

The Habitat HERALD

April 2010

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Land Audits spark change in eco-management

By Cindy Grau

Can monitoring change the world? Two recent Land Audits certainly did. Stewards in Cook County have been rejoicing over much improved staff support and more than \$7M in contract burning, herbiciding, and other help. Major credit goes to the citizen scientists for insights that paved the way for a whole new approach.

In the summer of 2007, 76 volunteer botanists undertook a Cook County Land Audit. Citizen-science “auditors” measured the floristic quality of 147 sample plots in priority Cook County Forest Preserve locations to measure the land’s ecological health.

First, a call was put out to the Habitat Project volunteer network asking for plant monitors. Enthusiastic responses came from botanists and aspiring botanists throughout the metro area. Says Audubon’s Karen Glennemeier, “The wealth of botanic knowledge among our conservation community is really impressive. Most of our experts have day jobs and also just happen to be able to identify 2,000 plant species.” McHenry County volunteer Greg Rajskey says, “I was eager to help, and as a bonus I got to re-visit places
“Tens of thousands of contract dollars to help the sites in our region ... I give a lot of the credit to the citizen-scientists who gathered the data that launched the new approach.”

Barbara Birmingham

I had developed a great affection for earlier in my volunteer career, like Cap Sauers Holdings in Palos.”

Monitors were trained in the monitoring protocol at a series of workshops, and teams were formed that paired an experienced botanist who would lead plant identification with a volunteer who would help count and record data. Greg



Photo: Karen Glennemeier

Data collected by plant monitors in Cook County led to increased support for stewards, more funding for restoration, and good partnerships.

points out that “plant identification was not always easy when the plant was not in bloom or was just in the early stages of growth.” Aspiring botanists whose role was to record data also enjoyed the mentoring in plant identification they received from experts like Greg.

The 2007 audit was a follow-up to a similar undertaking in 2001, to look at trends over time. The initial Land Audit showed widespread ecological degradation and resulted in a number of significant changes at the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, including a renewed commitment to volunteer resources and the gradual lifting of a moratorium on restoration efforts.

The results of the 2007 Land Audit showed that much more work needed to be done to restore the health of our priority conservation lands. Degradation remained widespread, and invasive or weedy vegetation such as buckthorn and poison ivy had increased in the six years between audits. This, despite the ongoing and improved efforts of restoration volunteers and the Forest Preserve District staff. In a nutshell, “the ecological health was not improving fast enough,” says Justin Pepper of Audubon.

“Some of the findings were just startling,” Pepper says. In all the areas surveyed not a single seedling and only one sapling bur oak was found, and no white oak seedlings or saplings were found. Bur oaks and white oaks have historically dominated our region’s wooded lands. It was clear to all involved that improved efforts needed to be undertaken to protect these important places. Although the audit results were not totally unexpected, they reinforced the collective understanding that something had to change.

As a result of the data the study provided, the Forest Preserve District, Audubon, and the Friends of the Forest Preserves came up with a new working model to support more effective restoration efforts. It relies on much greater levels of coordination, collaboration, and communication

The Habitat Project serves the grassroots of the Chicago Wilderness conservation community:

The future of nature in Chicago Wilderness depends very much on the 995 site monitors and stewards and the thousands of other volunteers and staff who work for the wellness of animals and habitat. To help out at a site – or to adopt one yourself – see the opportunities below.

Grassroots Opportunities



WEEKEND WORKDAYS

[WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG/RESTORATION PROJECTS](http://WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG/RESTORATION_PROJECTS)
OR THE **VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP NETWORK WEBSITE:**
WWW.NATURE.ORG/WHEREWEWORK/NORTHAMERICA/STATES/ILLINOIS/VOLUNTEER/ART9844.HTML

SITE STEWARDS

TRAIN TO SUPERVISE VOLUNTEER RESTORATION OF A PRAIRIE, WOODLAND OR WETLAND PRESERVE. SEND YOUR NAME AND AREA OF INTEREST TO KGLENNEMEIER@AUDUBON.ORG OR CONTACT THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR OF YOUR NEARBY COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OR SIMILAR LANDOWNER.

