



Notes from the Nursery

Rope dodder: a vine with attitude

by Luke Dahlberg

In the summer of 2018, I was walking through a remnant wet prairie in northern Lake County, tracking down early-flowering prairie plants in order to collect seed from them to propagate. In the distance, I saw something glowing bright orange in the midday sun. As I approached to take a closer look, the orange growth weaving its way through the flowers and grasses turned out to be a large colony of rope dodder (*Cuscuta glomerata*). It was a large colony that must have been a few meters wide! Dodders are a strange and alien-looking group of plants. These morning glory relatives form a niche as one of the few fully parasitic plants in our natural areas. Completely orange in color, the leafless stem lacks chlorophyll, the pigment needed for photosynthesis. They get all the nourishment they need from their host plant. There are several species of dodders found in the Chicago region, and all of them are specialist on a particular group or species of plants. It was because of the parasitic nature that I took interest in rope dodder, but before I go any further, the life cycle of these plants is truly fascinating.

Late in spring, seeds of rope dodder begin to germinate. They need a lot of moisture during this time to fuel their growth, and it's one reason why you typically find this species in wet areas. They are on a race to find a host plant since they cannot produce their own food. As they grow, they can pick up chemicals from a potential host plant and grow towards it. In a way, they are



Rope dodder seedhead. Photo by Luke Dahlberg.

“sniffing” out a victim! Once it finds a stem to attach to, the dodder vine begins to wrap up the stem. As it grows, the vine sends out root-like structures call haustoria that drill into the stem of the host plant to connect to the vascular tissue. This allows dodder to take up all the needed water and nutrients to fuel growth. Once it's confident of being attached to the host, the actual roots that dodder had in the soil to help it grow early on deteriorate. It is now completely dependent on its host plant. As summer progresses, the vines can grow 6-10 feet long. That takes a lot of energy. So much energy, the host begins to yellow, wilt, and becomes stunted. As the dodder vine grows, it attaches to other stems, draining them out in the process. When August approaches, dodder forms flower

buds, and the vines begin to die back. Like frothy white bubbles, dense masses of tiny white flowers bloom on the stems of the host plants, attracting crowds of bees and other pollinating insects. Seed capsules form afterwards, and hang on the stem all winter. Dodders are annuals, and new generations keep growing until their hosts are gone. However, their seeds can last decades in the soil, waiting for the next host plant to grow in their vicinity.

Knowing about the life cycle of rope dodder, I wanted to try to introduce it to our restorations, not just to increase the biodiversity, but also to use it as a biological control. Rope dodder is specific to parasitizing members of the composite family: sunflowers, asters, and goldenrods, just to name a few. However,

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Dodder vines. Photo by Luke Dahlberg.

I've always observed the vines growing most commonly on two particular species: sawtooth sunflower (*Helianthus grosseserratus*) and Canada goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*). Both of those species are very aggressive, and can outcompete other plant species in no time with dense growth and chemicals they release to reduce competition from

other plants (called allelopathy). Many land managers either mow down or spray the colonies to try to control them, or just let them go unchecked. Is it that aggressive and vigorous growth that is attractive to rope dodder? After all, it needs all the energy it can get to fuel its growth and reproduction during the summer months. So, I collected seed from local dodder populations to test out my theory. After cleaning the seed, I strategically sowed all the seed within several colonies of sawtooth sunflower and Canada goldenrod throughout Flint Creek Savanna. I looked at different soil conditions, burned versus unburned areas, and higher quality restorations versus younger, weedier ones. Checking back at my test sites in 2019, all had dodder growth and control of the hosts as I suspected, but the one site I used for sawtooth sunflower control was the turning point I needed. In the right conditions, sawtooth sunflower can grow up to eight feet tall, and create a monoculture that is impenetrable to other plant species. The dodder vines stunted the growth so much that, at the height of summer when the sunflowers are as tall as I am, they were only waist high! The leaves and overall growth were yellow and stunted, and by the end of summer, all the stems in the center of the sunflower colony were blacked and completely dead. The fringes of the colony survived. The dodder vines had similar results on the Canada goldenrod, but not as detrimental. No other plant species were affected by dodder parasitism. Throughout that season, I began to notice neighboring mountain mints, pasture roses, and chairmaker's rushes fill in the center of the sunflower colony. Rather than having a dense monoculture, the sunflowers actually looked like they fit into the ecosystem. Both sawtooth sunflower and Canada goldenrod are not bad plants, and play a vital role in our plant communities and as a food for our native insects. But in our novel ecosystems that are highly unstable, they tend to take over quickly before other native forbs and grasses have a chance

to gain a foothold. Because of the parasitic nature of dodder, many are hesitant to introduce it into restorations, but based on the results I've seen so far (and with further monitoring of long-term impacts), I hope that dodder will become another tool for us and other land managers to help keep these aggressive species in check, which will help with the long-term health of our restorations.

