



Restoration report - 2019 in review

by Jim Vanderpoel

For 2019, our Restoration Project Manager, Kevin Scheiwiller, set certain objective goals for our restoration efforts. We would collect more than five hundred pounds of seed; we would surpass last year's list of species collected; we would begin to seed at heavier rates to increase germination. All of these goals were met and exceeded. For the first time, we filled fifty barrels with our various seed mixes. A substantial percentage of the barrels (76%) were sowed at Barrington Greenway Initiative partner properties. In many past reports, I've urged CFC members to visit our flagship preserves to see how well restoration is working and creating living space for living things. Now I can confidently encourage people to visit some of the restoration sites in our forest preserve partners like Grassy Lake Sedge Meadow or Galloping Hill Prairie. These two sites have become scenic attractions partially due to CFC's seed, restoration techniques and cooperative volunteer work.

The Barrington Greenway Initiative is making progress at its supreme restoration goal of creating ever larger, high quality natural areas—I know this when I see an American bittern flush out of the autumn grass of a restored prairie, or when we spot an endangered wildflower bloom for the first time since being seeded almost twenty years ago; when we see six species of native butterflies simultaneously nectaring at a single clump of ironweed; when I note nursery-grown riverbank dock transplanted into a degraded floodplain, which was covered by an ugly and unproductive clone of reed canary grass just

a year earlier. I grow more confident when I see how fast the progress came at Flint Creek South—proven techniques, combined with our rich seed mixes (seventy species in our sedge meadow mix alone!) in tandem with knowledgeable and dedicated volunteers. We have become so proficient at attacking the invasives head-on that for the first time in over thirty years of working on Barrington area restoration I feel cocky. It's as



Recent burn at Flint Creek Savanna. Photo by Ken DeMuth.

though the BGI restoration team looks at a pasture overgrown by a dead zone of buckthorn and says, "Bring it on!"

This year we made a major upgrade to our prescribed fire tactics. Prescribed burns are absolutely essential to prairie and oak woods ecological management. Without fire, prairie and oak woods do not survive—they are each entirely dependent on periodic burns. As the size and number of our preserves continues to increase, we were beginning to strain our

capacity to complete enough prescribed fires. Burns are time consuming and physically arduous—and require the right weather conditions. Humidity, temperature, wind velocity and wind direction all have to be favorable. We had to come up with a plan to spread this effort out rather than squeezing ever more sessions into the same brief period of early spring.

The solution? Fall burns! In the late fall of 2018, CFC conducted five burns at four of our preserves. Doing half of our burns in the fall halves our risk of running out of good conditions in the spring and protects the burn crews from fatigue. The burn leader suffers less stress and the burn crews benefit from spreading out the taxing and nerve-wracking

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Restoration report *(continued)*

workload. It was interesting to observe the results—we noticed that the combustion of vegetation is a little less complete in the fall, which leaves a little more duff on the ground. 2019 was a great year for our nesting prairie birds at Grigsby; we observed probable nesting of bobolink, Eastern meadowlark and both Savannah and Henslow's sparrows. Do they appreciate the extra duff? We cannot say for sure, but we'll continue to monitor results.

Kevin Scheiwiller also emphasized improvement of our safety preparation. CFC

now provides Nomex fire retardant suits and hard hats with protective visors to the burn crew. Burn volunteers also attended safety-training sessions. All in all, CFC has a more professional approach to prepare for, plan and execute each burn.



Volunteers at the burn. Photo by Ken DeMuth.

2020 marks the second phase of this project as we begin work on the west side of Hart Road. Volunteers will be working on removing buckthorn surrounding a high-quality remnant sedge meadow. Simultaneously, contractors will mow around five acres of buckthorn close to Hart Road. Over time, we will restore this property back to a grassland mosaic of prairie, savanna and wetlands with a special focus on shrubland habitat.

Come join us at a workday as we continue to expand into a new horizon on this project!

— Kevin Scheiwiller



First workday at new Craftsbury site. Photo by Patty Barten.

Notes from the Restoration Manager

Craftsbury: past, present and future

As many of you know, we received a large grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation to help aid in the restoration work at Craftsbury. We are just wrapping up our initial phase of the grant and wow did we accomplish a lot!

You may recall how different the site looked before CFC began stewardship at the preserve. Most of the upland areas were extremely choked out by buckthorn, while the wetlands were under attack by non-native cattails and reed canary grass.

