



Co-Partners of the Volunteer Stewardship Network

## Gatherings Online

*A monthly email newsletter of the Volunteer Stewardship Network  
published by The Nature Conservancy*

*To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter or if you would like to contribute articles, stories, or announcements to be published in future newsletters, please send them to Karen Tharp at [ktharp@tnc.org](mailto:ktharp@tnc.org) by the first day of each month. The next newsletter deadline is Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>.*

### **FEBRUARY 2006**

*I am proud to unveil this first issue of Gatherings Online. This new online newsletter will be published monthly by The Nature Conservancy for the Volunteer Stewardship Network. This new format will help to get information out to volunteers in a timely manner with less expense on the environment. If you have articles or stories that you would like to contribute or if you have any suggestions on improving this newsletter, please contact Karen Tharp at [ktharp@tnc.org](mailto:ktharp@tnc.org). **Please feel free to pass along this newsletter to anyone who may be interested in receiving it with a note for them to send me their email address if they would like to be on my list to receive future copies.** I hope you enjoy the newsletter and look forward to hearing from you.*

*Sincerely,  
Karen Tharp, VSN Coordinator  
The Nature Conservancy*

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## I. NEWS FROM ACROSS THE VSN

### **Herbicide Training and Testing Workshop a Success!**

Thank you to all of the 144 people who attended the herbicide testing and training workshop at Brookfield Zoo on Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. If you were unable to attend this training and need to get licensed, the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) and Cooperative Extension Service offer other training and certification clinics throughout the year, and testing is available at the IDA office in Springfield 217/785-2427 and Des Plaines 847/294-4343 during the week.

### **2005 Environmental Heroes Award - Congratulations to Larry Thorsen**

In December 2005, the Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn awarded 13 citizens, cities, and groups from across the state the Environmental Heroes Award in recognition of their commitment to providing and maintaining a healthful environment for this and future generations in Illinois. Larry Thorsen, President of the Embarras Volunteer Stewards was one of the recipients. Since 1994, Larry has provided leadership to the Embarras group and helps to coordinate and lead workdays. He typically volunteers 40 Saturdays a year. The Embarras group oversees the stewardship of 11 natural areas that cover a seven county distance...impressive! The group also works with private landowners to help them to preserve and restore native prairie and woodland sites. Larry has also been a mentor for other volunteer groups within the VSN. Congratulations Larry!

### **Welcome – New Groups to the VSN**

We are proud to announce that the VSN is growing! In 2005, a few new groups joined the Network. Some of these groups have been around for some time, and some of them are brand new. Please welcome the following groups: Orland Grassland, Bartel Grassland, Friends of Dan Ryan Woods, Friends of the Lower North Branch, and Beaubien Woods Forest Preserve (Calumet region). For a complete listing of groups within the Network along with their workday schedule, visit The Nature Conservancy web site at <http://nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/illinois/volunteer/index.html>.

### **Volunteers in the Parks & Preserves Nominations - Deadline: Feb. 10**

Friends of the Parks (FOTP) is calling for nominations for VIPs - Volunteers In the Parks & Preserves. Each year FOTP acknowledges individuals, groups, advisory councils, park district employees, and forest preserve district employees for their hard work and valuable stewardship, and nominations are currently being accepted for the annual awards. Download the nomination form from the FOTP web site at <http://www.fotp.org/>. The annual VIP reception will be held on Sunday, March 12 at Douglas Park. For more information contact Mary Eileen Sullivan, FOTP Director of Volunteers, at [sullivanme@fotp.org](mailto:sullivanme@fotp.org) or call 312-857-2757, ext. 13.

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## II. VOLUNTEER AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

### **Millennium Seed Bank Project - Help to Preserve our Native Seeds for the Future**

The Millennium Seed Bank Project is an international conservation effort with a goal of preserving 10% of the world's flora in the form of seeds. The Chicago Botanic Garden, one of the North American institutes involved, aims to collect seed from 1,500 native species by 2008, with a focus on tallgrass prairie species. Tallgrass prairies are one of the world's most threatened habitats, covering less than 0.01

percent of their former range. Our objective is to collect between 10,000 and 20,000 seeds of one population from each of the species. These collections can act as a basis for off site (*ex situ*) conservation and, where and when appropriate, can be used for study and propagation for restoration purposes. Long-term seed banking can also act as an “insurance policy” against extinction in the wild.

<http://www.rbgkew.org.uk/msbp/index.html>. We are looking for volunteers to assist us in finding sufficiently large populations of our target species, monitoring their seed development during the stage and making seed collections. Field sites are throughout the greater Chicago region and include Will, Grundy, Lake, DuPage and McHenry counties with a likelihood of expansion. Help with scouting populations can begin as soon as plants emerge and seed collection can occur throughout the growing season, but is particularly heavy during the months of September and October. A single day training session will be held during the last weekend in May (date to be determined soon). For more information or to participate in the project, please contact Betsy Allen at [ballen@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:ballen@chicagobotanic.org) or 847/835-6957.

