



# Newsletter

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## In This Issue:

Habitat Loss .....	1
Members' Meeting .....	2
Election Information .....	3
Bike Ride Wrap-Up .....	4
Upcoming Programs .....	6
Workdays .....	7
Past Events .....	7
Merwin Trail Extension...	8
Summer Interns.....	9

## Fighting Against Habitat Loss

by Frank Sanders

There are basically three types of habitat loss: Habitat Destruction, Habitat Degradation and Habitat Fragmentation.

In Central Illinois, **Habitat Destruction** is the change of land use from prairies, savannas, and woodlands. This was originally done through the creation of farmland, homesteads, and towns. Today, it continues in the same way, with the exception that it is most often on a much larger scale: corporate farms, housing developments, and commercial parks.

**Habitat Degradation** occurs through the introduction of non-native plant and animal species. These non-native species have no natural predators and can easily out-compete native plants and animals. It has been taking place over the centuries, since the influx of the European pioneers, but at an accelerated pace with the globalization of trade, increase in human travel, and illegal importations.

**Habitat Fragmentation** is related to Habitat Destruction, in that it happens when parts of a natural habitat are destroyed, leaving smaller unconnected areas. This has the greatest impact on animal species by limiting food availability and mating options. There are some animal species that will not cross open, unnatural areas to feed and mate, thus minimizing their survivability by ultimately reducing the gene pool. It can impact plant species also by limiting pollination and seed dispersal.

So where does ParkLands Foundation fit into limiting and/or mitigating the loss of habitat?

ParkLands is working to restore prairies, savannas, and woodlands. We do this by taking primarily donated land that has been depleted or significantly modified and work to allow native species to flourish. Some of the work that we do is reseeding areas and prescribed burns.

ParkLands fights off the ever-present invasive species. These include black locust, teasel, lespedeza, autumn olive, honeysuckle bush, multiflora rose, and others. To the volunteer stewards that oversee the preserves, it feels like a never-ending battle.

As more land comes under the protection of ParkLands through donation, purchase, and the creation of conservation easements in the Mackinaw River Watershed, fragmentation of the land is reduced. Native plants and animal species are more able to migrate and reproduce.

As members of ParkLands Foundation, you are making it happen. You save our natural world from further habitat destruction, degradation and fragmentation. Thank you for being a part of ParkLands Foundation!



*Garlic mustard grows densely in this photo by Peter Goodspeed. It typically comes up in March and April, and crowds out native spring woodland flowers like bluebells.*

# Our Past, Present, & Future: ParkLands Foundation's 2024 Annual Members Meeting

**Sunday, September 8, 2024**

*Free, \$20 Charge for Lunch if Purchased, or Bring Your Own*

10:30 a.m. Optional Guided Hike at Moon Preserve

10:30 a.m. Committee Representatives & Table Displays at Davis Lodge

12:00 p.m. Ancho & Agave Fajita Bar Lunch & Speaker Presentations at Davis Lodge

1:30 p.m. Committee Representatives & Table Displays at Davis Lodge

Members of ParkLands Foundation are invited to attend our Annual Meeting of Members on Sunday, September 8, 2024. Our Moon Preserve, located within the inner loop of Lake Bloomington, will be the site of an optional 10:30 hike. Experienced guides will point out the features on this 1.2 mile trail located north of Camp Peairs Girl Scout Camp (Google Maps: ParkLands Moon Preserve). Directions will be sent upon registration.

At noon, head the short distance to the Davis Lodge, 25449 Davis Lodge Road, Hudson, Illinois. An Ancho & Agave Fajita Bar lunch (\$20, *or bring your own*) will take place simultaneously with the Formal Membership Meeting, Year in Review, and featured speaker. Bill Kemp, from the McLean County Museum of History, will discuss the history of Lake Bloomington.

New this year, there will be table displays with representatives from each committee. Get a quick overview, ask questions, or dig deep for more information with the people that know the answers!

If you are not a member, now is the perfect time to join at [parklandsfoundation.org/membership](https://parklandsfoundation.org/membership). We hope to see you there! Please register so we have enough chairs and food for everyone. Visit [parklandsfoundation.org/events](https://parklandsfoundation.org/events).

