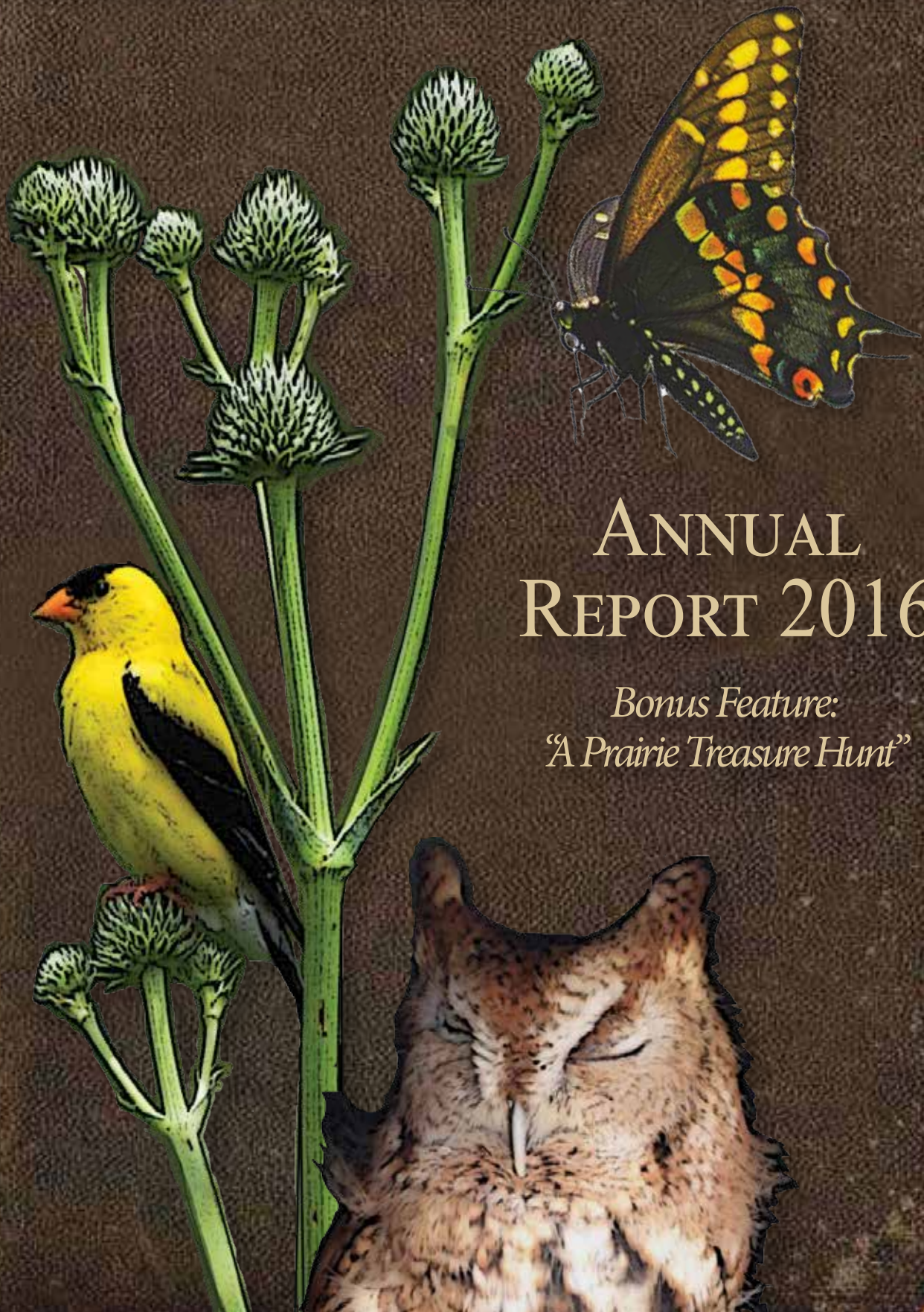


SAVE THE PRAIRIE SOCIETY

WITH AFFILIATE FRANZOSENBUSCH HERITAGE PROJECT



ANNUAL REPORT 2016

*Bonus Feature:
"A Prairie Treasure Hunt"*

SAVE THE PRAIRIE SOCIETY **WITH AFFILIATE FRANZOSENBUSCH HERITAGE PROJECT** WESTCHESTER, ILLINOIS

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NEW WEBSITE ADDRESS! www.fhproject.org

