

CFC's 50th Anniversary, and first virtual, Annual Meeting

CFC celebrated its 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting March 11, 2021 with a toast to our history, recognition of record-breaking achievements despite the challenges of 2020, and conducting our first-ever virtual format meeting broadcast.

It was a special event honoring decades of CFC contributions and milestone achievements for our community, its citizens, and our collective ecological future. The informative and entertaining event included impressive nature photography, activity and restoration updates, annual financial reporting, introduction of new board members, and special awards. We were honored to have a presentation by distinguished conservationists: Wendy Paulson, Stephen Packard, Patsy Mortimer and Sam Oliver. They presented an engaging look at the past, present, and future of CFC's important role in local, regional, and national conservation efforts. The video of the Annual Meeting, including the panel presentations, is available on citizensforconservation.org on the landing page under Announcements. If you missed the meeting, or even if you attended, we encourage you to view or review this inspiring discussion.

Kathleen Leitner, CFC President, opened the meeting noting the theme for our 50th Anniversary year is Deep Roots and Growing. CFC has accomplished much in the past 50 years and now we look to the future.

In 2020, CFC continued our important work in creative ways all while following pandemic health and safety guidelines culminating in:

- Over 12,000 volunteer hours.
- Seed production at its highest.
- Continuing our 4th graders on the prairie program through creation of videos, distance instruction modules and

new on-site experiences streamed to the students.

- Declan Smith as CFC's 2020-21 Barrington High School liaison.
- Taking advantage of Covid-inspired downtime to engage Conservation Consulting Group, a consultancy with deep experience supporting land trust organizations, to help us develop a forward-looking strategic plan.
- Despite the pandemic, our consistent outdoor and indoor volunteers who accomplished so much whether in person or remotely.

Kathleen then previewed the events we have planned to celebrate CFC's 50th Anniversary and our members' contributions to our community.

Edith Auchter, as CFC's Treasurer, next presented the 2020 Annual Report.

She thanked our grantors: Barrington Area Community Foundation (production of 50th Anniversary booklet), Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (Flint Creek Savanna restoration), Oberweiler Foundation (summer intern program) plus various Covid-relief and community grants. She also recognized the Joe Cragan Memorial Conservation Scholarship which has now been awarded to three recipients: Karen Portillo, Maren Prokup and Lucas Rot. Each receives \$20,000 over four years.

2021 CFC Annual Meeting Panel



Patsy Mortimer



Sam Oliver



Steve Packard



Wendy Paulson

(continued)

Annual Meeting

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Kathleen began the Board Report, recognizing retiring Board members Larry Anglada, Patty Barten, Barb Cragan and Karen Rosene. Edith introduced our new Board member nominees Janet Agnoletti and Matt Hokanson who were approved for three year terms. Kathleen Leitner and Tom Benjamin were reelected for three years terms and Leslie Coolidge was reelected for a one year term.

The Board elected the following officers immediately after the meeting: Kathleen Leitner, President; Jim Anderson, Vice President; Judy Springer, Secretary; Edith Auchter, Treasurer.

Kevin Scheiwiller, CFC's Restoration Manager, presented the 2020 restoration report, "Preserving through a Pandemic". He reviewed the accomplishment for each of our 2020 goals:

- Expanding Original Grove restoration
- Finishing floodplain sedge planting along West Bluff
- Continuing brush removal at Craftsbury
- Increasing seed collected (704 pounds of 319 species)
- Improving prescribed burn capabilities.

He then declared 2021 the year of the sedges with plans for thousands of wetland sedges to be planted in the Flint Creek and Spring Creek complexes. And, of course, we continue pointing toward the future with our Barrington Greenway Initiative partners.

The evening's program was highlighted by an inspiring panel of long-time CFC leaders. Moderated by Peggy Simonsen, panelists included Wendy Paulson, Steve Packard, Patsy Mortimer and Sam Oliver, who shared their impetus for becoming involved with CFC in the 1980s. Wendy, who was a Nature Lady in elementary schools, was asked by William Miller, founding president of CFC, to start an education program. Sam and her family moved to Barrington because of the open space and wanted to help keep it. She was asked by William Miller to be the Staff Director. Patsy lived near Baker's Lake and got involved when CFC became the steward for the Village-owned property. Steve, who was a pioneer in prairie restoration in the area, consulted with Tom Vanderpoel when CFC received the first donation of property that became Grigsby Prairie.

When asked what their significant contributions were to CFC over the years, their answers varied: Sam's community liaison, public relations and communications with a goal of having at least one article each week in local publications. Patsy's work with Wade Vanderpoel in land acquisition and Tom Vanderpoel in restoration, as well as establishing record keeping systems, and the founding and leadership of Flint Creek Watershed Partnership. Wendy built CFC's education program with one outcome being today's annual 4th graders

on the prairie, created the Junior Naturalist books, and started *CFC News*. Steve advised on both the initial restoration efforts testing new techniques, as well as the continuing sophistication of our work over the years.

Our panelists were particularly inspirational when asked about CFC's role for the next 50 years. Wendy focused on our stewardship role and how we respond to the national and international urgent environmental needs and trends she sees in her work with national environmental groups. Steve urged CFC to continue being a model for conservation and sustainability, and caring for the ecosystem, expanding its influence in the broader Chicago area with public/private partnerships, as CFC has initiated with the Barrington Greenway Initiative. Sam emphasized the work CFC does with individuals in the Barrington area to improve the ecosystem on homeowners' property as stepping-stones that link with broader efforts. She noted the importance of our native plant sales, Habitat Corridors visits, interns and Community Education and Youth Education programs in fostering caretakers of the earth. Patsy lauded CFC's extensive work with volunteers, our generous donors, and financial frugality that gives us the resources to fulfill our mission now and for the future. She stated that success breeds success and knows CFC has built the model for continued growth and impact.

