

## *Thismia Americana* – The Saga Continues

By Linda Masters and Rebecca Schillo



*Thismia Americana* was discovered nearly 100 years ago and has eluded botanists for decades.

This August 13 there will be a search, and a celebration. Many people with varying degrees of botanical expertise and physical stamina will brave the heat and the bugs on hands and knees, assigned in small teams to selected natural areas. They will search for one of the smallest vascular plants known to man or woman. This plant, named by Norma Pfeiffer when she discovered it in 1912, is *Thismia americana*.

Ms Pfeiffer collected the small white plant she found nestled “in a small space along the margin of a grass field . . . in a low prairie.” She described the location:

“ . . . characterized by such plants as Late Goldenrod, Grass-Leaved Goldenrod, Black Eyed Susan, Common Boneset, Swamp Milkweed, Blue Flag Iris, Sweet Flag, and Redtop, as well as Marsh Club Moss, a liverwort, and a moss.”

*Thismia* is 0.2 inches wide and 0.2 inches high. It has 3 sepals and 3 petals and the leaves are reduced to white scale-like bracts. The entire plant is smooth and white – except for a delicate blue green in the sepals and petals. Only this colored portion is above ground.

When Dr. Mohlenbrock wrote about *Thismia* in his popular book, *Where Have All the Wildflowers Gone?*, he referred to correspondence with Norma Pfeiffer. Ms. Pfeiffer wrote to Mohlenbrock that a barn had been built on her original discovery site but that she found more plants about 1/3 mile away in the midst of cat-tails between ancient beach ridges. Today the original location is under many feet of fill. But within a ten-mile radius are many remnant natural areas that have likely habitat for *Thismia*.

In 1991, plans were being made to build a third airport in the Lake Calumet area. People who were familiar with the area knew that tucked away amongst the buildings and landfills there were some real

# 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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**

[HTTP://ILLINOIS.SIERRACLUB.ORG/](http://ILLINOIS.SIERRACLUB.ORG/) OR [WWW.FOTFP.ORG](http://WWW.FOTFP.ORG) (COOK COUNTY) OR [WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG](http://WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG)

### **GRASSROOTS EDUCATION**

[WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG](http://WWW.HABITATPROJECT.ORG)

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We welcome to our newsletter  
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*Thismia Americana* - continued from front

natural Illinois treasures. George Johnson, long time steward of the Old Plank Road, had read about *Thismia* and had the idea that forming a search party for it could serve two purposes. It would bring new people to the area who could see first hand the importance of what was threatened. And it would be FUN! A day was organized, people were assigned to small search parties at likely locations, and off they went.

After several hours of searching the teams reassembled to give reports on the day. While no one found *Thismia* (there were, however, a few heart-stopping moments), many other plants previously not known to that region were discovered. By the last Great *Thismia* Hunt in 1994, over 50 species of plants previously unknown to that region were added to the list.

These rich discoveries, and the spirit that went into making them, attracted a public spotlight on this region, highlighting its natural treasures and its conservation community. Since that time, municipal, county, and state agencies have saved Burnham Prairie, Calumet City Prairie, Dolton Prairie, and many other sites. Public and private conservation agencies are increasingly using the data and the public interest to make the rich natural areas a permanent and thriving part of the rebirth of the modern community of Calumet.

We invite you to join in this wonderful mission.

If you are interested in volunteering to be a part of *Thismia Hunt 2011: Celebrating 20 Years of Conservation in Calumet*, please visit the website: [www.tinyurl.com/thismiahunt](http://www.tinyurl.com/thismiahunt). On the website you can learn more about the event and can register to volunteer. Volunteers are needed to join search teams and assist with event logistics. Expert botanists are needed to lead search teams. Hope to see you on August 13th.



Photo: Rebecca Schillo

*With enough people getting down on their hands and knees, we may find *Thismia* yet.*

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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 [JPAPPER@AUDUBON.ORG](mailto:JPAPPER@AUDUBON.ORG) OR SEND US A NOTE AT 1718 SHERMAN AVE., SUITE 210, EVANSTON IL 60201.