Restoration Report

The Good, the bad, but no uglies

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused so many problems in so many places that it is no surprise it has affected CFC's activities. Fortunately, we were able to have some successful workdays earlier in the year, and held our annual meeting just before the lockdown began. However, we had to cancel BGI



Shooting star. Photo by Rob Neff.

Explore and Restore events, restoration workdays, bird walks, children's education programs, Community Education presentations and Habitat Corridors home visits. We got most of our prescribed burns in last fall and early this spring, but we had to miss key burns this spring at our two most established prairies: Original Grove at Flint Creek, which would have included Swink Prairie and the Golden Triangle; and the west side of Grigsby Prairie, which means neither of our most interesting restoration sites were attractive this spring. This year we will have to miss seeing the beautiful vista that only a prescribed burn can bring to a prairie. A burned prairie looks so good in the spring when the brightly colored foot-tall flowers tower over the inch high prairie grasses, composites and others that will dwarf the spring flora as the summer progresses. Fortunately, the late summer prairie and marshes will be showing off their colors in late August no matter if a burn occurred and we will be able to get out to enjoy that.

Since the lockdown regulations allowed hiking as an essential activity, I made the best of a bad situation and did at least twenty inspections of our burned prairies, the east side of Grigsby and the Grand Prairie and West Bluff at Flint Creek. All three sites share the same level of restoration—the restorations are old enough that the conservative spring flora that comes by seeding are beginning to build up good population, but they are too recent to have received any of the

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Restoration Report

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transplanted plugs of virgin prairie that used to live along the Chicago Northwestern Railroad tracks, which helped us so much at the beginning of our restorations. These rescued sods of prairie contributed so much to the diversity of plants that thrive at our top preserves.

The good news is I found seven species of spring blooming flowers that are beginning to become common on our middle-grade prairie restorations; shooting star, golden Alexander, common blue-eyed grass, yellow pimpernel, prairie lousewort, wild hyacinth and Jacob's ladder. All of these plants were established by broadcast seed. I call them the Successful Seven. It takes about seven years from germination to first blossom for shooting star—very slow, but the good news is, once they start flowering, the momentum builds and they just keep getting more common. Jacob's ladder, wild hyacinth and golden Alexander do best in the moister prairies so are a little bit more limited in range, but they have really begun to put on a display in their favorite habitat. Yellow pimpernel prefers the boundary where the woods and the prairie meet and this relative of the carrot, which is very uncommon in the Chicago area even in the best habitats, has really taken hold.

Now, the bad news is I found very few encouraging signs of germination of other hard to restore species. I didn't find a single specimen of hoary puccoon coming from seed, though the little colony that was the last group of wildflowers to be rescued from the railroad right of way, and are now on the East side of Grigsby, expanded from nine to thirteen in the last two years. At that rate, it would take many centuries for this once abundant resident of Grade-A prairies to retake its rightful place as the dominant prairie flower of late May. The Mead's sedge was another total failure; I did not find a single specimen. How about prairie alumroot or white-ladies slipper? No luck. I found a few violet wood sorrels and one prairie violet on the West Bluff, but those might be the remnant of a transplanting of nursery grown stock from five or six years ago. I also saw a few prairie phlox at both West Bluff and Grand Prairie—again, those may have been transplanted. Prairie phlox may be the one spring flower that we can reintroduce by trowel because it seems to transplant pretty well. So, it seems some species are relatively easy if you have the patience and correct techniques, but others are not.

To mitigate the gloom, I did find several heart-leaved Alexanders that clearly came by seed. A positive development, indeed! I suspect this plant would do well if we could just expand our seed harvesting—it germinates and persists so well, but because it is so rare we are able to collect only a meager amount of seed each year. Slightly more successful is the Seneca snakeroot; I found about a dozen in each of the three burned areas. One plant that has really come on is the Northern bedstraw, but it would be a stretch to call this mid-

June bloomer part of the spring flora, so I won't add it to the Successful Seven list and spoil the alliteration.

More good news is that full-scale workdays are now running again and Kevin Scheiwiller has been creatively putting volunteers to work while respecting appropriate distancing, and I look forward to seeing some progress made this year. Kevin and individual volunteers have been coming out and working hard on their own to prevent the comeback of garlic mustard.

In my next report, I will revisit the Sought After Sixty and evaluate the progress we have made meeting that goal. Again, we'll have some good news...and some bad.