ADOPT A PRESERVE

WATCH FOR MISUSE OR ECOLOGICAL THREATS. REPORT FOUR TIMES A YEAR TO THE HABITAT PROJECT AND THE LANDOWNER. SEND YOUR NAME AND AREA OF INTEREST TO KGLENNEMEIER@AUDUBON.ORG.

BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK

LEE RAMSEY 847-501-4683

BIRD BLITZES TO MONITOR

GRASSLANDS, WOODLANDS, SHRUBLANDS, OR WETLANDS

JUDY POLLOCK 847-328-1250

CHICAGO WILDERNESS CALLING FROG SURVEY

KAREN GLENNEMEIER 847-328-1250

BUTTERFLY MONITORING

ILLINOIS BUTTERFLY MONITORING NETWORK, TOM PETERSON 630-443-8604

DRAGONFLY MONITORING NETWORK

CRAIG STETTNER 847-925-6214

PLANT COMMUNITY AUDITS OF WOODS, PRAIRIES, OR WETLANDS

KAREN GLENNEMEIER 847-328-1250

PLANTS OF CONCERN RARE PLANT MONITORING

SUSANNE MASI 847-835-8269

ADVOCACY AND POLICY WORK

WWW.SIERRACLUB.ORG/IL/ OR WWW.FOTFP.ORG (COOK COUNTY) OR WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG

GRASSROOTS EDUCATION

WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG

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who would enjoy getting involved.
To learn more, contact Karen
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between the volunteer community and the Forest Preserve District, and it is showing impressive early results.

As District Superintendent Steve Bylina put it, "It is important to me that the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and our partner organizations, like Audubon-Chicago Region, work together closely and positively to continue to move our common goal of ecological preservation forward. In this case, by supporting our mutual cause, we controlled literally hundreds of thousands of buckthorns and other invading species, while protecting ancient oaks and hickories and re-invigorating populations of rare plants and animals."

Under the new model, the site stewards receive unprecedented support from the Forest Preserve District and its resources. When planning what is to be accomplished at each site the steward is now able to request District contractor support for invasive species treatment and controlled burning. Utilizing a contractor on large scale projects, where a group of committed volunteers can follow up, helps leverage both types of resources to achieve better and more sustainable outcomes. In essence, the site stewards now have more powerful tools at their disposal.

"Tens of thousands of dollars of contract help to the sites in our region has made a world of difference," says steward Barbara Birmingham of the DesPlaines and Salt Creek preserves. "I give a lot of the credit to the citizen-scientists who gathered the data that helped launch the new approach."

The Cook County Forest Preserve District has put a lot of trust in the efforts and skills of the volunteer community by committing to this level of support. In turn the support is helping the site stewards achieve unprecedented amounts of ecological gains each season. This partnership between a forward-thinking public agency and a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic grassroots conservation effort is remarkable. The 2007 Land Audit helped mobilize these two powerful groups toward a common goal of preserving important natural areas. This cooperation in the preservation of the Chicago Wilderness ecosystems gives us great hope that the next Land Audit will show a system returning to good health.



Mary Cannon (1942-2010) was a writer and editor for the *Habitat Herald* for eight years. We all grew accustomed to reading her compelling, inspiring pieces on the front page of each issue. Mary wrote of successes large and small, the people who made these successes happen, and the wonderful places where they happened. She told these stories with a writer's gift for painting a picture in words. She ended each piece with a sentence that made the reader smile contentedly, as if to say, "Yes, that's exactly how this piece should have ended." Her words have helped to inspire all of us by telling the stories of our collective good work. Mary received a Conservation Leadership Award for her work in 2007. She gave so much to the Herald and was integral to its voice. We will miss her.