Save the Prairie Society (STPS) is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 1975. STPS works in partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission to preserve and restore Wolf Road Prairie, a Dedicated Nature Preserve. The Society's mission is to:

- Acquire natural areas and wildlife habitat
- Preserve, protect and enhance biodiversity
- Restore native ecosystems
- Offer field trips, prairie tours and natural, historic and cultural programs and events at Wolf Road Prairie and the Prairie House
- Promote connection to nature through the arts
- Restore and renovate the Prairie House as a Museum and Nature Center.

Natural Areas Rescue Fund (NARF) was initiated in 1993 by STPS as a land acquisition project to save imperiled "orphan" natural areas and threatened and endangered species in Illinois.

STPS is a member of Chicago Wilderness, Earth Share of Illinois and The Land Trust Alliance. We support local, statewide and national conservation and environmental causes. STPS docents lead tours at Wolf Road Prairie and the Prairie House for student and adult groups. We offer monthly educational programs and events at Wolf Road Prairie and the Prairie House as a community service, and work to promote the site as a tourism destination that highlights conservation and local history.



2016 EVENT AND FEST COMMITTEE

Dave Findley	Rita Mc Cabe,
Jack Doyle	Jim Arbuthnot

ANNUAL REPORT COMMITTEE

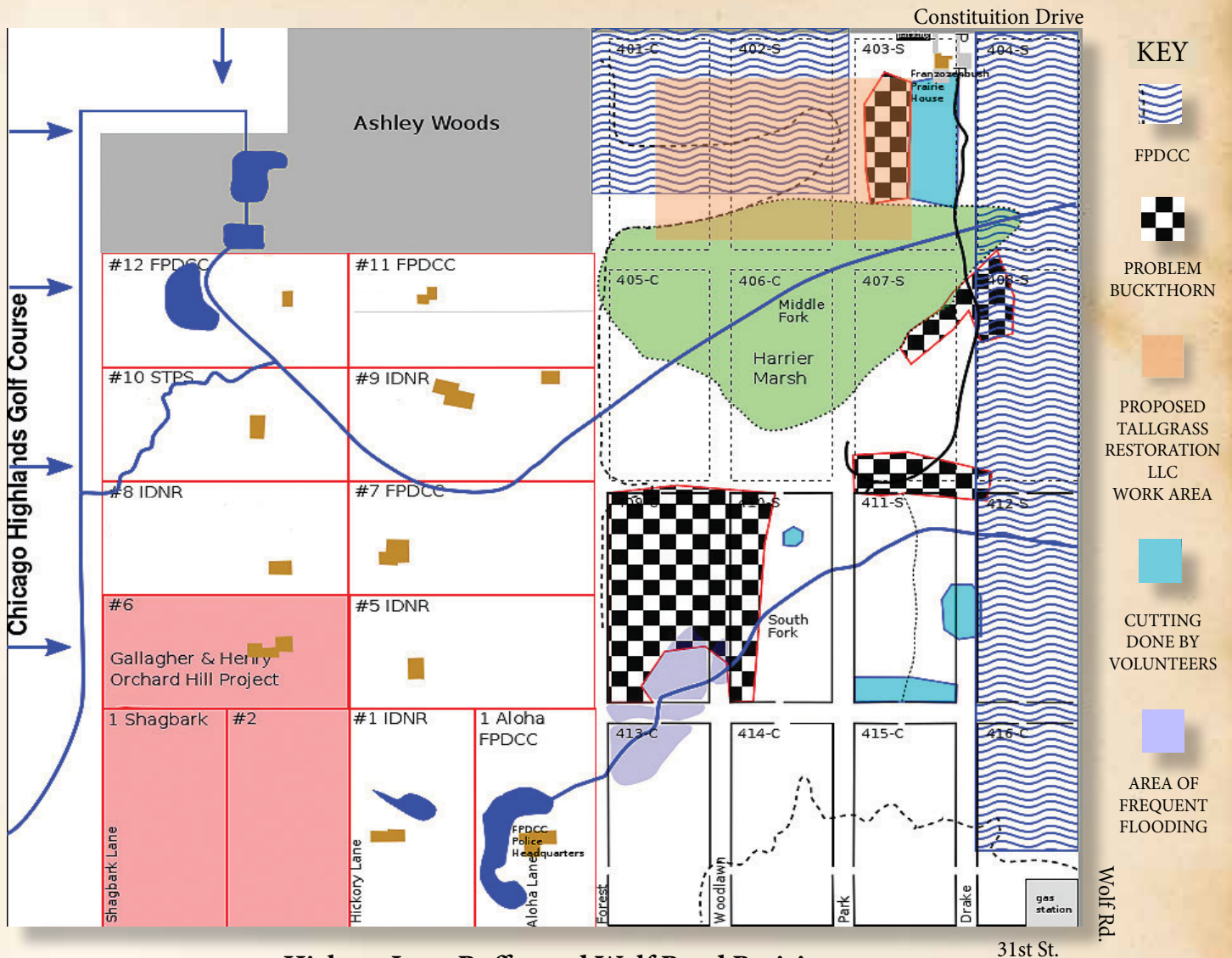
Jim Arbuthnot	Larry Godson
John Banaszak	Rita McCabe
Mary Cray	Patricia Reaves
Lana Gits	Drew Reaves

