



ThePrairieBreeze



Save The Prairie Society 11225 Constitution Drive Westchester 60154

FLOOD AND FIRE

In March, the Cook County Forest Preserve District burned the marsh area. Prairie fires have been a natural phenomenon for thousands of years. Ignited by lightning and fanned by prairie winds, many spread beyond the horizon. In more recent times, Native Americans, observing that prairies were more fertile after such burns, imitated nature by setting the grasslands ablaze, reinvigorating the prairies and keeping the woodlands at bay. Naturalists eventually realized the benefits of such fires. Today they are used as an effective management tool with the added advantage of favoring the growth of native plants while slowing the spread of invasive weeds.

Last month the Prairie, like many backyards, was inundated by our intense "April showers." Expansive ephemeral ponds formed, and the middle and south fork came alive with flowing water. In low lying areas, the pools of water remain, making it easy to identify the undulating fall and rise of our Prairie's topography.

Now that some flowers are already in bloom with many other plants greening-up, it will be interesting to compare the vigor of the marsh area with previous years. The question is "Which plants will benefit the most from our spring of fire and flood?"

BIRD SPOTTING



Photo by Eudencio Marbella

The following birds have recently been sighted in the Savanna and Prairie: Flickers, field sparrows, song sparrows, a swamp sparrow, red-winged blackbirds, starlings, robins, a sora, kestrels, cardinals, brown thrashers, mallards, killdeer, bluebirds, tree swallows, woodcocks, English sparrows, mourning doves, red-tailed hawks, Cooper's hawks, and turkey vultures.

Our spotters include: J. Banaszak, C. Brouk, L. Godson, F. Marbella, E.J. & S. Neafsey, and L. Padera.

Email sightings at rmccabe@savetheprairiesociety.org

THANK YOU WILLOWBROOK WHOLE FOODS

Willowbrook Whole Foods chose STPS for their "Dime a Bag" fund-raising drive for the months of April, May, and June. Proceeds will go for the completion of the Prairie House Nature Center and Historical Museum.



Check-out clerks will ask those customers bringing their own shopping bag whether they prefer to have the dime they saved subtracted from their bill or donated to STPS. A dime a bag, all day long, all week long for 3 months could add up to a substantial amount. So please, when shopping for healthy foods, consider Willowbrook at 201 63rd St. west of 83, and don't forget to bring your bag.

www.wholefoodsmarket.com

5% Day A HUGE SUCCESS

On April 23, Whole Foods in Willowbrook dedicated 5% of their Sales to Save The Prairie Society. As a result, Willowbrook donated **\$5,965** towards the Prairie House. Thanks to their generosity, we are closer to raising the final 1/3 of the funds needed to make the Prairie House the gateway to the Prairie and a center for environmental gatherings and education. As a historical museum, it will project both the history of the land and its people. **Many thanks to Whole Foods and their wonderful staff!**

EARTH DAY



Photo by Lawrence Godson

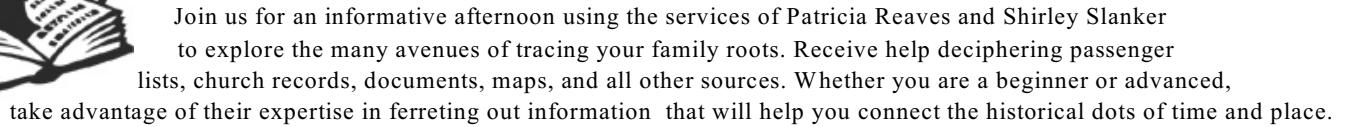
Volunteers were on the Prairie from 10 am 'til 4 pm on April 20. Looking for dry ground and buckthorn, they worked east of the house. At the end of the day, it was nice to stand back and see an area cleared. Now the native viburnum saplings, planted last year, will have more room to grow. It was rewarding to share nature with our younger volunteers who were especially interested in the insects emerging from a decaying tree stump. The tiger beetle attracted the most attention with its metallic green back, antennae, and legs.

BLOOMING AND GREENING-UP

The prairie willow, the savanna trout lily, rue anemone, and Pennsylvania sedge are in flower. The hyacinths, rattlesnake master, golden Alexanders, monardas, blue-joint grass, and the persistent troublesome garlic mustard are some of the plants that have already sent up shoots and unfolded their leaves. Into middle May, don't miss enjoying the fragrance of savanna hyacinths in the evening hours.

HANDS-ON HELP WITH GENEALOGY

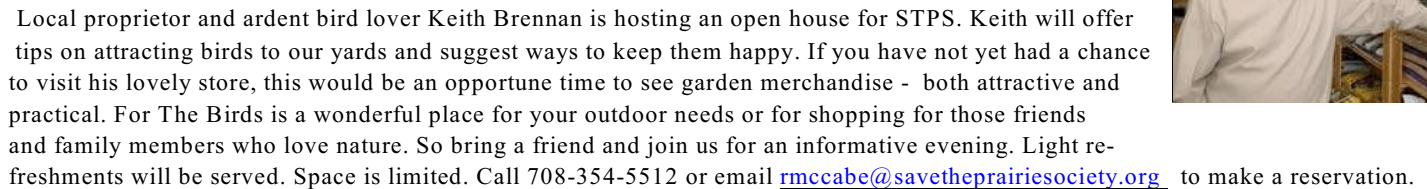
Westchester Library - 10700 Canterbury St. - East of Wolf Rd. and West of LaGrange Rd.



Meet in the upstairs conference room for this free event.

ATTRACTING THE BIRDS

For The Birds at 9207 Broadway in Brookfield (near Gross School).



Evening Stroll on The Spring Prairie

Park in one of the three parking bays located on 31st St. just west of Wolf Rd.

PRAIRIE WORKDAYS

Sundays - 3 pm to 5 pm at the Prairie House call for 708-531-1851 for confirmation.

VERN GOER'S STPS FUND-RAISER

From May 2 to May 31, Vern Goer's Greenhouse will be donating 10% of all purchases made with STPS coupons. Coupons can be downloaded from our website www.savetheprairiesociety.org or by asking for one at the check-out register. Vern Goer's can meet almost all your gardening needs and also offers beautiful vases, decorations, and arrangements. Visit them at www.verngoersgreenhouse.com. The Greenhouse is located at 5620 South Oak St. in Hinsdale just off 55th past County Line Rd.



Facebook.com/prairie society

www.franzosenbuschheritageproject.org

708-531-1851