THE HABITAT HERALD IS PRODUCED BY AUDUBON TO SUPPORT THE GROWING CONSERVATION COMMUNITY. AUDUBON CHICAGO REGION WORKS EXCLUSIVELY ON LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ISSUES, AND WE RAISE ALL THE FUNDS FOR OUR WORK OURSELVES. DONATIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR FUNDING, AND GIFTS FROM OUR FELLOW MONITORS AND STEWARDS ARE ALWAYS PARTICULARLY TREASURED. (MANY THANKS TO THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY SUPPORTERS.) WITH THESE GIFTS AUDUBON CHICAGO REGION SUPPORTS LARGE SCALE HABITAT RESTORATION, SITE STEWARDSHIP, REGIONWIDE MONITORING PROJECTS, AND EVENTS SUCH AS THE WILD THINGS CONFERENCE.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN OUR FAMILY OF CONTRIBUTORS, OR IF YOU'D LIKE TO RECEIVE A COPY OF OUR ANNUAL REPORT AND CONSIDER OUR PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR, PLEASE CONTACT JPEPPER@AUDUBON.ORG OR SEND US A NOTE AT 1718 SHERMAN AVE., SUITE 210, EVANSTON IL 60201.

Woodland birds may need a little elbow room



Photo: Mary Kay Rubey

Woodland birds of conservation concern such as the Great Crested Flycatcher may prefer areas with fewer small stems of buckthorn and invasive trees.

Woodland birds of conservation concern appear to prefer areas with fewer buckthorn and “pole trees” according to data from a Habitat Project study of woodland breeding bird habitat.

Previous studies have found that some bird species prefer managed woodlands over degraded ones, where managed woodlands had lower canopy cover and less dense mid-canopy vegetation compared to degraded woodlands*. Our study looked further at the relationship between woodland birds and the quality and structure of their habitat.

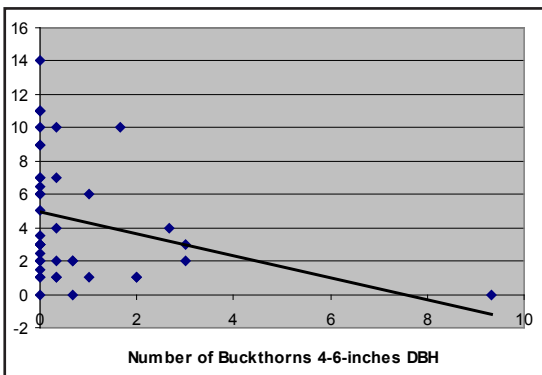
We developed a system that ranks species according to their conservation priority, rather than looking simply at total number of species. Woodland birds of concern such as Northern Flicker, Great Crested Flycatcher, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo (the three most commonly recorded birds of concern in this study) were weighted more heavily in the analysis than other woodland species whose populations are more stable such as Red-eyed Vireo and Hairy Woodpecker (see Table 1 on facing page). Thus, the results reflect the habitat needs of the species for which we are most interested in managing habitat.

We found that the quality of the herbaceous layer was not important – breeding birds of conservation concern didn’t seem to notice whether there were weeds or wildflowers on the ground. However, they did seem to notice how many stems of buckthorn and other invasive trees were present. As the number of buckthorn stems

increased, the number of bird species of conservation significance decreased (see Figure, 1 below). Same for pole trees – those trees less than ten-inches in diameter that are crowding our oak woodlands – birds of conservation significance were found less often in areas unnaturally thick with pole trees (see Figure 2, below).

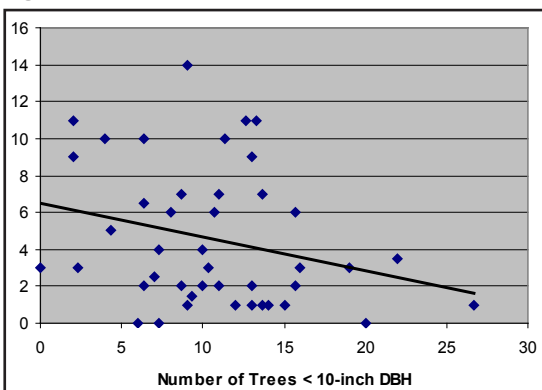
The study was conducted during the breeding season in the Cook County forest preserves. Bird monitors and plant monitors both covered the same

Figure 1



As buckthorn stems increased, we found somewhat fewer species of conservation concern.

