

THE CHICAGO WILDERNESS HABITAT PROJECT PRESENTS

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# 2004 CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARDS

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*The Habitat Project is about effecting change, starting with the collection of knowledge. It is about building a culture of conservation that connects people to our natural heritage and brings neighbors together to protect and enjoy it. The following people exemplify the Habitat Project spirit. They are changing the world, and we are all a part of their success.*

**Debbie Antlitz**



**Debbie Antlitz**, ecologist for the *Forest Preserve District of Cook County*, dared to ask a challenging question. She studied the quality – and needs – of the District’s 55,000 acres of natural lands and determined that 62% of that land was in poor condition. The report described urgent needs in many areas, for example that deer control was needed for 9,000 acres, that excessive saplings and pole-sized trees needed to be culled from 13,000 acres, and that the District needed to conduct controlled burns on 5,000 acres per year. The study was detailed, creative, wise, and courageous. Debbie deserves the thanks of all conservationists.

**Judy Boehmer**

“**Judy Boehmer** has been a godsend to *frog monitoring* in *Kane County*,” says Mary Ochsenschlager of the St. Charles Park District. “Judy inputs most of the data into the database, she helps people learn how to use the web page, she is calm and encouraging and always positive. She anticipates needs, acts on these instincts, and keeps the county’s frog monitoring program running smoothly.” Judy coaches and supports frog monitors in Kane County and beyond. She signs new monitors into the data entry website and provides them countless answers, resources, and support. Judy is helping the frog monitors write a new chapter in wetland and amphibian conservation.



**Bob Brodman**, a professor at Saint Joseph’s College in Rensselaer, contributed his expertise to the Chicago Wilderness regional conservation plan for *savanna reptiles and amphibians*. Then he took it one step further. He developed and found funding for a project to survey the reptiles and amphibians (herptiles) in 48 savanna habitats – in 12 counties. As a result, four years from now we’ll have a scientifically sound assessment of our region’s savanna herptiles and a baseline against which to measure future conservation progress.

**Donald Dann**

**Donald Dann** worked with biologists from the DNR and Navy officials to save habitat for nesting terns at the *Great Lakes Naval Training Center* and organizes workdays at the site. As *Bird Conservation Network* president, he advocates sound policies that support biodiversity in parks and preserves. Donald also is a regular bird monitor at Rollins Savanna in *Lake County* and has stood up for sound deer control in his town, Highland Park. Through his regular series of conservation alerts, his eloquent testimony on behalf of conservation issues, and his effective leadership, Donnie’s voice is an important one on the local conservation scene.



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### Bob Fisher



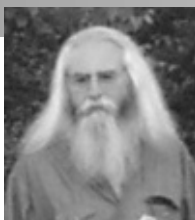
**Bob Fisher** was instrumental to the success of the 2003 *Grassland Bird Blitz*. He organized a group of leaders to coordinate the Blitz in seven counties and covered a dozen *DuPage County* sites with his own crew of monitors during the June blitz week. Because of Bob's hard work, we have bird data from 62 grassland sites for 2003. Bob provides strong, consistent leadership to the Bird Conservation Network (BCN) Census in DuPage County. Bob also works to elect conservation-minded board members for the DuPage County forest preserves and to support the District's sound deer control policies. As immediate past president of the BCN, he is an important voice for conservation in the region.

### Judy Grey



**Judy Grey** is the *butterfly monitor* who developed, organized, and implemented butterfly monitoring at the *Morton Arboretum*. She explained to the Arboretum staff about the Butterfly Monitoring Network and got authority to do the monitoring. She worked with Arboretum staff to establish three routes, one of which she monitored herself. She then recruited and trained two more monitors to cover the other routes and continues to recruit new monitors to the Network.

### David Hamilla



**David Hamilla** is a geologist by trade, with a love and knowledge of plants that led him to develop an extensive *database of flora* for the south shores of Lake Michigan. The database includes more than 18,000 entries, including plants, mosses, mushrooms, and more, plus information on habitats, bloom dates, coefficients of conservatism, synonyms, and even seed germination tips. The database is used by the *Indiana Dunes State Park* and is relied upon as a major resource at *Taltrées Arboretum and Gardens*. David also has begun developing databases of local birds, butterflies, and moths.

### Pam Holy

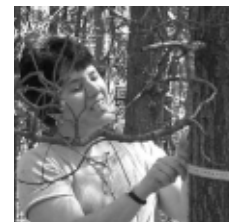
**Pam Holy** helped to plan, establish, and maintain the Kathy Osterman Beach dune planting, a small but significant lakefront native habitat *in Chicago*. As *steward* of this area, Pam assists with its on-going management as well as its possible expansion in the future. Pam also is helping to monitor and manage the newly restored Burnham Nature Area at 47th Street and is active with the Chiwaukee Prairie Stewards in Wisconsin.



**Bill Koenig**, Volunteer Coordinator for the *Forest Preserve District of Cook County*, is a wise and creative supporter and colleague of the volunteers in Cook County. He figures out how to open road blocks, launch new opportunities, and establish positive linkages between volunteers and staff at all levels. He has been instrumental in the success of restoration projects throughout the county. Bill currently is spearheading the development of the District's new volunteer center, which will significantly expand the resources and support available to Cook County volunteers.

### Joy Marburger

**Joy Marburger** has skillfully used the *Chicago Wilderness Woods Audit* to lay the groundwork for long-term monitoring at *Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore*. The Research Coordinator for the Dunes' Research and Education Center, Joy recruited 15 plant monitors for the Audit. She marked the Dunes' twenty Audit plots with permanent stakes and will return annually with the other monitors to track trends in the vegetation. Joy also plans to begin monitoring birds at these points next year, so that she can study the connection between vegetation and bird life.