### **Swainson’s Hawk – Field Volunteers Needed**

Help is needed to save a noble raptor. Each year 3 to 5 pairs of Swainson’s Hawks nest in a small area of northern Kane or southern McHenry counties. The area has the only breeding population of these hawks east of the Mississippi. This past summer, three nests were found. The Swainson’s Hawk Project has formed to search nearby areas in the hopes that hawks displaced by development are relocating there – and to find ways to protect them. Field team volunteers are needed this spring and summer. For more information, contact Vic Berardi 847/680-5281 or [vbirdman@aol.com](mailto:vbirdman@aol.com) or Bob and Anita Morgan at 708/209-1938.

### **GPF-PGV Summer Internship Positions**

Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers (GPF-PGV) seeks interested applicants for two full-time summer internship positions for summer 2006 in ecological stewardship and management of natural areas in east-central Illinois. Interns will work independently and in teams to control and remove exotic, invasive plant species from prairie and forest natural areas using mechanical and chemical techniques. Educational opportunities including outings in the field with natural resource professionals, scientists, and volunteers will be scheduled. Interns may also assist with planting native plant seedlings and collecting native plant seed. **Qualifications:** Applicants should be highly self-motivated and able to work with little or no direct supervision. Applicants must be willing and able to work in the field under a variety of environmental conditions. Course work or interest in the biological and ecological sciences is preferred. Ability or willingness to operate hand and power tools including bow saws, clippers, power brushcutter, chainsaw, etc. is also preferred. A pesticide applicator license will be required after the start of the internship. A valid automobile driver's license is required. **Rate:** \$8.00/hr including up to \$300.00 in mileage reimbursement expenses for personal vehicle use (GPF-PGV has available a stick-shift pickup truck for use). **Time Period:** Position begins May 30 and will continue to approximately August 31, 2006. To ensure full consideration for the internship, applications should be received by **March 31, 2006**. Please send letter of application, resume, and contact information for three references (references need to fill out and send in a reference form, download here:

<http://www.prairienet.org/gpf/internships.php>) to: **Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers Summer Internship, P.O. Box 36, Urbana, IL 61803**. Specific questions regarding the summer internship can be directed to Jamie Ellis ([jamese@inhs.uiuc.edu](mailto:jamese@inhs.uiuc.edu) or 217.244.5695). GPF-PGV is an all-volunteer not-for-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation and stewardship of prairie, forest, and wetland natural areas in east-central Illinois. We also educate interested citizens about the ecology, natural history, and importance of our remaining natural areas. More information about GPF-PGV can be found at [www.prairienet.org/gpf](http://www.prairienet.org/gpf).

## **Bird Survey Summer Positions – Illinois Natural History Survey**

Applications are being taken for field assistants to work with the Illinois Natural History Survey's Critical Trends Assessment Program ornithologists in conducting breeding bird survey's statewide this coming summer (2006). The positions are 40 hour per week positions and will run from approximately 15 May 31 July. Duties for the field assistant will involve independently conducting point-count surveys of birds in forests, wetlands, and grasslands throughout Illinois. Although experience with GPS systems is not a necessary pre-requisite for the positions, the field assistant will be expected to locate survey census points with a GPS machine, so for those without GPS experience, training for using GPS will be provided. Other skills which the field assistant should possess include orienteering (through use of a compass) and some minimal computer skills, for use in data entry, etc. A valid driver's license is also required. However, the main qualification necessary for filling these positions is the ability to IDENTIFY ALL SPECIES OF BIRD that occurs or is likely to occur in Illinois by BOTH SIGHT AND SOUND (SONG AND CALLS). In order to accomplish this, the applicant should have excellent hearing. The applicant must also be willing to work outside under a variety of field and environmental conditions and travel 3-4 days at a time throughout Illinois with overnight stays (motel costs will be reimbursed). Mileage will be reimbursed for use of personal vehicles, or the possibility exists that a vehicle may be provided. Some overtime work may be necessary, for the applicant to be able to complete the 20-25 censuses that will be expected of them to complete. The rate of pay for this position will be \$10.00/hour. Those with experience in conducting bird point-count surveys should mention any and all such work when applying. Conducting an Illinois Breeding Bird Survey route would be one example of such survey work. If you have more questions regarding any aspect of this project, please contact Steven Bailey at the address/phone below. Good birding! Contact: Steven D. Bailey, CTAP Ornithologist, Illinois Natural History Survey, 1816 S. Oak St., Champaign, IL 61820; Phone: 217/244-2174; Fax: 217/ 265-5110; sdbailey@mail.inhs.uiuc.edu