Figure 2



As the number of “pole trees” increased, we found somewhat fewer species of conservation concern.

“I’m a busy person with work and family, but when I was asked to do bird surveys in the ‘audit’ I took a bunch of sites. It was my chance to be involved in something wonderful and insightful.”

43 points, which had been randomly placed within the county’s oak woods. Birders visited each point twice in June and conducted the Bird Conservation Network’s point count protocol. Plant monitors visited each point once and took data on the herbaceous flora, the shrubs, and the trees. The plant data were part of the Cook County Land Audit, a larger study to assess the condition of the county’s priority conservation lands (see cover story).

The people who took these data are major contributors to Chicago region conservation. After many years of monitoring, birder Conrad Fialkowski said, “The act of surveying takes a person interested in birds to a far better understanding of what birds need.” And the impact is much broader when many people’s data contribute to a scientific analysis. Robert Sliwinski probably spoke for many when he said, “I’m a busy person with work and family, but when I was asked to do bird surveys in the ‘audit’ I took a bunch of sites. It was my chance to be involved in something wonderful and insightful.” As Mike Zarski put it, “What I really appreciate is how quickly the results of our field work get translated into findings that affect the plans of the land

managers and site stewards who work to improve our environment.”

The findings are preliminary. The relationships show lots of variation and exceptions, as seen in Figures 1 and 2. We hope to follow up with an experimental study that alters the numbers of pole trees and follows the response of birds. The goal is to provide guidance to stewards and land managers working to provide habitat for species of conservation concern.

* *Brawn, J.D. 2006. Effects of Restoring Oak Savannas on Bird Communities and Populations. Conservation Biology, Volume 20, No. 2, pp.460–469.*

Table 1

High Priority
Northern Flicker Great Crested Flycatcher Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Moderate Priority
Wood Thrush Rose-breasted Grosbeak Eastern Kingbird
Low Priority
Red-eyed Vireo Eastern Wood-Pewee Hairy Woodpecker

The most commonly recorded species in each of three Conservation Priority categories. Categories were developed by the Bird Conservation Network and were based largely on Partners in Flight classifications. Categories also take into account the Chicago Wilderness region’s importance for the species in question - including the species range, trend in the CW region, local population size, and historic status in the area. For more details, please visit <http://bcnbirds.org/trends07/concern.html>.

Fine Fall Burn Season

by Alison Carney Brown

“It’s the best fall we’ve had since ‘98, ‘99,” said Leslie Berns of the Lake County Forest Preserves. In 14 days of burning, they burned 1,209 acres, accomplishing their goals in most units. “We were really pleased,” she added.

Cook County Forest Preserves also fared well. Staff and contractors conducted 79 burns at 36 sites for a total of 1,106 acres.

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County burned 31 units totaling 529 acres. “On one day we had 5 crews out burning. We burned on 10 days from 11/3-11/16 and then again on 12/1, for a total of 11 burn days,” said Brian Kraskiewicz, ecologist. “The one thing that was challenging was that there was not enough frost to cure some of the vegetation in the woodlands, so that prevented some of the woodlands from burning”.

“Fall 2009 was generally a good burn season,” reported Jason Johnson, senior restoration technician for Kane County Forest Preserve District. “It was hampered a little bit by green fuels and things were wet, but in previous falls we’ve been lucky to have two days to burn.”

65-degree days marked the beginning of burn season in Kane County. Burn crews were able to burn on more than a half-dozen days before snows arrived; they accomplished 17 burns at nine sites.