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Lana Gits

Cover: (clockwise from left) "Finch on Rattlesnake Master" & "Black Swallowtail butterfly" by Fidencio Marbella. "Screech Owl" by Steve Kiecker.

SPS Management Report 2016



Hickory Lane Buffer and Wolf Road Prairie

A great deal of Buckthorn was cut and the stumps herbicided in Wolf Road Prairie in 2016 with the help of SPS volunteers and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. In the map above the blue boxes represent where cutting was done by volunteers, including the rectangle directly south of the Prairie House where Nazareth High School students worked. The boxes filled with blue wavy lines represent areas where the Forest Preserve District of Cook County worked (west of the Prairie House along Constitution Drive and west of Wolf Road). The areas filled with a checkerboard pattern show sections where Buckthorn remains a problem, especially along the western side of the prairie. The Forest Preserve has said they are slowly working from east to west on the prairie, so progress will continue but it is a never-ending battle for us all. Tallgrass Restoration LLC will provide SPS contracted work again during the last half of the winter in 2017. Tallgrass will concentrate mainly on Buckthorn to the west and southwest of the Prairie House (transparent orange area). Thanks to all who have contributed funds to make this approximately \$4,000 project possible. And finally - it was a tremendous year for the Blazing Stars, with hundreds blooming in the prairie along the sidewalks north of the kiosk.

- Larry Godson and E.J. Neafsey

PRAIRIE WORKDAY SCHEDULE

JOIN US MOST SATURDAYS 1PM TO 3PM at The Prairie House
Call Rita to confirm! (708) 354-5512 or (708) 715-4221

STPS LOGGED 655 VOLUNTEER HOURS IN THE PRAIRIE FOR 2016.

Save the Prairie Society 2016 Events and Education Programs



JANUARY

The Edmund Fitzgerald - A Strange Encounter

Storyteller, Jack Doyle, shared the exploratory and revealing journey that he and his wife Diane shared while vacationing in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Curiosity and many unexplained coincidences led the couple to unearth fascinating discoveries about the tragic fate of the SS Edmund Fitzgerald. We felt transported as Jack shared their findings. Little by little, and with astonishing luck he and Diane discovered compelling details surrounding the sinking of the ill-fated Fitzgerald.