— Jim Vanderpoel

Notes from the Restoration Manager

Our stalwart volunteers not only kept the ship afloat during the current pandemic but have helped to further



Kevin Scheiwiller. Photo by Susan Lenz.

our management goals! Throughout the past few months, individual volunteers practiced extreme social distancing by pulling garlic mustard surrounded by only the birds and the wildflowers. Good thing too, because garlic mustard was having a banner year. Slowly, CFC has been able to open our workdays back up to the public. To date, we have planted

high quality savanna species including: false dandelion, fire pink, and big-leaved aster. We have also been able to plant approximately 10,000 wetland plants along the banks of Flint Creek, in the Grassy Lake Sedge Meadow, and at Galloping Hill. Seed season is already off to the races as the interns and volunteers have collected seed from over 30 species. We've been keeping busy!

A huge thank you to Larry Creekmur, the former owner of Country Road Greenhouses in Rochelle, IL! Tom Vanderpoel was always looking to buy broad-leaved wooly sedge (*Carex pellita*) from Country Road, but Larry had trouble getting it to germinate. Back in March, Larry donated thousands of *Carex pellita* to CFC in Tom's memory. These sedges have been planted across the BGI to honor the long-standing relationship.

— Kevin Scheiwiller

2020 Joe Cragan Conservation Scholar

by Karen Rosene

This year CFC awarded the Joe Cragan Conservation Scholarship to Barrington High School (BHS) senior Lucas Rot. In keeping with the extraordinary circumstances of 2020, the award was presented to Lucas in the gravel parking lot of CFC early in June with those attending wearing face masks. CFC President Kathleen Leitner and Barb Cragan presented the award to Lucas. His family attending included his mother and father, Elizabeth and Craig, as well as his two younger brothers (T.J. and Cameron), a friend and his proud grandparents (Cheryl and Tom Borst).

We stood in a circle and enjoyed a recap of Lucas' qualifications which included an early love of all things in nature. In addition to being a student honored for academic distinction, he was a Crew Leader for the Chicago Conservation Leadership Corps in 2019. His Project Leader was impressed with his knowledge of both birding and botany coming into the program as well as his intellectual curiosity throughout.

Lucas told the story of a road trip to the Chisos Mountains in west Texas in search of the breeding grounds of the Colima warbler. He and a friend drove to Texas and camped in "triple-digit" heat. Long before the sun rose, they began their climb to search for the elusive bird. Seeing it requires a day-long hike. Well into the climb he recognized the bird's distinctive call and they eventually sighted the warbler in a pine tree. Lucas had however suffered a sprained ankle in the pre-dawn start!

Lucas will attend Louisiana State University in the fall. He hopes to pursue a path to protect the environment, especially the oceans, from the effects of climate change and habitat loss, which may include environmental policy.

Through the generosity of the Cragan family, CFC is proud to offer this scholarship in honor of Joe Cragan, former teacher and chairman of the Guidance Department at BHS. The four-year college scholarship is for a student pursuing a degree in an environmentally related area.



Lucas Rot and his parents. Photo by Tom Benjamin.

Volunteers needed

Late Summer and Fall workdays focus on seed collection which many volunteers cite as their favorite activity. 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.

News from Habitat Corridors

Invasive species destroy habitat

Day by day the world is getting smaller. It has diminished in size in part because of improvements in transportation and communications. Many benefits accrue from advancements in technology and accompanying lifestyle changes; however, increases in travel and commerce have negative consequences as well.

Ecosystems have lost the protection afforded them by the isolation they once enjoyed. Lakes, rivers, oceans, and mountain ranges no longer provide sufficient barriers to guard close-knit plant and animal associations from invasive alien species.

Nothing is inherently wrong with exotic (alien) species. Some backyards and parks safely include plants from around the world. Gardeners admire tulips and daffodils, lilacs, peonies, zinnias, and marigolds. These non-native flowers and shrubs are beautiful, fragrant, and well-behaved, although they do not provide native creatures with the habitat they require.



Zinnias. Photo by Anna Marie Lukes.

Unfortunately, many exotic species are not environmentally friendly. Sometimes because of human error, sometimes through accident or ignorance, exotic species introduced to the landscape have become invasive in neighborhoods and often escape into our few remaining natural areas. There they threaten our dwindling natural habitats.

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Habitat Corridors

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Nature is often unprepared for man's interference. In the natural world, most changes occur slowly, often over millions of years, giving plants and animals time to adjust. Mankind, on the other hand, works rapidly; a brief plane flight introduces a new plant or animal while its natural predators remain behind in the alien's homeland. In its new environment, the imported species may flourish unfettered by the conditions of its former habitat. Meanwhile, our native creatures are unprepared and can be overwhelmed by the intruder.

Countless indigenous trees, shrubs, and wildflowers are obliterated by invasive alien species. The English sparrows and starlings frequenting feeders and evicting native woodpeckers and chickadees from their nesting holes are non-native. Asian ladybugs that invaded local homes and ecosystems are aliens that were imported by nut tree growers in the South. Those ladybugs are essentially harmless irritants except to the native ladybugs with which they compete.

