

ParkLands Foundation

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Admin. Director: Mike Hall

www.parklandsfoundation.org



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Newsletter February - March 2013

Planning For the Future - Strategically

At its regular meeting on January 14, 2013, the Board of Directors of the ParkLands Foundation adopted a Five Year Strategic Plan. The purpose of the plan is to set comprehensive goals and objectives with measurable strategies critical to achieving the organization's mission to preserve, protect and ecologically restore natural lands in the middle and upper Mackinaw River watershed.

During a two-year period, current Vice President Jim Franks led a strategic planning process that analyzed and evaluated the Foundation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to develop initiatives.

A robust list of organizational strengths was identified, but strategies to strengthen weakness, exploit opportunities, and protect against threats are the real focus of the plan.

Common to most volunteer organizations, sustaining leadership positions with highly committed individuals who must balance their active schedules is a challenge identified in the plan. Strategies to relieve leaders of day-to-day operational management of the organization and allow them more time to concentrate on initiatives to increase donor base, collaborate with other local conservation and ecological organizations, and promote public interest have already been implemented.

A part time management staff position was created and filled by Mike Hall in May 2012. This manager not only oversees daily operations, but also focuses on implementing the foundation's strategies.

At the time the Board of Directors adopted the plan, Vice President Jim Franks addressed those assembled with: "It is critical to the Foundation's continued success that the plan be monitored, updated and readopted annually along with the budget." Dwight D. Eisenhower

said: "Plans are nothing; planning is everything." Rewards and success are in the process.

A full version of the ParkLands Foundation Five Year Strategic Plan can be viewed on the website at www.parklandsfoundation.org/BoardofDirectors.

Mike Hall

The Vision Statement

ParkLands Foundation is a financially secure and professionally managed land trust that is well known in its mission area. We identify, protect and restore significant remnants of diverse native ecosystems within the middle and upper Mackinaw River watershed in McLean and Woodford counties. We create relationships with landowners, community leaders, educational institutions, youth organizations and other conservation groups to protect our native ecosystems and educate them on the importance of natural areas to the quality of life. We will attain Land Trust Alliance (LTA) accreditation to ensure use of best practices and to maximize access to grants and other funding resources.

Is Garlic Mustard Here to Stay?

Garlic mustard is the most abundant invasive herbaceous plant in central Illinois woodlands, and is common along portions of the Constitution Trail in Bloomington and Normal and parts of the ParkLands Merwin Preserve. Invasive organisms are species that are not native to locations where they establish viable populations in novel environments, and cause environmental and/or economic damage or create human health problems.

Garlic mustard is native to Eurasia and was first introduced into North America on Long Island, NY in 1868 as a vegetable green. It is a mustard family member, but has the taste and odor of garlic and has a high concentration of vitamin C. Genetic information indicates that garlic mustard was introduced several times in North America. It occurs in 37 US states and five Canadian provinces, and is most abundant in deciduous forests in eastern North America and adjacent Canada.

The plant is biennial, and in our area, garlic mustard seeds germinate in mid-February to late March. In its first year, the plant forms a basal rosette of leaves and remains green throughout the year. In the early spring (late March to early April) of its second year, the plant bolts and produces a rapidly elongating shoot that bears numerous small flowers with four white petals. By the end of May the plant begins to undergo senescence and has green fruits that mature and are shed from spindle

shaped fruit during July through late September. A single plant can produce more than 100 seeds. In dense patches there can be thousands of seeds shed per square meter. The seeds require exposure to cold-moist winter conditions before they germinate. Typically, 90% of the seeds produced in one year will germinate in the spring of the next year. However, the remaining seeds will germinate over a period of five - six years. This means that if second-year plants are removed annually from a site so no new seed enters the area, seedlings will be continually produced for 5 to 6 years but at diminishing numbers.

Garlic mustard usually has alternating years of high abundance of first- and second-year plants. Second-year plants are strong competitors of first-year plants and in years of high second-year plant abundance, few first-year plants survive to maturity. Consequently, there are few second-year plants in the following year, but a high abundance of first-year plants that resulted from seed produced by the large cohort of reproducing plants the previous year. In the next year, there is a high abundance of second-year plants because of large numbers of first-year plants in the prior year.

