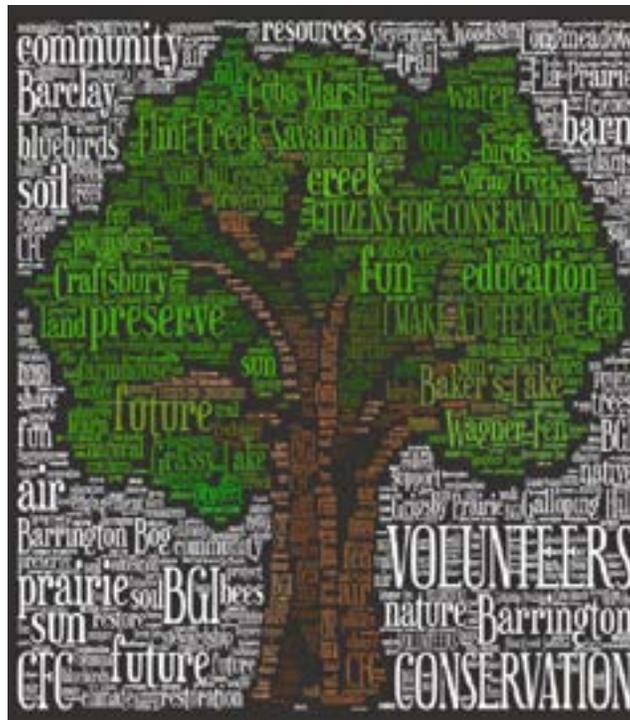


## CFC's 51st Annual Meeting "Deep Roots and Growing"

CFC conducted its 51st Annual Meeting March 10, 2022 via Zoom for the second year. Kathleen Leitner, CFC President, welcomed everyone to the meeting and began by reviewing the past year of celebrating CFC's 50th anniversary. And what a year it was! Our celebrations included our Craftsbury dedication and donor appreciation luncheon, dedications to Tom Vanderpoel and our 50 FEST celebration on the grounds of the Smith Professional Building surrounded by Flint Creek Savanna—it was a beautiful day enjoyed by all! And our final celebration was the Art Show at the Barrington White House, featuring CFC's own very talented artists. She thanked everyone for their support through what was another interesting year!

Next, Kathleen recognized our volunteers. CFC is proud of its restoration work, which couldn't be accomplished without our restoration volunteers. But there is much other work conducted by CFC that relies on our many volunteers of many different talents—annual appeal and membership drives, the plant sales, data entry, teaching classes, and wildlife monitoring, to name a few. We logged 11,945 volunteer hours last year! We are grateful to all of you for sharing your time with us!

We celebrated our volunteer awardees. There were 35 Mighty Oak awardees, non-board members who volunteer for 50 hours or more. Two Shooting Star Awards for ten years of service



*This graphic by Amanda Moller kicked off the Annual Meeting.*

were awarded to Tom Auchter and Karen Rosene; one Waid Vanderpoel Award for 20 years of service to Barb Cragan and one Bobolink Award for 25 years to Rob Neff. Kathleen thanked them all for their generosity with their time. We couldn't be successful without them!!

Kathleen reviewed a number of accomplishments during the year. We were able to continue our education programs including our Community Education series that we did in conjunction with the Barrington Library, reaching hundreds of people; our summer camp and our 4th Graders on the Prairie that once again included all of the fourth graders in District 220.

In a great example of our reach to area youth, Kathleen introduced our Barrington High School liaison, John Crossin. A restoration volunteer, he obtained a \$1,000 grant from his employer, Home Depot, for CFC to purchase loppers and pruners. At the high school, he is growing native species in the greenhouse for a Mother's Day plant sale.

Continuing our education efforts, our Habitat Corridors program reached 30 households this past year. And this year, we can also host our plant sale in person, on the grounds of Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital.

*(continued)*

## Annual Meeting

(continued)

Edith Auchter, as CFC's Treasurer, next presented the 2021 Annual Report. She thanked our grantors:

- Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation for funding a streambank restoration project for Flint Creek Savanna.
- The Preservation Foundation of Lake County Forest Preserves for funding for a three-year bee monitoring study.
- Illinois Ornithological Society for funding for shrubland habitat for birds at Craftsbury Preserve.
- The Garden Club of Illinois for funding for sedges.
- Barrington Area Community Foundation for funding for an update to the Spring Creek Watershed Plan.
- The Oberweiler Foundation for funding for summer college interns.

Edith presented a proposed amendment to CFC's Bylaws (dated 2015) for a membership vote. As a result of the strategic planning process, the Board felt the size of the Board should be reduced. The proposal is to reduce the number of Directors from the current range of not less than fifteen nor more than twenty to a range of ten to fifteen.

Edith moved to adopt the proposed amendment to Article IV, Section 1 of the Bylaws as follows:

*The number of Directors to be elected at the annual meeting by the membership shall be determined annually by the Board of Directors, but the total number of Directors shall not be less than ten nor more than fifteen. Directors shall serve staggered three-year terms, with approximately 1/3 elected each year.*

Steve Smith seconded. An on-screen ballot appeared and the Bylaw amendment was approved by the membership.

Kathleen began the Board Report, recognizing retiring Board members Tom Benjamin, Leslie Coolidge and Amanda Moller. The following Board members were reelected for three year terms: Edith Auchter, Peggy Simonsen, Steve Smith, Ginger Underwood and Jim Vanderpoel.

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 2021 restoration report. Highlights included:

- 3,562 restoration volunteer hours this past year with 911 pounds of 258 varieties of seed collected. Sixty-eight acres were burned and five acres of brush removed from Craftsbury.

- Flint Creek Floodplain project—Using a 3:1 matching grant, reed canary grass was treated and 18,000 wetland sedges were purchased. 21,000 plants, 12,000 of which were grown by Luke Dahlberg, were installed. Seventy-seven pounds of custom seed mix was dispersed. This is one of the heaviest seedings to date.
- CFC, working with the Village of Lake Barrington and Lake County Forest Preserves, is working to restore the wetlands behind the Lake Barrington Village Hall.
- Craftsbury—It has been determined that the number of native species has increased from 12 per plot to 26 per plot over the last four years. Brush removal has continued.
- Two experiments are being conducted at Craftsbury: a brome field study and a shrubland bird study.