**Please Register by September 1!**

# Election Information

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 four vacated seats as Director, the following individuals are hereby presented for nomination for a three-year term (24-27):

- Jeff Howard
- Herb Wiser
- Mary Jo Adams
- Chuck Croxton

To fill one vacated seat as Director, the following individual is hereby presented for nomination for a one-year term (2024-25):

- Dan Deneen

The following current Directors are hereby presented for nomination to continue for a three-year term (2024-27):

- Paul Van Ness
- Michael Doherty
- Shannon Fulton

These nominations will be voted on Sunday, September 8, 2024 by the ParkLands Members present at the Annual Meeting of Members.

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Register online by credit card at [parklandsfoundation.org/events/](https://parklandsfoundation.org/events/) or fill out this form, pay by check if applicable, and mail it to: ParkLands Foundation, PO Box 12, Normal, IL 61761.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

All correspondence will go to the person listed above. Please forward information to those under your registration.

List the names of everyone attending under this registration (including yourself) and lunch preference.

Name	Ancho & Agave Fajita Bar	Will bring lunch/no lunch
	Total x \$20=	

Please Register by September 1!



## 7th Annual Bike Ride Wrap Up

### Riders

Two hundred thirty bike riders took off from the Lexington Pavilion early in the morning on Saturday, July 13, 2024, hoping to beat the worst of the heat. What started off as 73 degrees quickly rose to 88, with a heat index of 97! These riders were part of ParkLands 7th Annual Bike Ride. They chose between courses of 20 miles, 50 miles, or the Century- 100 kilometers (approximately 62 miles).



### Volunteers

Volunteers were on hand to get the riders checked in, assist those experiencing bike issues, and stock the Rest Stops with beverages and snacks- from cookies to pickles and everything in between. We couldn't do this without them!







## After Party

Bikers and volunteers alike relaxed at Analytical Brewing in Lexington for the after party.



## Thanks to Our Sponsors

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### Birch

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Gentle Family Dentistry • Heartland Bank • Kemp's Upper Tap • David Osnowitz, CFP, Merrill Lynch  
Dr. William Ray • The Vein Specialists

If you would like to be a sponsor for the 2025 Annual Bike Ride, contact Erin Herbez,  
[erin@parklandsfoundation.org](mailto:erin@parklandsfoundation.org).

## Upcoming programs

To register for all programs, visit [parklandsfoundation.org/events/](https://parklandsfoundation.org/events/).

### **ParkLands River Adventure: Musseling in the Mackinaw**

*Date & Time: Saturday, August 17, 2024; 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.*

*Cost: \$5/person members, \$10/person non-members*

*Location: Private property near Letcher Basin, Secor, IL. Directions to parking and the access point will be sent upon registration. All ages welcome!*

Step into the Mackinaw River for an unforgettable hands-on experience for all ages. Discover the animals that live beneath the waterline. With the help of scientists, search for and learn about mussels, damselfly and dragonfly nymphs, crayfish, and so many other fascinating animals. This popular program will sell out! Don't be left on the waiting list. We will get wet, so please wear water shoes or old sneakers and clothes that can get wet and muddy. Bring a towel, change of clothes, water bottle, and sunblock.

### **Hike with a Naturalist: Letcher Basin Preserve**

*Date & Time: Saturday, August 24, 2024; 9:00-11:00 a.m.*

*Cost: \$5/family or group*

*Location: Letcher Basin Preserve near Secor, IL*

An experienced naturalist will be your guide through Letcher Basin Preserve in Secor, IL. See what nature has to offer on a (hopefully) beautiful summer day. Wear clothes suitable for the weather and sturdy shoes. Please do not bring your pets, as they are not allowed in any of ParkLands Foundation Preserves.

### **ParkLands Annual Meeting of Members**

*Date & Time: Sunday, September 8, 2024; Optional Hike, 10:30 a.m., Lunch and Meeting, 12:00-2:00 p.m.*

See pages 2 & 3 for complete information. You must be a member to attend this event.

### **Stargazing, Wine Tasting, & Snack Grazing with the Twin City Amateur Astronomers**

*Date & Time: Saturday, October 4, 2024; 7:30-9:30 p.m.*

*Cost: \$20/person members, \$25/person non-members*

*Location: South Chinquapin Bluffs*

Take a tour of the Universe with the Twin City Amateur Astronomers ([tcaa.us](https://tcaa.us)) and ParkLands Foundation. Telescopes will be available for viewing, and laser pointers used to show us around the night sky. Prominent sky objects such as planets, nebulae, star clusters, and galaxies that are visible will be identified. Wine, other beverages, and light appetizers will be served. This is an event not to be missed!

