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

**Newsletter
August - September
2011**

Savanna Restoration Key ParkLands Project

Prairie, savanna, woodlands, and forest vegetation are not distinctive vegetation types, but rather they blend into one another, forming a vegetation continuum. Separation of these vegetation types is based on the degree of tree canopy closure. Prairies have zero to 10 % tree canopy, savannas have more than 10% but less than 50% canopy cover, woodlands have 50 to 80% cover, and forests have more than 80% canopy coverage.

Trees that occur in Midwestern savannas are a few species of oaks and hickories - locally these are typically white, black, and bur oaks and shagbark and mockernut hickories. Savanna trees retain their lower branches longer than trees growing in forests, and form broad spreading crowns. Because the lower branches are retained, they grow large and when they fall a large knob-like branch scar is formed on the tree trunk. The scattered nature of the tree canopy creates areas of high and low light in the understory, which supports a diverse mixture of herbaceous plants, some of which can also grow in either prairies or forests.

In the Midwest, the historic vegetation was a mosaic of prairie, savanna, woodland and forest. Fire frequency was the most important factor in determining the occurrence of these vegetation types on the landscape, which decreased in frequency from prairie to savanna, woodland, and forest. The fires were caused by occasional lightning strikes and Native Americans who used fire as a tool to manage the landscape. When Europeans settled the Midwest, they stopped the fires. Without fires, the density of trees increased and shade-intolerant oaks and hickories, which require open sunny habitats to successfully reproduce, were replaced by more shade tolerant species of trees, such as sugar maple, elm, and basswood. Areas that changed from savanna to forest because of fire exclusion often are where savanna restoration begins, especially if some of the old open-grown trees that were part of the historic savanna persist on the site. Restoration reverses the changes that occurred on the site since the time of fire exclusion. The trees are thinned and prescribed fire is introduced. These practices create the patchy distribution of areas of high and low light, which allow prairie and forest species to occur in the savanna and shade-intolerant oaks and hickories to reproduce.



Tour the North Savanna at Merwin Preserve to see the results of lots of volunteer and staff work on the restoration. The tour will occur at approximately 1:30 after the Sept. 11 annual meeting and lunch.

Roger Anderson

ParkLands Foundation Annual Meeting Registration

**Sunday, September 11, 2011
Davis Lodge, Lake Bloomington**

For your meal, please select from the Garlic Press Brown Bag Lunch Menu

Each sandwich comes with a bag of specialty Zapp's chips, a cookie, and bottled water.

Cost for each is \$10.00, with kids' sandwich \$7.00

NO SUBSTITUTIONS PLEASE

_____ **Artichoke Garlic Tuna Salad**, on multigrain bread, with tomato, red onion, and ro-maine lettuce.

_____ **Boar's Head Tavern Ham and Swiss**, on multigrain bread, with tomato, romaine let-tuce and house-made Stoneground Mustard Sauce.

_____ **Boar's Head Roast Beef**, on a toasted Ciabatta roll, with tomato, red onion, romaine lettuce and house-made crumbled Blue Cheese Sauce.

_____ **California Smoked Turkey Club**, on sesame semolina bread, with applewood bacon, cheddar cheese, tomato, red onion, romaine lettuce and guacamole.

_____ **The "Knuckle" Sandwich**, a favorite Italian Hero style sandwich, on a toasted Ciabatta roll, with Tavern Ham, Fennel Salami, spicy Capicola, provolone cheese, with our sig-nature sweet & spicy Peppadew Pepper Medley.

_____ **Boar's Head Arrostica Chicken Caesar**, on sesame semolina bread, with tomato, red onion, romaine lettuce & house-made Roasted Garlic-Parmesan Caesar Sauce.

_____ **Vegetarian Muffaletta**, a veggie lover's delight on a toasted Ciabatta roll, with herbed goat cheese, artichoke hearts, roasted red peppers, red onion, baby spinach, olive spread, and sweet & spicy Peppadew Pepper Medley.

_____ **Gluten-free option**, Crustless Quiche and Greens Salad

_____ **Kids' Option**, PB&J on Wheat or White (circle which one), which comes with chips, cookie, and juice. (\$7)

Coffee and Lemonade will also be available. Lunch will be at noon after the Annual meeting.

Name(s): _____

and ages of children attending: _____

Phone and/or email: _____

Amount included (with check made out to ParkLands Foundation): \$ _____

Send registration form, with meal(s) selected, **TO ARRIVE NO LATER THAN August 24th** to:
ParkLands Foundation, P.O. Box 3132, Bloomington, IL. 61702-3132

ParkLands 45th Annual Meeting September 11

This year's annual membership meeting will begin at 11:30 at the Davis Lodge at Lake Bloomington (see directions) on Sunday, September 11th. The meeting is open to all ParkLands members. For those of you with families, we will provide activities for the younger naturalists while you attend the meeting. A picnic lunch, with a choice of several box lunches prepared by The Garlic Press, will be served at noon. To make reservations for the lunch, please complete the form on page 2 and mail it so it will arrive no later than August 24, 2011. Following lunch, we will car pool to the Merwin Preserve where we will hike to the North Savanna to learn about the savanna restoration that has been taking place there.

Come dressed for a hike in the woods.