## **Natural Resources Technician Position – Champaign County Forest Preserve**

Join the team responsible for conserving, restoring, and caring for nearly 3,500 acres of preserved land throughout Champaign County, Illinois. The Natural Resources Technician is responsible for assisting Natural Resources Staff with the conservation and restoration of natural areas throughout the District. This may include but is not limited to prairie and forest restoration, cutting and pruning, exotic species control, seed collection, data collection, natural resource monitoring, and trash pick-up. In addition, there are some office and clerical duties with this position. Qualifications: High school graduate required. Bachelor's degree in Restoration Ecology, Natural Resource Management, Park Management, Forestry, Botany, or related field of study preferred. Knowledge of conservation biology, restoration ecology, environmental science, hydrology, soil science, environmental laws and regulations, and environmental impact assessment principles and practices are essential. Under unusual circumstances, extensive direct experience may be substituted for all or part of the educational requirement. Other Requirements: Candidates must be able to communicate clearly orally and in writing, have a valid Illinois driver's license, and have the ability to obtain an Illinois Pesticide Applicators License. Expectations: This position will be based at the Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve in Mahomet, Illinois, but work will take place on all District lands throughout Champaign County. This is a full-time hourly position with benefits. Hours must be flexible to accommodate evening and weekend work. Starting pay is \$13.00 per hour. To Apply: To apply for the Technician position please send resume, cover letter and names and numbers of three references to Dan Olson, P.O. Box 1040, Mahomet, Illinois 61853. Applications accepted until Friday, March 3, 2006. (see attachment for more information)

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### III. WORKSHOPS

#### **Wild Things Winter Workshops**

Chicago Wilderness and Audubon, Chicago Region will host a series of Winter Workshops at The Brookfield Zoo to discuss a variety of topics for advocates, stewards and volunteers. We encourage anyone who is interested to please join us! RSVP is not required for these workshops, but it is appreciated. To attend, please contact Maggie Kurcz, 847/965-1150 or [mkurcz@audubon.org](mailto:mkurcz@audubon.org). For more information visit: [www.habitatproject.org](http://www.habitatproject.org)

##### **New Faces AND Friends and Politics**

**Sunday, February 19, 10am – 3pm, Brookfield Zoo**

##### New Faces

Presentations and discussion on recruitment, outreach, partnerships and community and youth involvement. Learn what others are doing.

##### Friends and Politics

Presentations and discussion on advocacy, communications, the political process and dealing with the public.

##### **Invasive Species AND Restoration Planning**

**Saturday, March 4, 1:30pm – 4:30pm, Brookfield Zoo**

##### Invasive Species

Comparing notes on what works and what doesn't. Evaluating and improving the region's "Best Management Practices", building on the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission's Invasive Species Guidelines – and our experiences.

##### Restoration Planning

Presentations and discussion from a case-study perspective. Local examples of restoration plans that have improved the work (and sometimes attracted special funding).

##### *Confirmed Participants for the preceding workshops include:*

Roger Keller and Joe Neumann, stewards, Palos Preserves  
Barbara Birmingham, steward, Ted Stone Preserve  
Dick Riner, steward, Bartel Grassland  
Logan Lee, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie  
Rena Frigo, Nature Programs Supervisor at the St. Charles Park District  
Sue Harney, Supervisor, Dundee Township  
Donnie Dann, President, Bird Conservation Network  
Sam Oliver, Citizens for Conservation  
Dave Hodge, Turning Leaf

#### **Plants of Concern Workshops**

Plants of Concern is a rare plant monitoring program, a collaboration of over 200 trained volunteer monitors working together with 54 cooperating landowners at over 165 sites in six counties. The data are providing land managers with information that helps them to set management practices. Plants of Concern will be holding training workshops on weekends during April and early May (to be determined) at various sites throughout the region.

##### Workshop Schedule in April

Saturday, April 8 – Blackwell Forest Preserve, Warrenville, DuPage County

Sunday, April 23 – Glacial Park, Ringwood, McHenry County

Sunday, April 30 – Chicago Botanic Garden, Cook County

Workshops will be held from 9:30 am to 3 pm. This workshop will give you an opportunity to learn monitoring skills and to select a monitoring assignment or will refresh your skills for the new season. We strongly encourage any monitors who have never been to a workshop to attend. Bring a lunch. Morning refreshments will be served. Registration is required. A confirmation will be sent after registration and directions will follow shortly before the workshop date. More dates will be announced soon. For more information, please visit our webpage at: [www.plantsofconcern.org](http://www.plantsofconcern.org). To get on the mailing list and/or to register for the workshops, please contact Emily Hudson, Program Assistant, Plants of Concern, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, IL 60022, or call 847/835-6873 or email: [ehudson@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:ehudson@chicagobotanic.org).

