



SAVE THE PRAIRIE SOCIETY

WITH AFFILIATE FRANZOENBUSCH HERITAGE PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT
2013

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

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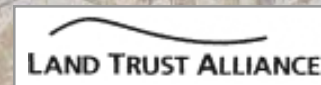
Save the Prairie Society (STPS) is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 1975. STPS works in partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission to preserve and restore 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 connections to nature through the arts
- work to restore the historic Prairie House as a Nature Center and Museum.

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, state-wide 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.



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Cover: "Prairie Dawn," photo by Larry Godson

NOTE: All photographs in this publication by Larry Godson unless otherwise indicated.

DONORS: OCTOBER 1, 2012 - SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2013

YOU ARE IMPORTANT!

Contributions from our donors are acknowledged with sincere appreciation. While care has been taken to record all donors correctly, mistakes can occur. If your name is misspelled or should appear and does not, please let us know and we will correct any errors in the next listing.

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Proceeds from Prairie Fest: \$1,012
Earthshare Illinois: \$1,240
Willowbrook Whole Foods:
201rd rd St., Willobrook, IL: \$8,954

Photo of Wolf Road Prairie in Autumn by Fidencio Marbella

Wolf Road Prairie Management and Nature Programs: 2013

What a busy year! In 2013 STPS volunteers put in over 800 hours of restoration management work at the preserve in conjunction with the expert help of the Cook County Forest Preserve District and the State of Illinois. With your donated funds STPS provided close to \$5,000 for contract work performed by professional restorationists in the northeast section of the preserve.

In our century, sweeping prairie fires that ranged over hundreds of miles--singeing, blackening and nurturing the soil as they blazed--have vanished. Today, native prairie needs the assistance of man to survive. What inspires us to dedicate our valuable time to this effort? For most of us, it is the knowledge that we are helping to save a rare and necessary ingredient of the natural world. We are proud of our efforts to maintain and save it. Whether you choose to donate your time or money, we thank you for your commitment and your support as we work towards our restoration and education goals in the new year. The following provides a list of nature programs we sponsored in the community.

STPS Nature Programs in 2013

- January:** *Aquaponics: Gardening Through The Year:* presented by Shawn Neal, proprietor of Root 66 Aquaponics in Brookfield.
- March:** *Examining Climate Change:* presented by Rick Knight of Citizen 99 at the LaGrange Park Library.
- April:** *Earth Day:* STPS celebrated by cutting Buckthorn and sharing food with our volunteers *Woodcock Spotting:* with John Banaszak on the Deck of the Prairie House. *Coyotes In Our Midst:* presented by Melina Peters, Cook County Forest Preserve Naturalist.
- May:** *Evening Strolls on the May Prairie:* with guides John Banaszak, Shonagh & E.J. Neafsey.
- June:** *Attracting the Birds:* presented by Keith Brennan, proprietor of "For the Birds" in Brookfield.
- July:** *Insect Safari:* Led by Larry Godson and Mike Rush.
- August:** *Prairie Walk:* with guides John Banaszak, Shonagh & E.J. Neafsey.

Program list continued on page 9



Management at WRP 2013 - The Year in Photos

by co-stewards, John Banaszak and Larry Godson with Kristin Pink, Cook County Resource Ecologist

JANUARY/FEBRUARY



Timberaxe Machine, January



Tallgrass Restoration, January



STPS Workday with Kristin Pink, February

Beginning in January, professional restorationists performed contract work in the northeast section of the preserve. In the southern part of this area the Timberaxe machine made short work of dense stands of alien Buckthorn, followed up by careful herbiciding by Tallgrass Prairie Restoration workers. North of this area the treatment of choice was swiping herbicide on the stems without cutting. We feel that the initial control percentage achieved was good. Now we will watch the regrowth and seedling production to determine follow-up treatment. Data on all county and state work is provided in this issue by Ecologist, Kristin Pink. *Kristin Pink's Report* for January to February lists brush removal by staff in blocks 410, 411, 412 owned by the State in the south half of the preserve.

MARCH through JULY



Burning brush piles, April



Nazareth Academy Workday, mid-May



Tracking down the alien Reed Canary Grass, June



Thimbleweed blooming in Mid-June



Hillside Carmax Workday Crew with Stacia Novi (far left)



Wild Bergamot, Blooming in July

STPS volunteers spent many hours tracking down the alien Reed canary grass and cutting off the seed heads, followed up with herbiciding. A search was made for Sweet clover and Garlic mustard which was pulled wherever it was found. Generous volunteers from the Hillside Carmax also cut brush along the northern border of the preserve. *Kristin Pink's Report* for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) early March: Brush mowing by staff in blocks 407-408. March 23: Prescribed burn by staff in north marsh blocks 401-403, 405-407. May-June: Canada thistle herbicide application by staff in blocks 409-411. June: Reed canary grass seed head removal by FPDCC staff and Greencorps Chicago, concentrating in blocks 409-413; limited RCG herbicide treatment by FPDCC staff. (Greencorps Chicago is the City of Chicago's green industry job training program for individuals with barriers to employment). June-July: Teasel seed head removal and Sweet clover pulling by staff throughout the site.