Will County had above average rain. Burn bosses cancelled many scheduled burns and the season was short. The forest preserve district got off six burns at six sites.

A permitting problem foiled McHenry County Conservation District burn plans altogether. By the time the permit came through, the season was over.

Agency	Acres Burned	% of Natural Acres Held	Natural Acres Held
Cook FPD	1,106	2%	55,000
DuPage FPD	529	2.4%	21,682
Kane FPD	637	4.8%	13,550
Lake FPD	1,209	11%	11,000
McHenry CD	0	0%	15,000
Will FPD	208	3%	7,000
Kendall FPD	100	6.5%	1,575

2010 Plants of Concern Workshops

Saturday, April 10th, 9:30am to 3pm

Cook County Volunteer Resource Center, Edgebrook
(Chicago), Cook Co., IL

Saturday, April 17th, 9:30am to 2pm

University of Wisconsin Parkside, Kenosha Co., WI

Saturday, April 24th, 9:30am to 3pm

Glacial Park, Ringwood, McHenry Co., IL

Sunday, May 2nd, 9:30am to 3pm

Will County FPD Administration Building, Joliet, IL

This workshop will give you an opportunity to learn monitoring skills or to refresh your skills for the new season. New volunteers are required to attend one workshop. We ask any monitors who have never been to a workshop to attend.

Workshops will provide training in the basics of monitoring techniques, including measuring and mapping populations and using a GPS unit. This is also your opportunity to select a monitoring location and meet seasoned monitors who will share their experiences.

Bring a lunch. Morning refreshments will be served. **Registration is required.** Please visit www.plantsofconcern.org to register on-line, or contact Greg Hitzroth, ghitzroth@chicagobotanic.org; 847-835-6856.

A Roomful of Greatness

Photo: Todd Bannor



On February 27 in a packed house at the Brookfield Zoo Discovery Center, the Habitat Project awarded thirty individuals and groups 2010 Grassroots Conservation Leadership Awards. Loud applause

and big smiles were the spirit of the evening as deserving citizen-scientists, stewards and advocates received recognition.

This banquet was the first of its kind. Previous awardees had received recognition through publication and press releases, but not the banquet festivities. One of the biggest ovations of the evening came when previous awardees were asked to stand. So many leading leaders attended – in conservation, restoration, citizen science, and advocacy – that one attendee remarked, “Wow. This is a roomful of greatness.”

Keynote speaker was U.S. Congressman Mike Quigley, former Cook County commissioner and frequent attendee at restoration workdays. The awards were handed out by John Rogner (IL DNR), Karen Glennemeier (Audubon), Benjamin Cox (Friends of the Forest Preserves), and Greg Rajskey (Wild Things). The award language was read by volunteers Debra Shore and Stephen Packard.

So many people doing such creative and important work tells a powerful story. The words heard in conversation afterward tended toward “inspired,” “amazing people,” “honored to be a part of all this,” and “wonderful community.”

Photos and write-ups for this and previous years’ awardees can be found at: www.habitatproject.org/news/people.html. Photos of the actual award celebration are at <http://tinyurl.com/lyf732va>. Mike MacDonald donated the handsome photo that graced the award plaques and table displays.

The event was sponsored by Audubon Chicago Region, Wild Things, Chicago Wilderness Grassroots Task Force, Volunteer Stewardship Network, Friends of the Forest Preserves, and Openlands.

Dragonfly Monitors Needed

Become a budding odonist by attending one of the following workshops:

Saturday, April 10th, 10:00am-1:00pm

Harper College, Room Z102, 1200 W. Algonquin Rd., Palatine

Sunday, April 11th, 1:00am-4:00pm

Sugar Creek Administration Center, Forest Preserve District of Will County, 17540 West Laraway Rd., Joliet

Wednesday, April 14th, 6:00-9:00pm

Grounds & Resource Facility, Forest Preserve District of DuPage, County 29 W 220 Mack Rd., West Chicago

Wednesday, April 21th, 6:30-9:30pm

McHenry County College, 8900 US Hwy. 14, Crystal Lake

Friday, April 23th, 1:00-4:00pm

College of Lake County, Room T326, 19351 West Washington St., Grayslake <http://www.clcillinois.edu/>

Saturday, April 25th, 10:00am-1:00pm

Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, 2430 N. Cannon Dr. in Lincoln Park, Chicago <http://www.chias.org/> (RSVP required at Peggy Notebaert to waive museum entrance fee.)