Julia Martinez hosted a Fireside Chat on our Strategic Plan with Kathleen Leitner, Jim Anderson and Kevin Scheiwiller. Kathleen's *President's Comments* column on p. 15 summarizes the discussion.

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 Dr. Kurt O. Thomsen, a professional geologist and environmental engineer who over the past twenty years has donated an estimated 15,000 hours of service to the area through developing science and programs for the protection of the area's surface waters and groundwater.

And finally, the Great Blue Heron Award, for outstanding contributions to conservation within CFC, was awarded to Patty Barten and Sam and Bob Oliver. Patty has made immense contributions to CFC through leading our public relations and community outreach efforts. Sam Oliver was honored for the countless volunteer hours she has contributed to CFC beyond her paid staff role while Bob has also contributed hundreds of hours with restoration, Buildings and Grounds, plant sales and other projects that needed a capable hand. They are a conservation power couple.

Thanks to our Annual Meeting Committee: Janet Agnoletti, Jim Anderson, Edith Auchter, Patty Barten, Heidi Bolling, Kathleen Leitner, Amanda Moller, Kristi Nash and Kathy Paczynski. Special thanks to Marjie Malia for coordinating and hosting the Zoom meeting, to Jane Christino for the beautiful tree watercolor image, to Steve Barten and Jim Bodkin for creating stunning volunteer awards, and to the many volunteer photographers who contributed to the presentation.

Thanks to Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital for their continued support of CFC and for sponsoring the Annual Meeting.

# New land acquisition: the Highlands

by Kevin Scheiwiller and Steve Smith

When CFC looks at a property, we try to make judgments regarding the ecological value that the property will be able to deliver to the community. Key elements are:

- Size of the preserve
- Contiguosness to other open lands and preserves such as CFC or forest preserve properties and the potential to build habitat corridors to connect existing ecological islands
- Quality and diversity of existing pre-settlement native flora and fauna
- Ingress and egress
- Ability to navigate the interior of the property
- Diversity within ecotypes in prairie, wetland, and savanna
- Parking for restoration workdays
- Cost of acquisition
- A review of the historical maps and aerial photos
- Walking the property with trained and experienced ecologists to observe
- Hazmat inspections.

Check all the boxes and there is a clear picture that there will be a strong, value-added, restoration site.

Though degraded, the Highlands has seen relatively little disturbance. Based on aerial images dating back to the 1930s, it appears that the Highlands has always been kept open in a natural state. There may have been some cattle grazing under the oaks, but the continued burning from the railroad companies allowed the ecosystems to still hang on. The only apparent disturbance was the installation of a natural gas line where a berm was built to cover the pipe and is now part of the trail system.

Due to the remaining ecological integrity, close proximity to Grigsby Prairie and Craftsbury, and immediate connectivity to the Mullins parcel, CFC made the decision to acquire this 24.88-acre parcel. Negotiations began in earnest during the summer of 2021 and, thanks to the tireless effort of the land acquisition team, CFC was able to close on the Highlands on March 3, 2022. Part of the acquisition process included the application and subsequent award from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation as part of their land acquisition program. This generous grant covered \$383,000 or 80% of the \$479,000 closing price negotiated for the property. This grant also provided a \$10,000 restoration budget to jumpstart our work.

*(continued)*



Dr. Kurt Thomsen  
William H. Miller Award



Patty Barten  
Great Blue Heron Award



Bob and Sam Oliver  
Great Blue Heron Award

## **Mighty Oak Awards:**

Tom Auchter (9)	Debbie Kreischer (3)
Patty Barten (2)	Barb Laughlin-Karon (3)
Steve Barten (4)	Annamarie Lukes (8)
Donna Bolzman (16)	Laura Mandell (2)
Pieter Bonin (1)	Rob Neff (11)
Brenda Borkenhagen (1)	Bob Oliver (8)
Gene Branson (4)	Abhishek Patel (1)
Jeanette Burger (6)	Wendy Paulson (10)
Jeff Chemelewski (3)	Susan Rapinchuk (1)
Barb Cragan (1)	Jim Root (1)
Kat Gantt (1)	Cliff Schultz (11)
Diane Greening (8)	Sarah Schultz (5)
Susan Griffith (2)	Laura Simpson (3)
Katherine Grover (21)	James Stumpf (1)
Sarah Hoban (6)	Alicia Timm (4)
Erin Hokanson (2)	Melissa Washow (7)
John Katz-Mariani (2)	Julia Zuidema (5)
Linda Krauss (7)	

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

## The Highlands

(continued)

The Highlands is an exciting restoration project and a way to pay homage to CFC's humble restoration beginnings. In the 1980s, Tom Vanderpoel and restoration volunteers scoured the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad tracks to collect seed of rare native prairie and savanna species. There is no doubt that Tom knew all about the remnant vestiges on the Highlands property. High-quality native prairie species are still hanging on along the steep rocky slopes adjacent to the railroad including: Leiberg's panic grass, flowering spurge, porcupine grass, rough blazing star and Culver's root. Large bur oaks and shagbark hickories still protect nice savanna patches lush in remnant sedges and sprinkled with nodding wild onion, wild geranium, and Jacob's ladder. CFC plans to liberate these degraded remnant portions starting in the Fall of 2022. This will allow these species to flourish once again as we broadcast our seed mixes to fill in the gaps where the buckthorn invasion had taken over.

Attention will then be shifted to freeing up large oaks on the rugged Barrington Hills topography adjacent to the Barrington Hills Country Club golf course. Seeds from the remnant savanna species will be used to jumpstart a new savanna restoration under these trees. Overall, the site will have a huge diversity of ecosystems from dry hill prairie, to savanna, to wetland sedge meadows. Using techniques that have worked at Craftsbury coupled with the relatively intact nature of the site, we expect this to be a slam dunk restoration.



Map showing location of the Highlands relative to our existing preserves.

## Notes from the Restoration Manager

### Equipment to aid our work

We are wrapping up our winter clearing season and are in the middle of our spring burn season at the time of this writing. Over the past few months, we have started to invest in equipment to make all of our lives easier. Our current Stewardship Challenge Grant provided by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and a generous donor made it possible to purchase a hammer mill. This is a glorified thrashing machine that will take dried seed stalks and remove the seed from the head by a series of spinning rods and different size screens, allowing cleaned seed to pass through the bottom. Gone are the days of endlessly pushing rattlesnake master through a screen in the dusty barn! By processing the bulk material with this machine, we will be able to spend more time in the field collecting seed. More seed = more prairies, savannas, and wetlands.



