



# Newsletter

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

## THANK YOU FOR 2017..... BUT ENCORE YEAR WILL BE DIFFICULT

First, on behalf of the Board of Directors, Jason Shoemaker, and Erin Herbez, thank you for making our Celebration for the 50 years of ParkLands Foundation such a success! Without your support, 2017 would have been a good year, but not as outstanding as it was. Merwin in May, the first Bike Ride, and Guy Fraker's banquet were extraordinary events.

So, what do we do for an Encore? It will be difficult. 2018 will also be active, but in a different manner. We hope to show off our Woodford County properties on June 3 through a "Wandering in Woodford" event. Please check our website and calendar for updates. During the summer, instead of one big event we will have members of the Board of Directors, present and past, lead informal tours on weekends at the Merwin Preserve. Please contact one of the board members if you would like to join us with family, friends or co-workers.

We are planning a second Bike Ride on July 28. ParkLands Supporters Tom Nielsen, Kathy Bohn, Paul Van Ness, and Molly Munson have agreed to serve on a committee to keep the bike ride going. They will be joined by board members Finn Amble and Michael Brown.

After Merwin in May last year, my son Patrick commented that there were very few minorities represented. We have tentative arrangements for groups from the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club to visit our properties in 2018.

If there are any volunteer activities you would like to participate in during 2018, please contact us. Each of our board committees allows adjunct committee members to assist them with the volunteers' time and expertise. Jason Shoemaker can always use some help in the field, and Erin Herbez would welcome appropriate assistance in our office. Please contact any board member if you would like to increase your participation in 2018.

We are exploring several potential property purchases. Our resources are limited, but the consensus is that some of the properties are too good a fit to pass up, even with a stretched budget. Grants will allow us to pay only 20%-25% of the purchase price. Any new purchases would also stretch the stewardship budget even further.

The Board had a retreat on February 24. One of the main topics was the competing interests of land acquisition, restoration & maintenance, and limited resources available at this time. ParkLands Foundation has approximately \$1.25 million in maintenance endowments, but with our successful expansion during the 21st Century additional funds are necessary. ParkLands Foundation also needs a cushion of money to cover our portion of purchases (20%-25%, after grants) and additional sources of revenue for increasing administrative costs.

Continued



## THANK YOU FOR 2017... *(continued)*

There will need to be a Capital Campaign in the coming years to meet these goals. ParkLands Foundation has been managed quite well, especially in the stewardship aspect, but it needs to evolve and transform as ParkLands move forward. We are slowly but surely creating and preserving a unique ecological paradise in an ecological desert of farm ground and development. We need to continue to press forward for future generations!

Any assistance you can provide in any manner in 2018 will be greatly appreciated.

Dan Deneen, President

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## Calendar of Events

■ **Friday, April 20th**  
**Piling Brush Piles**  
McDonalds 1744 P J Keller Hwy, Lexington, IL 61753  
(Bunney tract)  
1:00pm to 4:00pm  
Jason Shoemaker (309) 531-7065

■ **Sunday, May 6th**  
**Merwin Wildflower Walk**  
(North Parking Lot) East .5 miles on 2650 N,  
intersection of 1925 East Rd and County Rd. 2650 N.  
Lexington IL (Merwin)  
2:00pm to 3:30-4:00pm  
Roger Anderson (309) 438-2653

■ **Sunday, June 3rd**  
**Wandering in Woodford County**  
South .8 miles on 1975 E. From intersection  
of 475 N. and 1975 E. Secor, IL (Letchers Basin)  
10:00am to 1:00pm  
Jessica Chambers (309) 287-8768

■ **Most Thursdays, Beginning August 30th**  
**IWU Conservation Biology Work Days**  
Fairlakes Golf Course 2203 County Rd 600 N,  
Secor, IL 61771 (work at Woodford Corridor sites)  
1:00pm to 5:00pm  
Jason Shoemaker (309) 531-7065