This stellar panel kept attendees' attention while covering a lot of CFC's history. These amazing leaders have made immeasurable contributions to CFC's success over the years and built the foundation for continued success for the next 50 years.

Kathleen next presented the Awards recognition.

There were 30 Mighty Oak awardees, which go to non-board members who volunteer for 50 hours or more. There were 13 Shooting Star Awards for ten years of service; and 3 Bobolink Awards for 25 years of service!

Sarah Hoban received a special Thank You Award for more than 10 years as CFC's voice to the outside community and media organizations.

The William H. Miller Conservation Award, for outstanding contributions to conservation in the Greater Barrington Area outside of CFC, is CFC's highest award. It was presented to Carol Rice for her outstanding work bringing our region to where it is today and Sarah Voska as one of our next generation of ecological leaders.

And finally, the Great Blue Heron Award, for outstanding contributions to conservation within CFC, was awarded to the transformative leaders of our Bluebird Monitoring Team—Barb Laughlin-Karon, Laura Simpson and Karen Rosene.

Thanks to our Annual Meeting Committee: Patty Barten, Kathleen Leitner, Peggy Simonsen, Edith Auchter, Tom Malia

and Juli LaRocque. Special thanks to Marjie and Sean Malia for coordinating and hosting the Zoom meeting, to Steve Barten and Jim Bodkin for creating stunning volunteer awards, and to the many volunteer photographers who contributed to the presentation.

Mighty Oak Awards:

- Tom Auchter (8)
- Steve Barten (3)
- Carol Bockman (2)
- Donna Bolzman (15)
- Jeanette Burger (5)
- Mickey Cardenas (1)
- Jeff Chemelewski (2)
- Diane Greening (7)
- Susan Griffith (1)
- Katherine Grover (20)
- Matt Hokanson (3)
- Randy Holtz (4)
- John Katz-Mariani (1)
- Debbie Kreischer (2)
- Juli LaRocque (6)
- Barb Laughlin-Karon (2)
- Annamarie Lukes (7)
- Mary Martinez (1)
- Rob Neff (10)
- Wendy Paulson (9)
- Mary Phillips (1)
- Wayne Schild (6)
- Cliff Schultz (10)
- Sarah Schultz (4)
- Laura Simpson (2)
- Richard Teper (1)
- Anne Thyfault (1)
- Alicia Timm (3)
- Meredith Tucker (6)
- Peter Whitney (2)

Parentheses indicate number of Mighty Oak awards each volunteer has earned.

Shooting Star Awards (10 years):

- Kyle Boatright
- David Bunker
- Erin Hokanson
- Randy Holtz
- Bryan Hughes
- Kim Keper
- Bob Lee
- Yvonne Martin

Shooting Star Awards (10 years) continued:

- Elizabeth Root
- Cliff Schultz
- Daniel Suarez
- Bill Sullivan
- Alison Quin Vanderpoel

Bobolink Awards (25 years):

- Margaret Hudson
- Linda Mrowicki
- Meredith Tucker



Sarah Hoban



Laura Simpson



Barb Laughlin-Karon



Karen Rosene



Carol Rice



Sarah Voska

Getting ready for Spring

Woe is me! I'm gradually running out of new ideas for this column. I've been writing it for years, and nothing seems fresh. When I mentioned this to a friend, she reminded me that this newsletter has new readers and that the content of former issues is not locked tight in all minds. Forgive me if I repeat myself!

This article is essentially a list of things to do in early spring. These are chores that will prepare us for the flowers and flush of green plants we anticipate when thinking of spring.

Clean-up is likely to be high on the list of chores. If you are picking up fallen twigs and small branches from your lawn and gardens, be sure to put them on a brush pile rather than in the trash. Small critters rely on brush piles to make homes for their new babies.

These animals include chipmunks but also the beetles and other insects that provide food for birds, especially nestlings. The brush piles will continually degrade and diminish, so be sure to keep adding to them as the seasons progress. There is always a good use for these structures.

Composting is a great way to use softer, more easily decomposed, materials. If you keep a compost heap well supplied and turn it occasionally, you will have an excellent source of humus, the organic component of soil, the component that provides its richness. Humus is formed by decomposition of leaves and other plant material by soil microorganisms.

Humus also gives soil its tilth which includes moisture content, degree of aeration, soil biota, water infiltration and drainage. Good compost added to your garden soil will help seeds and plants grow strong and sturdy. No chemical fertilizer needed!

Be sure the compost you spread on grass or garden is well-aged on the compost pile. Also be sure to turn the pile on occasion. If your compost is in an enclosed container, you may need to add water occasionally as it only matures if it is a little moist.

Water Sources are essential for over-wintering and returning wildlife. The birds flying north are tired and thirsty. They will welcome a drink at your bird bath and a safe place to rest in dense shrubs or in trees. If you have planted native shrubs, there may be oil-rich berries for them to eat. (Berries of non-native shrubs rarely provide the oil birds need.) Woody native plants often have fruit that is timed for the return of needy birds. Or is it the other way around? Birds return when they are assured a good supply of fruit while they wait for the insects they need to feed their young.

Water sources include bird baths (either on a pedestal or on the ground). If you are fortunate enough to have a pond, it will serve the birds well if there is a gentle slope down to the water. Even a pie plate will function adequately if you regularly replenished it with clean water. Butterflies will also use a shallow source such as that.

Please don't poison the clover in your lawn. It provides a rich supply of pollen for early bees and is one of the only pollen sources that is early in the season.

