

SUMMER 2018



Newsletter

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www.ParkLandsFoundation.org

WANDERING IN WOODFORD

Written and Photography By Erin Herbez

ParkLands invited the public to Letcher Basin on June 3rd of this year for an open house style event. 50 friends joined us for a beautiful day on the prairie. We had several area partners present information including: The Ecology Action Center, Illinois Wild Ones, The Illinois Native Plant Society, Master Naturalists, Dr. Ben Sadd of Illinois State University and Guy Fraker. Dr. Ben Sadd led participants through the prairie to identify bumble bees, Eric Smith of IDNR discussed the mussel community on the Mackinaw River, Don Schmidt led a plant identification walk, and Guy Fraker gave a fascinating talk on the historical relevance of the area, including Abraham Lincoln's use of Wyatt's Ford. Thank you to everyone that attended!

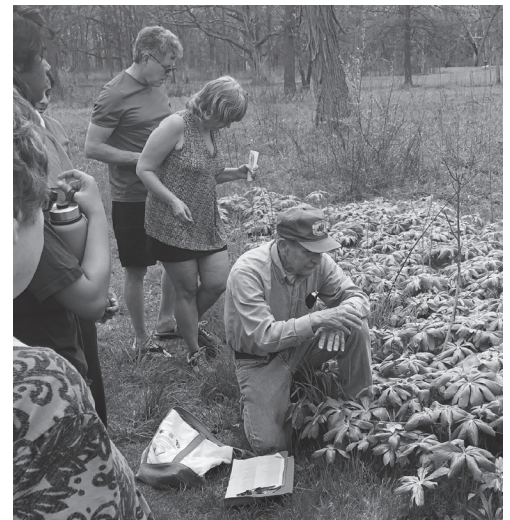




WILDFLOWER WALK AT MERWIN PRESERVE WITH LOCAL NATIVE PLANT EXPERTS

Written and Photography By Kristin Duffield

ParkLand's enjoyed a larger-than-expected gathering and perfect weather conditions for the Wildflower Walk on May 5th of this year. To accommodate all attendees, experts Dr. Joe Armstrong (Emeritus Professor of Botany) and Dr. Roger Anderson (Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Ecology) both led groups across the Merwin Preserve to explore the site and learn about local wildflowers. Janice Turner (an Illinois native plant expert) also helped lead a walk and provided her expertise. About the large turnout, ParkLands Director Jim Franks mentioned "The last time I did a wildflower walk a few years ago, I was the only participant. I had Dr. Dale Birkenholz all to myself. So, having 50 people show up was a great turnout." President Dan Deneen noted that the great turnout was in response to the ParkLands Outreach committee's hard work in the last few years. Walkers were able to see many different native species of flora and learned a bit of biology along the way. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the highlight of the walk was the spring bloom of bluebells. The walk took place at the peak time of year to see these native blossoms in their full glory, which create a stunning sea of blue across the woodland floor.



Calendar of Events

- **THURSDAYS, STARTING AUGUST 30TH**
IWU CONSERVATION BIOLOGY WORK DAY
PUBLIC WELCOME!
1:00PM-5:00PM
Fairlakes Golf Course 2203 County Rd 600 N, Secor, IL
*Please note that for every hour of work we receive \$10 from ICECF grant towards managment.

- **OCTOBER 21ST**
McDonalds 1744 P J Keller Hwy, Lexington, IL
9:00AM-12:00PM
Collecting Prairie Seeds

- **NOVEMBER 4TH**
McDonalds 1744 P J Keller Hwy, Lexington, IL
9:00AM-12:00PM
Collecting Prairie Seeds
- **DECEMBER 9TH**
Science Laboratory Building, 125 S. Fell Avenue, Normal, IL
9:00AM-12:00PM
Prairie Seed Cleaning

PARKLANDS 2ND ANNUAL HALF CENTURY RIDE

Written and Photography By Erin Herbez

On July 28th ParkLands hosted our second annual Half Century Ride. This ride was organized by an outstanding committee lead by Paul Van Ness and Molly Munson. We had 180 riders turn out on a beautiful (cool!) summer morning. Our 50-mile riders began at 7am from the Keller Pavilion in Lexington, followed by our 20-mile riders at 8am. Volunteers greeted the riders at two rest-stops, the first stop was located at the West Gate of the Merwin Preserve and the second at the mountain bike trailhead for Comlara Park. At the conclusion of the ride most of us met at Kemp's Upper Tap in Lexington for a celebratory lunch. We were very pleased that this event has been such a success two years in a row! We hope to continue to introduce cyclists to the Mackinaw River valley in upcoming years. This event would not have been possible without our volunteers, staff and our especially our sponsors: Vitesse Cycle shop, Kemp's Upper Tap, Prairie Oak Veterinary Center, The VEIN Specialists, Wilson Cycle, Commerce Bank, Daniel G. Deneen Attorney, Deer's Mill Farm, Dermatology & Mohs Surgery Institute, Mueller, Reese and Hinch LLC, and Heartland Bank and Trust Company. Thank you to our riders and we hope to see you again next year!