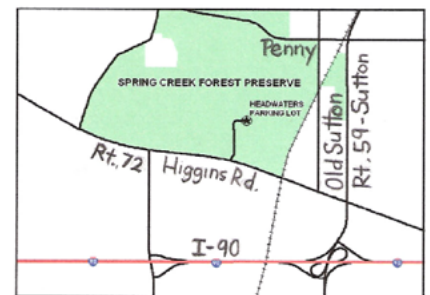
For more information contact Craig Stettner: cstettne@harpercollege.edu. RSVP appreciated, but not required.

Frog Monitoring Field Workshop

Spring Creek Headwaters Preserve

Saturday, May 8th, 5-10pm

Join local steward and frog monitor, Matt Hokanson, at Spring Creek Forest Preserve for a night of frog fun. We will spend a couple of hours doing some restoration activities, break for some snacks and a short presentation, and then head out into the night to listen to some frogs and their mating calls. Come and learn all you can about frogs, their habitat, and how we are trying to restore it. Also, find out how you can become a monitor. Bring your family and friends. All ages are welcome. For more information, contact Matt Hokanson at 708-408-2933.



The Headwaters parking lot is located north of I-90, on Rt. 72, Higgins Rd. just west of Rt. 59.

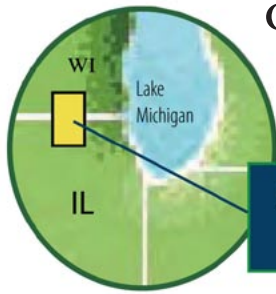
**Skokie Lagoons
Frog Calling
Canoe/Kayak Trip
Friday, May 14th, 7-9pm**



We’ll paddle the Skokie Lagoons by evening, listening for calls of toads and frogs. The Lagoons are interconnected ponds amidst seasonal wetlands in the Forest Preserve of northern Cook County. There is an active rookery of great blue herons, who no doubt prey on the frog population, and many other nesting birds, migrants and wild critters. The trip will be led by Robert Sliwinski and Robbie Sliwinski of the Habitat Project’s Calling Frog Survey, and by Ryan Chew of the Chicago River Canoe & Kayak. Beginning paddlers are welcome, instruction can be provided, and the Lagoons are a gentle body of water for those uncertain of their paddling skills. Enjoy a late spring evening, learn more about frogs, their habitat and needs, and hear their calls in the wild. We’ll spend about 1 hour and 30 minutes on the water. \$25/person in single kayaks. \$15/person in canoes or tandem kayaks. RSVP to Ryan at 847 414-5883 or at ryanwc@sbcglobal.net.

Hackmatack: Tamarack or String of Pearls?

By Gregory T. Rajskey



**Hackmatack NWR Area of Interest
NE Illinois & SE Wisconsin**

Have you heard of Hackmatack? Hack-ma-tack is an Algonquin word for the tamarack tree (*Larix laricina*), a denizen of remnant bogs, a few of which still can be found in the northern Chicago Wilderness region. The area along the Illinois-Wisconsin border where McHenry and Walworth counties meet also is the place where a growing group of conservation visionaries foresee a new national wildlife refuge.

In true grassroots fashion, the idea stemmed from conversations amongst citizens deeply committed to a common cause. Recognizing the history of conservation in this region, and noting that the natural-areas restoration movement has matured, these folks realized that this special place has national value. And there is no national wildlife refuge within 140 miles of Chicago. Yes, we have the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, but these Federal lands to the south are not part of the national wildlife refuge system, and they do not represent the unique glacial relief of the McHenry-Walworth landforms. Out of this perceived need, Friends of Hackmatack was born.