LATE BREAKING NEWS! Last year we provided a \$40,000 loan and a \$3,000 grant to the Nature Conservancy to purchase a 40-acre property downstate. Just prior to going to press we have received word that the property is now in IDNR hands. The "revolving" STPS Natural Area's Rescue Fund will be searching for additional high quality land to protect in 2014.

WRP 2013 -- The Year in Photos

AUGUST Through NOVEMBER



Rita McCabe hunting Teasel behind #7 Hickory Lane, August



"Alien Search Mission", early August



Sneezeweed, late August



Working for many weeks this summer, Eagle Scout volunteers replace bridge at #10 Hickory Lane



John Banazack at workday



Goldenrod Soldier Beetle on Coreopsis



E.J. Neafsey with Nazareth Academy workday, November



The rare Gray Comma butterfly in early November - Photo by Fidencio Marbella

Volunteers searched for and dealt with invasive Teasel in August. Eagle scout candidate Robert Tworak and his volunteers did a high quality replacement of the bridge on STPS Nature Preserve Buffer property at #10 Hickory Lane, west of the main preserve. Enormous quantities of Buckthorn were removed at the north end of the preserve by the tireless efforts of Nazareth High School students who gave up six Saturday afternoons in October and November to lend a hand. Michael Clark at Westchester Middle School coordinated a workday for their "Make a Difference Day" in October. *Kristin Pink's Report* for September: Brush removal by volunteers and staff at Salt Creek Greenway sponsored volunteer workday for National Public Lands Day, (NPLD is held on Sept.28th each year). November: prescribed burn by staff and FPDCC contractor. Kristin Pink and our management volunteers are currently planning the STPS-funded contract work to be done next year.



Westchester Middle School "Make a Difference Day," late October



FPDCC back fire by Pizzo & Associates in November



Kristin Pink, Cook County Resource Ecologist - November burn

“The burned area would later become magnificent prairie with cream wild indigo, prairie gentian, bird’s foot violet and white lady’s slipper orchids.”

- Floyd Swink from a 1987 interview with STPS



Above: Aerial photo by John Hill of Tiger Hill Studios, March 2013 showing managed areas of WRP: Green - swipe on stem herbicide treatment of Buckthorn without cutting, STPS funded contract. Yellow - mowed and herbicided by STPS funded contract. Upper right corner, mowed by Forest Preserve Dist., Cook County.

Franzosenbusch Heritage Project Report

2013

Another year has passed and we reflect on our many accomplishments with regard to the



P. Reaves lectures in schoolhouse museum during Prairie Fest

Prairie House and its gardens. We have focused on several projects involving maintenance, programs, events, and the collecting of historical information. Members have been involved in maintaining the front garden this summer, where the tall Compass plants were spectacular on stalks over 9 feet tall. (A little history: Compass plant leaves grow with their edges in a north/south direction. The slaves used to use this plant as a "compass" when trying to find their way north). We weeded and kept invasive plants at bay. A rose bush was planted in honor of longtime volunteer, Suzanne Moreau, who passed away in



Rita McCabe

June of 2012. The herb garden was cared for by Rita Dowd. The Native American green house directly southeast of the house has been removed, thus creating a wider access path to the prairie. Groups of volunteers helped us scrape and paint the entire front porch and steps. We also replaced tongue and groove floor boards and some of the banister wood around the porch. We hired professional painters to work on the higher parts of the house. A special thanks to Ken Moreau, of Westchester, for sharing his expertise by water-proofing some of the exposed wood sections.



Lucchese Heritage Herb Garden, east side of Prairie House

DR WM HILGER
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KATHERINE
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IN MEMORY
DONNA & JERRY
RUSS

Donor: Bob Russ

*Bricks purchased for
house walkway in 2013.
(Lettering not to scale)*



Five of the Willowbrook Whole Foods Volunteers who helped repaint the front porch



Draw (Sawyer) Reaves painting fence

Ken graciously used his carpentry skills to replace some sections of wood. You may have noticed that the fence that used to be white is now also painted in the color scheme of the house. Two groups of Willowbrook Whole Foods volunteers helped us repaint the front porch in July. Thanks to the Willowbrook Whole Foods for their generous monetary donation and the help of their wonderful volunteers.

Since the Fall of 2010, FHP has published 14 newsletters with a new column by Lana Gits entitled "Did You Know," regarding little known historical facts of the area. We also raised a total of \$7,572 dollars in that period of time through memberships, the purchase of commemorative bricks and other donations. Enclosed please find our membership form. We know you will enjoy a visit to our extensive website:

franzosenbuschheritageproject.org
and **facebook.com/franzoproject**

HERITAGE PROGRAMS 2013

February: Networking Connections to Family History and Beyond -- Facebook, Twitter and other internet resources for family research. **Social Media and Genealogical Research:** presented by Frank Martino and Patricia Reaves at the Westchester Library. **May: What is the Next Step with Your Family History?:** Shirley Slanker, Westchester Library. **Hands on Help with Genealogy:** presented by Patricia Reaves and Shirley Slanker at the Westchester Library. **Before We Were Suburbia:** presented by P. Reaves at Plymouth Place Retirement Community. (continued on page 9).