## **Frog Monitoring Workshops**

These workshops are for both beginning and experienced monitors. We'll teach and review the calls of our 13 species of frogs and toads, help new monitors find survey sites, and discuss the monitoring protocol. Experienced monitors are encouraged to attend, in order to learn any protocol changes, obtain data sheets, review frog calls, and share lessons learned from last year.

### **Tuesday, February 7 – 7-9 pm, Volunteer Resource Center (Cook County)**

Located at 6100 N. Central on Chicago's northwest side. This workshop is co-sponsored by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and the Chicago Park District. Contact Bill Koenig, 773/631-0237.

### **Thursday, February 16 – 7-9pm, Sugar Creek Administrative Building of the Forest Preserve District of Will County (Will County)**

Located at 17540 W. Laraway Road in Joliet. Take Rte. 80 to Briggs, head south on Briggs (turns into 52-S), then west on Laraway Road, and look to the north side of the street after about a half mile. Contact Rebecca Key, 815/722-7366.

### **Wednesday, February 22 – 7-9pm, Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake (McHenry County).**

Located at 2112 Behan Road, just south of Hwy. 176, between Hwy. 31 and the Fox River. Heading NE from – Crystal Lake on Hwy. 176, turn right on Behan Road after passing Valley View/Silver Lake Road and take another right at the end of the road. Please call 815/479-5779 to pre-register.

### **Saturday, February 25 – 9am-noon, Pottawattomie Park, St. Charles (Kane County)**

Coming west on Route 64 (called Main St. in St. Charles), turn north at 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., two blocks before the river. Second Ave ends at Pottawattomie Park – head west and go to the large building down by the river. Contact Mary Ochsenschlager, 630/584-1885.

### **Tuesday, February 28 – 7-8:30pm, At the Valparaiso branch of Porter County Public Library, (Porter County).**

Located at 103 Jefferson Street in Valparaiso, Indiana. Workshop will be in meeting Room A. For location details, see: <http://www.pcpls.lib.in.us/>. Contact Alan Resetar with questions, 219/465-7231.

## **IBMN Presents: Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Workshop – March 5**

This workshop will be hosted by the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network (IBMN) on Saturday, March 5, 10am-2:30pm at the Gail Borden Public Library. Registration for this workshop starts at 9:30 am. The keynote speaker is Paul Labus, and his subject is the Karner Blue Butterfly habitat restoration and re-introduction efforts in Indiana. Doug Taron will conduct a breakout session on skippers, and Mel Manner

will conduct a session for beginners on family characteristics. It is recommended that you bring a sack lunch. Snacks and drinks will be provided. The workshop will be held at the Gail Borden Public Library at 270 N. Grove Ave. More details can be found at the IBMN website at [www.bfly.org](http://www.bfly.org) under "Training Workshops". To register or for more information, please contact Mel Manner at [melmanner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:melmanner@sbcglobal.net).

### **New Invaders – Invasive Species Identification Workshop – February 18**

Saturday, February 18, 10am – 2pm at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Learn how to identify and report the top 17 NEW invasive, exotic species for the Chicago Region. All materials will be provided and there is no fee. To register or for more information, contact Julie Sacco, Volunteer Coordinator at 815/423-2148 or [jsacco@fs.fed.us](mailto:jsacco@fs.fed.us).

### **Amphibians, Frogs and Toads of Midewin – February 25**

Learn to recognize species by their vocalizations. Volunteers will then monitor at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie at least three evenings between March-July, working in pairs. There is no fee for this workshop. To register or for questions, contact Julie Sacco, Volunteer Coordinator at 815/423-2148 or [jsacco@fs.fed.us](mailto:jsacco@fs.fed.us).

### **CW Interpretive Writing Workshop**

February 13 & 14 and February 15 & 16 at the Brookfield Zoo

The Chicago Wilderness Interpreters Task Force will offer these two, two-day workshops to develop and enhance interpretive writing skills. Taught by Alan Leftridge, former Editor for the National Association for Interpretation's (NAI) Legacy magazine, these workshops will sharpen your skills for connecting with your audiences by using strategies promoted by the NAI, and the National Park Service. \$40 fee includes lunch for both days. The registration date for this workshop has already passed, to see if you can still register, please contact Chris Mulvaney, at 847/242-6424 or [cmulvaney@chicagowilderness.org](mailto:cmulvaney@chicagowilderness.org)

### **CW Burn Training Workshop**

February 25 & 26 at the Forest Preserve District of Cook County Volunteer Resource Center. The Chicago Wilderness Natural Resources Management Team will be offering a Midwest Ecological Prescription Burn Crew Member training workshop for volunteer stewards on Saturday & Sunday, February 25 & 26 at the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Volunteer Resource Center. This course is intended to provide volunteers with the background necessary to participate safely on the crew of a controlled burn. There is no charge for the workshop, but you must register to attend. Space is limited and is available on a first come, first served basis. To see if there is still room to register or for questions, please contact, Chris Mulvaney, at 847/242-6424 or [cmulvaney@chicagowilderness.org](mailto:cmulvaney@chicagowilderness.org).