Night crawlers are non-native; and although they perform some useful services, these worms also destroy the organic matter of the forest floor at a furious rate and have caused some native worms to become threatened species. They sometimes remove leaf cover that forest plants depend upon to shelter seeds. The worms may also kill mycorrhizal fungi which help plant roots acquire moisture and nutrients from the soil.

Woody shrubs like buckthorn and bush honeysuckle have invaded woodlands and yards destroying understory plants and replacing native shrubs. Purple loosestrife, that colorful, alien beauty of local wetlands, is deadly to the native plants and animals it displaces. Another prolific invasive alien replacing native woodland wildflowers is garlic mustard.

Public awareness is a first step toward controlling menacing plants and animals. Notice in late Fall and early Spring that many of the shrubs crowding forest preserve edges are green when all else is dormant. Notice the rosettes of green garlic mustard along roads and trails. Alien species tend to begin growing earlier in the season and to go dormant later in the season than our native plants.

When the sugar maples are glowing with fire and the oaks are red and rust, the alien buckthorn is still green. This phenomenon illustrates how insidious the alien species can be. They are everywhere, enveloping the natural landscape, shading and suffocating it. Their extended growing season is only one of the advantages these non-natives have over our indigenous species.

Please, notice; be aware of nature around you and your home. Working together, citizens and organizations like CFC can help to control these destructive alien species.

— Meredith Tucker



Summer interns Matt, Sophia, Audrey and Dane.
Photo by Patty Barten.

Summer internships fly by

by Larry Anglada

Time flies—before we could officially welcome them in *CFC News*, our summer college interns have completed their official terms. We are thankful that for the 18th year the Oberweiler Foundation has funded this important program.

Returning this year was Dane Dalton who acted as our Crew Lead as he has shown a solid understanding and a desire to continue growing with CFC. He will be a senior this year at Iowa State where he expects to complete his B.S. in Environmental Science.

Audrey Taillon may be familiar to some of you as she became a frequent volunteer over the last year as she discovered the magic of restoration. She completed her freshman year at Wellesley College in the spring and will pursue environmental related studies there.

Sophia Younger is a recent Barrington High School graduate who volunteered at occasional workdays and has gone on to the University of Washington and is pursuing environmental coursework in policy and climate change. She will also be a sophomore this fall.

Matt Sarnowski, another BHS graduate, is pursuing interests in renewable energy and zero emission solutions as a student at Purdue University where he too was a freshman last year.

The interns started on June 16 as we followed the COVID-19 guidelines set forth by the Lake County Forest Preserves. We practiced social distancing and wore masks when in groups.

The interns participated in an erosion prevention project done cooperatively with Flint Creek/Spring Creek Watersheds Partnership and Barrington Area Conservation Trust (BACT) in which we planted over 3,000 sedges and other wetland associated plants along an area of Flint Creek within the BACT's Pederson Preserve. In addition, they planted sedges

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Summer internships *(continued)*

along our own restoration of the Flint Creek flood plain in the Flint Creek Savanna. The interns have also been busy with the “usual” spring essentials such as weeding of invasives, collecting seed from the spring ephemeral flora, and planting elsewhere especially at our newest restoration of Craftsbury Preserve. We also had a visit with our entomologist friend Rich Teper who tasked them with finding the lead plant moth larvae which has never been found on our properties and is an indicator of high-quality prairie. The interns immediately found a larvae which we are now rearing to determine if it is indeed this insect.

The intern program is more valuable than ever as we continue to grow the Barrington Greenway Initiative. We are excited about this growth and how communities are working together to further conservation and restoration. This growth makes reliance on our interns more important than ever as a source of work and leadership.

While Dane and Matt have returned to school, we are lucky to have both Audrey and Sophia staying with us a little longer to help with seed collecting. We received a grant from The Nature Conservancy to support this work.

We thank these talented young people and acknowledge them as part of the CFC family.

Applications for 2021 summer college internships will open in December.



Carol Hogan. Photo by Patty Barten.

Congratulations Carol and Wes!

Courtesy of Lake County Forest Preserves

The National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO) recently announced awards that relate to volunteerism, organization and planning. NACPRO comprises 117 park and special recreation districts from across the country, of which the Lake County Forest Preserves (LCFP) is a member organization.

Carol Hogan and Wesley Wolf earned the Outstanding Volunteer designation for their dedication and passion for restoring Lake County’s natural areas. “They volunteer as Natural Area Stewards at Grassy Lake Forest Preserve in Barrington,” said Stewardship Ecologist Kelly Schultz. “Additionally, they donate their time, energy, knowledge and expertise to mentoring other site stewards at other natural areas in both public and private landholdings.”