Hammer mill.  
Photo by Kevin Scheiwiller.

We also were recently gifted a fire suppression pump unit from our friends over at the Natural Land Institute. They had an extra pump gathering dust in a barn and we had a pickup truck just begging to have a pump! This pump has already played a critical role in our fires by providing much needed power to put out fire line and snags that catch fire. On a recent burn, Steve Barten noted "how precise our fire lines are when using this pump." Having this water pump also adds another layer of safety to our burns and lightens the load on our burners not having to lug around a 5-gallon water pack.

The grant we were awarded from the Illinois Ornithological Society allowed us to rent a forestry mower for a week. We were able to mow a specific pattern into the buckthorn to hopefully encourage the use by specific species of birds that have adapted to using shrublands. In addition to that, we were also able to knock out another five acres of brush in the far southeast corner!

With all this equipment, what are the volunteers going to do?! Don't worry, nothing is being automated about the restoration work we accomplish together. Investing in equipment is additive to the work we have done and will always continue to do. Using a forestry mower to tackle the

horrendous buckthorn at Craftsbury allows us to cut larger buckthorn at Grassy Lake, Spring Creek, Baker's Lake, and now the Highlands. Using a seed processor to knock out five garbage bins of sky-blue aster means another workday to fill up another five bins of sky-blue aster to double the amount of seeds landing in new restorations.

We are always looking for ways to improve and expand our footprint as we strive to protect and expand our prairies, savannas, and wetlands!

— Kevin Scheiwiller

## Restoration Report

### The pinks

CFC, like all midwestern grassland stewards, spends most of its restoration efforts to establish the three foundation families of the prairie and open wood understory.



*Starry campion. Photo from Illinois Wildflowers website: [https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/woodland/plants/starry\\_campion.htm](https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/woodland/plants/starry_campion.htm).*

Three families provide about eighty percent of the non-woody biomass of Illinois' native habitat. The grass family dominates and forms the matrix of the grassland landform; the composite family is the world's largest plant family and its dozens of genera and scores of species account for most of the great displays of summer

and fall flowers; the soil-building legumes account for most of the rest; however, to achieve the proper balance and biodiversity, CFC must not neglect restoring members of the other 178 plant families found in the Chicago area that make up the remaining twenty percent of the vegetative cover. The family featured in this report is the pinks (the Caryophyllaceae), which are not prominent in any habitat or in any season.

Of the twenty genera of this family living in Chicagoland, thirteen have no native members. The non-native species are generally inconspicuous weeds. Though some, like corn cockle, bladder campion and soapwort, might be familiar to the knowledgeable plant lover in the BGI area, most would never even be noticed. Some live in lawns or in the cracks in driveways or sidewalks. None of the

non-native pinks would be described as invasive and I am quite sure that CFC has never had a workday devoted to controlling any representative of this group. In fact, the Deptford pink (a carnation) would win the prize of my favorite Old World wildflower in Barrington.

There are not many natives either, but CFC has made some effort to restore a few species. The starry campion is one of the stars of our restoration seed mix. This beautiful wildflower is very rare in the BGI area as a remnant plant—I never see it blooming along the railroad tracks anymore. Fortunately, it has done extremely well in all of our oak grove restorations—it thrives in the open oak woods at Baker's Lake and is doing well at Flint Creek Savanna and Grigsby Prairie. It will spread a short ways from the open woods into the adjacent prairie. I think Kevin Scheiwiller would rate this plant as one of the distinctive seeds in the CFC mix along with its consistent associate yellow pimpernel.

There are three more showy members of the *Silene* genus in our general area that have not been recorded in Lake County. A nursery-grown specimen of the royal catchfly was planted at Flint Creek Savanna many years ago—it has persisted and has actually spread. The odd thing is that seedlings have appeared hundreds of meters from the original planting much to the delight of our hummingbirds, who love this plant's brilliant scarlet blossoms. I have never seen the snowy campion, but it is known from Cook County so it may belong in the BGI territory; however, its habitat is seeps on steep banks so we do not seem to have the right place in any of the BGI preserves to restore this one. The final member of this genus is fire pink—it is one of CFC's Sought-After Sixty and has done extremely well in our shaded planting beds. Hopefully, our seed program success will get it going in our preserves!

There are two more pinks that we have never identified in our collecting area: the long-leaved stitchwort is on CFC's Sought-After Sixty list and the tall forked chickweed will join the list as soon as we knock one off. The final member of the family is the wood sandwort. We have two expanding populations of this diminutive savanna specialist in Original Grove at Flint Creek Savanna. We are not sure how it got there, both populations are growing near plant rescue sites; but over the years we have collected seed from the planted specimens that grew in Tom and Gail Vanderpoel's rock garden. At any rate, we need more of it—I believe it may be one of the conservative "old growth" oak bluff species.

*(continued)*

## Restoration Report

(continued)

CFC exerts its strongest efforts to restore the entire range of native plants to our preserves. The pinks are not easy to restore, but I believe this is because we collect so little seed—I eagerly await the results of our Sought-After Sixty initiative and Native Seed Garden and other advanced techniques. We have plenty of places in the BGI area that would benefit from the presence of the native members of the pink family.

— Jim Vanderpoel

## Plant a little prairie in your yard

by Peggy Simonsen

At CFC's February Community Education program, Cindy Crosby, author and prairie steward, told a hybrid audience of in-person and webinar, "You need to KNOW the prairie!" She made a case for minimizing your lawn and adding native plants to your yard. American lawns use more herbicides and pesticides than any crop. North America is the only place in the world where tallgrass prairies existed, and only 2,300 acres of remnant prairie still exist in Illinois, the Prairie State.

So we each need to plant a little prairie in our yards. Prairie plants need a minimum of five hours of sun each day, but we mostly don't have to amend the soil. There are prairie plants that prefer sandy soil, wet soil, and even do okay in clay. Cindy listed the pros and cons of planting seeds versus small plugs: seeds are cheaper for large areas, but are harder to weed and take longer to get established. Small plants give instant gratification, are easier to weed, but cost more and are more labor intensive to plant. To smother turfgrass, she recommends using black plastic or layers of newspaper.