With funding from this grant, as well as the focused effort from all our hearty volunteers, we were able to make huge gains at this site in a relatively short period of time. We removed buckthorn from 4.5 acres, making way for our prairie seeds to start to take hold. CFC volunteers spread over 35 pounds of a custom seed mix in the Fall of both 2018 and 2019. Additionally, we were able to attack all the wetland invasive species which will help the remaining native vegetation to flourish as well as ensure that this site continues to serve as important wetland bird habitat as exemplified this past year when a sora decided to nest in the main wetland!

Special Onion workday

We have scheduled a special workday for Saturday, January 25th, noon–3 p.m. at the Onion Pub & Brewery on land they donated to CFC several years ago. The property is east of the lake behind the Pub. Natives have long been planted over this property. The far back, which is where we'll be working, has been taken over by scrub willows from a ridge of land down to the wetland. We hope to conquer/clear this whole area with a large group of volunteers.



We'll have two fires, one for our hands and feet, and one for the cut junk shrubs we attack. We'll have good homemade soup, other snacks, cider/cocoa, and fun! The Onion has supported CFC in many ways, so it is especially fun to do something to give back to them. If you'd like to bring additional snacks, please contact Ginger Underwood at 847-331-3568.

Please join us for this great opportunity to show our appreciation of our long-time supporters at the Onion. RSVP to CFC's office at 847-382-7283 so we can plan for plenty of food.

The traditions of seed collecting, both old and new: the trip to Harvard

by Matt Hokanson

Local plant genetics are key to highly successful restorations and are typically preserved in conservation areas set aside by local groups, municipalities, counties and the state. Sadly, these precious undisturbed habitats are few and far between and only a small percentage are left in northeastern Illinois. Many railroad lines located in Illinois were constructed a long time ago and numerous undisturbed



2009 Harvard trip. Photo by Doug Johnson.

patches of prairie and other habitats are located near railroad right-of-ways, hidden and generally protected from urban sprawl. Many years ago, Tom Vanderpoel came up with the brilliant idea to scout for native remnant landscapes by riding the train on local railways. During one of his train rides, Tom found a site near Harvard, Illinois which turned out to be highly diverse and one of the closest remnant areas to Citizens for Conservation property.

Since its discovery roughly 34 years ago, CFC has been making an annual trip in October to Harvard to collect seed adjacent to railroad tracks. Rare species such as fringed gentian (*Gentianopsis crinita*), Michigan lily (*Lilium michiganense*), marsh bluegrass (*Poa palustris*), prairie Indian plantain (*Arnoglossum plantagineum*), and fringed brome (*Bromus ciliatus*) have been found in the Harvard remnants. With local populations of native species dwindling, the seed collected from Harvard soon became the building blocks for a number of CFC restoration projects. The species found in Harvard with their local genetic ecotype became crucial to gather every year. So, year after year, rain or sunshine, it has become an annual tradition to make a trip to Harvard to gather seed.

Given time, CFC care, and seed from remnant areas, the restorations matured to the point where CFC volunteers were able to collect seed from the restorations as well as the remnants. As the number of seed sources increased, so did the opportunity to expand the restorations and take on new projects. Even though many native species became more abundant throughout CFC sites, it was still worthwhile taking the time to visit those remnants to collect seed. The

combination of remnant and restoration genetics builds resiliency in our native plants to disease, climate change, and many other factors.

Sadly, anyone who has joined the Harvard workday recently will have noticed the dramatic reduction in the abundance and variety of seed we are able to collect. The remnants are slowly degrading due to the lack of management and seed quantities as of late have been small. This year, we were still able to collect a total of 19 species. What really makes the trip still worth our time is the fact that there are three key species collected in Harvard that we are unable to collect from the restorations: Michigan lily, marsh bluegrass, and fringed brome. We were successful this year in being able to collect one of these key species: fringed brome. Score! At this point in time, it is still fun to make the trip each year come October. It is difficult to break the tradition!



More Harvard. Photo by Doug Johnson.

Thank you Silbrico Corporation

It's time again for CFC to thank Todd Kokes and our Silbrico friends for generously donating 50 plus bags of Coarse Krum Horticulture Perlite to CFC for our annual seed mixing event. The perlite is an essential component for success as it helps bond with the tiny seeds for even distribution in the mixing. It also serves as an extender, helping volunteers see where the seed mix has been sown for better coverage during hand sowing. Thank you to Silbrico for supporting nature by sharing your high performance, environmentally friendly perlite with us.



Seed mixing. Photo by Patty Barten.

News from Habitat Corridors

Habitat Corridors had another successful season of home visits. Most of our appointments are between May and October when there are leaves on the trees and shrubs so that we can accurately identify the existing woody plants. That is when we can best identify forbs and grasses as well.