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# Gray Catbirds vs. Cats

By Bob Fisher

There have been various stories lately about the adaptability of birds, some evidence suggesting that a few of our native bird species may prosper in spite of (or even because of) humankind's propensity for landscape-scale habitat alteration. Parking lot and landfill gulls and Northern Cardinals are both poster children for this phenomenon, having increased their numbers and ranges as a result of the exponential growth in bird feeding. Even Cooper's Hawks are cited as examples of this adaptability. But is this

phenomenon more the exception rather than the rule?

The online journal *Science Daily* recently published a feature article on the subject. The source material for the feature was a technical paper: *Population demography of Gray Catbirds in the suburban matrix: sources, sinks and domestic cats*, authored by Balogh, Ryder, and Marra of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, and published in the *Journal of Ornithology* in January 2011. What the study found was interesting, and alarming.

Quoting from the *Science Daily* article, "...brood size, sex, or hatching date played no significant role in a fledgling's survival. The main determining factor was predation, which accounted for 79 percent of juvenile catbird deaths... Nearly half (47 percent) of the deaths were attributed to domestic cats at 2 of the 3 test sites...."

"The predation by cats on fledgling catbirds made these suburban areas ecological traps for nesting birds," said coauthor Marra. "The habitats looked suitable for breeding birds with lots of shrubs for nesting and areas for feeding, but the presence of cats, a relatively recent phenomenon, isn't a cue birds use when deciding where to nest."

This research supports the hypothesis that altered suburban landscapes are really population sinks for Gray Catbirds, largely due to heavy predation on fledglings, especially by cats. Based on earlier, similar research, The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) began a program several years ago, urging cat owners to keep cats indoors.

The ABC website below documents the phenomenon of cat predation as a well established, major source of wild bird mortality, both from pet cats allowed outdoors and feral cats (whose numbers are now estimated to exceed 60 million within the continental USA).

As I write this, two bills are advancing in the Illinois legislature (one in the House and the other in the Senate). Both bills seek to legalize the establishment of feral cat colonies, embodying a technique called TNR – Trap Neuter Release/ Return. The effectiveness (or lack thereof) of TNR as a technique for controlling or reducing feral cat populations is also discussed on the ABC website. By the time you read this, the legislative process will have considerably advanced. Drop me an email at [bfisher928@aol.com](mailto:bfisher928@aol.com) if you're interested in an update on the situation at that time.

Website: <http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/index.html>



Photos: Mary Kay Rubey

Gray catbirds suffer serious mortality at the hands – or claws – of domestic cats.

# Butterflies and Moths in Winter

By Tom Peterson

Where do butterflies and moths go in the winter? Although many butterflies migrate, such as the well known monarch migration to Mexico, most species actually stay right here in our Chicago Wilderness all winter long.

Each species of butterfly or moth has its own particular method of surviving the winter. Thirty-seven of the 56 species of butterflies observed at Fermilab, for example, hibernate through the winter on site.

Hairstreaks do so as eggs, fritillaries as caterpillars, swallowtails as chrysalids, and morning cloaks and commas hibernate in the woods as adult butterflies. The hibernating insects have a chemical “antifreeze” in their blood which prevents freezing during the cold winter temperatures.

Some of our common adult butterflies, like the monarch, do not survive subfreezing temperatures. Red Admirals, Buckeyes, and Painted Ladies do not survive winters here, but all disperse again to the north each spring, often becoming quite common here in the summer. As with monarchs, these species go through several generations in the south between migrations; no individual butterfly makes the entire round trip.

Moths also have their unique ways of surviving winter. Giant silk moths, like Polyphemus and Luna, overwinter in a cocoon. The common, furry, banded woolly-bear caterpillars often seen running across walking paths in the autumn hibernate as a fully grown caterpillar. They spin a cocoon in the spring, using fur from their bodies, and emerge a few weeks later as an orange moth, the Isabella moth.