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

We continue to work our way through legal issues involving parking and fire lane requirements. The Department of Natural Resources has taken the lead on this for approximately two years but severe budget constraints have ultimately prevented them from making significant progress. Attorney Kenneth Moreau has stepped in with needed pro bono professional legal aid. We thank him greatly for this and cheer him on!

*Larry Godson, FHP Chairperson,
Building and Maintenance Committee*

Social Media Initiative



by Frank Martino, STPS Director, IT Consultant

During the last year, STPS has grown tremendously on the web. Our home page has been updated and redesigned, allowing users quick access to prairie news, articles, events, and volunteer or donation opportunities. We are on Twitter now and have also gained a strong community of followers on Facebook (over 100 Likes!)

Please join us by subscribing to our feeds and get involved in a like-minded community of concerned nature enthusiasts. We want to create a hub for the community--a place to share thoughts, feelings, and experiences about our mission of ecological preservation and historical restoration.

If you believe in our mission and are looking for convenience, consider the many new ways you can donate to STPS by visiting savetheprairiesociety.org/get-involved/donate, where you can give online using secure methods through Paypal, Amazon, and Network for Good. If you are an Android user, consider downloading the One Today App by Google (<http://www.google.com/onetoday/>) and look out for our Restoration Project where you can donate \$1 towards restoring Wolf Road Prairie. Thank you for following us--and if you haven't, please visit the following sites!

www.savetheprairiesociety.org
www.facebook.com/prairiesociety

ANNUAL REPORT COMMITTEE

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Larry Godson	Drew Reaves

Nature Programs 2013

(continued from page 4)

September: *Save the Prairie Society's Annual Prairie Fest:* at the Franzosenbusch Prairie House
Perspective on Nature: by Steve Sullivan, Senior Curator of Urban Ecology for The Academy of Sciences.
October: *Flowers and How They Changed The World:* presented by the author, William Burger at LaGrange Park Library.

Education Outreach



Beginning in February, (left) STPS contributed pictures, drawings, and information to the children's department of the Westchester Library. The children and their mentor, Julie Yekel used our contributions for ideas to create a four season mural of Wolf Road Prairie, which is now on display on the library's second floor. Don't miss it! In July, (left) three busloads of students from Enrico Tonti Chicago Public School visited the Prairie. Docents John Banaszak, Mary Cray, Rita McCabe, E.J. Neafsey and Shonagh Neafsey enjoyed sharing both their love and knowledge of the prairie with an enthusiastic and appreciative group of elementary students.

In June, (left) 24 Eco-rangers aged 6 to 8 from the Oak Park Conservatory toured the prairie with STPS docents Mary Cray, Lawrence Godson, and Rita McCabe. As part of our outreach education effort, Board director Dr. E.J. Neafsey gave his digital presentation "Magnificent Flowers, Fire, Ice, Native Americans, A Big Fight, Global Warming, and Good Prairie Plants for the Garden" to Bethlehem Woods Retirement Center, the Oak Park Chapter of Wild Ones, and a local chapter of the Daughters of the American

Revolution. In November, at the invitation of middle school teacher Lilly Buss, Director, May Cray spoke to five classes of third graders about ways in which the prairie benefits their community. Again this year, Elm Middle School's 8th graders (Elmwood), under the guidance of teacher Geri Rode, raised dozens of plants for STPS. Some were sold to purchase food & refreshments for volunteers. Others were gifted to volunteers in appreciation for their work.

by Rita McCabe, STPS Director, Chairperson, Publicity & Events Committees

Heritage Programs (Continued from page 8)

September: *Fall Harvest Fest: Passenger Lists - The Transatlantic Journey - Explore the Voyage of Your Ancestors* (Posters, info provided about U.S. ports of entry and exit ports in Europe. Much local history was shared with visitors that day).
November: *Streetcars:* The third in a series of programs presented by Jack Doyle at the LaGrange Park Library.
December: *A German Christmas:* presented by Patricia Reaves at the Westchester Library.
 Come join us for one of our educational programs on the great history of our wonderful neighborhoods!

ANNUAL PRAIRIE FEST September 28, 2013



Top row: Jack Doyle, (STPS Events Committee) with rep from Shell Food Mart, Hinsdale; Sarah, the dulcimer player. 2nd row: Save the Prairie Society tour leader Shonagh Neafsey (second from left) about to enter the Prairie with a group, Drew Reaves giving raffle prize basket to happy recipient. 3rd row: Dulcimer players; artist enjoying the afternoon beauty of the Prairie House.



Save the Prairie Society with Affiliate Franzosenbush Heritage Project

11225 Constitution Drive
Westchester, IL 60154

Located between 31st Street and Constitution Drive,
west of Wolf Road, just 15 miles west of downtown Chicago.
Free parking along 31st Street or in the Prairie House parking lot.
For information or to volunteer, call 708-562-3280 or 708-531-1851.