Friends member and Clean Water Advocate for the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, Cindy Skrukud has been working along with other organizers behind the scenes for some four years, laying the groundwork for the refuge. Initially they met with local public officials representing various jurisdictions and eventually worked their way up to state and Federal representatives. Both Illinois Governor Quinn and Wisconsin Governor Doyle have issued letters of support to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; some half-dozen or more members of Congress have signed on, as well.

The geographic scope of the refuge is proposed to encompass portions of northern McHenry County, including areas surrounding Elizabeth Lake, Glacial Park, and Alden Sedge Meadow, and portions of southern Walworth County, including areas surrounding Bloomfield Wildlife Area, Peterkin Pond, and Bigfoot Beach State Park. Skrukud notes that this region contains critical habitat for grassland birds and is an important stopover on the migratory flyway for such species as sandhill cranes and whooping cranes.

“What struck me,” said Ed Collins, Friends member and Natural Resource Manager for the McHenry County Conservation District, “is the movement coming to a new level of maturity.” In spite of the fragmented character of our natural areas, Collins sees real national value in the slow-paced, small-scale landscapes of the region. “We have a wonderful thing, and not many of us recognize that we have a national treasure.” We might not have the vistas of, say, Yellowstone, but our lands have survived tremendous land-use changes, and the remaining systems still function, stitched together like a patchwork quilt.

Or a string of pearls.

For more information, visit www.hackmatacknwr.org

February Workshop Notes Available



On February 7th of this year, 126 stewards, monitors, public officials, land managers, and scientists gathered at the Danada House in Wheaton for some serious talk. We covered prairies, savannas, woodlands, wetlands, herbicides, invasives, seeding, monitoring, and working with people. We held in-depth discussions on each of these topics, led by experts in each field, and came away with a deeper understanding of our work and the best management practices others are using.

Notes from all seven discussion sessions are available on the Habitat Project website. Go to www.habitatproject.org and look under the “Resources” menu for workshop notes.

Here are some samples from those notes:

Prairies and Savannas: When sowing seed, take the time to figure out which conservative species are right for your site. Diverse conservative species are hardest to get, but that is what you need for the long run.

Woodlands: The best way to determine if there is adequate light is to look for the species that depend on higher light levels, such as asters, goldenrods, and oak seedlings. To identify which sites are most appropriate for woodland restoration, look for areas with oak trees (especially bur oaks) and many surviving woodland herbs, as these give the best chance of success.

Working with People: Recruiting advice: Become part of the local community, if you aren't already. Engage the local newspapers – they want to hear from you. Connect with existing organizations that already have a networking structure in place such as service organizations, corporations, faith based organizations, churches, and schools.

Find time to relax and reflect upon your work and thank each other for your efforts.

New *Hot Shot* Orchid *Crack Team?*

Your participation is earnestly invited. We need explorers and saviors for a very rare and beautiful plant. The Habitat Project, in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is seeking some generous people with energy for finding, learning about, and upgrading habitat – to support this region's rich populations of the globally rare (and Federally Threatened) eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*).

At many sites that formerly had populations, this plant no longer exists. In the Chicago Wilderness region, 34 populations are known, perhaps the biggest concentration anywhere. Most of these populations are threatened by brush, invasive weeds, loss of pollinators, and insufficient burning. Excessive deer populations also threaten certain sites. Some populations have increased to many times their earlier sizes, thanks to good stewardship.

You could help find the shoots in early spring and clap deer cages over them, control brush or weeds, hand pollinate, help with controlled burns, take data and submit reports, or a variety of other work, depending on your interests, and on the site.

If you MIGHT BE interested, please take a quick computer survey and give us your thoughts at: www.habitatproject.org

Your ideas are welcome. If you'd like to sample this adventure of work and discovery in the 2010 growing season, please contact us through the website.



Photo: Doug Sherman