



SUMMER 2019

Newsletter

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www.ParkLandsFoundation.org

ParkLands 3rd Annual Century Bike Ride *Written by Refugio Moreno*

On the hot and bright Saturday morning of June 29th ParkLands hosted our third annual Bike Ride. Although this is the first year that we offered a 100-mile bike route to our riders, this is the third year that we held our Bike Ride event. This ride was organized by a wonderful committee lead by Paul Van Ness.



*Riders group up for a picture before starting their journey on the 50 and the 100 mile routes

We had 215 riders turn out on this quite beautiful summer morning. Riders participating in the 50-mile and the 100-mile routes began their journey at 7am at the Pool Pavilion in Lexington, and those participating in the 20-mile route began at 8am. Volunteers were set at two stations on the route to greet, encourage, and provide drinks and snacks for our riders. The first stop was located at the West Gate of the Merwin Preserve, and the second stop was located at the Comlara Mountain Bike Trailhead. To conclude the riders exhausting expedition, most of us met at Kemp's Upper Tap in Lexington to celebrate

over lunch. We then also raffled off a brand new bike from Vitesse Cycle Shop to one of our lucky riders.

This year we are very pleased to see the continued success of this event as we conclude our third year organizing our Bike Ride. We hope that with our yearly Bike Ride event we continue to introduce cyclists and community members to the Mackinaw River valley.

This event would not have been possible without the amazing help from all of our volunteers, staff, and our wonderful sponsors: Bloomington Cycle and Fitness, Commerce Bank, Daniel G Deneen Attorney at Law Deer's Mill Farm, Heartland Bank and Trust Co, Keg Grove Brewing Co, Kemp's Upper Tap, Prairie Oaks Veterinary Center, William Ray, MD, The Vein Specialists, and Vitesse Cycle Shop.

We here at ParkLands send out a huge thank you to our riders and we hope to see you all again next year!



A Day in the Hiking Shoes of ParkLands' Summer Interns

Written by Refugio Moreno

On Tuesday June 25th I attended a day with the ParkLands summer interns Morgan Armbrust and Amanda Best.

Morgan Armbrust graduated in May of 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts from Eureka College. Her major was design and digital media, with a minor in environmental studies. Morgan has a passion for the outdoors and photography, and she hopes to combine these into conservation photography in the future. Amanda Best is from Madison, Wisconsin and is a senior at Illinois Wesleyan University. She is majoring in Environmental Studies along with a German minor. She is a member of the Illinois Wesleyan Women's lacrosse team and also volunteers with Big Brother Big Sisters. ParkLands' third intern Refugio Moreno (me) is a junior at Illinois Wesleyan University and is an Environmental Studies and Psychology double major. He is involved with several cultural clubs and environmental clubs on his campus, and hopes to bring his knowledge and skills from those into his internship, which is also shared along with the Ecology Action Center.

I met up with the two interns at Letcher Basin at noon to drive around the trail of Letcher and other nearby ParkLands plots with a GPS tracking device. This would then gather data and allow for ParkLands to make online trail maps for their preserves. Amanda explained to me how the handheld device operates just as we set off on the ATV Gator around the trails at Letcher Basin and Kenyon Preserve.



*ParkLands' two summer interns, Morgan Armbrust (left) and Amanda Best (right)

It being such a beautiful day and such a beautiful landscape made the ride that much more enjoyable, but as we were driving around, Amanda and Morgan were telling me about some of the difficulties that they have been experiencing with the heavy June downpours while trying to map out some of these preserves. This made

me quite thankful that it was a nice day to get out into the trails.

Upon finishing the GPS mapping for these preserves, we drove out to Sweeney Woods Nature Preserve to prune the trees along the trail. Stewardship and maintenance of the preserves is another big part of their summer internship, so it was only fitting that we included some of that into our day's schedule. Morgan handed me a pair of loppers and Amanda handed me a pair of gloves and we began trimming what seemed like an endless sea of branches.

A big thank you to our summer interns for allowing me to tag along that day and thank you for all the hard work you have put in this summer!

*Driving around Letcher Basin on the Gator with our two interns

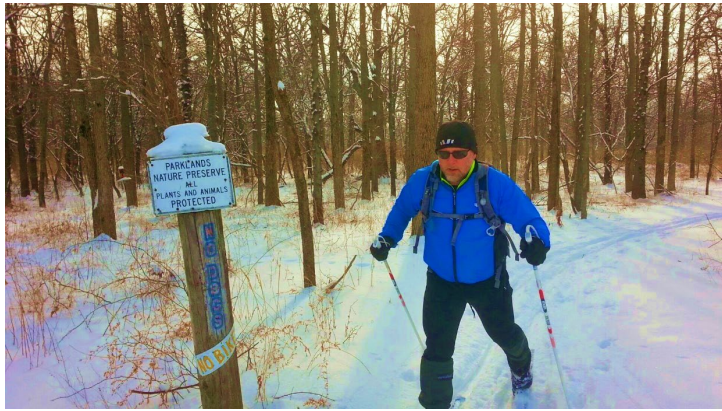


Meet the ParkLands Board:

Michael Brown

Written by Christopher Guethoff

Michael Brown is an individual who has devoted his life to the betterment of the natural world. Having previously worked at the Peoria Health Department and Park District in education and restoration fields, Michael has a large background from which to draw in his current position. As Director of the Ecology Action Center for 11 years he has focused on promoting environmental sustainability to the Bloomington-Normal community and beyond. Working in the same building as the ParkLands Foundation, it seemed as if his membership on our board would be a foregone conclusion. He says that his ability to “wear two hats” is critical to helping EAC and our Foundation work together to better achieve their goals. Michael was chair of our stewardship committee for eight years and helped manage decisions concerning land restoration, prescribed burns and management plans.