FEBRUARY

Indian Mounds of Illinois Including the Chicago Area

In our February event we were astonished to learn from naturalist, **Jack MacRae** just how many Indian Mounds Illinois has. Through a power-point presentation and a conversational-like lecture, Jack engaged his audience from the beginning right to the end.



MARCH

Woodcock Spotting

From the Prairie House deck, board members John Banaszak and E.J. Neafsey helped visitors spot the male Woodcocks as they displayed their courtship ritual on the ground and in the sky. Information about the life cycle of the Woodcock was discussed and handouts were made available. Despite the



cold, bird enthusiasts turned out and stayed for the after sunset display. (This event was repeated in April with John Banaszak and E.J. Neafsey).

APRIL

Contested Land: The Changing Flora and Fauna of the Chicago Region with Joel Greenberg

Joel is the author of several noted books including *The Natural History of The Chicago Region* and *A Feathered River Across The Sky*. We were honored to have him speak at our April event. Joel is a researcher and consultant at the Chicago Natural History Museum and the Peggy Notebaert Museum. *The Natural History of the Chicago Region* is a must read for serious naturalists in the Chicago area. Mr. Greenburg shared his latest research with us on the impact of humans on the health and survival rates of our flora and fauna in prairies and woodlands. He also reported on the loss of biological richness due to pollution, introduced species, land use, and climate change.



photo by L. Godson

MAY

The Effects of Climate Change on Bird Migration



Naturalist and birder, Ron Skleney discussed the stresses that climate change places on bird migration.

Studies from around the country were used and patterns from many data sources were shared through a PowerPoint presentation. Skleney's in-depth knowledge was evident as Ron clearly answered all the questions posed by our many well informed guests



Illinois Native Plant Sale

photo: E.J. Neafsey

JUNE

To encourage the use of native plants in home gardens STPS hosted a plant sale from *Linda's Loves*. Linda Walker is the owner and an Illinois Certified Perennial Specialist. She made a wide variety of native plants available to the public on the lawn of the Prairie House. The great turnout was evidence of the growing popularity of native plants.

JULY

Insect Safari

Our annual Insect Safari was hosted by Professor Mike Rush and STPS President, Lawrence Godson. Participants were treated to a beautiful display of insects on the Prairie House deck and an adventure on the Prairie.

AUGUST

Coloring for Grown-ups

Several guests joined us on the Prairie House porch to relax and chat while participating in nature-themed, coloring.



"Twilight", a Barred Owl, red phase. (above left, Photo: Larry Godson). Next three photos by Steve Kiecker taken at the Prairie Fest. Other raptor species are (left to right) Peregrine Falcon, Screech Owl and Red-tailed Hawk. Candy Ridlbauer, CEO/Executive Director of Northern Illinois Raptors showed all of these birds on the glove. Some of them were injured or rehab birds that were non-releasable, which is why they are in captivity.

SEPTEMBER

ANNUAL PRAIRIE FEST/ Northern Illinois Raptors

This organization, dedicated to saving raptors, displayed ten individual birds of prey on the glove while informing visitors of their life history and answering their questions. Guests were treated to music by the Dona Benkert's dulcimer players, Civil War reenactors, a wool spinning demonstration, basket raffles, a quilt display, and free handwriting analysis. Many of our visitors availed themselves of informative lectures about the Prairie House and the the first settlers who lived in the early 1850's hamlet of Franzosenbusch and the surrounding area. Guided tours were given by our docents who were also available throughout the day to answer questions about the Prairie. Once again, **Shell Gas Station at Ogden and York Roads once again, acted as our food vendor providing brats and hotdogs and donating all of the money received to SPS.** Throughout the day, visitors were also able to purchase handcrafted goods from vendors along the parkway. Later in the month we observed National Public Lands Day by cutting back non-native plants and collecting seeds.