Plant a linden tree (also called basswood). It blooms with an exquisite fragrance that attracts gentle little bees from around the neighborhood. It smells delicious and is a wonderful nectar source in the spring.

Finally, plant a native milkweed plant or two or ten! Milkweed sustains the monarch butterfly, and everyone needs to grow it if we are to save this butterfly species. Milkweed is beautiful and fragrant and got a very bad rap when

it was called a weed. Factory farming doesn't like anything that might pop up in a pristine field of wheat or corn or soybeans!

Especially if you have children or grandchildren, plant some milkweed. It grows best in small groups, and monarchs will be able to find the plants so that they can lay their eggs on the underside of the leaves. The larvae hatch and eat parts of the leaves, but they never destroy the plant. Nature knows better than to kill its food sources. Show the eggs and the larvae to children. If you are lucky enough to have some larvae survive (birds eat lots of them), the new butterflies may grace your property before heading south. Children will be delighted to watch nature's progress.

Note: I have written countless articles for *CFC News*, and each of them has been read and reviewed by Annamarie Lukes. She has found my errors and improved my language; yet, she has never received credit. I enthusiastically thank her for all her help over the years. She makes me look good!

— Meredith Tucker



Monarch caterpillar on milkweed. Photo by Meredith Tucker.



*Linden blossoms.
Photo by Meredith Tucker.*

Greetings from Habitat Corridors! We hope everyone is excited for a new native gardening season. We are offering home visits once the plants come out of dormancy, sometime in April. Our volunteers will help identify invasive species on your property and suggest ways to “green up” your landscape practices. We will also help identify natives already growing on your property and suggest natives that fit your space. For property visits we consider the “Barrington area” to include: a north boundary of Wauconda, east boundary of Arlington Heights, south boundary of South Barrington, and west boundary of Tower Lakes. We are offering assistance via email if an in-person visit doesn’t work for you or if you have questions about what to buy from the plant sale.

Check out our new and improved website at www.habitatcorridors.org. There you will find some resources, videos, and a native plant database which has filters to find the right plant for the right place. Habitat Corridors volunteers look forward to joining you in your effort of “saving living space for living things”, one yard at a time.

Notes from the Restoration Manager

During a typical winter, volunteers will clear approximately 1 to 1.5 acres of invasive brush across the CFC landholdings. During the winter of 2020-21, we were able to knock out a whopping 3.5 acres!! If you have driven down Hart Road past Craftsbury or along Northwest Highway past Flint Creek South, you will have seen all the amazing work we were able to accomplish this winter. During a cold, bleak pandemic winter, volunteer workdays were one of the safest and most rewarding options to get out and socialize with others. We had a huge influx of volunteers new and old that came out and masked up to knock out huge chunks of buckthorn in these new savanna restorations. Many young bur oaks will wake up over the next month and breath a sigh of relief as they feel the warm glow of the sunshine again!



Buckthorn and brush clearing at Flint Creek South. Photo by Wendy Paulson.

As we start to switch gears and get back into the spring mindset, we hope to keep this momentum rolling as we have many large wetland plantings to knock out this year. We will be starting our most ambitious floodplain planting here at Flint Creek Savanna while helping our BGI partners install wetland plugs in many of the special natural areas of Barrington.

— Kevin Scheiwiller

Workday protocols

Regular workdays continue every Thursday and Saturday from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. with some modifications as a result of pandemic protocols. Volunteer spots are strictly limited and determined by the activity and number of team leaders available for each event. You must pre-register to participate in any workday. If you do not have a confirmed reservation, you will not be able to participate. Please email kevin.scheiwiller@citizensforconservation.org to RSVP. Once your spot is confirmed, please bring your own face mask, work gloves, water, and snack. If you would like to be added to our email group to receive notification of upcoming workdays, please email kevin.scheiwiller@citizensforconservation.org.

Restoration Report

Insects

In the Summer 2019 issue of *CFC News*, I discussed CFC’s goal for attracting birds to our preserves. In Fall/Winter 2020, we reported on the progress we have enjoyed in establishing the plants on our Sought-After Sixty list. This was a list of plants that we identified that we needed to do more to restore to our preserves—this list serves as a steering tool for improvements to our restoration techniques. It is good to state goals—ecological restoration is a very new discipline. Its practitioners must strive for continuous improvement of techniques and a wider and deeper understanding of the environment.

The next great frontier in natural land restoration is insects. Insects make up the vast majority of observable wild animals in our area. According to the *Kaufman Field Guide to Insects of North America* (which is the source for this entire report) there are nearly 90,000 species of insects in North America—when I compare this number to the 1,006 species of quadruped vertebrates I have seen in a lifetime of searching, I realize that one cannot even accurately evaluate an ecosystem without a thorough understanding of insects.

So, where does CFC stand? I am confident that our restoration efforts are building both the quantity and diversity of insects on our preserves. This confidence is built only on observations in comparison to routine walks around the grounds of corporate campuses and suburban yards—we have done no scientific surveys. We have seen some very interesting creatures over the last fifteen years: one of Rich Teper’s popular Moth Week observations at Flint Creek, where Rich shined a lamp light through a white bed sheet, attracted a giant water beetle. The same viewing found the Eastern Dobson fly, which is a surprisingly large aquatic insect and

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an indicator of high water quality. That same night we had our first and only sighting of the little brown myotis, a bat that is one of the Chicago Wilderness species of emphasis. Large aquatic insects are the preferred food of the little brown myotis—it is a very interesting pattern that the improved quality of the water in Flint Creek provides habitat for an uncommon insect that is preyed on by a mammal that is suffering a worrisome decline.



