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

**Newsletter
April -
May 2009**

ParkLands chosen for organizational assessment

The ParkLands Foundation was one of two land trusts in Illinois selected by The Land Trust Alliance and Prairie State Conservation Coalition to undergo a Guided Organizational Assessment in 2009.

The Guided Organizational Assessment is based on the Land Trust Standards and Practices, which were created by the LTA in 1989 as the ethical and technical guidelines for land trusts. The assessment is designed to help land trusts make changes or improvements in their structure and capacity to fully realize their mission.

The process will involve intensive on-site assessment and strategic planning in order to address ParkLands' specific needs.

The Executive Committee has designated an ad hoc committee to lead ParkLands through this process. Committee members include Eric Smith, Chairman, Julie Elzanati and Mary Horgan. For more information about LTA and the accreditation process please go to www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

*Mary Horgan
Vice President*

Red Cedar — McLean County native found in Merwin Prairie

The red cedar, like many other trees called cedar, is not a cedar. It is a juniper. The leaves on the lower foliage, if disturbed by browsing, will become quite sharp. Above the browsing level they become quite soft, resembling that of an arborvitae.

The flowers are not very conspicuous. The male trees have yellow green tinted flowers while the female trees have a reddish cast. The female fruits are small bright blue berries that give the tree a blue color by late summer in a good year. These fruit last into the winter and are finally consumed by many birds, especially the cedar wax wing. These birds scatter thousands of the seed and fence rows can become a solid mass of red cedar. It takes two years for the seed to germinate.

The wood is bright red and very fragrant and is used primarily to line chest and closets to keep the wool moth from destroying wool garments. The heartwood is very resistant to rot when in contact with the soil; the sap wood is not. Thousands of small cedar trees have been cut for fence posts but only the heartwood will be left after a few years.

The red cedar tree is an alternate host of the apple cedar rust. After a rain this bright red fungus-like structure swells and becomes quite showy.

It does little damage to the juniper but you don't want it spreading rust into a nearby apple orchard.

The red cedar is a native of Mclean County and most of the rest of the United States. This wide distribution has led to the development of many locally adapted varieties. For the most part you can move red cedar that have become locally adapted from one part of the country to any other.

About one hundred years ago the pfitzer juniper was introduced and was widely planted by homeowners as a slow growing ornamental around the base of the house. Fifty years later these slow growing small trees started to grow over the bottom half of windows and walks to the entrance of homes including my own. They had to be removed and replaced with smaller and slower growing varieties. There are plenty of cultivars to fill this need and plenty more if you want to change the color of the foliage too. Beyond that our red cedar can easily hybridize with other juniper species, and many of these are entering into the market as oriental junipers. As the number of oriental junipers reaches such gigantic levels, maybe its time to get back to basics and remember that the juniper berries are an essential ingredient in gin.

John English

Editor's note: John loved to share his knowledge of trees with all who would listen/read. He left many articles with the ParkLands newsletter editor.



Meet your ParkLands board member — Matt Fraker



My name is Matt Fraker and my history with ParkLands goes pretty much all the way back to the beginning, as we are both about 42 years old, and my father, Guy Fraker, has been with ParkLands since its inception (just like he's been with me since mine) in 1967.

Thanks to my mother and father, ParkLands and nature were always a part of our childhood; for this, my brother and I were very fortunate. My interest in birds started at a very young age, largely due to the time my family spent tromping around on the shoulders of the Mackinaw River. It was not until I had grown much older that I learned further the significance and the importance of this wonderful river and the areas protected near her by ParkLands. Largely through the influence of our senior scientists, such as Roger Anderson and Dale Birkenholz, I grew to know and love not just the birds, but also the plants, trees —really the entire ecosystem as a whole.

I am currently the owner of a four doctor veterinary clinic named The Prairie Oak Veterinary Center in Normal. My wife Dr. Sherri Thornton and I have two boys ages 4 1/2 and 3, and I have a daughter who lives in Monticello

who is almost 7 years old. It is wonderful to see them also find a love in nature, and to watch them learn their birds and butterflies. I guess I see it is a passing of the torch — children really do need that wonderment in nature. And if any of them — really, if any of us — have the Mackinaw River as our torchbearer in these exercises, well then, we are all the more lucky for it. She is a wonderful, beautiful river, and I am very proud of the efforts of ParkLands in protecting her the way this organization has over its 42 year history.

Matt Fraker

Calendar of Events

Wildflower Walk

Saturday, April 11, 1:00 p.m.

Merwin Preserve
South Gate

Leader: Roger Anderson
309-452-5728

rcander@ilstu.edu

Wildflower Walk

Sunday, May 10, 1:00 p.m.

Merwin Preserve
South Gate

Leader: Roger Anderson
309-452-5728

rcander@ilstu.edu

Invasives Control

Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m.

Merwin Preserve North Gate

Leader: Jason Shoemaker
309-531-7065

shoemaj@hotmail.com

Invasives Control

Saturday, June 6, 9 a.m.

Merwin Preserve South Gate

Leader: Jason Shoemaker
309-531-7065

shoemaj@hotmail.com

Garlic Mustard Pull

April 25, 9 a.m.

Merwin Preserve
South Gate

Leader: Mary Horgan
309-527-5636

horgan@mcchs.org

NOTE: Dates are subject to change. Join Jason's e-mail list or log on to www.parklandsfoundation.org.

Thank You ParkLands Volunteers!

Letchers: Jamie Herold, Frank Zimmerman, Less Leuganville, Wayne Gustanson, Dave Jeffries, Frank Jabouski (father and son), and Jim Mohr for their help with the prescribed fire.

Gas Well: Jack Pfefferman, Jamie Herold, Dave and Pearl Jeffries, Frank Zimmerman, Less Leuganville, and Carol Loffran for help with the prescribed fire.

Merwin Prairie: Kristi Trendl, Angelo Capalero, Jamie Herold, Todd Bugg, Keely Austin, Don Schmidt, Lilly Choi, Jen Breaux, Jessica Sorgani, Katie Szymanski, Jonathan Damery, Phil Ferguson, Richard and Nancy Damery, Eric Smith, and Mitch Slater for your help with the prescribed fire.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Jason Shoemaker

Have an article, idea or photo for the newsletter?

Contact editor Gretchen Monti, 309-829-2450, or gretchen.monti@verizon.net

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