In whatever form they hibernate, butterflies and moths remain inactive and well hidden. Even in winter as we walk through a snowy woods or prairie, butterflies and moths are all around us, waiting for the warmth of spring.



The Mourning Cloak (top), Eastern Comma (right), and Giant Swallowtail (chrysalis) are among the many species that spend the winter with us. These photos were taken at Fermilab in early spring.

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## Wild Things 2011 Conference

**It was another wonderful Wild Things. Here are some comments the organizers have received...**

*“Wild Things - I think I LOVE YOU!!”*

*“I truly loved the quality and content of the speakers. Remarkable Knowledge!”*

*“I especially benefitted from that sense of Community that I feel nowhere so much as at that conference.”*

*“First time I’ve come – it was terrific!”*

*“The folks that came to listen to my presentation were inspiring.”*

*“It’s like energy and inspiration in a can that you can sip from in the months to come.”*

**And some statistics:**

1131 registrants

69 sessions plus 2 keynotes and a poster session

36 exhibitors

72 volunteer organizers

124 presenters

9 authors

12 sponsors

To find resources posted by the presenters, go to: <http://www.habitatproject.org/WildThings2011/index.html>



# This June, be a part of something huge. The biggest breeding bird blitz ever! *(p.s. plant people are needed too)*

By Lee Ramsey and Jenny Vogt

It will be the largest, most comprehensive bird (and invasive plant) blitz in the CW region. We need your help. We must get a snapshot of the 4,000-acre Spring Creek Forest Preserves in northwestern Cook County. This comes at a critical time, prior to the Army Corps of Engineers undertaking a multi-million dollar restoration project in the preserve.

Like to help out?

With the Bird Conservation Network, in June 2009 we organized a breeding bird blitz at Poplar Creek Forest Preserve, modeled on the successful annual blitz at Orland Grassland. A great team of 32 volunteers covered about 2,500 acres, tallying 82 species in one morning and supplying valuable

information for management by the forest preserve staff and stewards.

Compare: The Poplar Creek blitz had ten three-person teams who covered about 250 acres each, in one morning. At Spring Creek we are planning to have 40 teams. Each team will cover a smaller area, of roughly 100 acres, to get more complete coverage. Teams will be treated to a picnic and “results countdowns” on the official blitz dates of June 5th and June 11th (rain date June 18). To accommodate everyone’s busy June schedules, surveys can be conducted on any June date available to them.

Our focus on habitat data will be more intense and will include specific information about areas threatened by a dozen identified invasive plant species.

We need more than 100 blitzers to complete the survey at Spring Creek. We need people willing to plunge into the preserve’s many marshes (think: hip-wader brigades and a canoe crew) as well as teams to cover forests, grasslands, and shrublands.

We anticipate a great value to conservation, with lots of rewards, camaraderie, and amazing stories to share at the tally picnics.

Teams are forming now. Please join us. To sign-up go to <http://www.bcnbirds.org/news/blitz2011.html>.

Contact Lee Ramsey to join a team (leeramsey@comcast.net; 847-946-6040) or Jenny Vogt to help with planning and preparation (jmvogt2003@yahoo.com; 847-408-0444).

This is the big one. Be a part of something huge.



Photo: Scarlet Tanager by Mary Kay Rubey



Photo: Henslow's Sparrow by Carolyn Fields



Photo: Jenny Vogt

In 2009 blitzers found birds in every corner of Poplar Creek Preserve. This year, we're heading to Spring Creek.

# Do Something “For the Birds” on May 7

*By Bob Fisher*

**M**ay 7, 2011 will mark the 36th consecutive year when birders fan out all across the 102 counties of Illinois on a Saturday in early May, counting all the birds they see or hear, by species and by numbers.