*American deathlover.
Photo by Jim Vanderpoel.*

The decline of the monarch butterfly has caused more concern in the general public than the status of all other insects combined—but, I have observed another odd pattern: our huge stands of milkweed provide food for lots of monarchs, but those same milkweed also supply sustenance to red milkweed beetles and large milkweed bugs. It's fascinating to me that these three species are not closely related (they are in different taxonomic orders) and yet all share the exact same color scheme; each are burnt orange with distinctive black trim. Milkweed is not the only plant that hosts specific insects; the beautiful Luna moth feeds mainly on hickory and walnut; the handsome Virginia ctenucha moth devours woodland grass, while the equally attractive eight-spotted forester moth favors Virginia creeper. CFC has long used the expression "Saving Living Space for Living Things". This is what conservation is all about—if you do not preserve land, all of these creatures have no place to live; if you do not restore and manage the land and European buckthorn or common reed take over everything, you lose most of the moths, and butterflies and beetles and bugs. Without these, the fish and birds and mammals have nothing to eat. The more you observe nature, the more you realize that the living world is a vast, complex and interdependent web.

Not all of the interesting insects observed on our preserves are vegetarian; at Grigsby Prairie, I once saw what I thought was a bee that I had never seen before; I was able to get a good picture of it, and I later identified it as an American deathlover. I learned that the adults of this beetle eat the larvae of other insect scavengers consuming a dead mammal or bird. The female beetles then lay their eggs in the decaying carcass and, when their eggs hatch, the babies eat the long dead animal's sinews and skin. I would never imagine that this rather

attractive local beetle could have such a gruesome life history. Not to be outdone, great golden digger and cricket killer wasps happily pollinate prairie wildflowers, but the females sting crickets and other plump insects with a venom that paralyzes the prey. The wasp mother then carries the immobile cricket off to the wasp's burrow to serve as fresh food for the baby wasps when they hatch. Life is tough in the entomological world!

So, what are CFC's goals for insect conservation? First, we need to greatly increase our knowledge about this gigantic class of wildlife. When I first joined CFC's Board, former Great Blue Heron Award winner John Schweizer challenged me to become CFC's resident insect expert. I issue the same challenge to our membership—CFC needs to build its base of knowledge about these mindbogglingly numerous and diverse beasts. I would love for someone at CFC to participate in one of the formal monitoring programs like the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network. Second, once we have a more thorough understanding of what insects already live in our preserves, we will need to identify what is missing and should be there. Third, ultimately, we will need to restore the missing elements of our insect fauna to the Barrington Greenway Initiative territory.

To start the discussion, I have made a list of interesting insects CFC should consider while implementing our three goals. The question for each species is: Do we have it? Should we have it? How do we get it?

- Panorpa genus scorpionfly
- Great spreadwing
- Dragonhunter
- Burrowing mayfly
- Handsome locust
- Red-winged grasshopper
- Northern mole cricket
- Prairie cicada
- Wheel bug
- Hercules beetle
- Multiple species of tiger beetles
- Rhinoceros beetle
- Dogbane beetle
- Cottonwood borer
- Elderberry borer
- Green lacewing
- Imperial moth
- Royal walnut moth
- Green marvel

Multiple species of Haploa genus day-flying tiger moths
And *Mesembrina solitaria* (Okay, a bit of a stretch because this fly is solely dependent on buffalo dung—well, maybe some day at Spring Creek?)

— Jim Vanderpoel

Barrington area spring bird walks & hikes

Sponsored by Citizens for Conservation

Get to know nearby nature with Barrington area naturalist Wendy Paulson. Walks are free and open to the public though spaces are limited and registration is required. Waterproof boots are strongly recommended for these hikes. Current Covid protocols will be observed; bring your binoculars and your mask.

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

April 30, 7:30 a.m. — Cuba Marsh (park in parking lot off east side of Lake Zurich Rd. just south of EJ&E RR tracks. Lake Zurich Rd. runs between Rt. 14 and Cuba Road)

May 7, 7:30 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) with optional extension to Camp Alphonse (off Dundee Rd.)

May 14, 7:30 a.m. — Beverly Lake* (parking lot on north side of Higgins Rd./Rt. 72, east of Rt. 25, west of Beverly Rd.)

May 17, 7:30 a.m. — Crabtree Nature Center (3 Stover Rd. off of Palatine Rd.)

May 19, 3:30 p.m. — Baker's Lake for students and adults (parking lot on Highland Ave. south of Hillside Ave.)

May 21, 7:30 a.m. — Headwaters* (parking lot on Wichman Rd. off north side of Rt. 72, ½ mile west of Rt. 59)

May 28, 7:00 a.m. — Galloping Hill* (meet at Penny Road Pond parking lot, less than a mile west of Old Sutton/Penny Rd. intersection)

June 4, 7:00 a.m. — Galloping Hill* (as above)

*indicates a more strenuous hike

Registration required: contact Hilary Lane (312) 450-8206 or hlane@paulsonoffice.com. Be sure to include name, email address and best number to contact you should that be necessary.

Seasonal bird walk coordinator needed

Volunteer needed to manage registrations for seasonal bird walks. Sign-ups for this spring's walks are mostly complete, but ongoing tasks will include notifying those on wait lists when spaces open up; taking cancellations; sending reminders about walks two days before; answering questions or directing questions to the appropriate person; etc. Volunteer needs to be tech-savvy (though some communication may be done by phone), as that makes the tasks simpler and less time-consuming, and the communication much quicker. For information, contact Hilary Lane (hlane@paulsonoffice.com).