### **Hike with a Naturalist: South Chinquapin Bluffs Preserve**

*Date & Time: Saturday, November 2, 2024; 1:00-3:00 p.m.*

*Cost: \$5/family or group*

*Location: South Chinquapin Bluffs Preserve, Carlock, IL*

An experienced naturalist will guide you through Chinquapin Bluffs Preserve in Carlock, IL.



# Workdays

Public workdays are held throughout the year at many of our preserves. Typically, volunteers will remove invasive plants and do trail maintenance. You do not need experience nor plant identification skills. Your Lead Stewards will give you all the information you need. In addition, you will become part of a like-minded community and learn about plants, animals, and ecosystems! If you have been thinking about volunteering at our preserves, give it a try! Come prepared wearing long sleeves, long pants, and gloves.

*Moon Preserve, within the inner loop of Lake Bloomington*

Thursday, August 8, 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, August 28, 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, August 14, 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Saturday, September 7, 8:00-11:00 a.m.

*Weston Cemetery Prairie Preserve, Weston, IL*

Sundays, August 11, 18, & 25; 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Please register for workdays by visiting [parklandsfoundation.org/events](https://parklandsfoundation.org/events). Knowing how many volunteers to expect will allow us to bring enough tools for everyone!

## Past Programs & Events

We've been busy at ParkLands! In the past few months, we've hosted and participated in many events. We love meeting the public and showing them all that ParkLands Foundation has to offer. It's easy to do when you represent such an amazing organization! Here is a sampling of programs we've offered and organizations we've collaborated with.



School District 87

Hike with a Naturalist: Kenyon-Baller led by Andy Smoot & Chuck Croxton  
Analytical Brewing