We have three regular volunteers making house calls as well as the occasional additional helper. All of these volunteers are very capable of identifying both native and non-native plants and helping the homeowner decide what new plants to consider purchasing and what existing plants should be removed.

Our volunteers mainly visited properties in Barrington, Lake Barrington, and Barrington Hills. However, sometimes we have ventured to more distant communities like Carpentersville (to award a sign), Palatine, and Arlington Heights.

Please think about problem areas in your yard and consider contacting us at info@HabitatCorridors.org. If you leave a request and contact information, we will reach out to you in the spring to schedule an appointment.

— Meredith Tucker

All photos by Meredith Tucker representing seasonal natives.



Spring – woodland or blue phlox under linden.



Summer – marsh phlox in rain garden.



Fall – sneezewood in rain garden.



Bottle gentian from seed in rain garden.

Start planning your spring planting; the pollinators will thank you!

by Laura Mandell

As winter settles in, take some time to explore the native plant section of citizensforconservation.org. It's your best source for information about the native ferns, forbs, grasses, sedges, shrubs and trees that thrive in our area, and it's a sneak preview of the many choices that may be available at CFC's 24th annual Native Plant, Shrub and Tree Sale scheduled for May 1-3, 2020.

The native plant database on the site puts information on nearly 300 plants at your fingertips. To make your planning easy, it has a great filtering capability. In addition to common filters such as sun and water, you can also filter by color; by tolerance to deer, rabbit or black walnut; and by species that you want to attract, such as hummingbirds, butterflies, beetles and bees.



*Bumble bee on wild bergamot.
Photo by Donna Bolzman.*

Speaking of bees, have you ever wondered where they go during winter? According to Anthony Colangelo of the Pollinator Partnership, they all display a variety of unique strategies in order to survive the cold weather.

Honey bees, for example, form clusters inside their hives to keep warm. Worker bees huddle around their queen and vibrate their wings and bodies to generate heat inside the hive. Amazingly, this behavior is carried out all winter, fueled by their stored honey.

Bumble bees, on the other hand, take a different approach; only new queens survive the winter, while the rest of the colony dies off. And for native solitary bees, it is common for females to lay eggs in underground nests or sealed, insulated cavities above ground. The eggs hatch and survive the winter as dormant adults or developing pupae kept safe and warm inside nests. When the weather is warm enough, emerging females find their own independent nesting sites to lay the next generation of eggs.

By adding native plants to your landscape, you are a part of our collective effort to create a much-needed wildlife corridor for these clever bees as well as for birds and other pollinators. Every patch of habitat, no matter how small, plays a critical role. Start your planning now! Preordering opens March 1.

Upcoming Events

Community Education Programs

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

Youth Education

February 15 – Great Backyard Bird Count. Check CFC website for information.

Annual Meeting

March 12 – Featuring Kevin Scheiwiller and artist Philip Juras. 6:00 p.m. at the Onion Pub & Brewery, 22221 N. Pepper Road, Lake Barrington.

Annual Native Plant, Shrub and Tree Sale

May 1-3 – Preordering opens March 1. Pickup for preorders on Friday, May 1, open to all members and those who have preordered. Plant sale open to all on May 2 and 3. CFC's annual plant sale will be held at the Good Shepherd Hospital barn area across Highway 22 from CFC Headquarters.

Barrington Greenway Initiative Explore and Restore Series

January 18, 9 a.m.–noon, Brushcutting at Grassy Lake

February 8, 9-11 a.m., Brushcutting at Craftsbury

March 9, 9-11 a.m., Cuba Marsh Brushcutting

See CFC website (www.citizensforconservation.org) for details.

Special Onion Workday

January 25 – see page 2.

Summer Camp – Save the Date

June 8-12 – Ages 5-7: 9:15-11:45 a.m., Ages 8-10: 1:15-3:45 p.m.

Winter 2020 Community Education programs

by Peggy Simonsen

Please plan to join us for four enlightening programs this winter. All programs are on Saturday mornings from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the Barrington Village Hall. Programs are free for members and \$10 for non-members. Make reservations at 847-382-7283 or CommunityEd@Citizensforconservation.org.

January 18, 2020

One Drop at a Time

Marcus de la fleur, Landscape Architect

Marcus de la fleur will discuss the stunning appearance of sustainable storm water management at the residential scale. This includes the use



Photo by Marcus de la fleur.

of native prairie plants and resilient ecological landscaping practices including rain gardens and bioswales. He will also touch on the soils of the Midwest, another important aspect in the development of sustainable landscapes. He has created pilot projects to demonstrate that garden aesthetics can be combined with sustainable and ecological yards as well as storm water management.