Time to renew

Joining CFC means being part of a dedicated group of people who believe in the need to protect and restore open land in the Barrington area, and to educate our community about the significance of "Saving Living Space for Living Things". CFC has 50 years of experience working with volunteers to support that mission. To achieve what CFC has already accomplished, and continue to build on our past successes, a strong base is needed, and a big part of that base is our membership.

Is your membership current? Now is a good time to show your support. If you have not renewed already, an annual membership brochure will be arriving by mail in April.

Is there someone to whom you might give a membership as a gift? Don't forget, a current membership makes possible a 10% discount at the Native Plant, Shrub & Tree Sale. Please renew online or by mail with the envelope in the April brochure.

Notes from the Nursery

Fern propagation

CFC has had much success in restoring many species of plants to its preserves thanks to the efforts of so many committed volunteers who collect, clean, mix, and sow the seeds each year. But some plants don't do as well from seed, and one group of plants—the ferns—has been neglected in many restorations because they don't produce seeds at all; they grow from spores. CFC has had some success restoring sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*) in our restorations, and other species have recolonized remnant areas quickly with clearing of invasive species, but introducing them to new areas is difficult. Ferns are an important part of our plant communities, so for the past few years I have been working to propagate ferns for CFC's restorations. I will admit, they are more challenging to grow than seed-bearing plants, but through trial and error I have achieved excellent results. If given the right conditions, they are fairly easy to grow from spores. You can even germinate fern spores in your home if they are given a specialized growing environment, a little bit of pampering, and a lot of patience.

Ferns produce specialized fertile fronds that contain their spores. For many species, these leaves look like typical fronds, but other species, such as sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), have highly modified fertile fronds that look completely different. The undersides of fertile fronds contain spore-bearing reproductive structures known as sori. These sori are typically brown to black in color when ripe, depending on the species. The sori contain the spores which are released into

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the air when cracked open. The majority of our native ferns produce fertile fronds from June to September. One fertile frond can release billions of spores, yet because of the spores' susceptibility to environmental stress factors, very few will grow to become mature plants. It is for this reason that seed-bearing plants have outcompeted these ancient plants on the planet over the eons. With that being said, a small amount of the frond goes a long way. I usually clip off sections of the fertile fronds when they are ready, place them in a clean Ziploc bag, and lay them out to dry overnight on wax paper. Dry fronds release their spores, and the slick surface of wax paper makes sure that spores do not get caught in nooks and crannies on the paper. If done right, it will leave a beautiful imprint of the frond on the paper. If not using the spores that day, store them in a clean, sealed plastic bag in the fridge. They can remain viable for several years under these conditions.

On average, growing ferns in a controlled environment from spore to mature plant takes about 9-18 months. I usually try to start ferns around Christmas so I can yield a fairly mature plant by August or September (plus this gives me something to grow during winter). The preparation of the tray before sowing fern spores is crucial. As the spores germinate, they are highly susceptible to mold, and because they have evolved to utilize rain water for their reproduction, they need distilled water to germinate and grow. Hard water or tap water will kill them when they are young. Once the potting mix is moistened in a tray or pot, you can sterilize it in the microwave. Most pathogens and fungal spores are killed at temperatures of at least 150 degrees Fahrenheit. However, I have grown ferns successfully by using freshly opened potting soil, so you may not have to sterilize your growing medium. When cooled down to room temperature, sow the spores on the surface of the potting mix with the tip of a clean knife. A tiny amount of spores goes a long way, so you don't need to add a lot! Once they are on the surface, place them in a sealed environment,

whether under a humidity dome or in a sealed plastic bag. Many fern growers will use the plastic sandwich or salad containers from grocery stores or restaurants once they are cleaned and sterilized, which is a great way to use them so they avoid going into the land fill (they work for growing other plants too). I have best results with lightly misting the surface with distilled water twice a week, and within



Maidenhair ferns (Adiantum pedatum) at 10 weeks old. Gametophytes and sporophytes are present.



Imprint of lady fern (Athyrium felix-femina) spores after a day of drying.

a couple of weeks, you'll start to see the surface green up with what almost looks like algae. These are the spores germinating, and they are forming a structure called a gametophyte. This heart-shaped growth is the beginning stage of fern reproduction. The sperm cell has to swim from one end of the gametophyte to the other (or if they are close by, to another

gametophyte). This is only accomplished when the surface is moistened with distilled water, and the environment is humid. In seed-bearing plants, this happens inside the ovary of a flower once it is pollinated. Now that I have given "The Talk" about how ferns are made, in about 8-12 weeks after the spore are sown, a miniature frond will appear. The fern now has entered the adult or sporophyte stage of life. You can carefully transplant these young ferns into individual pots at this point. As they get larger, you can slowly add regular tap water and a little bit of fertilizer to their diet, and place them outdoors in the shade. They may not be large enough to plant in the ground by the end of the season, but you can overwinter them in a protected location such as an unheated garage or cold frame until spring comes.

There are a lot of helpful resources on growing ferns out there, but if you would like to pursue more information, one of the most helpful books for me was *Native Ferns, Mosses, and Grasses* by William Cullina. He goes into detail of propagation methods, as well as use and ecological value in the landscape. Propagating ferns has been and continues to be a joy for me, and not just for the challenge. Their cultivation will play an important role in their restoration and conservation. They have been on our planet long enough to be resilient to extremes in changes, and we want to help them to continue to thrive and play their important role in our ecosystems.

— Luke Dahlberg



One year old sensitive fern (Onoclea sensibilis) ready to plant!

Upcoming Events

Annual Native Plant, Shrub and Tree Sale

May 6-9 – Plant sale pickup by appointment only.