“Wes and Carol are outgoing and great spokespersons for natural areas restoration,” Schultz said. “They interact with forest preserve visitors, engaging them in conversations about what they are doing, and educating them on the importance of conservation and restoration.” The duo started volunteering for the Lake County Forest Preserves in 2006, taking on the steward roll at Grassy Lake in 2010. Since becoming stewards, they have contributed nearly 14,000 hours (collectively) to restoration at the preserve, and have guided volunteers through nearly 19,700 hours of cutting invasive brush, and collecting and sowing seed. In total, the stewardship group they lead has restored over 65 acres of woodland and 25 acres of wetland.



Wes Wolf. Photo by Patty Barten.

They have also been active volunteers in the Barrington Greenway Initiative, a public/private partnership between three county open space agencies and four conservation not-for-profits intent on bringing additional resources to protect and restore natural areas in the Barrington area.

Ways to help CFC

Did you know you can support CFC while shopping at Amazon? Enter "smile.amazon.com" in your browser address bar and choose Citizens for Conservation as your charity. Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase price to CFC.

As a reminder, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) allows taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions to claim a charitable deduction of up to \$300 for cash donations made in 2020. You could add \$300 to your charity budget this year, recover a portion of it in tax savings, and help charities address extraordinary current needs.

CFC volunteer opportunities

In addition to our regular workdays, there are other volunteer opportunities at CFC. Current needs include:

- If you are looking to dive deeper into the plants and ecosystems of this area, the Barrington Greenway Initiative is looking for volunteers to help with plant monitoring and new seed collecting opportunities. If interested, please contact Kevin at kevin.scheiwiller@citizensforconservation.org or call the office at 847-382-7283.
- We are also looking for a few friends who would like to help us with some of our “odd jobs”. Please call the office if you can help with any of the following:
 - Work with a committee to spruce up the office by selecting, framing, and hanging CFC artwork and educational posters.
 - Data entry of volunteer hours; familiarity with Excel nice, but not necessary. We will teach you.
 - Miscellaneous office help once a week for about 2 hours.
 - Our new native garden at CFC headquarters would love some extra weeders. Just an hour here and there helps a lot.
 - Barn organization and clean-up volunteer needed.

Are you crafty? We could use an extra-large birdbath to fit on a 38” diameter silver maple stump at the front entrance to enhance the new demonstration garden. It could be a poured concrete bowl. The birds would love a solar powered fountain for it.

Herbert Kirst - benefactor and philanthropist

by Edith Auchter

CFC recently received notice our nonprofit organization was named as a residuary beneficiary of both the trust and retirement assets in the estate of Herbert Kirst. An inherited IRA in CFC’s name was established in late March. Assets from the Trust are expected to be distributed in 2021.

The process by which CFC became a named beneficiary was fascinating. Over the past thirty years, Mesirow Financial identified possible charities for Herbert’s review based on his interests, including the environment, women’s issues, Parkinson’s research, music, and art. Way to go, CFC, for meeting Herbert’s standards!

I would like to share a bit of information about Herbert from his obituary: Herbert Kirst passed away on September 25, 2019. He held a PhD from Harvard in Organic Chemistry (1971). “After a post-doctoral fellowship at the California Institute of Technology, he began his career as a Research

Scientist at Eli Lilly & Company, in Indianapolis, which spanned 30 years. He authored/co-authored over 50 scientific publications and more than 40 reviews, monographs, and book chapters in the fields of antibiotic biochemistry and antimicrobial physiology. Dr. Kirst was a frequent organizer, invited scientist, and lecturer at scientific meetings in the field and recipient of the Microbial Chemistry Medal from the Kitasato Institute (Tokyo) in 2005.” Herbert’s name is on numerous pharmaceutical patents. His wife, Peggy Hillman, was a retired labor lawyer who was very involved in social programs. She passed away in 2015. Apparently, they were avid hikers and several park foundations are among the beneficiaries.

We all should consider and plan how we can leave a legacy. If you have such plans in place, please advise CFC so we can celebrate your generosity. Dozens of nonprofits will benefit for years to come as the result of Herbert’s generosity. Thank you, Herbert.

Exploring nature at home with Youth Ed!

by Julia Martinez

While exploring nature through in-person programming has been on hold, we have been exploring the nature found in our own backyard. If the commonly listed benefits of native plants aren’t enough, add entertainment to the list! Here’s what we’ve been up to in our yard!

Color Wheel Scavenger Hunt

We pulled a simple color wheel from the internet, colored it in and went in the yard to find all the colors on the wheel. We did this a couple of times. To make it more challenging, stick to living things. If that’s not working, look for anything of that color. We discovered that blue is hard to find and yellow is pretty common. There’s a reason for that related to how light scatters, but I’m not going to get into that with a five-year-old



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Youth Ed

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just yet. We took photos of our finds and even explored the neighbor's yard (with permission) to find orange.