Marcus de la fleur is a Registered Landscape Architect with more than 20 years of experience. He owns a design and consulting firm, de la fleur LLC in Chicago. He received his 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, UK. He has contributed to the design and management of multiple sustainable projects (some of them LEED registered or certified) and has extensive field experience in sustainable technologies through his past work in Germany, Switzerland, and Great Britain. He also led the development of the Morton Arboretum's Collections Master Plan in 2000.

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Save the date: CFC Annual Meeting

CFC's 2020 annual meeting will feature our own Kevin Scheiwiller and artist Philip Juras. The meeting will be Thursday, March 12, at the Onion Pub & Brewery, 22221 N. Pepper Road, Lake Barrington. A reception featuring the Onion's craft brews will begin at 6 p.m.; the meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

Community Education (continued)

February 22, 2020

The Battle for Our Wetlands

Kevin Scheiwiller, CFC Restoration Manager



Photo by Kevin Scheiwiller

Kevin Scheiwiller will discuss how to use “warrior sedges” to combat wetland invasives and rebuild a functioning sedge meadow. Eradicating wetland thugs like reed canary

grass, cattails, and phragmites (giant reed) is a very difficult restoration task. Kevin will also describe some sedges that thrive in residential rain gardens.

Kevin graduated from Loyola University Chicago with a degree in Environmental Science. He has experience working in a wide variety of ecosystems around the Chicago region through internships, as an ecological restoration consultant, and currently as the Restoration Manager for Citizens for Conservation. At CFC, Kevin has expanded restoration efforts at Flint Creek Savanna and other properties with sedges in the wetlands and initiated restoration plans for our newly acquired Craftsbury Preserve. He also leads the collaboration with Barrington Greenway Initiative partners to improve habitat in the greater Barrington area.

March 14, 2020

Vanishing Edens: Biodiversity in a Changing World

Michael Jeffords, Coauthor of *Exploring Nature in Illinois, A Field Guide to the Prairie State*

Mr. Jeffords will discuss how current pressures are affecting the biodiversity of plants, pollinators and other wildlife that are interdependent and on which we depend. We are all affected by changes in the abundance, distribution, and behavior of organisms— shade trees, agricultural pests, beautiful birds and butterflies, myriad flowers and their pollinators, and vectors of disease.



Photo by Donna Bolzman

Mr. Jeffords is the retired Education/Outreach Director for the Prairie Research Institute, Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) at the University of Illinois. The INHS was founded in 1858 and is the guardian and recorder of biological resources of Illinois. He also was staff photographer for The Illinois Steward magazine and is co-author of *Exploring Nature in*

Illinois, A Field Guide to the Prairie State. He holds a PhD in entomology from the University of Illinois.

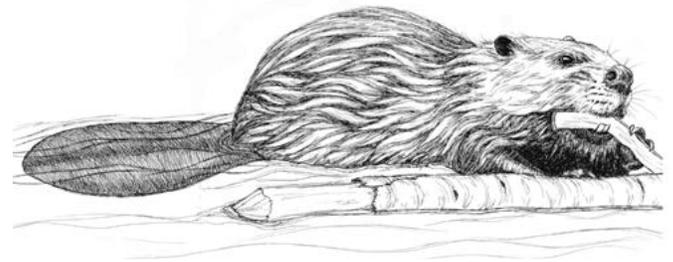
April 18, 2020

Living with Beavers

Chris Anchor, Senior Wildlife Biologist, FPDCC

Mr. Anchor will discuss his research on beavers in our area. He is Senior Wildlife Biologist, Forest Preserve District of Cook County. The District Wildlife Division is tasked with monitoring and surveying all of Cook County’s flora and fauna less game fish. He has nearly 30 years of experience managing wildlife and wildlife habitat and has spent much of that time observing the animals that make the forest preserves their home, gaining a breadth of knowledge few in his field can match.

Mr. Anchor 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, providing extensive insight into their behavior and habitats. He has been with the FPDCC since 1981.



Drawing by Beth Lee Cripe

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.

Youth Ed is looking forward to 2020!

by Julia Martinez

Youth Education's next event is the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) in February. Despite the bitter weather in February, this event collects vital data. February is an excellent time to collect data because most birds are not migrating at this time. This means a more accurate snapshot of species populations can be developed. This is a global event that allows citizen scientists to contribute to a massive global data set! In 2019, over 200,000 people participated in observing nearly 7,000 species (<https://gbbc.birdcount.org/all-summaries/2019-gbbc-summary/>). The data collected supports an on-going trend of species moving northward. Furthermore, the wide participation allows scientists access to more data than any one avid ornithologist could hope to collect himself.