Summer Camp – tentative

Weeks of June 14 and June 21

Barrington Greenway Initiative Explore and Restore Series

April 24, 9 a.m.-Noon – Earth Day Sedge Planting at CFC – Flint Creek Savanna

May 15, 9:30 a.m.-Noon – Sedge Planting at Spring Creek – Galloping Hill

May 23, 8 a.m.-10 a.m. – Spring Ephemerals and Warblers Hike – Baker's Lake Savanna

June 5, 9 a.m.-Noon – Sedge Planting at Spring Creek – The 160

June 5, 1-3 p.m. – Prairie Ephemerals and Grassland Birds Hike – Grigsby Prairie

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

Itching for Spring

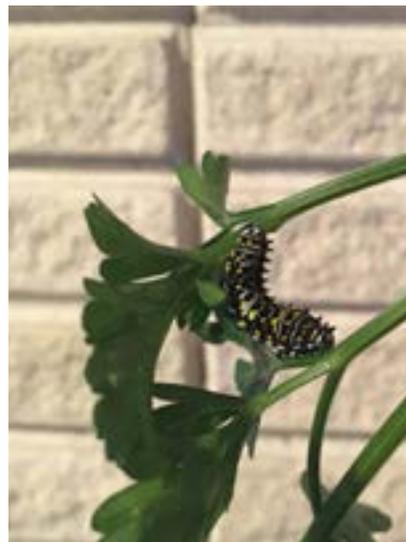
by Julia Martinez

One of the delights of working with children outside is sharing the seasonal changes. Children love tradition; just try giving a child a treat once and not be asked to duplicate the experience over and over again. Watching monarch butterflies move through all stages of the life cycle in a matter of weeks helps children appreciate the hidden gems in their own yards. From a tiny egg grows a respectable caterpillar to a showy backyard mainstay. Come fall, the monarchs embark on a journey of incredible faith and hope that enough of them will survive and arrive at their winter home in Michoacan, Mexico.

Not all journeys of faith involve travel. Some involve sitting tight and waiting patiently. The monarch butterfly is unique in the insect world in having such a long migration of about 2,500 miles. While the globe skimmer dragonfly boasts a journey of 3,700 miles, the monarch lends itself to revealing more about its life cycle than the dragonfly. Another readily

observable insect, with a different sort of journey, is the eastern black swallowtail.

Having raised monarchs for years, I had considered raising swallowtails as well, but did not seek them out. The universe works in mysterious ways and my grandmother found herself with a swallowtail caterpillar living on her parsley just as the weather turned frosty. Knowing my summertime hobby, my grandmother gifted me a sprig of parsley from her garden complete with a swallowtail caterpillar.



*Swallowtail caterpillar.
Photo by Julia Martinez.*

A funny thing happens when you learn more and more about something. You realize that you know less and less about other things. Having raised monarchs for years, I was in no way prepared for raising swallowtails. The two are so similar, yet so different. Each has its own host plant. While monarch caterpillars happily munch away at any milkweed you put in front of them (I suspect the females have their preferences when laying eggs, but their offspring are too voracious to mind a change in cuisine), swallowtail butterflies have various host plants such as zizia, parsley and dill. To my eyes, these host plants seem very different from one another, but for the caterpillars, all are equally enticing.

The transition from a speck of a caterpillar to what seems like a cartoonishly large caterpillar is more linear with monarchs. The swallowtail caterpillars start out dark and spend much of the day stationary; to my eyes they resemble the shedded exoskeleton of a caterpillar which could be hazardous to a little caterpillar. Later, the caterpillars of the two species resemble one another in many ways but are easily distinguished side-by-side.

One very notable place of divergence is how each species handles the winter. While the monarchs migrate to Mexico and cease the maturation process until the longer days of spring call the survivors back north, the swallowtails have a different strategy. They wait. Much as we have been doing for the past year, the swallowtail caterpillar makes a tidy little chrysalis, often brown in the fall, and waits for spring. I witnessed this near my front door, but another outdoor resident made a quick meal out of that chrysalis.

(continued)

Itching for Spring

(continued)

The swallowtail caterpillar I was gifted made a neat and tidy chrysalis and proceeded to wait. It is still waiting in my garage. It is waiting for warmer temperatures and brighter days. This leap of faith is inspiring in many ways. While we are tempted to marvel at the journey monarchs take annually over thousands of miles, we should not overlook the very real journey swallowtails take over the winter. Both strategies have merit. While the monarch braves the distance, the swallowtail patiently braves the cold, not emerging until it is safe. After many months, both can be found in your own backyard.



*Observing a monarch butterfly.
Photo by Julia Martinez.*

A few specimens of the right host plants in the yard and you and the children in your life can enjoy both showy species throughout the warmer months. Searching for eggs and caterpillars amongst the host plants can reinforce a sense of wonder and help children appreciate how important one small plant can be to the living creatures that depend on it. Native plant species can create an inviting oasis as monarchs migrate south, allowing you to stretch your sighting of monarchs into September. Making your yard inviting to native species can also make it inviting to children.

Summer camp returns for 2021

Spring is in the air and plans for summer are ramping up! The tentative dates for summer camp 2021 are the weeks of June 14 and June 21. Please email cfc@citizensforconservation.org to determine which week is best for your child and reserve a spot. As with last year, we will include additional protocols to ensure a safe and fun experience for all. Campers will explore a variety of ecosystems at Flint Creek, meet an assortment of insects, play animal-themed games, learn about native plants, and get creative with nature themed crafts. Ages 5-10.

50 ways to improve habitat in your yard

The first of CFC's Community Education winter programs launched our 50th Anniversary year events. Entitled "50 Ways to Improve Habitat in Your Yard", the free program was presented in cooperation with the Barrington Area Library on Zoom. We had over 200 people register, more than double the number who can attend in-person programs.