Michael cross country skiing at Merwin nature preserve

Michael thinks that since he has been a member, the biggest change in ParkLands has also been its greatest success. Michael assisted developing a strong staff for the foundation and is proud of his role in hiring and working with Erin Herbez, our Administrative Director and supervising Jason Shoemaker's our Land Steward for these last 8 years.



Michael kayaking on the Mackinaw near the Sweeney Preserve

He believes that our excellent staff has allowed the ParkLands Foundation to retain members, widen our scope, become more cohesive and safeguard the organization.

We whole heartedly agree.

Michael is proud to be a part of our foundation and the work we do, believing it to be a critical organization. He is confident that the next 50 years will be equally as impressive.

Michael will be reaching the end of his 9 year term this September and will take his mandated break from the board. We will miss him but look forward to working with him and the Ecology Action Center for many years to come!

Volunteer Day at Chinquapin

Written by Refugio Moreno

On the bright Saturday morning of July 13th ParkLands held a Volunteer Work Day at the Chinquapin Preserve in order to remove invasive species. One of our volunteers and I met up with ParkLands' Land Steward, Jason Shoemaker and one of our summer interns, Amanda Best at Chinquapin to get our day started.



*Volunteer, Leah Bieniak (left), Land Steward Jason Shoemaker (center), and intern Amanda Best (right) after a day of trimming away at invasives at Chinquapin

We drove up into Chinquapin Preserve and unloaded pairs of loppers and bottles of herbicide in order to spray the specific plants that we cut.

The four of us went into the forest and began cutting down waves of invasive species such as Honeysuckle, autumn olive, multi-flora rose, a catalpa tree, and honey locust, which is a native tree in bottomland, but it becomes unwanted in upland forests, such as Chinquapin.

The end goal with these sorts of work days is to ultimately turn the preserve in a savanna and begin burning it periodically. Along with restoring native species and rebuilding an ecosystem, these work days a wonderful opportunity to explore some of ParkLands' wonderful preserves.

We still have several work days remaining for 2019 and we also schedule special work days for large groups.

2019 Work days

Invasive Species Control

Hayes Woods Nature Preserve

Meeting Place: Fairlakes Golf Course 2203 County Rd 600 N, Secor, IL 61771

September 21- 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Native Prairie Seed Collection

Cayuga Ridge Meeting place: McDonald's 1744 PJ Keller Hwy, Lexington, IL 61753

- October 26- 9:00 AM- 12:00 PM
- November 9- 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Prairie Seed Cleaning

Meeting Place: Science Laboratory Building, 125 S. Fell Avenue, Normal, IL 61761 (ISU)

- December 7th- 9:00 AM- 12:00 PM

For more opportunities to work with our preserves, please visit our website parklandsfoundation.org or contact Erin Herbez at parklandsoffice@gmail.com



*Leah and Jason removing and spraying an invasive species at Chinquapin

Doc, Take a Bath with a Tree? Really??

By: Finn Amble

"Did you read the article in the New York Times about nature and health?" asked Dan Deneen while we were helping cyclists register for our awesome June 29th Parklands bicycle ride.

"No, I haven't seen that. What did it say?" I respond.

Dan proceeded to tell me and then sent me the link. Fascinating stuff. So, I channeled my borderline ADHD and researched the topic. Not necessarily surprising to most of us but confirmatory and absolutely fascinating just the same.



The June 13th issue in the Health Section of the New York Times began with the following: "It's a medical fact: Spending time outdoors, especially in green spaces, is good for you. A wealth of research indicates that escaping to a neighborhood park, hiking through the woods, or spending a weekend by the lake can lower a person's stress levels, decrease blood pressure and reduce the risk (for) asthma, allergies, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, while boosting mental health and increasing life expectancy.

"It did not matter how close people lived to recreational spaces or how often they frequented them, as long as they accumulated two hours of outdoor time by the end of the week."

Prior to beginning our ride, I shared this information with veteran primary care physician and Parklands cyclist participant, Dr. Paul Hakes, who definitely agreed: "About one third of what I do is dealing with patients with anxiety, especially around the beginning of harvest time."

The journal, Mind, agrees with Dr. Hakes adding that "95% of those interviewed said their mood improved after spending time outside, changing from depressed, stressed, and anxious to more calm and balanced."

The University of Minnesota quoted Andrea Taylor's research noting that "Children with ADHD shows that time spent in nature increases their attention span later."