Sherrie Snyder

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS: The nominating committee is recommending the following individuals to a three year term; Matt Fraker, Nancy Armstrong, Given Harper and Krista G. Kirkham. Members may nominate candidates for director by petition filed with the secretary (Terry Caines) at least 7 days prior to the annual meeting. The petition must contain the signatures of at least 15 ParkLands members. No nominations are allowed from the floor during the annual meeting. Following an expected favorable vote to amend the bylaws, Dale Birkenholz and Guy Fraker will be named Honorary Board Members.

Nominating Committee Chair Barry Brenneman



Late Summer on the Merwin Trail

The savanna restoration along the Merwin trail is reaping dividends! A few purple milkweeds peeped through this summer and the enclosure at Station 4 allowed the

Michigan lilies to bloom. Joe-pye weed is now the dominant tall wildflower and is more numerous than ever. You can identify it by the green stem that is purple at the nodes. It will be in bloom for some time yet. A few tall bellflowers are still blooming and should remain for awhile. I think that the most attractive species along the trail at this time is the starry campion. It is about two feet tall and is often in small patches. The white petals are deeply fringed making it easy to identify. Another showy species that will bloom in August and September is yellow false foxglove. Several plants are found between Stations 4 and 7. The foxglove is between three and four feet tall and sports fairly large snapdragon-like flowers.

Prairie wildflowers are becoming more common in the restored savanna and are particularly evident in the

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BY-LAWS
NEW SECTION 13, ARTICLE V - In addition to the regular directors, persons who have completed two or more nine-year tenures as regular members of the Board of Directors of ParkLands Foundation, or have otherwise materially contributed to the conservation community in McLean and Woodford Counties, Illinois, may be elected to a lifetime position of Honorary Lifetime Director of ParkLands Foundation. A nomination may be made by any member of the Board of Directors of the ParkLands Foundation, with the nomination requiring approval by the ParkLands Foundation Board of Directors at a regular meeting and the membership at an annual meeting. Honorary Lifetime Directors may attend any Board meetings and participate in any discussions as a non-voting member. Honorary Lifetime Directors shall also qualify for appointment to any ParkLands Foundation committees as a voting member.

Directions to Davis Lodge, Lake Bloomington:

1. Take I-39 N/US-51 N toward Rockford - 7.6 mi
2. Take exit 8 for IL-251 toward Kappa/Lake Bloomington Rd - 0.3 mi
3. Turn right onto IL-251 N/E 2500 North Rd (County Hwy 8). Continue east - 3.5 mi
4. Turn left at Green Gables onto N 1750 East Rd
5. Take the 2nd right onto County Rd 2535N/Davis Lodge Rd - Welcome to 25549 Davis Lodge Rd

open area around Station 3. Yellow coneflower is most numerous, but also look for tall mountain mint, wild quinine, and flowering spurge, especially behind the bench. Wild petunia has been particularly common here and a few plants are still blooming.

Several species of aster and goldenrod will begin to bloom in August and September. As Mr. Stargazer says: Keep watching everyone!

Dale Birkenholz

At Last — Hiker Relief

Over the years we've received many pleas for a privy to better accommodate school and other groups as well as individual hikers. A permanent privy will be installed at the west gate entrance to Merwin Preserve, adjacent to the Gridley Blacktop. The facility should be ready by October after we receive all required permits.

This infrastructure improvement is thanks to a grant from the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation.



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Bloomington,
Illinois 61702-3132
(309) 454-3169
Ecology Action Center

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On The Wing - Early Fall Migration

Fall bird migration is under way and it's a great time to get out and see big numbers of birds as they make their way south for the winter. Spring migration is wonderful because birds are in their bright breeding colors and singing beautiful songs. But it can be a rather brief event and the birds are not always plentiful. Fall migration is another story however and can be even more delightful. The number of birds is greater as a burst of youngsters from the nesting season attempt their first migration. It's also a more prolonged affair. In spring, it's a frantic rush to get to the breeding grounds, find a mate and start nesting. In the fall, migration is more leisurely and the birds tend to hang around longer.

Shorebirds are already on the move, leaving their precocious young behind and heading for their winter grounds. Checking any mudflats or fluddles in August will yield migrant sandpipers and plovers. Tyrant Flycatchers are some of the first passerines to start migrating. Watch for Olive-sided and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers. Uncommon and early migrants, they are quite a treat when you get to see them. By the third week of August, the first wave of post-breeding warblers will start trickling in. American Redstarts often lead the way with hordes of warblers to follow. The second week of September might rival the second week of May as the best birding week of the year. A morning walk through any of our preserves should turn up a mixed flock of migrant songbirds. Vireos and thrushes can be seen gorging themselves on the fruits of the season.

Neotropical migrants have the longest journey and thus are the earliest to depart. Mid-September is typically the height and turning point of songbird migration locally. Loads of migrants can be seen using our preserves as stopover sites to forage and rest. By the third week of

September insectivores start thinning out, not to be caught with an insufficient supply of food. Get out and enjoy them while you can because it will be another six months before they come back.

Matthew Winks

The two surviving eaglets are on the wing for sure, chasing each other, streaking down from on high learning to catch their own fish; it's a thrill to behold.



Photo by Mary Jo Adams

Calendar

Annual Meeting

Sunday, Sept. 11, 11:30 a.m.

Davis Lodge, Lake Bloomington

Reservations must be received by 8/24/11

Sherrie Snyder

309-376-2070

slc12852@hotmail.com

Seed Collection

Saturday, Oct. 1, 9 a.m.

Cayuga Ridge (Pontiac)

Meet @ BP gas station @ Lexington I-55 exit

Leader: Jason Shoemaker

(309) 531-7065

shoemaj@hotmail.com