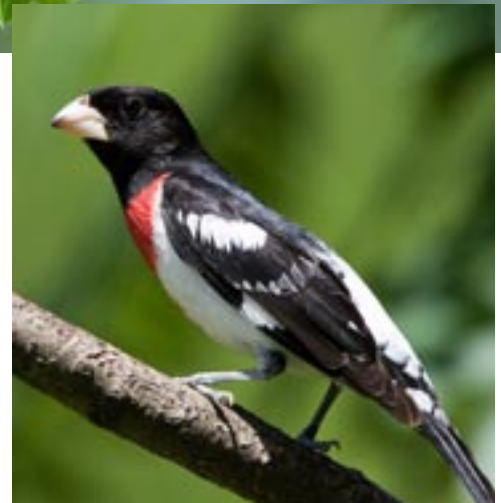
The purpose: Provide a “snapshot” of the state of the birds here in Illinois, both those species that stop and breed here, and those just passing through on their way to nest farther north. The Spring Count is dependent on a simple concept – the more eyes (and ears) the better! It’s science, and it’s fun – whether seeing the warblers in their best spring breeding plumage, listening for owls in the hours before dawn, or spotting an unexpected rarity, those sights and sounds keeps many birders coming back year after year to the Count.

Each county has a compiler, whose job it is to recruit birders, assemble them into teams, assign the teams to cover specific locations within the county, collect the data, and then compile it for the Statewide compiler. Here in northeastern Illinois, the County compilers are:

Cook	Alan Anderson	casresearch@comcast.net	847-390-7437
DuPage	Bob Fisher	bfisher928@aol.com	630-985-2956
Grundy	Diane Cooper		630-834-2968
Kane	Jon Duerr	jjduerr1331@att.net	630-584-5891
Kankakee	David Atkinson	datkinsn@olivet.edu	815-932-6457
Kendall	Keith Johnson	KEJ2444@comcast.net	630-554-2912
Lake	Beau Schaefer	beauschaefer@yahoo.com	
McHenry	Rob Gough	robgough@att.net	815-970-0323
Will	Bob Harrison	nosira@sbcglobal.net	708-889-9693

All are seeking more volunteer counters. Good bird identification skills help, but inexperienced birders will be teamed up with experts. You can sign up for this May’s Spring Count by contacting the compiler for your county.

If you’d like to go even farther afield and help cover a less populous downstate county, contact Tara Beveroth; [beveroth@inhs.uiuc.edu](mailto:beveroth@inhs.uiuc.edu) at the Illinois Natural History Survey. Tara is taking over the task of statewide compiler from Vern Kleen; she’ll be happy to put you in touch with the compiler where help is most needed.



Photos: Black-throated Green Warbler and Rose-breasted Grosbeak by Mary Kay Rubey

# Wild Things Panel Discussion on Wetland Restoration

Panelists: Dave Casey, Aaron Feggestad,  
Dominic Kempson, and Jean Sellar

*Notes prepared by Cindy Grau*

*There were so many outstanding Wild Things presentations, it's always difficult to choose which ones to attend. By way of showcasing the type of expertise Wild Things makes available to our conservation community, here is a brief summary of one of the presentations.*

This panel of experts provided a broad range of options and advice for stewards, other volunteers, and land managers working in wetlands. The panelists began by discussing the extensive background research necessary before tackling a project and stressed that there is no single recipe for wetland restoration. Factors such as current topography, historical topography, hydrology, soil, location in the watershed, wetland size, and plant community will dictate the work that needs to be done. Restorations have been ruined by not doing thorough research in advance or trying to make the site fit into something it is not.

Looking at the history of a site tells us what it once was and what it might want to be. Some excellent resources are the 1939 aerial photographs, soil maps, and the Public Lands Survey. (See page 9 for resources.)

The current hydrology of the area also is a very important consideration. Restoration work cannot restrict water flow or affect neighboring properties by law. The upstream and

downstream neighbors matter. So it is important to find out where the water is coming from and going to. Do you have control of what comes into your site? Is the surrounding area slated to be developed? It may take a year or more of watching a site along with investigating neighboring properties to find out the necessary information for a successful long-term restoration. The location on the watershed also matters; for example, a higher location in the watershed will get less water and it will be less polluted.