### **Calculating the Cost of Stewardship for Conservation Easements Workshop**

February 23, 2006, 10am – 2pm, Lisle, IL.

The Land Trust Alliance and the 12 member land trusts of the Chicago Region Land Conservation Coalition will be holding their first workshop on February 23. The workshop will focus on calculating the costs of stewardship for conservation easements and will be led by the Minnesota Land Trust. There is great interest in the region on this topic and the workshop will be open to all Chicago Coalition members as well as key professionals in the region. The cost is \$75 for LTA members and \$90 for non-members. Contact Johanna Garsenstein, Chicago Field Representative at 773/957-9919 or [jgarsenstein@lta.org](mailto:jgarsenstein@lta.org) for registration information. Scholarships and tuition assistance is available.

### **Native Wildflower Workshop – February 11**

Learn to grow prairie plants for your garden or restoration project. This hands-on workshop will take you through seed preparation, getting the seedlings started and transplanting the seedlings. This workshop is free to attend and will be held at the Forest Park Nature Center in Peoria, IL. For more information, contact Suzie Barber, Peoria Wilds, at 309/249-3024 or email at [barber\\_suzie@yahoo.com](mailto:barber_suzie@yahoo.com)

### **Start Your Own Woodland Wildflower Program – March 4**

Saturday, March 4th, 9:00-11:00 AM - Early American Museum, Mahomet

Create a woodland garden in your own yard. You do not need much space- under a hardwood tree will work fine! Learn how to prepare the bed, find plants, plant your wildflowers, and tend your garden.

FREE! Giveaways and door prizes! Registration is required. For more information or to register call Rachel Dawsey, Horticulture Education, Champaign County Forest Preserves at 217/896-2455; E-mail [horted@ccfpd.org](mailto:horted@ccfpd.org).

### **Woods, Weeds, Water, Wildlife --- Managing Your Natural Resources**

Landowners and anyone else interested in managing and enhancing the natural resources of their property are encouraged to attend this half-day event. Sessions will be offered on subjects including managing your woodlot, urban tree care, rain gardens, and backyard ponds, living with wildlife, invasive species management, and prairie establishment. This event will be held on Saturday, March 11 at 4-H Memorial Camp, Monticello, IL (near Allerton Park); from 8am-12:30pm; Registration is \$10. This event is sponsored by Champaign and Piatt County Extension Units along with Grand Prairie Friends/Prairie Grove Volunteers, IDNR, INPC, and INHS. For more information, call Piatt County Extension at 217/762-2191 or Rick Larimore at 217/244-6716.

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## **IV. CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS**

### **14<sup>th</sup> Annual Natural Landscaping Seminar – February 25**

Learn about native plant landscaping at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Natural Landscaping Seminar, “Backyard Beauties and Beasts.” Sponsored by the Wildflower Preservation and Propagation Committee, and the McHenry County Defenders. This seminar will be held at the McHenry County College Conference Center on Saturday, February 25. Cost \$30, in advance, or \$35 at the door, including lunch. For more information and to register contact Carol Rice at 847/382-1181 or [Goforsix@aol.com](mailto:Goforsix@aol.com). A couple examples of some of the topics covered at the seminar include:

The Myths of Coyote Ugly - Chris Anchor of the Cook County Forest Preserve District will speak on “Coyotes in Urban Areas.” There has been a consortium of experts studying urban coyote populations in Northeast Illinois, led by Dr. Stanley Gehrt of Ohio State University, Cook County Forest Preserve District, Brookfield Zoo, and the Max McGraw Wildlife Federation of Barrington. Here about the interesting findings from this unprecedented study.

Monarch Magic – Back by popular demand is Randy Korb from the Audubon Society in Wisconsin. Randy delighted the audience at last year’s seminar with his “Meet the Frogs” program. This year, Randy will be back with a talk on butterflies, caterpillars, and all things lepidoptera.

### **Wildly Successful – February 25**

Saturday, February 25, 8:30am – 4:30pm. “Wildly Successful” is a day long seminar being held at The Morton Arboretum in the Thornhill Education Center. The seminar explores successful natural areas restoration projects, current strategies for sharing environmental knowledge, the essential input of volunteers, and the far-reaching influence of people who care. The cost is \$95 (Arboretum members \$75). For more information and/or to register visit [www.mortonarb.org](http://www.mortonarb.org).