Garlic mustard has several features that give it an advantage over native species. Like most invasive organisms, garlic mustard left many of its natural predators, parasites, and diseases behind, so it does not have to invest energy to overcome the effects of these organisms like native organisms do. Few organisms use it as a source of food in its North American environment. However, white-tailed deer will consume the plant after they have eliminated most native plants by browsing, which also reduced competition for garlic mustard. The plant also produces chemicals that reduce seed germination and growth of competitor species, and kills mycorrhizal fungi that form beneficial relationships with about 90-95% of herbaceous forest understory plants. Despite these advantages, garlic mustard seems to be declining in some areas in North America, which will be considered in a forthcoming article.

Roger and Becky Anderson



Caring for ParkLands properties - *Wish List*

\$100 donation to purchase two carts to move the herbicide tanks

Email ParkLandsOffice@gmail.com or mail a donation check made out to ParkLands Foundation and identifying its purpose to: PO Box 3132, Bloomington, IL 61704-3132. And thank you!

Please consider giving your friends and family a ParkLands gift membership in 2012 (make that 2013!) We're asking you to nominate four friends and/or families and send us not less than \$25 for their 2013 dues.

We will send these new members a letter indicating your gift and include them in our regular mailings.

We also ask that you take them to one of our sites, including recent acquisitions, this year.

You don't have to wait for a special occasion, although spring @ ParkLands might be considered a special occasion/treat. ParkLands could always use more members. Please bring your family, friends, neighbors, fellow employees, etc., to a ParkLands site this spring and expand our membership.

2012 Good Year for Building Membership

January 9, 2013

January 2012

Total Donor Count	487	424 +63 (14.9%)
Life Donors	30	28 +2
Annual Dues Paying Donors	457	396 +61 (15.4%)

New Member Donors

<input type="checkbox"/> By application	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Gift Membership Program	49
<input type="checkbox"/> Complimentary Donor*	42

Total New Member Donors 96

*Beginning in October, at the direction of the Executive Committee, complimentary memberships are granted to persons who have donated to the Foundation in memoriam.

Caring for ParkLands Properties - Stewardship Report

2012 Accomplishments

- ◇ Burned Letchers Basin, Ridgetop Hill Prairie, Chinquapin Bluffs North Prairie, Merwin Forb Garden, Lexington Prairie
- ◇ Finished the Sweeney Tract Canoe Launch parking lot

2013 Plans

- ◇ Plan on burning the Lake Bloomington Moon tract, Merwin North Savanna Nature Preserve, Merwin South Savanna Nature Preserve, Weston Nature Preserve
- ◇ Continue to improve the Sweeney Tract Canoe Launch

Jason Shoemaker



With upgrades to our website and social media platform will come dynamic, even real-time, updates on ParkLands happenings, including photos, articles and more. *Watch for announcements regarding the unveiling of the new website.* In the meantime you can find us in social media streams: search for ParkLands Foundation (Illinois) on Facebook or visit us on Twitter as @ParkLandsIL.

If you have suggestions of content you would like to see on our website or available through social media,

please contact the ParkLands office.

Also, let Mike Hall if you would like to receive the E-Newsletter (email) notification. Just send your request from the email address you want us to use to notify you.

ParklandsOffice@gmail.com.

We are happy to hear from you.

Matt Hickman



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Ecology Action Center

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Volunteer Stewards Have So Much Fun!
Don Schmidt burning Ridgetop Prairie in 2010.
 Go to ParkLands' Facebook page to see some of
 the comments about this photo

Seeking to maximize passion for our land holdings, we have a new volunteer steward program. We'll match you to a preserve (or a portion) and train you to tend the land according to the program guidelines and *on your own schedule*.

Contact Jason Shoemaker at 309-531-7065 (shoemaj@hotmail.com) or better yet, attend a workday to get an idea of how you can help.

Calendar of Events

Wild Ones program
 Mon., Feb. 11, 7pm
 "Bringing Meadowsparing
 to Large & Small Spaces"
 60-min. video
 Mennonite Church, W.
 Hovey @ Cottage, Normal
 Meredith Schroer
 309-452-8700

Invasive Species Control

Fri., Feb. 15, 9 am
 Cattle pasture
 Merwin Preserve
 South Gate

Workdays Leader:
 Jason Shoemaker
 309-531-7065
shoemaj@hotmail.com

Invasive Species Control
 Fri., March 1, 9 am
 Cattle pasture
 Merwin Preserve So. Gate

Workdays Leader:
 Jason Shoemaker
 309-531-7065
shoemaj@hotmail.com

Wildflower Walk

Sun., April 21, 1 pm
 Merwin Preserve
 South Gate

Leader:
 Dale Birkenholz
 309-452-8086
dbirke@ilstu.edu

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