Both the size and the quality of the wetland are important considerations. For example, a fen may be only ½ acre in size but is by nature a very high quality wetland.

Many people are restricted by lack of funding and find it too expensive to remove drainage tiles in order to restore a wetland. The experts suggested that it is actually important not to disturb the soil if possible. Many tile systems can be left in place and modified to help control water at the site. A control valve can be put in an existing system to lower and

*Wetland Restoration - continued on page 9*



Photo: Ed Beiffuss

*Wetland restoration involves many steps, including the choice of appropriate wetland plants for areas that will be getting wetter due to removal of drain tiles or other hydrologic changes.*



raise water levels. Also cut-off valves can be installed.

Sometimes vegetation management can be an effective and lower cost solution to control water flow, evaporation, and temperature. For example, removing dense buckthorn at the wetland edge can reduce transpiration considerably, resulting in more water remaining in the wetland. When fighting invasive species it is very important to use the correct herbicides. Products such as Aquamaster and Habitat are specially designed for safe use in wetlands. It is also very important to learn the source or cause of the weed problem in order to fully address it.

There are several resources to help lessen the cost of

Resources:

1939 aerial photos

USGS <http://edcns17.cr.usgs.gov/NewEarthExplorer/>

ISGS <http://www.isgs.illinois.edu/nsdihome/webdocs/ilhap/>

soil maps

USDA Web Soil Survey <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>

Public Lands Surveys

SE Wisconsin <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/SurveyNotes/Search.html>

NE Illinois [http://landplats.ilsos.net/FTP\\_Illinois.html](http://landplats.ilsos.net/FTP_Illinois.html)

For information about drain tile work

Background Data and General Consultation - NRCS <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Site and Near-Site Hydrologic Assessment and Design - Stantec (608) 839-2040

Construction - Huddleston-McBride Drainage Services (815) 757-6007

National Resources Conservation Service

Search for local service centers at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

Audubon

847-328-1250

Friends of the Forest Preserves

<http://www.fotfp.org/about/staff/>

Field Museum Environmental and Conservation Programs:

[http://fm1.fieldmuseum.org/aa/staff\\_directory.cgi?dept=ECP](http://fm1.fieldmuseum.org/aa/staff_directory.cgi?dept=ECP)

Openlands

<http://openlands.org/Staff-Directory/Staff-Directory/>

wetland restoration. The National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices have aerial photographs which can help identify tiles on site. There are both soil and water conservation people at the NRCS. There are also grants to help with funding.

Finally, volunteers and organizations need to work in cooperation with the land owner and resource agencies. In many cases permits will be required. Audubon, Friends of the Forest Preserves, the Field Museum, and Openlands also are great resources to connect project managers with resources. These resources can help you leverage your efforts to accomplish a successful restoration project.

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## Help Wanted: Frog Computer Migration!



We are looking for a volunteer with web/database experience to help us migrate the Calling Frog Survey database from a Microsoft Windows server to a UNIX/Linux server. Strong PHP and MySQL experience with a willingness to delve into ASP/VBscript, and Microsoft Access is required. A willingness to support the project after the migration and improvements is welcome, but not absolutely necessary.

We will be redesigning the frog database and its user interface from ASP/VBscript/Microsoft Access to PHP/MySQL. We would also like to add online reports of the data. (Adding a mapping capability would be an especially welcome addition.)

There are about 22 files consisting of a total of around 5,300 lines of code. The database consists of about 8 tables with a total of about 70 fields. The Microsoft Access database is about 4 MB.

Please contact Karen Glennemeier at [kglennemeier@audubon.org](mailto:kglennemeier@audubon.org) or 847-256-2608 if you would like to help.