P.O. Box 12, Normal, IL 61761-0012

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Roger Anderson
Guy Fraker

Staff

Jason Shoemaker
Land Steward

Erin Herbez
Administrative Director

Hello Friends of ParkLands!

We are writing to request your help! ParkLands Foundation is pleased to announce that we recently received a **challenge grant for \$21,000** from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) to support ecological restoration and stewardship efforts at one of our nature preserves along the upper **Mackinaw River**: Chinquapin Bluffs Land and Water Reserve in Woodford County.

The ICECF grant will give us \$3 for every \$1 that we raise specifically for this project from the general public for a maximum award of \$21,000 from ICECF. In addition, we can receive \$4,000 once 400 hours of stewardship work by volunteers is reached at the preserve.

In order for ParkLands to achieve these goals, we must raise at least \$7,000 in matching funds dedicated towards our natural habitat restoration efforts at the Chinquapin Bluffs preserve and involve more people from local communities in our stewardship activities at this preserve.

Chinquapin bluffs land and water reserve includes 757 acres located west of Kappa and south of Secor, and is being restored to native prairie and wetlands. We have included a more in depth description of the preserve in the following pages. We will use the funding to maintain wetlands through tree thinning, controlling invasive lespedeza, and conducting prescribed burns on 100 acres of prairie and hill prairie on the preserve.

Please consider giving a donation to the Chinquapin Bluffs Stewardship Fund to help us reach our ICECF challenge grant goals. If you are unable to donate funds to our efforts, please consider volunteering your time to help with our stewardship activities at the Chinquapin Bluffs Preserve. No matter how small or large, your valuable contributions will help us!

Thank you for assisting us in our efforts to increase conservation acreage in the Mackinaw River watershed, protect and improve the ecological health of the river corridor, and provide for passive public nature recreation and education.

Erin Herbez -Administrative Director of ParkLands Foundation

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, public membership, conservation land trust dedicated to acquiring, preserving, and restoring natural areas in central Illinois since 1967. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed.

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email: ParkLandsOffice@gmail.com



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Chinquapin Bluffs Land and Water Reserve

The 757.19-acre Chinquapin Bluffs Land and Water Reserve is owned by ParkLands Foundation and is adjacent to the Mackinaw River. The preserve is located in Palestine and Kansas Townships in Woodford County, Illinois. William Bateman purchased the land now known as the Chinquapin Bluffs around the time of the Civil War. In 1997 the Nature Conservancy (TNC) purchased the property as part of their focus on reducing flooding and sediment loads on the Mackinaw River. In 2008 the Nature Conservancy transferred title to the ParkLands Foundation due to the great work that ParkLands Foundation was doing in the surrounding Woodford County area. The preserve is now protected in perpetuity with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, a division of the IDNR, as a Land and Water Reserve.



With funds raised from individuals and ICECF we plan on removing invasive species from 120 or more acres, thinning woody species at two wetlands, as well as conducting prescribed burns on an additional 100 acres of restored prairie grasses and forbs. We will also be purchasing equipment to assist our new Volunteer Stewards at the site. Work days will be held at the sites throughout the year to recruit more community involvement and outreach with the community. The above listed activities will help the preserve directly, as well as remove the threat of spreading invasive species onto our other savannas, prairies, and other restoration areas down stream of this preserve.

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PARKLANDS ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH AT LETCHER BASIN

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 09, 2018 at Letcher Basin preserve. 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.

We will begin the morning with an optional hike/ hayrack ride around the prairie where you can learn about the flora and fauna of the area including our resident bald eagles and native river mussels.

This will be followed by lunch under the sycamore tree. 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 about the natural history of Letcher Basin.

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

LOCATION:

Letcher Basin Preserve, 404 County Rd 1975 E, Secor, IL 61771. Please see our website <http://www.parklandsfoundation.org/eventscalendar> for directions.

AGENDA

10:30 AM	OPTIONAL Nature hike/ hayrack ride at Letcher Basin
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 the natural history of Letcher Basin

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!

2018-19 SLATE OF NOMINATIONS FOR DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

In conformance with Article V, Section 11 and Article VII, Section 2 of the Bylaws, the following slate of nominations for Directors and Officers is hereby presented:

To fill two vacated seats as Director, the following individuals are hereby presented for nomination for a three-year term (2018-21):

Douglas Kaufman-Dickson
Paul Van Ness

Members may nominate candidates for director by petition filed with the secretary (Eric Smith) 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.

The Board will be saying farewell to Les Luginbuhl and James Franks

The following current Directors are hereby presented for nomination to continue for three-year terms (2018-21):

Eric Smith
Angelo Capparella

The Board of Directors will consider the following slate of officers for election when they meet on Sept. 09, 2018.
The following slate of nominations for Officers is hereby presented for one-year terms (2018-19):

Jessica Chambers	President
Eric Smith	Vice President
Nancy Armstrong	Treasurer
Krista Kirkham	Secretary



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Officers, Board of Directors and Staff

Dan Deneen
President

Jessica Chambers
Vice President

Eric Smith
Secretary

Nancy Armstrong
Treasurer

Directors

Cristina Almeida
Finn Amble
Michael Brown
Bethany Evans Campbell
Angelo Capparella
Jim Franks
Matt Fraker
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