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION EVENTS

Submitted by Julie Elzanati

*The following is a brief summary of the events held in 2017 to commemorate the ParkLands Foundation's 50 years of land conservation successes and to raise the publics' awareness of our ongoing habitat restoration efforts.*

Our nonprofit 501c3 formed in 1967 to preserve, protect and ecologically restore historic natural lands in the middle and upper Mackinaw River watershed. Working together, the ParkLands Foundation volunteers, members, donors, and neighboring landowners have conserved and restored thousands of acres of natural habitat dedicated primarily for preserving the biological diversity of native plants and wildlife, and secondarily for passive public recreation, environmental educational and scientific research.

### THANK YOU!!

We would like to extend much appreciation to the very enthusiastic members of our Outreach Committee for their hard work and contributions to planning, organizing and implementing the year-long 50th anniversary activities. Also, many thanks to the Board of Directors, Jason Shoemaker and numerous dedicated volunteers for giving much extra time and effort to help make our year-long celebration a huge success!

### Outreach Committee

Julie Elzanati (2017 Chair)

Jessica Chambers

Bethany Evans

Cristina Almeida

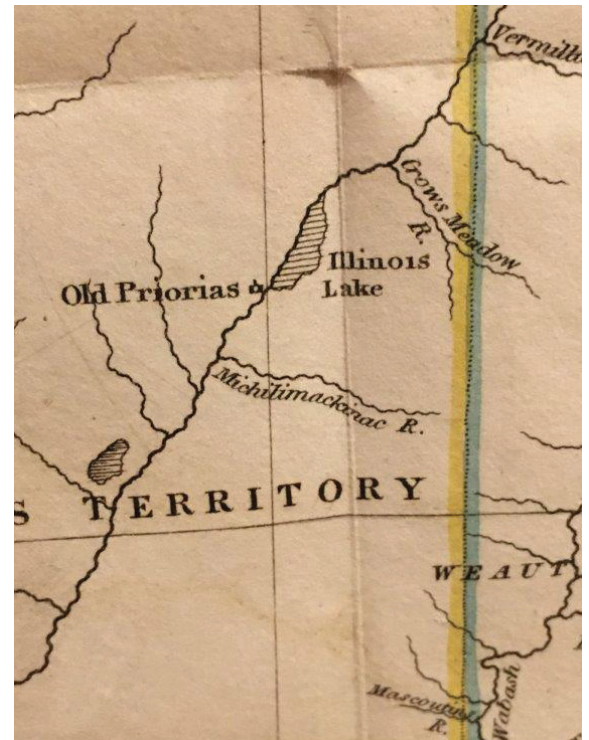
Mary Jo Adams

Jan Turner

Erin Herbez

### 50th Anniversary Celebration: FY 2016-17 Activities & Events

- Fundraising
  - Giving Tuesday (online)
    - One day: November 29, 2016
  - New merchandise apparel and gear sales have been good
- Publicity Events
  - March 2017 – Booth at Home, Lawn and Garden Show
  - April 2017 – Booth at IL Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo
  - June 2017 – Booth at Bloomington Farmers Market
  - Various radio interviews by board members
  - Guest editorial in Pantagraph
- New ParkLands Foundation apparel and outdoor gear with our new 50th anniversary logo (*Design work donated by Spoon Creative, Inc.*)
- New promotional materials, including brochure and marketing banners



Historic River Valley Map



## OUTREACH COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION EVENTS (continued)

### Merwin in May – May 13, 2017

Multiple outdoor activities offered at Merwin Preserve

120 people attended

5 new members joined because of event



Riders at ParkLands Bike Event



Merwin in May 2017 - Bethany Evans, Mary Campbell, John Campbell

### Half Century Bike Event

Saturday, August 5, 2017, turned out to be a beautiful and sunny but cool day, which was perfect for the Half Century Bike Ride event that ParkLands Foundation hosted as part of our year-long 50th anniversary celebration. 240 participants joined our noncompetitive ride on 7-, 20-, or 50-mile routes throughout the scenic Mackinaw River Watershed in McLean and Woodford counties. The courses started and finished at Keller Park Pavilion in Lexington, Illinois and went past several of our properties, including rest stops at Fairlakes Golf Course and the Merwin Preserve West Gate. Many photos of the event were shared on our Facebook page and on Twitter at #parklands50th. ParkLands welcomed 18 new memberships due to this event.