### **Maintaining the Character of McHenry County – March 10**

March 10, Bull Valley Golf Club, Woodstock, IL

"Maintaining the Character of McHenry County" is an all-day conference to provide local officials creative tools to protect water, natural and cultural resources as their communities develop. The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) is working closely with the McHenry County Aquatic Resource Protection Alliance (MCARPA) to hold this conference as part of a Chicago Wilderness funded project for outreach to professional and development communities on sustainable development. For more information and to download a registration form, visit <http://www.nipc.org/events/mchenry/> . Questions? Contact Irene Hogstrom at [ireneh@nipc.org](mailto:ireneh@nipc.org) or 312-386-8678.

### **Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference – March 11**

Sinsinawa Mound Center, 585 County Road Z, Sinsinawa, Wisconsin 53824

This conference is designed for landowners from Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Agency professionals, consultants, forestry industry representatives and others interested in woodlands and natural resources are welcome. Concurrent sessions will provide participants with the knowledge and skills to manage woodlands using good stewardship principles. For more information and to register visit <http://go.communityseason.com/?goto=uwex> or contact Peggy Compton at 608/342-1633 or [peggy.compton@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:peggy.compton@ces.uwex.edu).

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## **V. EVENTS AND LECTURES**

### **The Greatest Good – February 9**

You are invited to a special screening of “The Greatest Good” at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum on Thursday, February 9. This two-hour documentary helps tell the story of the U.S. Forest Service. The program will begin with a reception at 6:00 p.m. and the film screening at 6:30 p.m. Narrated by Charles Osgood of CBS News, the film explores the sometimes-controversial history of the agency charged with the management of America’s public forests. The deadline to RSVP has already passed, please contact Pat Thrasher at 815/423-6370 about reservations and more information.

### **Owl Prowl – March 15**

Winter is an excellent time to call to the owls. Join Chicago Audubon Society’s Jerry Garden for a captivating night exploring the mystery of owls in Highland Park’s Rosewood Park. Fee is \$26 for Park District members/\$33 for non-members. Register for class # NAT0031 at 847/835-8261.

### **Edens Lost and Found – May 18**

Chicago is one of four cities in America profiled in Edens Lost and Found, a national PBS series that will air on May 18, 2006. The program highlights Chicago stories of urban rebirth through the eyes of experts and committed citizens who make a difference. The series has been produced by Harry Wiland and Dale Bell for PBS. For more information on the series visit <http://www.edenslostandfound.org/>.

## **Nature in Fragments: Overcoming Sprawl through Enlightened Land-Use Planning - A Lecture and Discussion – February 8**

February 8, 2:30-4:30pm at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum

Dr. Michael Klemens, a senior conservationist with the Wildlife Conservation Society and director of its Metropolitan Conservation Alliance, has authored numerous publications on the effects of suburban sprawl on wildlife and ecosystems. His most recent publication, *Nature in Fragments: The Legacy of Sprawl*, which he co-edited with Elizabeth Johnson, contains numerous contributions from leading biological and social scientists, conservationists, and land-use professionals. This comprehensive book describes how "smart growth" and "new urbanist" initiatives can be used in conjunction with knowledge of species' needs and ecosystem limits. A January 15, 2006 article in *The New York Times* extolled Klemens' practical successes in helping to establish zoning ordinances that protect biodiversity.

This event is sponsored by The Chicago Academy of Sciences and the Center for Humans and Nature; the lecture will be held in the McCormick room of the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, 2430 N. Cannon Drive, Chicago, IL. To RSVP contact [fleslie@rcn.com](mailto:fleslie@rcn.com).

## **2006 Midewin Lecture Series**

For more information on the lectures listed below, please contact the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie at 815/423-6370 or visit their website at [www.fs.fed.us/mntp](http://www.fs.fed.us/mntp).

### Historic Cemeteries of Midewin – February 16

Dennis Reavis, Midewin Heritage Association

### Landscape Genealogy: Surveys, Maps and Aerial Photographs - March 2

Dave Lloyd, Forest Preserve District of Cook County

### Exploring the Mother Highway; The Evolution of Route 66 – March 16

Larry McClellan

### River Watch: Monitoring Midewin Streams – April 6

Jason Zylka, Biological Technician, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

### An Evening with John Muir – April 20

Pat Thrasher, Interpretive Specialist, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

### Dragonflies: Ancient Predators of Wetlands – May 18

Jane and John Balaban, North Branch Restoration Project

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## **VI. RESOURCES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Invasive Species Resources List & INPC Vegetation Guidelines**

A couple of items were distributed at the recent herbicide workshop to help volunteers with control and management of exotic, invasive species. First, a list of resources was provided to help those in search of information about invasive species (a copy is attached to this email). Second, the most recent version of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) Vegetation Management Guidelines (on CD-Rom) was distributed free of charge. We are in the process of getting this manual on a website for downloading, in

the meantime, if you would like a copy of this INPC manual free of charge, please send your name and mailing address to Karen Tharp at [ktharp@tnc.org](mailto:ktharp@tnc.org).