She suggested starting with small areas, like an entryway or edged garden. Get rid of "lollipop trees and poodle shrubs". Select plants for foliage as well as flowers. She shared photos of native plants in all seasons for appeal such as wild indigo (*Baptisia lactea*), bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*) and wild quinine (*Parthenium ingegrifolium*). If you have a larger area to convert, she recommends planting in "drifts". When planting prairie plants in gardens, you need to plant them closer than you would in a full prairie, because in nature they hold each other up with shorter plants like little bluestem (*Schizachyrium soperium*) or wood betony (*Stachys lavendulifolia*) at the base of tall ones, such as rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*). Single tall prairie plants in a garden tend to fall over. Shorter forbs also keep grasses in check. She recommended other prairie plants that are good for home gardens such as pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea*

## Upcoming Events

### Community Education Program

The season's last program will be held at the Barrington Village Hall starting at 9:30 a.m. for coffee and conversation; presentation begins at 10:00 a.m. Also on Zoom.

**April 23 – Give Native Plants a Home** with Alicia Timm, chair of CFC's Habitat Corridors program

### Annual Native Plant, Shrub and Tree Sale

**May 6-8** – Friday, May 6 for CFC members, open to all on May 7 and 8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. CFC's annual plant sale will be held at the Good Shepherd Hospital barn area across Highway 22 from CFC Headquarters.

### Summer Camp

Two sessions are planned for June 13-17 and June 20-24. Registration information is forthcoming.



Photo provided by Cindy Crosby.

*pallida*), prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*), yellow coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*) and a well-behaved grass, prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepsis*). Stiff goldenrod (*Oligoneuron rigidum*) is not as aggressive as the other goldenrods. Most of these are great pollinator attractors, and leave the stalks standing through the winter for eggs, shelter and winter appeal. If you have to cut them, leave a stack to help critters overwinter. When you plant a little prairie, invite neighbors to love native plants too!

Cindy Crosby is the author, compiler or contributor to more than 20 books. Her most recent book is *Chasing Dragonflies: A Natural, Cultural, and Personal History* (2020). Her recent book of photographs and essays is *Tallgrass Conversations: In Search of the Prairie Spirit* with co-author Thomas Dean (2019).

# Designing your native plant garden

by Karen Rosene

Matt Hokanson and his wife Erin own Woods2Wetlands, LLC.

Matt opened our March Community Education program, “Designing Your Native Plant Garden” with an emphasis on goals, planning and preparation. This includes an examination of ecological goals, physical goals and aesthetic goals.

His “know your space” calls for a reckoning of the space’s topography, history and soil type (sand, silt, clay). He described a quickie (informal) method to roughly determine the soil type which he calls a “thumb test.” This means taking a soil sample and attempting a guess by the way the sample behaves when rolled between the hands. Nifty. He also provided a method to test water infiltration by digging a 12” x 12” x 12” hole, then filling it with water three times, measuring the length of time for absorption. (This delighted everyone. I saw them come to attention.)

Matt’s program also included advice about garden design (formal and naturalized). His “think long term” suggests using templates, online resources and large scape (rocks, sculpture, etc.) to design island gardens and border beds.

He provided a welcome list of approximately 70 of his personal favorite plants and shrubs—pausing at each one to provide pros and cons—to a very appreciative audience. He carefully distinguished between native and cultivar, advising the importance of natives, as well as a caution about the use of neonicotinoids. There were suggestions about some aggressive natives to avoid, too. (I happen to have most of them in my gardens.)

Contact information: [www.woodstowetlands.com](http://www.woodstowetlands.com).



*Erin and Matt Hokanson.  
Photo provided by Matt Hokanson.*

# Last 2022 Community Education program

Note: Our previously scheduled program on Saturday, April 23 by Dr. Michael Jeffords on Vanishing Edens: Biodiversity in a Changing World had to be canceled. We are fortunate to have Alicia Timm step in with an informative program provided both in person at the Barrington Village Hall and on Zoom. If you have already registered for the Vanishing Edens program, there is no need to re-register.

## Give Native Plants a Home

Saturday, April 23, 2022, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Alicia Timm, chair of CFC’s Habitat Corridors program

Learn how to identify the habitats in your yard and welcome the perfect native plants that will succeed in each. Just in time to determine which native plants to purchase at CFC’s Native Plant, Shrub and Tree Sale! Alicia will also provide multiple regional resources. Bring the natural beauty home!

Alicia brings her experience advising homeowners on appropriate native plants for their various habitats and will share specific recommendations for each of nine possible conditions.

This program will be provided both in person at the Barrington Village Hall, 200 S. Hough Street, and on Zoom. Registration will provide sign-in information for Zoom. Join us at 9:30 a.m. for coffee and conversation. RSVP to [bit.ly/CFCApr22](https://bit.ly/CFCApr22) or 847-382-SAVE (7283) or [communityed@citizensforconservation.org](mailto:communityed@citizensforconservation.org). Please provide your name, email and phone. CFC members attend for free as a benefit of membership. Program fee is \$10.00 for non-members



*Photo by Alicia Timm.*

## CFC in-person native plant sale is back! Volunteers needed

If you miss the online ordering deadline of April 17 for Citizens for Conservation's 26th annual Spring Native Plant, Shrub and Tree Sale, don't worry: after a two-year hiatus due to COVID precautions, the in-person sale is back!

It will be held Friday, May 6 for CFC members and Saturday, May 7 and Sunday, May 8, for the general public, from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., in the Good Shepherd Hospital barn area, east of the hospital, at 450 W. Highway 22 in Lake Barrington. COVID health and safety protocols will be in place.

Volunteers are needed May 2 - 8. Find opportunities on the Barrington Area Volunteer Connection site: <https://volunteer.thebavc.org/need>.

CFC's sale is one of the largest in the area, offering more than 350 varieties of forbs, ferns, and grasses. This year's sale will also feature a special Mother's Day garden package, which includes an assortment of flowers that will attract butterflies and bees, and will provide blooms from spring through fall.

### Time to renew

Becoming a member of CFC means becoming 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 over 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. Our membership is a big part of that base.