Peggy Simonsen identified 10 categories of practices to improve habitat, including:

- Planting native trees and eliminating invasives
- Type of shrubs for various birds
- "Front yard" landscaping with native plants
- Plants to attract butterflies
- Bees and other pollinators
- Ways to attract and support birds in your yard
- Four season appeal
- Water features
- Groundcovers and mulch
- Healthy yard practices.

She showed photos of local yards and native plants, highlighting great photos taken by CFC photographers of monarchs on milkweed, a redheaded woodpecker in a snag, a sedge wren in a sedge meadow, a cedar waxwing with a berry in its beak on a viburnum and goldenrod swarming with bees.

The Barrington Area Library is recording all our Community Education programs and has made them available on their website as well as on citizensforconservation.org under Events/Community Education Scheduled Programs. So if you missed the presentation on Zoom in January, you can watch it at your leisure on YouTube. Even if you are already dedicated to improving habitat in your yard, there are probably a few new ideas in these 50 ways to expand your efforts. We are hoping you will contribute to the "stepping stone" habitat to compliment the large restorations of CFC and its partners in the area. If you would like advice for your yard, as a member of CFC, you can request a free site visit from our Habitat Corridors specialists.



Walk with phlox. Photo by Peggy Simonsen.

Backyard wildlife: if you build it, they will come

by Annamarie Lukes

My takeaway from Steve Barten's wonderful February program for CFC's Community Education was that I need to buy an infrared motion detector video camera! I was amazed at the variety of animals that pass through Barten's yard at night. My favorite was the flying squirrels that appeared on video as brief flashes of white light.

As Barten pointed out in his program, the reason he has so many animal visitors is that he provides habitat for them. He and his wife Patty have been working on their property for 25 years, starting with clearing buckthorn and then gradually adding native plants. The infrared camera is set up near a large fallen tree trunk because the trunk provides the opportunity to capture animals running along it and leaping over it. Leaving dead branches on the ground is one key to providing habitat. Another key is to provide a water source which Barten does with a small pond he created in his yard. He had photos of deer and birds drinking from his pond and bird bath.

In addition to intriguing night videos, Barten also showed spectacular photos of birds and many other animals who visit his yard in daylight hours. His secret for capturing those photos is to always have his camera ready by a window so the second he sees anything in his yard, he is ready to photograph it. Barten, a veterinarian, shared his immense knowledge of various animal species and their behavior.

Thanks to our collaboration with Barrington Area Library for our winter Community Ed programs, if you missed this program in February, you can watch a recording of it. You can find a link on citizensforconservation.org under Events/Community Education Scheduled Programs, and from the library's home page, balibrary.org. Scroll to the bottom and click on the YouTube icon. Search for the program by its title: *Backyard Wildlife: If You Build It, They Will Come*. Within one week after posting, the recording already had 380 views.



Eastern bluebird. Photo by Stephen Barten, DVM.

Rain gardens—more effective than storm drains

by Annamarie Lukes

Andy Hay's March Community Education program on Stormwater Management Success is just as applicable to residential property owners as it is to municipalities.



Photo by Andy Hay.

Andy Hay was project manager for the Rain Gardens and Bioswales project for the Village of Tower Lakes. If you have a soggy lawn, muddy turf grass, standing water after heavy rains or areas where water runs off rapidly during heavy rains, installing a rain garden can alleviate those issues.

Before beginning the rain garden project, Andy was skeptical about what it could achieve. Now he is a strong advocate. His advice is "Hang on for the ride". He stated that it takes about three years for a rain garden to mature to its full potential but that it will still look good in its first year. By the third year, it will look great and will fulfill its function of holding and filtering water on the property. We wouldn't need storm drains if every yard captured rainwater as it falls.

One of the inspirations for Andy's project was the Burnsville, Minnesota stormwater retrofit study. The study found a 90% reduction in runoff after the test neighborhood yards installed rain gardens. Search "Burnsville Rainwater Gardens" to find the study online.

In Tower Lakes, in addition to the large community rain gardens and improved wetland, residents are being encouraged to create rain gardens in their yards. Andy showed photos of some of these that successfully absorb water and are beautiful.

This program was the final one of Community Education's winter series for 2021. As with the others, it was presented on Zoom hosted by the Barrington Area Library.

If you missed the program or if you would like to review it, go to Barrington Area Library's YouTube channel from the library's home page. Scroll to the bottom and click on the YouTube icon. Search for the program by its title: *Stormwater Management Success*. The video will also be available on citizensforconservation.org under Events/Community Education Scheduled Programs.



50th Anniversary Year-Long Celebrations

Additional information on these events will be available soon.

Craftsbury Preserve Dedication & CFC Major Donor Recognition **August, Wild Onion Brewery**

Celebration and luncheon thanking major donors.

50 FEST Community Celebration **October**

50 FEST will include:

- Family friendly fun and something for everyone
- Big tent event, food trucks and beverages
- Music, games, crafts
- Guides tours of Flint Creek Savanna

Tom Vanderpoel Recognitions **October**

Two dedication events will honor Tom Vanderpoel's decades of leadership.

Conservation Art Show **December, Barrington White House**

Free event will showcase the work of CFC volunteers, members and BHS students.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for all these events. Please contact CFC's office for additional information. cfc@citizensforconservation.org or 847-382-7283.

New CFC Board members

Two new members were elected to CFC's Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting.



Janet Agnoletti

Janet Agnoletti has been a CFC member for over thirty years participating in numerous restoration and education activities. Janet's interest in the environment began as a student at University of Illinois when

she worked for the Committee on Allerton Park. The entire Barrington community has benefitted from Janet's professional background as a regional planner while she served as Executive Director of the Barrington Area Council

of Governments (BACOG) for the past two decades. We are delighted Janet has agreed to join the Board of CFC in her retirement.