OCTOBER

Poetry at the Prairie House:

Board member Drew Reaves invited the public for the first, annual "Poetry at the Prairie House" to share a favorite nature poem or to read an original nature poem of their own. This event provided an opportunity for local poets to share their thoughts and creative talent with like-minded people.



photo by L. Godson

NOVEMBER

Wings of the Night: Owls

Susan Dombro of the Cook County Forest Preserves gave an informative talk on owls. Her audience learned about the adaptations that enable them to fly and hunt on the darkest of nights. Susan talked about their life cycles and the difference between species that enable owls to survive in a wide range of habitats. Guests enjoyed being able to see and touch the small brown screech owl from the Trailside Museum. Feathers were also passed around enabling guests to see for themselves the adaptations Susan had discussed.

(left) October 15 members of the Congregation of St. Joseph and associates came out to gather seed. Photo by Jackie Schmitz CSJ



Prairie Snapshots 2016 :

DECEMBER

A Traditional German & Bohemian Christmas

SPS Board member Patricia Reaves gave an in-depth presentation of the customs and traditions of a German and a Bohemian Christmas using a slide show presentation. Patricia explained the meaning and origin of the many beautifully displayed crafted artifacts that she has collected over the years. Attendees were also treated to delicious samples of holiday foods from both traditions.



photo by L. Godson

the meaning and origin of the many beautifully displayed crafted artifacts that she has collected over the years. Attendees were also treated to delicious samples of holiday foods from both traditions.

Prairie Snapshots: 1-4: Nazareth Student volunteers. 1. Students rehab Mason bee nest boxes. (photo, L. Godson) 2. Throwing brush on burn pile at Naz. workday. 3. Students pose with Garden snake in the prairie. 4. Much needed weeding near Heritage Herb Garden. 5. Rita McCabe points out genealogy display in the Prairie House addition. 6. E.J. Neafsey explains the significance of Wolf Road Prairie and our restoration work to a group of Nazareth students.



A WOLF ROAD PRAIRIE

For Children of All Ages

There are many wonderful treasures at Wolf Road Prairie but not all are easy to find. Some are in the trees and among the plants. Some are floating in the air above and some are right in front of your nose! If you visit often and look hard you might be able to spot all of the treasures on both of these pages. See how many **you** can find and name!

ANSWERS THIS PAGE

1. Red-tailed Hawk
2. Tiger Swallowtail
3. Blazing Star
4. Michigan Lily
5. Milkweed Beetle
6. Hoary Puccoon
7. Prairie Dock leaf
8. Compass Plant
9. Black Swallowtail Butterfly



1. F. Marbella



2.

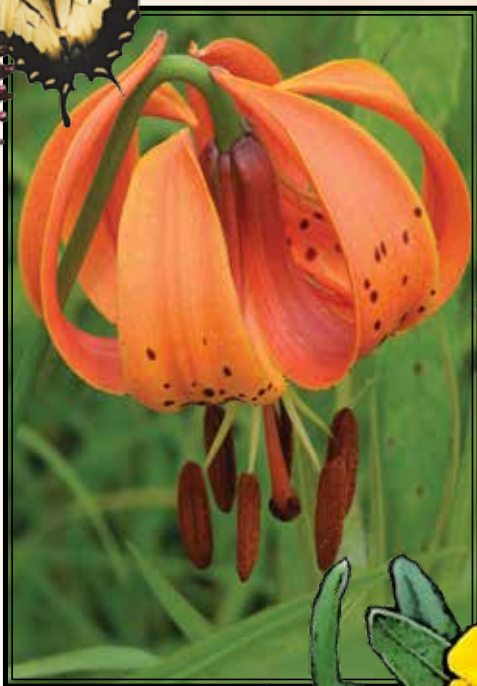


Photo: L. Godson

4.



