker.

The weeds are hardy and seem able to live anywhere without difficulty, while the plants we have installed seem to need help. Most like to be mulched and many patches of native plants must be weeded. However....

I have had an eye-opening thought; the natives are fine and self-sufficient if they are planted in the proper habitat and given some time to mature! I use as an example my very large and prolific rain garden.

Some of the species I planted there are gone - monkey flower, *Mimulus ringens*, for one and cardinal flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*, for another. I don't think monkey flower could withstand the strong competition from the other "obligate" plants that were its neighbors. (Obligate plants almost always occur in wetlands under natural conditions.) I have seen it growing in the gardens of Habitat Corridors homeowners, but not in my own.

I'm sure I will hurt some feelings now, but I think cardinal flower is a weak plant in a garden setting. It does beautifully in nature, in the habitat it was meant to inhabit and which it chooses for itself. However, I don't think it's worth the effort it takes to grow it at home. It is called a "short-lived perennial." I'll say. I never get more than a year out of it. Most people call that an annual!

However, there are fabulous native plants that thrive with less care and are every bit as beautiful as the weak sisters. If, like me, you have trouble growing monkey flower, instead try *Lobelia siphilitica*. This is great blue lobelia. It thrives in slightly drier areas and faithfully over-winters, year after year. Tall bellflower, *Campanula americana*, will also thrive and be beautifully blue.

Instead of *Lobelia cardinalis*, cardinal flower, I plant royal catchfly, *Silene regia*, whose blooms are every bit as red as those of cardinal flower and which comes up year after year in somewhat drier soil. I saw a hummingbird on some of my royal catchfly today!

All of these beautiful, sturdy plants thrive in and around my rain garden with no attention at all from me. The truth, however, is that it took a little while for them to become that self-sufficient!

— Meredith Tucker



Closer view of native plants in Meredith's yard. Photo by Meredith Tucker.

## Thanks to Saturdays are for the Bees!

Three donations to CFC tallying over \$1,200 have been made on behalf of Saturdays are for the Bees, a high school student-led organization dedicated to creating awareness and inspiring action around saving the bees. Max Adams, Ethan Smiley and Campbell Henry are the force behind the organization, which livestreams inspections of their backyard beehives and informational segments designed to inspire their peers to take action to save the bees. The livestreams are now averaging 20,000 views per week. The students are selling branded merchandise, and have decided to donate the proceeds to CFC given the alignment of the work that CFC does and their mission. Check out their facebook page at [saturdays are for the bees](https://www.facebook.com/saturdaysareforthebees), or [saturdaysareforthebees.com](https://www.saturdaysareforthebees.com). Keep up the great work - we love your support!!!

# Many thanks, Ralph Tarquino

by Leslie Coolidge

Recently, due to a move to Colorado, CFC Vice President Ralph Tarquino stepped down.

Ralph started attending CFC workdays in 2011 and joined the Board in 2014. His first responsibilities were to chair the internship program and to upgrade the technology used in the office at CFC.

When Tom Vanderpoel suddenly passed, Ralph stepped up to fill Tom's important restoration role. He dedicated an extraordinary number of hours to that effort. His was often a solo mission of planning, prepping, scouting, organizing, leading, and following through on restoration activities. Understanding the importance of the organization, Ralph dedicated himself to making sure CFC continued to thrive. His knowledge, leadership and ability to encourage others, helped CFC have a record-breaking volunteer restoration year that would have made Tom proud.



*Ralph Tarquino. Photo by Rob Neff.*

In recognition of his many contributions, Ralph was recognized with the 2018 Great Blue Heron Award which honors outstanding contributions by volunteers in helping meet CFC's conservation goals.

A few comments on Ralph:

Ralph was the model volunteer—really hard worker; always looking for what needed to be done, then doing it; never making a big deal about the heavy lifting—just doing it. He was/is the quintessential doer. He was a critical torch bearer after Tom's passing and before Kevin's start with CFC.

— Wendy Paulson

In a time of historic change, Ralph provided consistency and leadership. His reliability was something others rallied around and his focus on forward movement for the organization hastened a transition to an even more dynamic and collaborative CFC. There is no question that his committed actions left CFC's future much brighter.

— Justin Pepper

Ralph tells me the decision to leave Illinois was largely due to the desire to be closer to family. Four generations currently reside in Colorado, mainly along the Front Range. They bought a house north of Colorado Springs and are adjusting to living at an altitude of 7,500 feet.

Conservation activities and volunteer opportunities abound in Colorado, as residents realize the need to preserve/restore/maintain the land in order to continue to enjoy the benefits of living in the Rockies. Once they get more settled in this new community, Ralph plans to engage in local volunteer events.

Ralph, many thanks and we wish you the best in your future endeavors.

## Give the gift of green

by Barb Cragan

Membership to Citizens for Conservation is the perfect gift for anyone interested in nature, the environment, green spaces or conservation. Gardeners will get a discount at our incredible spring native plant sale and our fall tree and shrub sale. It comes with an informative newsletter and free admission to our many educational programs.

A gift membership is a thoughtful way to remember someone's birthday, anniversary or commemorate a special event like retirement. During the holidays, it makes a "green" gift that keeps giving all year.

Giving a gift membership can be done online. It is easy to fill out the form on the website. We will send the recipient a card and a letter explaining all the great benefits of membership to Citizens for Conservation. Or you can give us a call and we will be happy to process your gift membership.

Remember: Go green with your gift list!

## 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).

## President's Comments

Seed collecting is in full swing at CFC. Recently, I attended a BGI event on a beautiful, sunny Saturday. Many collectors came, including high school students and folks from our BGI partners: Audubon Great Lakes, Lake and Cook County Forest Preserves, Friends of the Forest Preserve and the Bobolink Foundation. We split into two groups and my group stayed at Flint Creek Savanna while the other group left for Grigsby Prairie. We moved far into the savanna to collect gray-headed coneflower, monarda, purple prairie clover and wool grass. I think I ended up wearing more of that seed than I got into the bag! Along the way, we discovered a nodding ladies' tresses orchid which had an unusually good growing season this year.

There was plenty of seed and we amassed quite a haul in two quick hours, then enjoyed delicious snacks afterwards. And, in keeping with our effort to minimize the use of bottled water, we brought out our new water refilling station. We all enjoyed using it and look forward to seeing it at our next workday!

— Kathleen Leitner



Kathleen Leitner. Photo by Steve Smith.

## Volunteers needed

Volunteers are the lifeblood of CFC. To achieve our ambitious restoration goals, we need to recruit additional volunteers. Regular workdays are scheduled every Thursday and Saturday from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. Our Restoration Manager, Kevin Scheiwiller, sends a weekly email which outlines plans for both regular and added workdays. These emails provide a great overview of what's being accomplished at CFC. If you would like to be added to our email group to receive notification of upcoming workdays, please email [kevin.scheiwiller@citizensforconservation.org](mailto:kevin.scheiwiller@citizensforconservation.org).

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