### **Community Garden Groups Invited to Apply for Fiskars Orange Thumb Grant Program - Deadline: February 17, 2006**

Fiskars Garden & Outdoor Living ( <http://fiskars.com/US/> ) is now accepting applications for its 2006 Project Orange Thumb grants program. The company created Project Orange Thumb to support community garden groups in the U.S. with tools and materials. Project Orange Thumb recipients will receive grants of up to \$1,500 in Fiskars Garden Tools (retail value), and up to \$800 in gardening-related materials such as plants, seeds, mulch, etc. Recipients will also receive Project Orange Thumb t-shirts for garden members/volunteers. Gardens and/or gardening projects geared toward community involvement, neighborhood beautification, sustainable agriculture, and/or horticultural education are eligible. Community garden groups, as well as schools, youth groups, community centers, camps, clubs, treatment facilities, etc. are encouraged to apply. Only group applications will be considered; single individuals are not eligible. The program is open to any community garden in the fifty states and the District of Columbia. Visit the Fiskars Web site for complete program guidelines and application instructions. RFP Link: <http://fconline.fdncenter.org/pnd/10000427/fiskars>. For additional RFPs in Community Improvement/Development, visit: [http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/cat\\_community.jhtml](http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/cat_community.jhtml)

### **IDNR State Wildlife Grant - Request for Project Pre-Proposals Deadline: April 14, 2006**

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has announced its request for pre-proposals for projects funded through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service State Wildlife Grant (SWG) program. The State Wildlife Grants are distributed specifically for the protection and management non-game species in the greatest need of conservation, as identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. The grant program will fund projects such as wildlife protection and stewardship and those that improve land and water resources. Planning projects such as applied wildlife research, monitoring, evaluation and data management may also qualify. The Illinois Wildlife Action Plan and information on the pre-application for the State Wildlife Grant program are available on the IDNR web site at <http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/Wildliferesources/theplan/> or by contacting the IDNR Watershed Protection Section at tel. 217/524-2544, e-mail [jcross@dnrmail.state.il.us](mailto:jcross@dnrmail.state.il.us).

### **National Forest Foundation Offers Community Assistance Program Deadline: April 28, 2006; and September 8, 2006**

The National Forest Foundation ( <http://www.natlforests.org/> ) established the community Assistance Program to promote the creation of locally based forest partnerships that seek to build ecological, social, and economic sustainability. The program will support newly formed nonprofit organizations in need of start-up capacity-building and which intend to proactively and inclusively engage the local community in forest management and conservation issues on and around national forests and grasslands.

The NFF CAP provides start-up grants in the \$5,000-\$15,000 range, as well as basic tools and guidance, to enable newly forming grassroots community groups to resolve differences and play a more active role in the sustainable management of nearby National Forests and surrounding communities.

Organizations applying for funding through CAP will be considered based on need and will not be required to match the NFF contribution. CAP funds can be used for a wide range of tools, including technical assistance, training, consultants, community outreach, obtaining 501(c)(3) status, group facilitation, basic start-up and operating costs, materials and equipment, program development, nonprofit management skill-building, and communications. Applications will be accepted from newly formed

community-based nonprofits in need of capacity-building and start-up organizational and technical assistance that wish to proactively engage in natural resource issues on and around national forests and grasslands. Applicants must have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status or use a nonprofit fiscal sponsor organization with that designation until they have obtained 501(c)(3) status themselves. Established organizations, fire safe councils, federal agencies, and state or local governmental entities are not eligible to apply. The submission dates for the 2006 Community Assistance Program are as follows: Round 1 proposals due: April 28, 2006; Round 2 proposals due: September 8, 2006. Visit the NFF Web site for complete program information. RFP Link: <http://fconline.fdncenter.org/pnd/10000428/natlforests> For additional RFPs in Environment, visit: [http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/cat\\_environment.jhtml](http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/cat_environment.jhtml)

### **The Common Counsel Foundation's Grassroots Exchange Fund**

The Common Counsel Foundation's ( <http://commoncounsel.org/> ) Grassroots Exchange Fund (formerly the Grantee Exchange Fund) provides discretionary small grants to build bridges between grassroots organizations throughout the United States. The fund was established to encourage social change organizations to seek technical assistance from one another, and to help build regional and national networks among organizations. GXF prioritizes grants to small community- based groups seeking to meet face-to-face with other grassroots organizations, to build collaborative campaigns, and to benefit from technical assistance opportunities. GXF awards grants averaging \$300-\$800 to approximately sixty organizations per year to cover training, travel, or conference expenses. The fund typically makes grants to grassroots community-based organizations working on economic, environmental, and social-justice initiatives that give voice to the needs of low-income people, women, youth, and people of color. Current criteria for GXF grants include the urgency of the action, strategy session, or conference to the overall work of the applicant organization; the extent to which a small grant from GXF would make a significant impact; the extent to which the applicant meets core Common Counsel criteria -- membership-led groups organizing for social, economic, or environmental change. Visit the Common Counsel Foundation Web site for complete program information, funding restrictions, and application procedures. RFP Link: <http://fconline.fdncenter.org/pnd/10000435/commoncounsel>. For additional RFPs in Philanthropy and Voluntarism, visit: [http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/cat\\_medical\\_philanthropy.jhtml](http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/cat_medical_philanthropy.jhtml)