Seek App Identification

Kids love to collect things and an easy way to do that is to use apps (I use the Seek App) to record what was spotted. Having native plants really attracts a variety of wildlife (insects, arachnids) and can make the things a child spots in the yard change weekly. Although I've had native plants for years, actively seeking out new species has shown me insects I hadn't seen in my yard before. It's refreshing and encouraging that just a few milkweeds will bring monarchs. One of my favorite finds (not ID'ed in the Seek App) is all the spittle bugs in my yard. The insects live in a little home made of bubbles on plants and we have many of them on our goldenrod and asters. It's hiding in plain sight!

Gardening

We picked out a couple of durable perennials last year and this year, they've come back up beautifully. Dill (self-seeds) last year attracted swallowtails and we loved going into the yard to monitor the swallowtail caterpillar that took up residence in our herbs. I think watching flowers and insects over the warmer months is helpful to children to observe how life cycles work. One of my favorite quotations as of late is a proverb: **"Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly."**

We hope to safely host a series of programs for children to explore nature, but encourage families to take a look around their own neighborhoods!



Finding colors in nature. Photo by Julia Martinez.

Welcome New Members

Due to our new software implementation, we have not acknowledged our new members for some time. We are glad to have you all.

Martha Adams
James Anderson
Brian Ban
Renee Blue
Garrett and Heather Boehm
Jennifer Boyle
Mary K. Brennan
The Carow Family
Vicki Casmere
Jeff Chemelewski
Joshua Coolidge
Suzanne Corr
Gary Day
Marianne and Bill Denison
Anita Donath
Warren Fischer
Marilyn Fish
Dennis Gardino
Douglas Gerleman
Dean and Jeanne H. Grant
Jodi Grant
Gust Hanson
Jim Hogue
Scott Hood
The Hunnicutt Family
Mark and Natalie Karney
Elizabeth Kilbridge
Kathryn Linville
Tom and Mary Malia
The Marcinek Family
Lida Miller
Jeanne Mitchell
The Podraza Family
Karen Prena
Debara Preston
Pat Pulsifer
Barbara Putta
Beth and Steven Raseman
Jennifer Ratcliffe
Kevin and Lynne Richardson
Karen Robinson
Kenneth Schaul
John Schneider and Jean Meilinger
Mike and Meg Severa
The Smith Family
Reid Stanton
Joanne Sullivan
The Traskaski Family
W. David Utley and Patricia E. Bain-Utley
Deborah Viall
Lisa Woolford

Time to renew your membership!

If you have not renewed your membership to Citizens for Conservation, please renew today. Our mission of saving living space for living things is more critical than ever. Despite these challenging times, our work to protect and restore land has not slowed down. As a nonprofit, our work—and our survival—is even more dependent on the generosity of supporters like you.

You may renew online at CitizensforConservation.org or use the return envelope that you received with our appeal in the mail.

Remember, all members receive a 10% discount at CFC's upcoming Fall Native Tree and Shrub Sale! In addition to:

- 10% discount at CFC's Native Plant Sale in the spring
- free admission to Community Education programs
- our quarterly newsletter
- on-line CFC news updates
- access to our preserves
- invitations to CFC events

We need your support!



Summer camp group. Photo by Mary Martinez.

Summer camp goes on

by Mary Martinez

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many activities and social gatherings were cancelled for 2020, but you can't cancel summer and you can't cancel a kid's need to play outside. Once again, CFC offered a week of fun nature-themed activities for children to explore and learn more about the natural world around them. New for this year were the added safety

precautions put into place. Upon arrival, campers put on their face masks, signed in with a temperature check and washed their hands. We also sanitized common surfaces and practiced physical distancing during snack time.

This year, CFC welcomed a grand total of 11 campers, most new to the program! Each day of camp featured a different animal theme, game or craft. The activities were chosen to stoke curiosity and encourage thought. Campers enjoyed birdwatching with their very own set of personalized binoculars, collecting pond water to examine under a microscope, and playing games like Bat and Moth. We went on short walks to find animal tracks, learn about native plants, and inflate a solar balloon that floats with air warmed by the sun.

But most importantly, our campers went home excited to share everything they learned about nature. "This is what a mink's footprint looks like. Plants with deep roots feel cool when you touch the leaves. The northern bobwhite bird sounds like it's saying Bob...White!" Even better than taking home a handmade craft, our campers made memories and took home a new appreciation for nature and wildlife. On our nature walks, we identified native plants like prairie milkweed, wild bergamot, compass plant and chicory. The campers also spotted robins, cardinals, red-tailed hawks, snails, frogs and tadpoles, a giant clam, sandhill cranes, monarch butterflies, turtle egg shells, a grasshopper and even a vole.