This is of great importance when paired with recommendations from the Mayo Clinic recommending "limiting children's exposure to screens – including computers, television, hand-held devices, and video games – to two hours per day."

As a huge Elvis fan, one of my favorite albums is, "50,000,000 Elvis Fans Can't Be Wrong." Regarding this topic of nature and health, the number 290,000,000 could be inserted for the number of people studied with global data. According a study quoted by ScienceDaily (July 6, 2018), "Spending time in, or living close to, natural green spaces is associated with diverse and significant health benefits. It reduces the risk of type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, pre-mature death, and preterm birth, and increases sleep duration."



That ScienceDaily article also introduced me to a new phrase – "Forest bathing:" "Forest bathing is already really popular in Japan – with participants spending time in the forest either sitting or lying down, or just walking around."

A national hospital system in Scotland has even gone so far as to allow "doctors at some medical practices to write scripts for outdoor activities as a routine part of patient care."

So, there you have it! Doctor's orders – Go take a bath in the forest! And what better venue to follow those orders than exploring 3,200 acres of Parklands land – privately owned yet open with warm welcome for enjoyment by all!

Your friend in boots,

Finn Amble



ParkLands Annual Meeting Sunday, September 8th at Hayes

Dear ParkLands Foundation Members,
We would like to invite *you and your friends* to join us at the ParkLands Foundation Annual Meeting on Sunday, September 08, 2019 at Hayes preserve at 11AM.
The Hayes preserve is our newest preserve of 69 acres of Mackinaw River forest in southeastern Woodford County.

The Hayes Woods Nature Preserve, named for the Richard Hayes family who have maintained this property in excellent ecological condition, is close to three other nature preserves, thereby increasing overall connectivity and area of protected natural land. We are very excited to share this preserve with our members!



Parking will be at the parking lot of Kenyon, and we will transport everyone to the site. Members and non-members are invited to join us for this event but we ask that non-members please become members on the day of the event.

There is a moderate hike to get to the picnic area at Hayes. We will have all terrain vehicles to transport those that need assistance. *

We will begin the morning with an optional guided hike around Hayes where you can learn about the flora and fauna of the area from our very own Matt Fraker.

This will be followed by lunch. You may order boxed lunches prepared by Scout's Downtown Cafe or feel free to bring a picnic lunch.

During lunch, we will hold a brief annual membership meeting, including a volunteer recognition, followed by a presentation by two of our board members as well as yearly reports from our board.

To place your order for the Boxed Lunch please complete the form below and mail it with your check so it will arrive no later than Tuesday, September 3rd. Or you can contact Erin Herbez at parklandsoffice@gmail.com or 309-454-3169 (ext. 16).

We hope you and your family and friends will join us!

LOCATION:

Hayes Preserve, Please park at the Kenyon preserve parking lot.

Directions: From Fairlakes Golf Course in Secor, IL go West on County Rd 600N for 1.5 miles. Take a left at the Y on County Rd 2000E. Travel south .5 miles and take a right at the T on County Rd 550N. Travel 1 mile west and someone will direct you to parking.

Please see our website <http://www.parklandsfoundation.org/eventscalendar> for more detailed directions.

AGENDA:

11:00 AM *OPTIONAL* Guided Nature Hike at Hayes

12:00 PM Lunch (boxed lunch or bring your own)

12:30 PM Formal Membership Meeting and Volunteer
Thank You

1:15 PM Presentation About ParkLands and Board
Reports

All programs and hikes will be free of charge and open to the public. Water, porta potties and handwashing stations will be provided. Please be sure to bring your water bottle, and a camping chair if you are able!

**PARKLANDS ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th at HAYES PRESERVE**

**ORDER YOUR LUNCH NOW
DEADLINE: Tuesday, September 3rd 2019**

We will order boxed lunches from Scout's Downtown Cafe. Identify your choices below.

COST = \$11 per box (includes a sandwich, a side, and dessert). Water will be provided.

If purchasing more than one lunch, please make clear which items (sandwich, side, and dessert) you want in each box.

CHOOSE ONE SANDWICH (per box):

☐ Roast Turkey and Smoked Gouda on Ciabatta bread

☐ Roast Beef and Horseradish Cheddar on Sourdough

☐ Black Forest Ham and Cheddar on Sourdough

☐ White Meat – Chicken Salad on a Croissant

☐ Albacore Tuna Salad on a Croissant

☐ Vegetarian – Hummus and Roast Veggie Stuffed Pita

CHOOSE ONE SIDE (per box):

☐ Italian Pasta salad

☐ Veggie salad

☐ Smashed Potato salad

☐ Kettle Chips

CHOOSE ONE DESSERT (per box):

☐ Assorted Cookie

☐ Triple Chocolate Brownie

**DEADLINE FOR ALL ORDERS IS Tuesday,
SEPTEMBER 3rd**

**Please send to: ParkLands Foundation P.O. Box
12, Normal, IL 61761**

NAME(S)(Please Print)

PHONE/EMAIL





ParkLands Foundation / PO Box 12 / Normal, IL 61761-0012
(309) 454-3169 / **Address Service Requested**



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