Photo: L. Godson

5.

Photo: E.J. Neasey

6.



Photo: E.J. Neasey

7.



8.

Painting: L.Gits



Photo: F. Marbella

9.

images not to scale

A WOLF ROAD PRAIRIE

ANSWERS THIS PAGE

1. Biennial Gaura
2. Yellow Coneflower (Grey-headed coneflower)
4. Wood Betony
5. Big Bluestem Grass
6. Little Bluestem Grass
7. Yellow Finch
8. Rattlesnake Master
9. Honey Bee
10. Monarch Butterfly
11. Trout Lily

WOLF ROAD PRAIRIE WETLAND TREASURE



Photo: L. Godson



Photo: Rita McCabe

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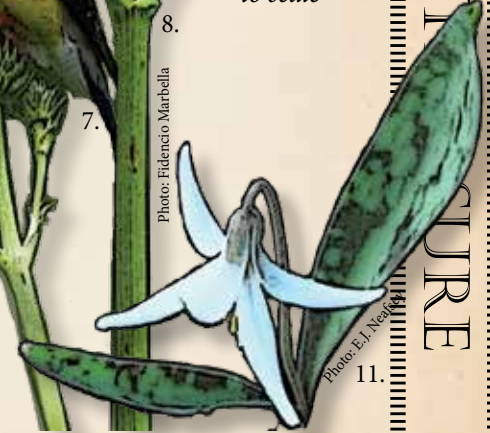


Photo: Fidencio Marbella

Photo: E.J. Nelson

Painting: L. Gits

Photo: L. Godson

Photo: A. Gara

Photo: J. Banaszak

Photo: L. Godson

WOLF ROAD PRAIRIE SAVANNA TREASURE

WOLF ROAD PRAIRIE SKY TREASURES

Cook County Forest Preserve Management Report

Cook County Forest Preserve Report by CCFPD Biologist Craig Billington

Restoration at Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve

At nearly 80 acres, Wolf Road Prairie Nature Preserve (WRPNP) is often considered to be one of the largest and highest quality examples of remnant, black soil, tallgrass prairie east of the Mississippi River.

Recently the IDNR and FPCC established an Intergovernmental Agreement that allows the FPCC to conduct restoration activities such as prescribed burns and invasive control on IDNR owned portions of the property under the direction of a Management Plan approved by the IL Nature Preserve Commission and the land owners. This has allowed restoration activity to increase dramatically over the last couple of years. What follows is a summary of the restoration work conducted by the FPCC that has taken place in 2016: In the winter of 2014 the FPCC's Salt Creek Resource Management crew mowed invasive brush and hand cut trees in about 8 acres in the northwest corner of WRPNP. In the summers of 2014, 2015 and 2016, Stantec (an ecological service contractor funded by the FPCC Habitat Enhancement contract) conducted follow-up control measures by foliar spraying invasive resprouts with herbicide.

In the late winter of 2015 Stantec cleared invasive brush from about 1.2 acres along the southern half of the western boundary of WRPNP and conducted resprouts follow-up control in the summers of 2015 and 2016. This again was funded by the FPCC Habitat Enhancement contract.

Also in the late winter of 2015 the FPCC's Salt Creek Resource Management crew began thinning oaks in the savanna area along the southern portion of the site. Oaks had grown too numerous and dense in this area for it to retain savanna natural community characteristics and savanna associated ground layer vegetation is being shaded out. These were the first steps in thinning the trees in this savanna unit by 50%. Work on this project continued in the winter of 2016 with the eastern half of the savanna now complete. Work began in the western half of the savanna in late 2016 and will continue on into 2017. In the winter of 2016 Stantec mowed about 1.5 acres of invasive brush in the southern section of block 405. They conducted resprout follow-up control in the summer of 2016. In the fall of 2015 the FPCC conducted a prescribed burn of nearly 30 acres in the southern half of WRPNP. The remainder of the southern half of WRPNP was burned in the spring of 2016.