Is your membership current? Now is a good time to show your support. If you have not renewed already, you can renew online at: (<https://citizensforconservation.org/get-involved/become-a-member>)—no need for postage. Alternatively, a renewal envelope 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 and Tree Sales. Please renew online or by mail with the envelope in the April mailing.

## Future conservation leaders growing future prairies

by Kevin Scheiwiller

Last year, high school liaison John Crossin reached out to propose an interesting concept. What if high school students used space in the Barrington High School greenhouse to grow native wildflowers and grasses? The obvious answer was, that would be fantastic! But, how would this project work? John wasted no time in taking initiative.

He coordinated with the High School Horticultural teacher and his employer, Home Depot, to come up with a plan and funding. John's impressive proposal and ability to secure all the materials needed from a Home Depot grant made for an easy sell of the project. The quest to grow around 30 different native plants for a High School native plant sale was on. The last step was just to collect the seeds!

John was instrumental in getting many hands out to workdays during the Fall to collect seeds from the plants that he intended to grow. At CFC, we sow the seeds in the Fall/early Winter and let nature stratify the seeds. John and his classmates have been taking the more professional approach of stratifying seeds in a temperature-controlled environment for very specific time periods. The students sowed the seeds in February so that the seed coats break and little cotyledons emerge. This will give these seedlings plenty of time to grow into robust specimen come the plant sale in May! Anything that is not sold will be planted either at a CFC restoration or as part of the Dreamway project behind the football field at the High School. Great work John!



*Barrington High School greenhouse seedlings.  
Photo by John Crossin.*

## A Healthy Nature Handbook review

The Winter 2022 CFC News introduced *A Healthy Nature Handbook*, a new restoration guide edited by Justin Pepper and Don Parker and published by Island Press. Daniel Suarez of Audubon Great Lakes reviews the guide below. Reprinted by permission.

Aldo Leopold once wrote that “One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise.”

Written nearly a century ago, Leopold’s words still ring true for many. In places like Chicago, where prairie was converted to farms and then homes, subdivisions, neighborhoods, and one of the largest metropolises in the United States over 100 years ago, we struggle to find the scars of past sins on the landscape. However, for nearly half a century, everyday people have taken up Leopold’s challenge and accepted that the consequences of science *are* their business, that there *are* marks of ecological decay all around us, that in fact communities *can* make a difference. These everyday people have congregated on weekends and weekdays, in the heat and mosquito-ridden humidity and in the piercing cold to begin putting small fragments of our ecological heritage back together. They’ve come from backgrounds as schoolteachers, pharmacists, lawyers, artists, and activists, learning from established professional experts but most importantly from each other. The result is a network of highly-motivated, generous individuals who are driven by the idea that to restore an ecological community, a human community must be formed around the cause.

For many, however, this network is inaccessible. Chicago, while highly manipulated and fragmented, does have an abundance of parks and preserves that set it apart from many

large metro areas. In more rural areas, or areas lacking access to nature, finding like-minded individuals and progressive institutions that value the contributions volunteers make can be exceedingly difficult.

That is why books like the *A Healthy Nature Handbook: Illustrated Insights for Ecological Restoration from Volunteer Stewards of Chicago Wilderness*, edited by Justin Pepper and Don Parker, are so needed. Breaking down the barriers for access to some of the most forward-thinking, hard-working volunteer stewards in the region, this volume will help connect isolated individuals with the thought processes, ingenuity, and innovation that are hallmarks of the volunteer stewardship community in the Chicago Wilderness region.

As a college graduate during the Great Recession of the late 2000s, I found myself in a difficult situation. Armed with a dual degree in Art History and Religion, I was unable to find work in galleries and museums, leading to a less-than-ideal job of bagging groceries at Whole Foods. I felt lost, stuck, and in need of a new direction. Someone turned me on to the idea of volunteering at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (now National Park), and I fell in love with the idea of becoming a National Park Ranger. Having grown up never camping, hiking, or even visiting a National Park, I didn’t have a grasp on what exactly I could accomplish or what I could learn. After making the long weekly trek to the Dunes on the South Shore Line for almost a year, I was tipped off that there were actually opportunities to volunteer doing habitat restoration closer to home. I attended one workday at Somme Prairie Grove with Stephen Packard, one of the volunteer stewards highlighted in *A Healthy Nature Handbook*, and my life was never the same.

Stephen and the Somme volunteers lit a fire under me. I had a radical awakening that challenged everything I thought I knew about nature, Chicago, and humans’ ability to restore what was lost. I immediately started spending my days off and time before or after work at Somme and other preserves, meeting stewards, asking questions, tagging along to mark areas for future workdays, collecting seeds of rare species, or hand-pollinating endangered orchids. It wasn’t easy or comfortable, and I was pushing myself outside of my comfort zone to spend time with unfamiliar people in unfamiliar places. However, before long I had established a strong network of teachers and mentors. This privilege afforded me the opportunity to eventually get an internship doing prairie restoration at the Chicago Botanic Garden, which developed into a temporary job with the Plants of Concern community science project, and eventually a career with Audubon Great Lakes, where I have worked for the past eight years.

(continued)



*A Healthy Nature Handbook featured at Raise-a-Pint. Photo by Patty Barten.*

## ***A Healthy Nature Handbook*** (continued)

What does my story have to do with *A Healthy Nature Handbook*? As I read through this impressive volume, I found myself with that familiar feeling I first felt at Somme. Hearing about innovations in restoration directly from the people that developed them, I felt that fire being lit under me again. And I know that others in the Chicago Wilderness region and beyond will feel the same.

The book focuses on particular restoration techniques, like the oft-duplicated sedge warrior process innovated by Tom Vanderpoel and Citizens for Conservation, or the backyard seed propagation efforts of Rob Sulski and the North Branch Restoration Project. Peppered throughout are nuggets of wisdom that are useful not only to those in the Chicago Wilderness region, but beyond. That's because the conversational style of teaching that volunteer stewards excel at is faithfully reproduced throughout the book. Therefore, even if you're restoring longleaf pine forests in Georgia, you can learn about the thought processes and can-do attitude that resulted in a regionally significant rare plant propagating effort and apply them to your own geography.

