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Find us on the web at:

[www.parklands.org](http://www.parklands.org)

**Newsletter**

**April 2006 –**

**May 2006**

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## PARKLANDS GAINS NEW PRESERVE

ParkLands Foundation gave central Illinois residents a special reason to celebrate Earth Day 2006 by increasing the amount of protected natural areas, thanks to a \$454,000 grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation in Chicago. We have used the grant to purchase 129 acres in southeastern Woodford County along the Mackinaw River to extend our nature preserve system, improve the ecological health of the Mackinaw River watershed, and maintain public access for nature enjoyment and education.

The two tracts are located in Montgomery Township, near the Kansas Township line (plat map: T25N, R1W, Section 12), and is contiguous with the western part of ParkLands Wyatt's Ford Nature Preserve on the north side of the river and not far south from Ridgetop Hill Prairie Nature Preserve (see map of those preserves at: [http://www.parklands.org/html/properties\\_map.html](http://www.parklands.org/html/properties_map.html)). It starts at the end of Denman Road (County Road 1975E). The combination of this newly acquired property, the current north Wyatt's Ford property, and a 52-acre private inholding will be named **The Letcher Basin Preserve**.

This land acquisition will help interconnect 1,120 acres of existing conservation lands owned and/or managed by the ParkLands Foundation in southeastern Woodford County and 202 acres owned by a conservation landowner, providing ParkLands with a perpetual conservation easement. The currently farmed land will be restored to native prairie and floodplain forest, and public trails will eventually be created. This grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation will bring the total area of this southeastern Woodford County nature preserve system to some 1,350 acres, an unusually large area for central Illinois.

Many Board members contributed substantially to making this happen. We particularly thank Board Member Matt Fraker and his wife Sherri Thornton and Board Member Christie Kennett and her husband Greg for major contributions. Our biggest challenge now is raising funds to buy seed to plant the prairie.

The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation ([www.illinoiscleanenergy.org](http://www.illinoiscleanenergy.org)) invests in clean energy development and land preservation efforts, working with communities and citizens to improve environmental quality in Illinois. The Foundation supports programs and projects that will improve energy efficiency, develop renewable energy resources, and preserve and enhance natural areas and wildlife habitats throughout the state.

*Angelo Capparella  
ParkLandsPresident*

### TOWNSHIP LAND SWAP UPDATE

The preliminary agreement between ParkLands Foundation and Money Creek Township officials reported in the last newsletter was dependant upon input from the citizenry and approval by the Township Board. At their April meeting, the board decided to decline ParkLands' offer of 2½ acres of land along the P.J. Keller highway for a Township building. Instead, this land will remain with ParkLands and be part of the property designated as an official Illinois Land and Water Reserve. They also decided that they preferred to keep in service township road 2040E, rather than de-commission it.

*Angelo Capparella*

### IN MEMORIAM

Edna Engberg died February 15, 2006 at the Grandview Christian Home in Cambridge, Minnesota. She was a member of ParkLands for nearly 25 years, served on our board for four years and was membership chair for two. Edna's first love was to hike the trails in the Merwin Preserve, and she also enjoyed helping with maintaining the trails and other activities such as repairing benches, bridges, and signs. She was active in these endeavors until failing health required that she move to Cambridge in 1999 to be near relatives.

Those of us who were privileged to know her will always have fond memories of our work together at Parklands.

*Dale Birkenholz*

THANK YOU AGAIN! (CORRECTED) Our thanks go to Sue Savage for editing the newsletter.

WANTED: Someone to help Tim Lindenbaum maintain the ParkLands Foundation website. Contact him at [tlindenbaum@dtntspeed.net](mailto:tlindenbaum@dtntspeed.net) or 309-531-7065.

# FIGHTING HONEYSUCKLE — IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

In a recent newsletter, Roger Anderson wrote about a group of volunteers who worked on a nasty crop of non-native Amur honeysuckle last fall. Their goal was to help prevent Merwin's native woodlands west of the Stein trail and north of Marsh Creek from being taken over by that invasive plant. They met for a typical ParkLands Saturday morning outing.

My son Chris and I were there in spirit only because we were immersed in sports, nearing the end of an NCHS Ironmen football season in which Chris' team placed second in state.

Chris and I used to attend a lot of those Saturday morning ParkLands outings when he was little, back before school, extracurricular activities, and sports took over our lives. We're lucky now if we can make it out to two Saturdays a year. (Burns are our favorite.) We approached Tim Lindenbaum, Land Steward, and Roger Anderson, Director, with the story of our frustration. They responded quickly, giving us our own ParkLands project that we could take ownership of and work on when our busy schedules permitted.

Since early last fall, Chris and I have been pulling honeysuckle from Merwin. We haven't been counting the plants we've pulled, but we're sure there have been thousands of them. We've been able to pull most plants

by hand. For larger ones, we work together and have also found that a large crowbar can persuade even the most established plants to let go of their grip on the forest floor. We've heard that controlled grazing by goats can do the job too, but since they don't remove the roots, the plants come back. Goat grazing or herbicide-free cutting only works if done repeatedly until roots no longer have the ability to rejuvenate their plants.

Back when Chris was little, our ParkLands Saturdays were different. Pushing him in a wheelbarrow as we delivered loads of woodchips or working alongside him while pulling garlic mustard or multiflora rose was a lot of fun. There's still an element of fun in what we do, but there's something else too. Teenagers tend to go their own way. The drive out there and the time in the woods give us time to talk and be together, time that just doesn't seem to be there otherwise.

If you think you might have a similar interest in the feelings of ownership and satisfaction that your own ParkLands project can give you, you may contact Tim Lindenbaum, Park Steward, by e-mail at [tlindenbaum@dtnspeed.net](mailto:tlindenbaum@dtnspeed.net), or (309) 531-7065.

*Bill and Chris Roth*

## EVENT CALENDAR

May-June 2006

### Walks

Late Spring  
Wildflower Walk  
Merwin, West Gate  
Sunday, May 14, 1:00 p.m.

### Volunteer Workdays

**Garlic Mustard Control**  
Sat., May 6, 9:00 a.m.  
Merwin, South Gate  
Leader - Tim Lindenbaum  
309-531-7065

### **Sweet Clover Control**

Sat., June 3, 9:00 AM  
Merwin, West Gate  
Leader - Mary Horgan  
309-527-5636

### **Note:**

Dates of Volunteer Workdays are subject to change. To receive up-to-date information, ask Tim Lindenbaum to put you on the e-mail contact list. Tim can be reached at [tlindenbaum@dtnspeed.net](mailto:tlindenbaum@dtnspeed.net) or 309-531-7065.

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