CFC's Director of Youth Education Julia Martinez organized and lead the nature camp activities with support from long-time volunteer Alison Vanderpoel, first-time CFC volunteer Mary Martinez and Naperville teacher Rob Lugiari who came to CFC with lots of previous summer camp experience.



Enjoying the view. Photo by Mary Martinez.

New software improves CFC's effectiveness

by Amanda Moller and Debbie Kreisler

When we talk about conservation, technology certainly is not the first thought that comes to mind. Over the years, CFC has had the honor of becoming a larger organization in regards to our volunteers, members, donors and the land we support. While keeping information in varying forms with various folks had worked for many years, it didn't give us the complete picture we wanted. We needed a central database to consolidate our data and a software system to improve workflow to allow us to better serve our community. We chose Neon CRM as our software because it is designed specifically to serve nonprofits. Neon has allowed us to decrease our use of paper, postage, and time spent on paperwork. Neon is now integrated into our CFC website to handle memberships, donations, and event registrations. Electronic thank you notes for membership dues and donations are now made by email when we have an email address on file. For the 2020 Annual Meeting, we encouraged our members to register for the event online (via Neon) and will continue to do so for future events. With all that COVID-19 has taken away, in the case of the Annual Meeting it gave us an opportunity to see that Neon could serve us well when we needed a quick way to notify registrants of important event safety information.

Over the years, membership and donor information has been kept electronically, but until 2018 volunteer information was kept on paper. Not just your run-of-the-mill 8 ½ x 11 paper either. The hours were tracked by Tom Vanderpoel on what are called the "refrigerator sheets". It's sure to bring a smile to anyone's face when you take out one of these refrigerator-sized sheets. You'll see lots of name, dates, activities and hours penciled in teeny, tiny writing. We are now working to get tablets so we can have folks check-in electronically for restoration days and other volunteer activities, and then upload the activity and hours to Neon. This will allow us to easily see volunteer hours and activities throughout the year as well as compare to previous years.

We have had a lot of learning to do while we have set up and started using Neon, and there have been a few glitches. We appreciate any feedback you can provide while we figure things out. Knowing when mistakes are made and getting that feedback helps us make things better, so your emails and calls are always welcome. We are thankful to be organizing all this information in a way that will not only be more useful to us, but also will save time, money, and most importantly, trees!

Barrington area bird hikes for late Summer and Fall

Sponsored by Citizens for Conservation

Get outside and track fall migration with Barrington naturalist Wendy Paulson. Walks are free and open to the public though spaces are limited and registration is required. Current COVID protocols will be observed; bring your binoculars and your mask!

Before you head out, please be sure to check the Citizens for Conservation website for any last minute changes or cancellations.

Friday, September 11, 8:00 a.m. — Crabtree Nature Center (3 Stover Rd. off of Palatine Rd.)

Friday, September 18, 8:00 a.m. — Beverly Lake* (parking lot on north side of Higgins Rd./Rt. 72, east of Rt. 25, west of Beverly Rd.)

Friday, September 25, 8:00 a.m. — Deer Grove East (entrance on north side of Dundee Rd., west of Hicks Rd., east of Smith St. Go to farthest parking area)

Friday, October 2, 8:00 a.m. — Crabtree Nature Center (3 Stover Rd. off of Palatine Rd.)

Friday, October 23, 8:30 a.m. — Galloping Hill* (meet at Penny Road Pond parking lot, less than a mile west of Old Sutton/Penny Rd. intersection)

Friday, October 30, 9:00 a.m. — Crabtree Nature Center (3 Stover Road off of Palatine Road)

*indicates a more strenuous hike

Registration required: Please contact Hilary Lane (312) 450-8206 or hlane@paulsonoffice.com with the walk date you are registering for, your name, email address and best contact number.

Fall Native Tree and Shrub Sale

by Matt Hokanson

Now that summer is here, many of us are hands or elbows deep in our home landscape projects (or are at least thinking about it). Does your yard need shade, privacy, or beautification? Do you have buckthorn that needs replacing?

(continued)

Fall Native Tree and Shrub Sale *(continued)*

Consider planting a native tree or shrub! Citizens for Conservation is soon hosting its annual Fall Native Tree and Shrub Sale. Going native not only provides the standard benefits of planting a tree such as promoting clean air, absorbing stormwater (which reduces the risk of flooding), protecting groundwater quality by taking up pollutants such as nitrogen and heavy metals, reducing ambient noise, helping us relax, and enhancing our homes' value, they provide other benefits that exotic species cannot, including:

- Saving money normally spent on fertilizers and pesticide. Native trees and shrubs love our local soils and if the correct location is chosen, usually do not require them.
- Saving water which would otherwise be used to maintain non-native landscaped trees. Some non-native tree species require copious amounts of water throughout their life while most native trees only need watering for the first year or two to become established.
- Native trees and shrubs are best adapted to the local climate and easier to maintain.
- Native species also provide the best habitat and food for migrant birds and other wildlife.