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Walter Marcisz



Walter Marcisz has long been a leader in saving the important wetlands of the *Lake Calumet* area and improving conditions for their bird populations. He helped to stop the construction there of a marina which would have had a devastating impact on the wetlands and bird populations. He has worked with the Chicago Department of the Environment to make hydrology changes to save the black-crowned night-heron colony. He contributes his conservation vision to the current planning effort for Lake Calumet. Walter uses his *bird monitoring data* to advocate for conservation and engages his community to make a difference.

Jim McDonald

Jim McDonald is a long-time *steward* at *Gompers Park* in *Chicago*. He leads a neighborhood stewardship group that cares for and helps others enjoy this restored urban natural area, widely considered a jewel for its rich wetland and native prairie flora. Jim hosts school groups, monitors frogs, and is a force behind the success of this thriving urban habitat. He is former president of the Mayfair Neighbors, a community group that has advocated for good management of nearby LaBaugh Woods.



Wendy Paulson



Wendy Paulson is a *bird monitor and steward* who has had a major impact in northwest *Cook County* and beyond. For decades Wendy led bird hikes, flower walks, and restoration crews in woods, wetlands and prairies. She also did the hard and wonderful work that brought hundreds of Barrington school children to experience the enrichment of nature. The culture of conservation that was fostered by Wendy's work is the driving force behind the new plan that seeks to restore 4,000 acres of prairie, woodland, and wetland in *Spring Creek Valley*.

Wes Serafin

Wes Serafin used his *bird monitoring data* from *Orland Grassland* to help develop a restoration plan for the site, which has now attracted one million dollars in funding, is the largest grassland in *Cook County*, and has already resulted in increased numbers of grassland birds. Wes also helped protect the nest of the first pair of nesting ospreys in the Palos area in many decades. He monitors human disturbance to the osprey nest area each year and effectively relays threats to the Forest Preserve District.



Ken Schulein developed and maintains the *Habitat Project website*, and he developed our online data entry system for the *Calling Frog Survey*. Though his initial interest was frogs, he quickly saw the need for a website for Chicago Wilderness conservation volunteers and contributed the needed ideas and work. He continues to collate the frog data regularly, so that we have current updates on the state of our frogs.

Doug Stotz

Doug Stotz was a leader in the design and analysis of the *Migrant Bird Habitat Study*, which was completed in 2003. The results of this study, which will be published this year, will guide the city of Chicago and Chicago Wilderness organizations in planting tree species which support migrant birds. An ornithologist with the *Field Museum*, Doug regularly contributes his time and expertise to conservation efforts such as the Lake Calumet planning process, the Bird Conservation Network Census, and the Illinois Important Bird Areas program. He has played a key role in the success of the Lights Out program which saves over ten thousand migrating birds annually.



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### Joe Suchecki



Joe Suchecki uses *bird monitoring* to save habitat for Henslow's sparrows and other threatened grassland birds at *Springbrook Prairie in DuPage County*. Joe's long-term monitoring data showed that a planned multi-use trail at Springbrook would bisect Henslow's sparrow habitat, and he successfully collaborated with the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County to get the trail moved to a less sensitive part of the preserve. Joe is a site steward at Springbrook. He works with land management staff to restore the prairie for birds and other wildlife and is generous in sharing his expertise in such regional planning efforts as the Grassland Bird Conservation Design.

### Doug Taron



Doug Taron is founder of the Chicago region's *Butterfly Monitoring Network* – a world model for citizen science. He subsequently left his “day job” as a BP scientist to become a conservation professional with the *Chicago Academy of Sciences*. As an example of one of his many recent achievements, Doug has reintroduced the Aphrodite fritillary butterfly at Glacial Park in McHenry County. He collected adult females from Nachusa Grasslands in Lee County, induced them to lay more than 100 eggs, and placed 66 successfully hatched caterpillars on prairie violet leaves at Glacial Park. This locally rare species may now have a new home in our region, thanks to Doug's persistence and skill.

### Mary van Haften



Mary van Haften, Natural Areas Manager with the *Chicago Park District*, is a champion of biodiversity for the urban parks under her charge. She works to move Chicago's parks beyond the traditional types of landscape, toward thriving, diverse habitats – and she brings citizens into the processes of stewardship and monitoring. The Park District has undergone a virtual explosion of habitat projects under her tenure. She shepherds projects at Burnham Prairie, South Shore Cultural Center, McCormick Place Bird Sanctuary, and Jarvis Bird Sanctuary, Humboldt Prairie River, Gompers Park, and the Paul Douglas and Montrose Bird Sanctuaries.

*The nature of Chicago Wilderness – a regional nature reserve – is more vibrant and secure because of the wise and generous work of these outstanding professionals and volunteers – and hundreds of others. Because of such generosity and vision, the Chicago region is building a culture of conservation that will benefit our region's people, plants and wildlife for a long, long time.*

CHICAGO WILDERNESS is an alliance of 172 public and private organizations working together to protect, restore, and study the precious natural ecosystems of the Chicago region for the benefit of the public. The success of the many projects of this coalition rests with the staff and volunteer leaders of the organizations described above, and hundreds of participants who are working hard to save some wonderful parts of the world.

The HABITAT PROJECT is a network of volunteers and staff who monitor, restore, and advocate for the the natural communities, plants, and wildlife of Chicago Wilderness. It is organized and supported by Audubon-Chicago Region, Plants of Concern (Chicago Botanic Garden), the Bird Conservation Network, the Butterfly Monitoring Network, and The Nature Conservancy. Its various projects have been supported by grants from the Chicago Wilderness Trust, the Illinois Conservation Foundation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, CorLands, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Grand Victoria Foundation, Boeing, and individual supporters of Audubon-Chicago Region.