Similarly, one does not need to be able to identify Henslow's sparrows or bobolinks to be able to understand Jenny Flexman's ability to "see ecosystems in 3D" and thus change their observational skills to interpret restoration through the lens of savanna or woodland birds. The book provides specific information that some may benefit from, and general ways of viewing ecosystems and the challenges of restoration that everyone can apply to their local habitats. This, in turn, should spawn creativity and experimentation from a new generation of stewards, which are sorely needed in our age of rapidly-declining biodiversity.

The visual format of the book will appeal to everyone, especially younger stewards who are familiar with bite-sized pieces of information that are rich with graphics that mimic social media and blog posts. The authors imply that one of their goals was to build a *Cook's Illustrated* for habitat restoration; the book acts not like a traditional recipe book that teaches you how to cook a specific dish, but rather teaches you how to build skills and techniques so that you can cook a great dish using the ingredients you happen to have on hand.

*A Healthy Nature Handbook* will surely influence a new generation of stewards. I know I'll be sharing this volume with future Audubon interns and volunteer stewards—both in and outside of Chicago—for years to come. Tools like this help build more ecological literacy, which is essential if we are to combat the biodiversity and climate crisis at hand.

One doesn't become a steward overnight. It requires patience, curiosity, hard work, and access to innovative teachers and ideas. *A Healthy Nature Handbook* takes the onus off of the individual to make those connections and helps fast track the development of ecologically-literate communities that can help us reimagine a brighter future for nature and humans.



Daniel Suarez.

## **Knowledgeable volunteers needed**

Spring is here! Habitat Corridors is receiving many requests for property visits from CFC members. We are delighted so many homeowners are interested in "saving living space for living things" one yard at a time. As demand grows, so must our program. We need more passionate volunteers to provide property visits. Interested volunteers should be able to identify invasive species. They should have a deep interest in and ability to identify and recommend native plants (forbs, grasses, sedges, shrubs, and trees). Property visits are scheduled by volunteers based on homeowner and volunteer availability and visits generally last about an hour. Our geographical range is about 20 to 30 minutes from CFC headquarters. New volunteers will train with a seasoned Habitat Corridors volunteer. It's a fun learning experience for all. For more information, please contact [info@habitatcorridors.org](mailto:info@habitatcorridors.org). Thank you and we look forward to the growing season!

Our Community Education committee is also looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join us. Help plan winter programs and assist at the four Saturday morning sessions, January through April. No particular skills are needed, but interest in helping others learn about using native plants to improve habitat on their properties. Contact [Peggy.Simonsen@citizensforconservation.org](mailto:Peggy.Simonsen@citizensforconservation.org).

# Irruption of redpolls

by Meredith Tucker

This winter our area has been treated to an infrequent event—an irruption. It's not an eruption of lava or other material but an irruption of birds! In this case, the common redpoll has inundated local feeders. Winter weather conditions have been just right for masses of finches to arrive in northern Illinois.



*Redpolls swarming a feeder. Photo by Stephen Barten, DVM.*

In most years one sees a few redpolls at thistle feeders, but this year they are visiting in much greater numbers than usual. Although they migrate to warmer locations every year, conditions in 2022 have lured them farther south than usual. Most birds have established migration routes, but this year the redpolls are traveling far in large numbers almost certainly to find food.

When the seed crop north of us fails, birds will travel beyond their usual range searching for a reliable winter food supply. Another bird that does so is the pine siskin. Strangely, siskins have not been prevalent at my feeders this year, but perhaps they are finding seeds they prefer to the nyjer I provide.

It's difficult for ornithologists and other scientists to predict irruptions because they are not certain what forces drive

the movement. It is clear that some birds prefer the seeds of specific plants, and they may keep moving until they find a place where those seeds are plentiful.

Redpolls prefer the seeds of birch and alder trees. If those are not available in sufficient quantity, the birds settle for feeders that provide thistle (often called nyjer) seed. This is not actually the seed of a thistle plant but is a small, black seed from the African yellow daisy *Guizotia abyssinica*.

People sometimes worry about having a yard full of thistle plants if they feed this seed. They wonder how one controls seed germination. The United States Department of Agriculture has taken care of that. It requires that the seed be heat-sterilized before it is sold to the public.

One caution about feeding thistle seed is that it can get rancid or moldy. Any seed can become moldy, but I find that nyjer is more likely than others to do so. In the winter I keep my thistle seed in a galvanized can in my unheated garage. However, during the summer I keep smaller quantities of nyjer on hand in plastic bags in my freezer. It lasts beautifully there.

I highly recommend that you hang a thistle feeder early next fall. Once the finches find it, you will have avian company all winter! I ask that you be consistent with your bird feeding. Please don't feed them regularly and then abandon them in the coldest weather. I have a soft spot when it comes to wildlife and worry about it, but the truth is that there may be another feeder or two in your neighborhood to take over feeding when you head for a winter vacation!



*Redpoll. Photo by Stephen Barten, DVM.*

# Barrington area spring bird walks & hikes

Sponsored by Citizens for Conservation

Track spring migration with Barrington naturalists Wendy Paulson, Barb Laughlin-Karon and Laura Simpson. Walks are free and open to the public but spaces are limited and registration is required. Waterproof boots are strongly recommended for these hikes. Bring your binoculars (and insect repellent if desired) and dress for the weather.

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

April 22, 8:00 a.m. — Crabtree Nature Center (3 Stover Rd. off of Palatine Rd.)

May 6, 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 and last parking area to the west of Picnic Grove #1) with optional extension to Camp Alphonse (off Dundee Rd.)

May 13, 7:30 a.m. — Crabtree Nature Center (3 Stover Rd. off of Palatine Rd.)