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## **VII. JUST FOR FUN**

### **River of Words - Poetry and Art 2006 Contest for Grades K through 12**

The deadline is February 15, 2006. Each year, in affiliation with The Library of Congress Center for the Book, River of Words conducts a free international poetry and art contest for youth on the theme of watersheds. The contest is designed to help youth explore the natural and cultural history of the place they live, and to express, through poetry and art, what they discover. Entry form and contest information at <http://www.riverofwords.org/contest/index.html> .

### **So Much to See in February**

*From: [Essays on Nature](#) by Virginia S. Eifert, 1967*

To the Indians, February was the lean month, the starving month, the month when even the wolves went hungry and howled like lost spirits on the prairie. To one who knows the calendar of events out of doors, February is still a lean and hungry month, yet as in every month, there always is so much to see. Here, in the last stand of winter and the first tentative touch of spring, are the living things whose very scarcity gives them an aura of excitement.

Compared with the grandeur and abundance of June, February truly may appear bald and empty. Yet February's wealth is not in vastness nor numbers. The song of one cardinal on a February morning takes the place of the chorus of a hundred birds in May, and is the sweeter for having been heard alone in its perfection. The flowers of February may be limited to one half-frozen crocus and a handful of maple flowers flung upon the sky, but after a long winter that is not yet past, this blossoming interlude in February is all the more wonderful. So it is with all the things which one may see in this wintery month – within the woods, along the roads, beside the streams, upon the wind. There is so much to see in February.

There are the first weak-winged stoneflies crawling upon the wet rocks of a thawed stream, and the first phoebe efficiently snapping them up as they venture into the sunshine. There are the dancing clouds of winter mosquitoes, and the same mild day that brings them forth may see the flitting, ragged, black and golden wings of that butterfly, the mourning cloak, which winters behind a tatter of hickory bark.

There may be those glowing bits of mushroom flesh, the scarlet cups, brilliant as a tanager's feather lost among the winter's leaves. There may be orange-capped, sticky, velvet-stem mushrooms jutting determinedly from the trunk of a willow or an elm. Upon a sunny hillside there may be a basking garter snake, up from its winter burrow in the deceptive warmth of the day, thawing its chilly blood in the weak sunshine. There may be a rabbit leaping from its cupped bed of dry grass, squirrels gathering mouthfuls of dry shingle-oak leaves to mend the big leaf-nests that have worn a trifle thin under the winter storms.

There is always a robin or two chirruping importantly in town, robins that are dignified and a trifle smug with the honor of being the First Robin and making all the front pages of the local press. There very likely are bluebirds, too, infinitely bluer than any bird possibly could be, in the orchard or along the road. The prairie horned larks come flying in a scattered migration over the February sky and return to the wet, plowed fields where northern horned larks have fed all winter. Mourning doves may appear before the end of the month, and so may the caroling redwinged blackbirds in the marsh. Short-eared owls cruise low over the dead grass of the prairie fields, hunting for the mice that have grown scarcer than they were in autumn. Juncos and tree sparrows in the weed patches begin to sing sweet tinkling songs that presage the flight to Canada. An in the woods, on wet banks where ice still lingers, the beds of moss are brilliant emerald. They are the greenest things in the whole February landscape just now – greener than the winter wheat, brighter by far than the algae and water cress in the slow stream, or the leaves of Christmas fern that wintered under the snow.

There is indeed so much to see in February – small things, exciting things, that are part of February and the doorstep to the spring. (*Feb. 1947*)

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*Thanks to the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to this newsletter: Mel Manner, Judy Pollock, Betsy Allen, Steve Bailey, Patricia Hayes, Connie Carroll Cunningham, Jamie Ellis, Carolyn Brown Hodge, and Julie Sacco AND for contributions from the following newsletters: Chicago Wilderness Member Bulletin, The Habitat Herald, Forest Park Nature Center's Tracks & Trails, the Park District of Highland Park's Natural Areas Notebook, the Acorn – the Newsletter for Natural Area volunteers in McHenry County, and A Prairie Rendezvous – A GPF/PGV newsletter.*