Matt Hokanson

Matt Hokanson has been engaged in conservation and local habitat restoration projects along with being a CFC member for over 13 years. He started out as a curious volunteer with CFC and the Spring Creek Stewards and began his

professional career at Tallgrass Restoration. He spent seven years working as a resource technician with the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Matt is a certified prescribed burn manager and an ISA certified arborist. He now owns and runs a small ecological services company with his wife Erin called Woods to Wetlands. Matt is also a member of the BACOG Water Resource Planning Commission, the Barrington Environmental Advisory Committee and the Streamwood Natural Resources Conservancy Commission.

We welcome Janet and Matt to our Board. Thanks for volunteering your time, inspirational leadership and ongoing dedication to CFC.

Orders pour in for native plants, shrubs and trees in 25th annual sale

by Laura Mandell

Online orders for native plants, shrubs and trees came in at a record-setting pace this year!

All online orders have a scheduled order pickup appointment. If you're not sure when yours is, check your confirmation email or email laura.mandell@citizensforconservation.org with questions. The pickup location is the barn area east of Good Shepherd Hospital, across from CFC Headquarters, 459 W. Hwy 22, Lake Barrington.

Pent-up demand no doubt played a role among experienced gardeners who couldn't shop the sale last year. (It was cancelled in March due to Covid-19 and the associated stay-at-home order.) The pandemic has also generated a surge of new gardeners; it's estimated that gardening increased 43% in 2020, according to a survey conducted by the Minnesota firm Axiom Marketing.

CFC's Native Plant, Shrub & Tree Sale is one of the largest in the region and features more than 225 native species. The annual sale plays an important role in expanding diversity in the greater Barrington area, with more than 18,000 plants sold each year.

We look forward to another strong sales year in 2022 when we will be able to hold an in-person sale once more.

Many thanks to our retiring Board members

The many contributions of our four retiring CFC Board members were recognized at the Annual Meeting.

Larry Anglada

While Larry participated in many activities at CFC, he had the greatest impact on our education efforts. He reinvigorated CFC's relationship with Barrington High School, including the establishment of a high school intern program. This program allowed for the first ever high school interns and has been successful in bringing some of them on as college interns.

But Larry's favorite activity has been participating in the restoration program to the extent of his time and abilities by helping at workdays and events, cleaning and organizing the barn, and greeting our wonderful volunteers.

Patty Barten

In her time on the Board, Patty has stepped up to fill leadership gaps, helping to coordinate various groups and activities. She expanded CFC's outreach efforts, especially social media. Patty has facilitated CFC's transition from one database system to another and worked with others to improve CFC's website, helping to ensure better and smoother communications with our members, volunteers and donors. She takes a trove of photos documenting many of CFC's events.

Patty's favorite experience with CFC is driving around the community feeling a "sense of place", knowing that she personally has planted some of the plants she sees and

being proud she can name most of them and knows their importance.

Barb Cragan

Barb has served on the Board for 17 years. She chaired the Membership Committee, redesigning the process and increasing membership by 450%! In addition, Barb has worked on the annual native plant sale, and contributed to the Community Education, Volunteer, Annual Meeting and Development committees. All this work earned her the Great Blue Heron award in 2019.

With all that she does, Barb says the highlight of her CFC tenure has been working with a community of people who are passionate about a land ethic that values restoration and sustainability—really important work and really great people!

Larry, Patty and Barb will be continuing as CFC volunteers.

Karen Rosene

Karen has always made the recognition of CFC volunteers a priority. The Volunteer Appreciation Lunch she has organized is a highlight of that recognition, using the opportunity to educate others on the value and importance of recycling by working with Jennifer Kainz and Renee Blue of Mindful Waste to make it a zero waste event.

Karen has volunteered to work on CFC's Annual Meetings since she has been on the Board, and for the last two meetings she chaired the event. It has gone from a simple meeting at the Barrington Library to a special evening with food, beverages, speakers, awards, networking, and an annual report.

Karen has pitched in to do anything to help make our organization successful, and, consequently, to help preserve the natural areas of Barrington for future generations.

It has been so meaningful to Karen to meet and work with such an outstanding group of people, but Karen's favorite role on the Board is her association with the birding people: Barb Laughlin-Karon, Laura Simpson, and their crew of 45 stalwarts, and particularly their connection with Kevin and the Shrubland Study.

Thank you all for everything you have done for CFC!

Thank you retiring board members



Larry
Anglada



Barb
Cragan



Patty
Barten



Karen
Rosene

President's Comments



to do it again because we missed all of you. Still, we have shown that, even with the adoption of Covid safety guidelines, we could hold our Annual Meeting and continue our important work of Saving Living Space for Living Things. In return, nature rewarded our efforts with an amazing year. We hope to see all of you soon, either at the office, or at a workday, but especially at one of our 50th Anniversary celebration events planned for this year!

— Kathleen Leitner

After a year of Zoom Board and committee meetings, we felt the time was right for CFC's first ever virtual Annual Meeting, inviting all of you to help us kick off our 50th Anniversary celebration. With the generous guidance of Marjie and Sean Malia, Board member Tom Malia's son and daughter-in-law, and photo coordination from Board member Patty Barten, we were able to coordinate presentations from seven different people located at seven different sites. We rehearsed twice: internet challenges were identified and resolved; we adjusted for timing, and for lighting, all of which was different at each location; we were ready! That night, our technology (mostly) worked, our timing was perfect, our guest presenters were informative and engaging. We did it...and hope to never have

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