Scribbles Center for Learning

4H presentation by Terrie & Jeff Howard

Ripple: A Clean Water Extravaganza by Ecology Action Center

BioBlitz 2024: Read, Renew, Record! by Normal Public Library

KiteFest by For A Better Tomorrow

PrideFest by Bloomington-Normal Pridefest, The Bistro, and Sharon ShareAlike

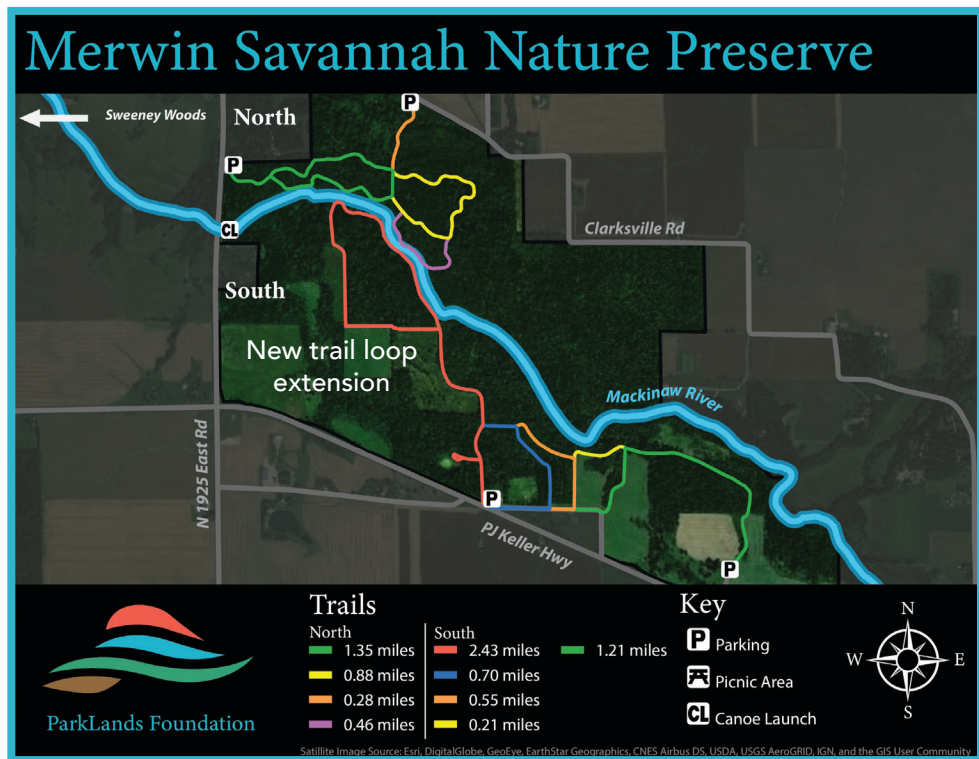


## Merwin Preserve's South Trail has a New Trail Loop Extension

The original Dale Birkenholz Memorial Trail, now known as the South Loop Trail at Merwin South Gate, has long been an out and back trail which many hikers have commented on. To address the hikers' suggestions, this trail has been extended to a 2.43 mile loop trail. If you refer to the map on the ParkLands Merwin Preserve website, you will see this as the red trail at Merwin South gate.

The trail starts at the Merwin South Gate on PJ Keller Hwy, as it always has. As explained in the original trail description, this trail highlights the diversity of the south Merwin Preserve as it wanders through hardwood timber, drops into the south river bottom, then follows along open areas where you can find prairie plants blooming at certain times of the year.

The South Loop Trail connection starts approximately one-half mile after leaving the river. This new trail follows the perimeter of three fields, with an occasional woodland pass-through. These fields will eventually be (or are in the process of being) restored to prairie, and in the meantime provide good viewing for birds. Along the third field you will reconnect with the main trail, leading you back to the South Gate. At this time there are temporary signs indicating Loop Trail to help you navigate.



Thanks for the creation of this loop extension goes to Sherrie Snyder and Peg Schickedanz who hiked the area several times in search of the best loop extension. Jason Shoemaker weighed in with his suggestions and did the most important thing, mowing and clearing the new trail. ParkLands interns, Tomi Sewell and Tanner Laesch, helped clear the connecting trail.

Our thanks also goes to Dale Birkenholz, teacher, naturalist, and conservationist. He shared an eagerness to establish a community for bird study and nature enjoyment. Dale served on the board of ParkLands Foundation for many years, planning trails, planting trees, and offering expertise in wildlife habitat management, prior to his death in 2015.

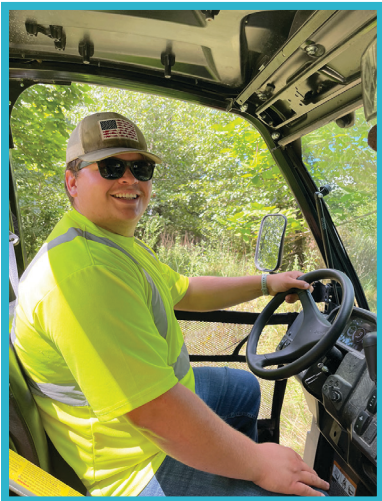
Visit [parklandsfoundation.org/our-preserves/merwin-preserve](http://parklandsfoundation.org/our-preserves/merwin-preserve) for a full size & printable map.

# Interns

Hi! My name is **Tomi Sewell**, and starting this fall I will be a senior at Bradley University. I am currently majoring in Environmental Science with a minor in Sustainability. As the summer is coming to a close, I find myself shocked that my internship with ParkLands is almost over. This summer has flown by with the many different tasks and preserves that we have found ourselves busy with. The amount of knowledge that I have learned from Jason and all of the wonderful stewards is more than I could have ever asked for. This internship was an amazing opportunity to grow my knowledge of the natural world as we were taught many different native and invasive species throughout these 11 weeks. Besides the massive amounts of knowledge gained through this internship, the best part was meeting so many people who love nature as much as I do. ParkLands is a wonderful community of like-minded people who want to see our natural environment flourish.



*Tomi Sewell*



*Tanner Laesch*

My name is **Tanner Laesch** and I am one of ParkLands Foundation's latest interns. Working along side such knowledgeable individuals who love the environment so much has expanded my understanding of nature and its beauty. I have become able to identify a wide variety of plants (both native and invasive) from my time here- ranging from autumn olive and teasel to cone flowers and wild bergamot. Although I have learned a lot of information about the environment in my educational studies, actually being in the wildlife every day made me learn about preservation in a way that no classroom could totally fulfill. My time here with ParkLands has been educational, fulfilling, and fun. Thanks so much for this opportunity!



*Tomi and Tanner cleaned up the picnic area at Letcher Basin, making it a great place to rest up after a hike or have your lunch!*



*Tomi Sewell, left, and Tanner Laesch, right*





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