To touch on the last bullet point, how habitats are connected has a significant influence on how animals move and may be supported within an area. You can maximize your land's usefulness for birds and other critters by creating vegetated "corridors" between existing vegetation patches on your property with your neighbor's property! Using native trees and shrubs will only support this effort.

All sales are PREORDERS ONLY during the last two weeks in August (August 15th through September 1st). Pick-up will be available on September 19th or September 20th. As CFC is taking extra precautions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, customers will be assigned a specific timeslot to pick-up their order. The pick-up location will be at Freier Farm in Lake Barrington. Also, if you are not currently a CFC member, please consider joining our community! CFC members will receive a 10% discount off all orders. Proceeds from this fall sale will be used to further our mission "Saving living space for living things" by continuing to protect and restore our land, conserve natural resources, and promote education for little ones and adults alike.

If you would like additional information about native trees or shrubs, or if you have questions about the fall sale, please reach out to CFC.

CFC receives generous grants

by Peggy Simonsen

Some of CFC's long-time supporters have given us grants again this year. We are also pleased to have received grants from new sources.

- Barrington Area Community Foundation has given a grant to create a video and commemorative booklet in celebration of CFC's 50th Anniversary in 2021.
- South Barrington Garden Club has donated funds to start a contract grow with a native plant nursery to germinate rare seeds from CFC properties and grow plugs for us to plant next year. These are very conservative plants that don't reseed readily when they have to compete with other plants in the prairie.
- The Garden Club of Barrington has given CFC a grant to plant native landscape plants around our property signs, where now the tall prairie plants obscure the signs.
- The Barrington Junior Women's Club has again donated funds to support our Youth Ed programs.
- The Oberweiler Foundation is again supporting our college intern program. This summer's interns are four highly qualified young people who are majoring in some aspect of environmental science. They get valuable field experience while contributing to CFC's restoration work.
- CFC received funds from the Environmental Collaborative Group Tech Grants to purchase IPads and hot spots so we can assign up to thirty restoration volunteers to different sites on workdays in order to maintain social distancing and still progress with our much-needed restorations.
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)'s COVID Relief Fund has given CFC a grant to set up outdoor cleaning facilities and shelter so our interns can follow COVID-19 guidelines while still completing their work. In addition, they have provided funds to extend interns' hours for an additional week to supplement fewer volunteers' work. TNC's Volunteer Stewardship Network has provided three backpack sprayers.

CFC is very grateful for all our supporters. We thank them all for continuing to believe in the work we do and the contributions CFC makes to the community.

President's Comments

As I write this article after the Fourth of July weekend, I appreciate that while our daily activity patterns have changed over the last several months, there is great benefit to today's "new normal"; like many of us spending more time at home, I have had the opportunity to observe and enjoy nature so much more.

At my house, we've enjoyed observing our many visiting birds, including hummingbirds darting around our feeder, sparrows nibbling the day lilies, and goldfinches delicately destroying our gerbera daisies one petal at a time. Perhaps we should have left the dandelions for them. Now I know what happens to my garden every year!



Female goldfinch.
Photo by Kathleen Leitner.

Across the street, we happened upon great snapping turtles pairing in the lake and recently watched the female lay her eggs in the sand path leading to the bridge in front of my house. Sadly, the raccoons found the nest and eggs shells are all that remain of that effort. Such is the life of a turtle! I hope she makes it back for another try.

Away from home, we've used the time to hike Flint Creek Savanna, observing CFC's resident sandhill cranes with their two colts; Baker's Lake and Grigsby Prairie with their abundance of spring and early summer flowers; and the Lake County Forest Preserve Marina to follow the progress of the bald eagle family in residence there. One day the male soared back and forth thirty feet over our heads so we could take a good look at him. Amazing!



Male goldfinch at left of plant.
Photo by Kathleen Leitner.

It has been a beautiful time, despite the obvious restrictions. There is lushness everywhere around us and now we're looking forward to getting back to work. Kevin Schweiller is again scheduling regular Thursday and Saturday workdays. He can have more than ten people, though he'd still appreciate an email to make sure he can accommodate everyone who wants to finally come out to volunteer. Please come—we look forward to seeing you again!

— Kathleen Leitner

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

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
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For membership information, visit us or call:
Office: 459 W. Hwy. 22 Phone: 847-382-SAVE

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