May 17, 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 18, 3:30 p.m. — Baker's Lake (parking lot on Highland Ave. south of Hillside Ave.); students welcome

May 20, 7:30 a.m. — Headwaters\* (parking lot on Wichman Rd. off north side of Rt. 72, ½ mile west of Rt. 59)

May 27, 7:00 a.m. — Paul Douglas Preserve, Hoffman Estates\* (use the Grassy Ridge Meadow Entrance on West Central Rd., between Ela Rd. and Freeman Rd., park all the way at the end of the lot)

June 3, 7:00 a.m. — Galloping Hill\* (meet at Penny Road Pond parking lot, less than a mile west of Old Sutton/Penny Rd. intersection)

\*indicates a more strenuous hike

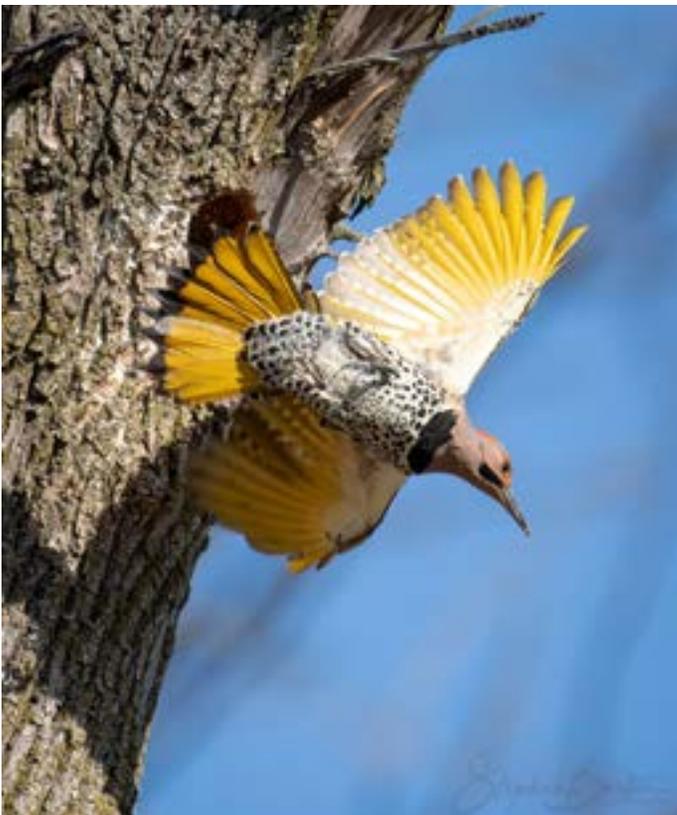
**Registration required:** RSVP to Susan Baert at [susan.baert@citizensforconservation.org](mailto:susan.baert@citizensforconservation.org) or 847-854-2175. Be sure to include name, email address and best number to contact you should that be necessary.

## Raise-a-Pint - A community coming together to learn and support nature

by Patty Barten

“Those are the fun people from CFC who do important things in conservation” was the response to inquisitive patrons at the Wild Onion Brewery each Wednesday in March. CFC was invited to help the community better understand our mission. We held fun “ask the expert” nights with a different theme of practical information each week to help people support nature. Continuing the support, the Wild Onion Brewery donated \$1 for each pint sold that day.

Each week's topics were practical things people ask about. It was great fun with something for everyone. Games like “guess the twig ID”, original artwork explained by knowledgeable conservationists, how to use binoculars, native plants that work best together in each growing condition, helpful photos, toys, bird house design comparisons, how to remove invasives, and lots of reference information to take home if desired. Everything was



Northern flicker. Photo by Stephen Barten, DVM.

supported by one-on-one dialogue with experts who shared what works best in our area. Each night also featured theme-based high-quality raffle items. The Onion's life size Bogart figure became our CFC-mascot decorated for each night's theme and the staff all wore CFC T-shirts.

The evenings were filled with smiles, laughs, old and new friends, and fun. Engagement and sharing with the community were priceless. Thank you to all who came to learn, support CFC's efforts, and help nature. Special thanks to the Wild Onion Brewery for this opportunity and being such a strong conservation partner over the years.



*Peggy Simonsen, Judy Springer, Ginger Underwood and Alicia Timm manning CFC's exhibit and enjoying a pint at Raise-a-Pint. Photo by Patty Barten.*



*Wild Onion Brewery staff sporting their CFC T-shirts. Photo by Patty Barten.*



*CFC members and fans like Mike and Kathy Hartke came each week for the fun, learning, raffle prizes, and to show support for all that CFC gives to the community. Photo by Patty Barten.*

Weekly Theme	CFC Program Experts	Raffle Prizes
Using native plants and garden designs	Habitat Corridors Plant Sale Community Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A.M. Leonard Deluxe Soil Knife</li> </ul>
Attracting birds to your yard	Bird Conservation Bird Monitors Bird Walks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bird Feeder, Thistle Seed, Bird Sticker Book, Bird Reference Guide</li> <li>• Onion Pub Shirt &amp; Gift Card</li> </ul>
Identifying invasives and removal recommendations	Restoration Habitat Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Folding Silky Saw - Hand Pruning Saw</li> <li>• Signed copy of <i>A Healthy Nature Handbook: Illustrated Insights for Ecological Restoration from Volunteer Stewards of Chicago Wilderness</i> by Justin Pepper and Don Parker</li> </ul>
Helping nature, what YOU can do	Education Native Seed Gardeners Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed copy of <i>Picturing the Prairie, A Vision of Restoration</i> by Philip Juras</li> <li>• An Annual Family Membership to CFC</li> </ul>
Volunteering opportunities	Volunteering Native Seed Gardeners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand Tools, Reference Book, and Special Shirt</li> </ul>

# Spring is for youth

by Julia Martinez

As the days warm up, the cheerful songs of birds invite children outside to play. There are so many ways for children to connect with nature and benefit from it.



*The elderberry fort.  
Photo by Julia Martinez.*

Time spent outside is associated with many health benefits, from better mood to better vision (studies show exposure to bright lights in childhood is associated with reduced incidences and severity of nearsightedness). Children benefit from the unstructured play natural areas offer. While not intentional, the native elderberry planted in my yard has become a source of recreation for my daughter. She regards the bush as her “fort” and likes to hide within its branches. She used binoculars to spy on a family of robins eating berries from the bush. She takes full advantage of the smooth, straight sticks the bush gives her, using them for all manner of play.

Native landscaping is inviting to children as well as native wildlife. The variety of bees that can be observed close up in a patch of brown-eyed Susans is surprising and the satisfaction of discovering a hidden drone fly in the mix is delightful. Because native species become showy all throughout the growing season, children can anticipate blooms and holidays concurrently. One of the first blooms of spring is the pasque flower which closely coincides with Easter. Even in the fall, once the native flora have ceased to bloom, children can search for sleeping bees clinging to the underside of fall asters. How lucky to be a child who can closely examine a bee and savor each detail without the dread of being stung.

Scientific thinking, that is learning through experiencing and experimenting, comes naturally to children. They love collecting data by touching and smelling everything they can.

