



# Newsletter

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[www.ParkLandsFoundation.org](http://www.ParkLandsFoundation.org)

## BLUEBIRDS AT PARKLANDS

Article by volunteer steward

Douglas Kaufman-Dickson.

His email is [oxgarden@gmail.com](mailto:oxgarden@gmail.com)

We all know that the ParkLands Foundation properties along the Mackinaw River provide a habitat for numerous native plant and animal species. One of the species we get to see frequently in these properties is the eastern bluebird, *Sialia sialis*. It is not just by coincidence that we see so many bluebirds at ParkLands sites. Although ParkLands properties provide a good habitat on their own, the bluebirds are getting an extra boost from a trail of 40 bluebird boxes spread through many different sites. Trail supervisor Frank Zimmerman estimates that over 1200 bluebirds have fledged from boxes along the trail since its establishment in 2005.



When Frank first established the current trail in 2005 there were a few boxes already on ParkLands properties. However, these boxes were being neither maintained nor monitored. Frank contributed the new boxes on the trail and incorporated additional boxes donated by Wild Birds Unlimited to create a trail of 16 boxes. Over the years, removal of some areas from the trail has occurred and others added to establish the current trail, which includes boxes at Merwin, Chinquapin, Hazel, Ridge Top, Letcher Basin and Kenyon. In addition to the boxes on ParkLand owned properties, some immediate neighbors, such as Matt Fraker, allow boxes on their properties near ParkLands boundaries.

As time passed more boxes were added, some purchased by volunteers and others contributed by Thrivent Financial (contributions recognizing Frank Zimmerman's volunteer service) and the East Central Illinois Bluebird Society. As the number of boxes grew, the time required to maintain and monitor the trail also grew. In 2012 Douglas Kaufman-Dickson joined with Frank to monitor the trail and the two of them have been working cooperatively ever since. Frank monitors the trail around Merwin while Douglas monitors the Woodford County sites. In 2017 Thrivent Financial has awarded a new \$250 Environmental Grant for the purchase of additional boxes to add to the trail.



## BLUEBIRDS AT PARKLANDS (continued)

By volunteer steward Douglas Kaufman-Dickson.

Each year brings new challenges and new opportunities to learn from happenings along the trail. As the trail has expanded, the need to coordinate with ParkLands staff on issues such as placement and timing of prairie burns also expanded. With additional sites to monitor there has also been an opportunity to experiment with different house designs and placement. When Thrivent Financial donated two new boxes last year, the first two sets of paired boxes were set up on the trail. Pairing bluebird boxes can relieve the competition between bluebirds and tree swallows which we see often on the trail.

In 2016, the ParkLands trail of 40 boxes fledged 178 blue birds, in spite of higher than normal losses from some cold spring rains. Not only blue birds use the nest boxes. This year also saw around 100 wrens fledged and several nests of tree swallows. Although it is rare, it is a special treat to find a chickadee nest.

While Frank and Douglas both look forward to every chance to walk the trail and visit each box, we would also welcome additional volunteers to help monitor the trails. It is a great way not only to learn about bluebirds but also to get very familiar with ParkLands properties and to watch them progress through the seasons each year. Anyone with interest in becoming a part of the trail monitoring team should please contact Frank at [fwz@frontiernet.net](mailto:fwz@frontiernet.net).

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## PARKLANDS HALF CENTURY RIDE

All participants in the ParkLands Half Century Ride will be receiving this exclusive ParkLands commemorative bike jersey. A limited number of jerseys will also be available the day of the race. See inserted flyer for more details or go to [parklandsfoundation.org/50th](http://parklandsfoundation.org/50th) to register today!

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## Calendar of Events

### ■ WORK DAY SCHEDULE

Please note that for every hour of work we receive \$10 from ICECF grant towards management.

### ■ AUGUST 13

**West Gate Parking Area**

**@Merwin Preserve 9:00AM-12:00PM**

Cutting invasive honeysuckle/invasives

### ■ AUGUST 19

**BP Gas Station/McDonalds**

**Lexington, IL 8:30AM-12:00PM**

Car pool to Mohr Preserve, cutting invasives

## MEET OUR INTERNS

**Caleb Pritts** is a sophomore student at ISU studying Horticulture and Landscape Management. Caleb is interested in trees and woody ornamental plants and would like to find a career involving both of them, but currently still investigating options. For fun, Caleb likes to garden, camp, hike, and woodwork.

**Austin Leise** is a senior at ISU studying biology and chemistry. Interested in the medical aspects of biology as well as the conservation side. Would like to work at a national park upon graduation and is applying for medical school in 2018. Hobbies include fishing, hiking, and beer brewing.

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

The ParkLands Foundation aspires to increase its membership during its 50th Anniversary Year. Could you please give ParkLands Foundation a 50th Anniversary gift by recruiting at least one other member? ParkLands Foundation has a Café Italia Gift Card for the member who recruits the most new members before our Annual Meeting.

There are numerous levels of membership with varied donation amounts available with ParkLands Foundation. Support of this organization will be very rewarding to the persons you recruit. A special benefit of membership this year will be an invitation to the 50th Anniversary Party at Matt Fraker's residence adjoining the Chinquapin Preserve. The event will include special tours of the Chinquapin Preserve.

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY GIFT

George and Mary Lou Farnsworth have generously donated approximately \$5,000 to the ParkLands Foundation as a 50th Anniversary Gift. They astutely donated appreciated shares of stock allowing them to donate the full value of the stock and avoid taxes placed on the capital gain on the appreciation for the shares. ParkLands transferred the shares to one of the two stewardship endowments for the ParkLands Foundation.

If you would like donate to ParkLands Foundation for its 50th Anniversary, please contact Dan Deneen, Nancy Armstrong, or any other member of the board. The gifts could include donations of an appreciated stock, cash gifts, land gifts, conservation easements, life estates, retirement assets, as well as other categories.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

ParkLands Foundation would greatly appreciate the assistance of more volunteers. This includes Stewardship Volunteers as well as "office" assistance for Administrative Director Erin Herbez or the Outreach Committee. What special talents do you have to assist ParkLands Foundation? Our volunteers are also able to serve on various committees and subcommittees as adjunct members.

ParkLands Foundation Celebrates



50 Years of Restoration and Protection



# ParkLands Foundation Half Century Bike Ride

**Saturday, August 5, 2017**

**All ages welcome • 7 / 20 / 50 mile routes**

**Registration: \$35 by July 22; \$40 after July 22**

**Includes a commemorative bike jersey\***

\*If registered after July 1st your jersey will be available for pick up at the Ecology Action Center at a later date post-event. You will be emailed by the event director once the jersey is available for pick up.

**Rides start between 7:00 - 9:00 a.m. at Keller Park Pavilion  
699 North Elm, Lexington, Illinois**

TO REGISTER VISIT:

**[parklandsfoundation.org/50th](http://parklandsfoundation.org/50th)**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Contact Erin Herbez at [parklandsoffice@gmail.com](mailto:parklandsoffice@gmail.com) or 309-454-3169 (ext. 16)**

## Our Sponsors





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

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