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Find us on the web at:
www.parklandsfoundation.org

**Newsletter
February -
March 2009**

MIGHTY OAK FALLS IN PARKLANDS FOREST

John English died January 6, 2009 at the age of 91 years. Guy Fraker offered a moving tribute, Roger Anderson and I, and many others contributed memories at his memorial on January 18. Sally Rudolf's obituary in the *Pantagraph* cataloged the many contributions John made to this community. John asked me to join ParkLands Board in 1969, and I was often his partner in tree planting and other activities for many years. Thus, I am honored to offer this tribute so today's members will learn of his service to ParkLands.

John was a founding member and served for more than 30 years on the Board of Directors. During that period he led and took part in much of the development: planting trees and shrubs, prairie burns, and building fences, bridges, and gates on the Merwin and other ParkLands properties.

In the early years of our existence John would drive his tractor or one borrowed from Comlara Park to the site of the developing Merwin preserve. We borrowed the park's tractor; they used our tree planter. At that time we were not rolling in money, and we relied mostly on whatever tree seedlings were available from the Illinois Department of Conservation. Today, many of those trees are part of the developing forest in several parts of the Merwin Preserve.

John also facilitated the establishment of the first restored prairies in the ParkLands area. He secured some old prairie grass seed from the Soil Conservation Service and drove his tractor with an oat seeder attached to the rear to Comlara Park where we sowed the first restored prairie in the area. I remember poking the seeds with a stick through that seeder. Later ParkLands purchased a Truax seeder, one designed for the fluffy prairie grass seeds. By the way, that 7-acre prairie is one of the best in the area. It is located east of the bridge at the south end of Evergreen Lake.

It would be fitting if it were to be named the English Prairie.



Dale Birkenholz



John's family suggests appropriate memorials would be to make a donation to ParkLands Foundation and/or go out and plant a tree. Our address is on p. 2

LAND ACQUISITION TO PROTECT SIX MILE CREEK

The ParkLands Foundation recently acquired approximately 48 acres in early November at the McClure Farm land auction that took place in Carlock. The 48 acres sits southeast of Dixon Ford Road and sits west of the Lake Evergreen spillway. It adjoins approximately 160 protected acres along Six Mile Creek right where the creek drains into the Mackinaw River. This 160 acres has been protected by the Prairielands Preservation Foundation in an effort that also involved the city of Bloomington.

The new tract is an upside down "L" shaped piece

of ground with a small tributary of Six Mile Creek and considerable rolling mature oak timber. Previously, the ground had been grazed and had some agriculture on it. The purchase was made with the option of reselling the ground to the Prairielands Preservation Foundation sometime in the next five years.

By further buffering the Six Mile Creek watershed below Lake Evergreen, this piece adds considerable protection to the Mackinaw River in this area.

Matt Fraker

First interns gain skills and calluses — ParkLands benefits

During the past summer, we hired two undergraduate students who worked as interns for the ParkLands Foundation. An internship is designed to contribute to a student's professional and personal development by working in a professional environment that is related to a career area they may wish to pursue. The two students, Ashley Heilingoetter, an undergraduate Biology major at Illinois Wesleyan University, and Jamie Herold, who graduated from Illinois State University with a degree in Biology in December of last year, came with glowing letters of recommendation from their respective institutions. The contributions of both of the young women to the ParkLands Foundation during their internship met or exceeded our high expectations for their performances based on their recommendations.

Our land steward, Jason Shoemaker, was the immediate supervisor of the interns and he involved them in the management and restoration of our native vegetation and maintenance activities on ParkLands' properties. These activities included controlling invasive woody plants by cutting stems and applying herbicide to the cut stems, controlling sweet clover and poison parsnip in our restored prairies, controlling invasive weeds, such as teasel and thistle, mowing and maintaining trails, and placing plastic deer guards on



2008 Interns Ashley Heilingoetter (left) and Jamie Herold demonstrate their shoveling skills, helping our land steward to maintain ParkLands trails.

tree seedlings. We planted 16,000 trees on our Kenyon property this past spring and the two interns and Jason placed deer guards on 1,600 of these seedlings.

Jason described our interns as being very helpful, hard working, motivated, and cheerful, and we hope they benefited from their intern experience as much as the ParkLands Foundation. We look forward to hiring additional interns this coming summer.

Roger Anderson

Calendar of Events

Savanna Tree Thinning

Saturday, Feb. 7, 9 a.m.
Merwin Preserve West Gate
Leader Jason Shoemaker
309-531-7065
shoemaj@hotmail.com

South Savanna

Exotic Plant Removal
Saturday, Feb. 21, 9 a.m.
Merwin Preserve West Gate
Leader Jason Shoemaker
309-531-7065
shoemaj@hotmail.com

Prairie Burns

March
Date and location
are weather dependent
Leader Jason Shoemaker
309-531-7065
shoemaj@hotmail.com

Anderson Retirement Symposium

Friday, March 27
www.bio.illinoisstate.edu/psr

Wildflower Walk

Saturday, April 11, 1:00 p.m.
Merwin Preserve
South Gate
Leader: Roger Anderson
309-452-5728

NOTE: Dates are subject to change. To receive up-to-date information, ask Jason Shoemaker to put you on the email contact list or go to the website: www.parklandsfoundation.org.

Roger Anderson Retirement Symposium

What: Prairie and Savanna Restoration: State of the Art and Science
When: March 27, 2009
Where: ISU Alumni Center, 101 N. Main St.
Program: daylong presentations and posters and evening banquet at which Guy Fraker will talk about Roger's contributions to local restoration
For More Info.: www.bio.illinoisstate.edu/psr or Angelo Capparella (apcappar@ilstu.edu) 309-438-5124

Thank You ParkLands Volunteers!

I would like to personally thank all the volunteers who helped with the work day activities during 2008. Your help has enhanced many of our lands in many ways. Activities like trail maintenance, tree and brush cutting, fence building, exotic and weedy plant removal were made possible by you...the volunteers. The 2009 work day activity schedule will be posted online in January. I look forward to seeing you at our next sessions.

Jason Shoemaker

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