Preparing for the GBBC. Photo by Alison Vanderpoel.

To celebrate the GBBC, Youth Ed invites families to join us February 15, 2020 from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Register for this free event by emailing julia.martinez@citizensforconservation.org. We will observe birds at our feeders, construct a bird-related craft, discuss diets of common song birds, and take a walk outside to record data for the GBBC! It promises to be a delightful event!

Internship opportunities

Be part of saving the environment! Join Citizens for Conservation in restoring and preserving the largest collection of prairies, woodlands, and savannas in our community by becoming an intern. We have two internships programs: (1) a ten-week paid program for current college students and (2) a one week program for high school students.

Our college-level summer internships, established in 1993, provide college students in the environmental sciences hands-on experience in restoration management methods and techniques. A large number of interns have gone on to successful careers in environmental fields.

For the ten-week period beginning in late May, our interns actively participate in the ongoing restoration of CFC properties as part of a nationally recognized restoration approach. Activities include planting native sedge/forbs, seed

gathering, weeding, brush cutting and removal of invasive species. Interns work outdoors in all types of weather, and need to be physically fit and capable of moderately high levels of exertion. In addition to the restoration activities, interns may assist in CFC's Youth Education program designed to inspire and encourage an understanding of the environment in our young naturalists.

Candidates should be currently enrolled in college with a preferred area of study in the environmental sciences or a related field. The stipend is \$10/hour with the possibility of a bonus at the end of the program.

For more information on our college program, please click the link below which will take you to our online application. <https://forms.gle/8qdWvBHx1thFgvpL8>

Our high school interns will work outdoors and participate in diverse environmental stewardship activities directed by professionals in the fields of conservation restoration along with our summer-long college interns. Activities will occur on varied terrain and in variable weather conditions requiring that you are physically able to move in these environments. CFC interns engage in active participation in the restoration of land located in the greater Barrington, IL area. Interns will participate in a diverse set of tasks relating to land stewardship including: preparing seed beds, planting sedge and other plugs, seed gathering, and removal of non-native invasive plants.

The program will take place June 1-5, 2020 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily. Required attendance on the dates indicated and the ability to get to the CFC farmhouse facility located on Hwy. 22 across from Good Shepherd Hospital are necessary.

The program requires the ability to work outside in the sun in a physically demanding environment. A \$10 per hour stipend will be paid upon completion of the internship.

For more information on our high school program, please click the link below which will take you to our online application. https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Rnu0P6kfJrkoWi-FWrlx05DQy7iV46PBcXDPGhr_OGI

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.

President's Comments

We have had some chilly December weather, perfect for cutting buckthorn and other nasty invasive species, topped off with controlled burns and well deserved meals.

This month we had two unique opportunities to share our expertise with new collaborators. On December 7th, we joined forces with the Village of Tower Lakes and Cuba Township, co-owners of the newly renamed Tower Lakes Preserve (formerly Barclay's Woods) in



Tower Lakes workday.
Photo by Steve Smith.

Tower Lakes, and the Barrington Area Conservation Trust (BACT), the conservation easement manager of the site. Kevin Scheiwiller, CFC's Restoration Manager worked with Susan Lenz, co-Executive Director of BACT, to develop a buckthorn cutting event which eventually included five burn piles, then completed the day by overseeding with some of CFC's native seed. Our volunteers also pulled out old silt fencing from the long ago construction project that was started on this site in the early aughts. We had 48 volunteers from all four groups, proving once again that many hands make for great fires! And short work.

Many thanks to the organizers, and in particular to Rey and Chrissie Mena who hosted a delicious chili meal afterwards!

Then on December 14th, we had our final BGI event and first workday with our friends at McHenry County Conservation District. We went to MCCC's Hickory Grove in Cary, a gorgeous rolling savanna located on the west side of the Fox River. We met Ed Collins, MCCC's Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources. Ed gave us a quick overview of the history of the property, a former dairy farm, and together with Kevin, laid out the day's plan for cutting buckthorn and a particular species of honeysuckle that only grows on that side of the Fox River. We also learned a new technique for squishing down a (non-burning) pile of buckthorn! We had over 30 volunteers, again making for an impressive end result.



Before and after MCCC workday.
Photo by Patty Barten.

And, of course, the day ended with a tasty meal of hotdogs grilled by none other than Daniel Suarez of Audubon Great Lakes.

Working to restore these properties helps to expand our ever-growing habitat corridor across the northwest suburbs. And it's fun!

— Kathleen Leitner

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