Many thanks to our generous sponsors: Invenergy for providing substantial financial support for our bike event and for serving free brats and beverages to participants after their ride. Vitesse Cycle Shop and Ecology Action Center for providing substantial assistance with event planning and preparations, as well as SAG service during the event. Contributors also included Wells Fargo, Dan Deneen, Nate Hinch, and Finn Amble.



## PLEASE JOIN US IN THANKING OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY SPONSORS

All expenses for the 2017 annual membership meeting, excluding the costs you paid for your food, were covered by the ParkLands Foundation or donated by Matt Fraker and Sherri Thornton.

Invenergy





## 49TH ANNUAL MEETING & 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PICNIC

The 2017 Annual Meeting of the ParkLands Foundation occurred on Sunday, September 10th. This was our 49th annual membership business meeting held in conjunction with our 50th anniversary celebration. Approximately 100 people were in attendance.

Many thanks to Matt Fraker and Sherri Thornton for hosting this wonderful event on their private property adjacent to our prized Chinquapin Bluffs Nature Preserve in rural Carlock, Woodford County, Illinois. This designated Illinois Nature Preserve is home to a variety of native plant and animal species in prairies, savannahs and woodlands along the Mackinaw River.

The business meeting was held from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. and included a Treasurer's Report, election of a new Board of Director, election of the FY 2017-18 Board Officers, and updates from the Outreach, Stewardship and Development committees. After the meeting, we had a delicious local food picnic lunch provided by Epiphany Farms and a keynote presentation by Matt Fraker on "50 Years of Conservation Success: The Past and Future of ParkLands Foundation Personal Perspectives of a Longtime Donor and Landowner."

After lunch, participants chose one of the following activities: (a) Guided hike with Matt Fraker on his property, (b) Tram riding tour to Mackinaw River in Chinquapin Bluffs Preserve, (c) Explore nature on your own or rest in the tent, or (d) Take a tram to the parking lot to depart. The day's activities ended with a celebratory champagne toast, a special anniversary cake and a dessert buffet.



Don & Carol Schmidt at the Annual Meeting & Celebration Picnic



Matt Fraker at the Annual Meeting & Celebration Picnic



## 50TH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET WITH DR. DAVID HASKELL

ParkLands Foundation held a banquet on October 24th, 2017 at the Doubletree Hotel in Bloomington to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our founding. Paid attendees enjoyed a lovely dinner and a program featuring the story of ParkLands founding and growth with stories from numerous ParkLands heroes along with stories from the invited speaker Dr. David Haskell. Dr. Haskell, renowned conservation author of *A Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature*, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award. Dr. Haskell's talk "The World is Made from Details" placed the ParkLands story in context. Dr. Haskell also shared excerpts from his writings in *The Songs of Trees* (Stories from Nature's Great Connectors). This was an incredible evening of memories and aspirations. Many thanks to Guy Fraker for his contributions towards this program.



50th Anniversary Banquet with Dr. David Haskell



## ILLINOIS PRAIRIE WILD ONES CHAPTER SPECIAL EVENT

Illinois Prairie Wild Ones Chapter is hosting noted ecologist and best-selling author, Doug Tallamy, on April 24th, 2018 at Heartland Community College from 7-8:30pm. The event is free and open to the public. Doug will share his ideas on creating living landscapes with native plants while attracting pollinators to your yard.



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