During the spring and summer Stantec conducted sweeps to apply herbicide foliarly to reed canary grass and non-native thistles in the southern half of the preserve and teasel and wild parsnip on the eastern edge of the preserve. This was funded through the FPCC Habitat Enhancement contract.



Special Mention: Jenny Chlipala *by Rita McCabe*

Every year since 2011, STPS has helped Nazareth Academy students fulfill a graduation requirement of twenty community service hours by inviting them to help with prairie management. Jenny Chlipala is one student who first started volunteering at the Prairie her sophomore year. Early on it became apparent to us that Jenny was a budding naturalist: always curious and enthusiastic, delighting in learning about snakes, crayfish, beetles, birds, frogs and plants. She came early and stayed late sitting with us on the house porch where she grilled us about the Prairie and asked for advice on colleges and majors. Jenny came back her junior year and assumed the role of group leader: doing the necessary paperwork and helping to organize the workday. She came back her senior year, even though she had already fulfilled her required service hours. Upon graduating, Jenny decided to major in environmental science at the University of Illinois. Through a series of emails that Jenny has shared with us, we have been able to follow her progress in completing her chosen major. Among her accomplishments she has participated in a university environmental study abroad trip in Costa Rica; qualified for a paid summer internship collecting insects from Illinois prairies, savannas, and woodlands; and taken part in an avian field course learning how to handle and band birds. Jenny always wrote about her experiences with enthusiasm – the same enthusiasm that Jenny once brought to her prairie workdays. We wish her well and hope she continues to keep us posted.



Photo: Mary Cray

Franzosenbusch Prairie House Report

by Drew Reaves

Parking Lots of Dreams

Visitors to the Franzosenbusch Prairie House last summer or passersby on Constitution Drive have noticed steady progress on, and the ultimate completion of, a new parking lot. What is not so evident is the long, winding path toward making this parking lot a reality and its importance for the future of the Prairie House as a welcome center to Wolf Road Prairie.

There has long been a wood-chip parking lot to the east of the Prairie House to accommodate those taking part in our many activities.

Because this area is an old street right of way and is partially owned by the State of Illinois, permission to build a permanent parking lot there has continually proved elusive. Our new parking lot is thus best appreciated in the context of our plans for renovating and creating a functioning public center with a parking area that meets strict building codes. STPS has already made significant progress on the house itself over the past two decades. During this time, committed volunteers have worked with architects, timber-framers

The lot provides a double parking space for special-needs parking as well as two other sets of four parking spots each, situated amongst the trees, lawn and street lights of the parkway.



Photo: D. Reaves

Working with a local firm, Heuer Engineering, special care was taken to develop a design allowing for water gathering on the lots to flow through the pavement, away from the nature preserve, toward the street and into the existing village drainage system. The varied and muted color pattern of the pavers was

chosen to not only reflect the variety of colors in the prairie and surrounding buildings but also to complement the traditional red bricks in the memorial walkway next to the house. Many

“Save the Prairie Society is finally in a position... to realize the potential of the Franzosenbusch Prairie House.”

individuals and entities contributed to the implementation of the plan. Local attorney Kenneth Moreau contributed unselfishly of his time and expertise to help us “cross our t’s” and “dot our i’s,” particularly regarding our consultation with many experts in their fields, including contract attorney Kori Bazanos. We have also appreciated the guidance of James Goumas



Photo: L. Godson

and engineers to develop plans for an interior renovation that will preserve and display a restored German Lutheran 1850’s schoolhouse. At the same time the entire building will facilitate

the society’s mission to inform the public of and involve it in maintaining and improving the native ecology of our landscape. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Village of Westchester. They approved placement of the new parking lot on the right of way which helped us reach another milestone in completing this exciting project. Special thanks goes to former Village President Paul Gatuso and the current administration of Westchester Village President Sam Pulia, Village Manager Janet Matthys, Public Works Director Robert Lewis and Director of Community Development Melissa Headley for their support in locating our parking lot to the immediate northwest of the Prairie House.

of Westchester’s Hancock Engineering firm in arranging and overseeing the work of local contractors who constructed the parking lot through August and September and local plumbers who upgraded the water lines from the prairie house to the street prior to that in order to support our building plans. Save the Prairie Society is finally in a position, with your continued support, to realize the potential of the Franzosenbusch Prairie House.