My daughter wondered if her toy Northern cardinal, which has a recording of an authentic cardinal call, would attract any attention from our local birds. Sure enough, she took the toy outside and quickly received a curious and somewhat irritated visitor in the form of a male Northern cardinal.

This spring, I hope the children in your life can explore the outdoors and build their scientific knowledge. This year, Kid Fest on May 7 is offering in-person activities for children. Citizens for Conservation has an annual plant sale that allows children to interact with nature in their own backyards. Finally, Youth Ed offers programs for children, the highlight of which is our summer camp. Two sessions are planned for June 13-17 and June 20-24. Registration information is forthcoming; be sure to sign up for emails from CFC to receive information.

## Editor's Note

After what I believe is six years, I am stepping down as editor of *CFC News*. I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience, especially all that I have learned from our marvelous writers. It never ceases to amaze me how beautifully our naturalists write; perhaps they all took a lesson from Aldo Leopold. I owe them all a debt of gratitude. Our many talented photographers and artists have provided invaluable content. Sammi, then Jenelle, and Minuteman Press have partnered with me to both do the layout and print the newsletter. Juli LaRocque and Amanda Moller have coordinated the mailing process. Many thanks to you all.

I am passing the torch to Julia and Mary Martinez as editors. I look forward to seeing the direction they take with *CFC News* and wish them the best.

— Leslie Coolidge

## Workday volunteers needed

Regular workdays continue every Thursday and Saturday from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. In addition, our weekly emails include workdays at our BGI partner sites. If you would like to be added to our email group to receive notification of upcoming workdays, please email [kevin.scheiwiller@citizensforconservation.org](mailto:kevin.scheiwiller@citizensforconservation.org).

# Many thanks to our retiring Board members

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



## Tom Benjamin

Tom joined the CFC board in 2011 and led the annual appeal for the last eleven years; the results of his persuasive efforts speak for themselves: in Tom's first year, CFC raised \$100,423. This year, we raised \$411,600!

Tom also spent nine years on the Buildings and Grounds Committee with his partner Bob Oliver. They achieved many important improvements around the farmhouse and grounds.

Tom along with George Pierce and Bob Oliver managed the Baker's Lake Bird Sanctuary. The work included bird monitoring and organizing the annual Christmas tree recycling program. He's been involved with 4th Graders on the Prairie, been the CFC representative for the Flint Creek Watershed and been a plant sale volunteer. And on top of all of that, Tom took over as the Chair of the Membership Committee in 2021.

While Tom is leaving the board, he will continue to volunteer for CFC, so you will still see Tom around!



## Leslie Coolidge

Leslie joined the CFC board in 2015. While Leslie's main role has been as the *CFC News* editor, Leslie has been an invaluable member of the Finance Committee, assisting Edith in managing CFC's financial affairs and the annual audit. She also

served as CFC's Secretary.

Leslie has also been a member of the special events committees for Ignite the Night and for the 50th Anniversary last year, helping with fundraising strategies.

Leslie had invaluable input during our strategic planning sessions this past year.



## Amanda Moller

After volunteering at many restoration work days, Amanda joined the CFC Board in 2019, to serve as our volunteer coordinator. After Ralph Tarquino moved to Colorado, Amanda 'inherited' the on-boarding of our new database system, "NEON". Amanda and the team got us through the transition and we now have a terrific system that makes communicating with you much easier.

Amanda still coordinates CFC's volunteer opportunities, which are posted on our website and on the Barrington Area Volunteer Connection's website.

Amanda is resigning from the board, but she's not going anywhere. After Juli LaRocque left as CFC's Administrative Assistant, Amanda applied for and accepted the role of Administrative Assistant. So now when you call the office, it's Amanda's cheery voice you'll hear.

Thank you all for everything you have done for CFC and will continue to do in the future!

## President's Comments

Once again we had to curtail our plans to meet in person for our Annual Meeting this year, but at the time we needed to make our decision final, it was clear that it was in everyone's best interest that we have a virtual meeting. I hope you were able to join us as we voted to reduce the number of board members from 15-20 down to 10-15; Edith Auchter gave our financial report; Kevin Scheiwiller gave the restoration report; and Julia Martinez moderated a fireside chat with Kevin, Jim Anderson and myself to cover the nine goals that came out of last year's Strategic Planning work:

- 1) Acquire, manage, and restore high priority properties within the greater Barrington Greenway Initiative area.
- 2) Strengthen CFC's position as a leader in land restoration and stewardship.
- 3) Advance the depth and breadth of CFC's work by building and strengthening partnerships, alliances, and collaborations that are mutually beneficial.
- 4) Advance the region's understanding of the ecological, economic, and social value of improved habitat and restoration.
- 5) Build habitat corridors by building a community of landowners and homeowners who adopt conservation and restoration practices on their own land.

*(continued)*

## President's Comments

(continued)

- 6) Inform and influence local community land use and environmental protection decisions and be viewed by governments and organizations as a welcomed collaborator.
- 7) Clarify CFC's brand of education, land preservation and restoration while building the public's awareness of CFC's culture of volunteerism.
- 8) Strengthen and diversify CFC human resources (Board, volunteers and staff) while maintaining CFC's strong commitment to a culture of volunteerism and citizen engagement to better serve the BGI area and deliver on goals and programs as designed.
- 9) Ensure CFC's long-term financial stability and sustainability to support its mission.

I know at first blush these goals seem to state what CFC already does, and in one sense that is true. But the exercises we went through helped us refocus our efforts together, as a group, just as the founders did 50 years ago. As Sam Oliver said in our 50th Anniversary booklet *Citizens for Conservation, Deep Roots and Growing*:

"The founders of CFC were true visionaries. In 1970, in response to a request from the Barrington Area Development Council, they committed to take on the responsibility of 'preserving the natural features of the countryside

environment...to acquire and maintain natural features of highest priority, especially watercourses of all types, to provide expertise and public information on the ecology of the area, and to encourage individual property owners to carry out sound conservation practices.'...Today, we owe a debt of gratitude to CFC's founders, those leaders who took the challenge, worked ceaselessly, and laid the deep-rooted foundation for CFC's accomplishments over these 50 years."

In honor of those founders, we forge ahead to build on that foundation for the next 50 years.

— Kathleen Leitner



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