FINAL NOTE: Now that we have the important parking lot and an enhanced water hookup project completed we can and are proceeding anew with the architectural and engineering plans necessary to organize the interior renovation/restoration of the Prairie House. Watch for more info about this phase or stop by when you see us at the house and we will catch you up!



Photo: L. Godson

2016 DONOR LIST

Save The Prairie Society including Franzosenbusch Heritage Project

Your donation to Save the Prairie Society and the Franzosenbusch Heritage Project are investments in the future and generations to come will be grateful for your foresight. There are many ways to invest. Just visit savetheprairiesociety.org/get-involved/donate, where you can give online using secure methods through Paypal, Amazon, and Network for Good.

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PRAIRIE SPIRITS

Beth & Chuck Edwards
- Won at a 2015
Prairie Fest raffle

THANK YOU KEN
AND VALERIE
SPALE, MARYON

(Brick images not to scale)

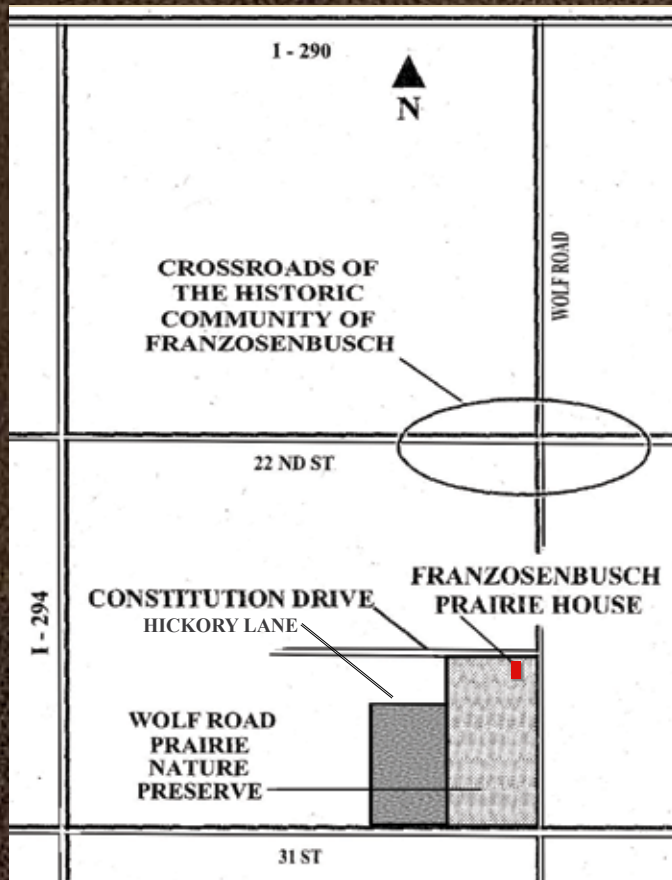


Save the Prairie Society with affiliate Franzosenbush Heritage Project

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Westchester, IL 60154

Located between 31st Street and Constitution Drive,
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Free parking along 31st Street or in the
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WORKDAY SCHEDULE

JOIN US MOST SATURDAYS 1PM TO 3PM
at The Prairie House

Call Rita to confirm! (708) 354-5512 or (708) 715-4221

www.savetheprairiesociety.org

For information or to volunteer call (708) 562-3280

e-mail: lawrencegodson@yahoo.com

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