## Stew-MAP Chicago

Who is doing environmental stewardship work in the Chicago region and where exactly are they working? A new project by the US Forest Service and Center for Neighborhood Technology is trying to find out. STEW-MAP (the Stewardship Mapping and Assessment Project) uses a broad definition of stewardship: *conserving, caring for, monitoring, advocating for, and educating others about local environments*. Stewardship groups can enter their information via an on-line questionnaire. The project will produce an on-line map of stewarded sites and a database of stewardship groups in the greater Chicago region. Additional information from the questionnaire will help us understand existing stewardship groups and identify stewardship hotspots and gaps in the region. You can put your group or organization's stewardship on the map by filling out the questionnaire at <http://stewmap.cnt.org>.



Using the mapping tool in Stew-MAP, Schaumburg Park District drew their stewardship "territory" (shaded here). Stew-MAP will put the territories of hundreds of environmental groups on a searchable, online master map that shows stewardship work across the region.

## Give Back to Birds Field Trip and Workday at Nachusa Grasslands

April 30, 2011



Photo: Arlene Kozlowski

### Saturday, April 30, 2011

9:00 am – 10:30 Bird Walk

10:30 am - Snack

10:45am - 12:30 Workday

12:30 - Brown Bag Lunch

The Bird Conservation Network is sponsoring its sixth Give Back to the Birds – Field Trip/Workday at Nachusa Grassland, an Illinois Important Bird Area, located in Franklin Grove – about a two-hour drive west from Chicago. This is one of the state's largest prairies, with a long-standing and active restoration group.

On the bird walk, we will learn about the project from a volunteer steward, and enjoy the beautiful remnant prairie, and the prairie and woodland birds (a spotting scope would be helpful). After the morning bird walk, we will enjoy a complimentary snack before we begin to cut invasive brush in the prairie.

This Saturday trip/workday will take place rain or shine. People of all ages can find a way to help. Dress in layers, with sturdy shoes. Bring work gloves if you have them, but extra are available. Bring a sack lunch if you would like to picnic after the workday. Goodies for dessert will be provided!

BCN would like to know how many to plan for. Please RSVP to Joan Bruchman at [pjbruchman@yahoo.com](mailto:pjbruchman@yahoo.com) or 847-687-3108. Also let Joan know if you would like to join a carpool.

### Directions:

**Nachusa Grasslands 8772 S. Lowden Rd., Franklin Grove, Illinois**  
Take I-88 West (East-West Tollway). Exit at Route 251 North (Rochelle) to Route 38 West (you need to follow a few signs.) Travel through Ashton and into Franklin Grove (approx. 16.5 miles), go two blocks past Casey's gas station of Franklin Grove (not Ashton) and turn right (north) at Daysville Road/1700E (sign: Franklin Creek State Park). Travel 1.5 miles north to Naylor Road/1950 North, then turn left (west) and go 2.2 miles to Lowden Road/1500 East. Turn right (north) and go 1.5 miles to preserve headquarters on left.

*Give Back to Birds is a series of "work and birding" trips sponsored by the Bird Conservation Network. The purposes: Fellowship and camaraderie among our bird conservation and birding communities; helping out some sites that have conservation needs; and seeing some great birds and beautiful places!*

# Frog Monitoring Field Workshop and Workday

Saturday, May 7th, 5–10pm

Spring Creek Forest Preserve

Do you enjoy the sounds of nature while hiking around the Chicagoland area forest preserves? Then, you will most certainly enjoy the sounds of frogs chorusing under a moonlit sky. You may have heard a few frogs calling during the daytime, but many species are known to call only after the sun goes down. During spring, volunteer monitors go into the preserves after dusk to count our populations of frogs and toads. We monitor frogs because they are great indicators of habitat quality or disturbance.

You are invited to come out to the far northwest corner of Cook County to attend a frog monitoring field workshop. 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. For more information about monitoring visit [www.habitatproject.org](http://www.habitatproject.org).

Bring your family and bring your friends. All ages are welcome.

Wear sturdy, waterproof boots and long pants, and bring a flashlight, bug spray, and rain gear in case the weather turns for the worse. Tools, gloves, snacks, and water will be provided. Please bring extra water if you think you'll need it.

**Questions? Call Matt Hokanson at 708-408-2933.**

**Directions:** The Headwaters parking is located north of I-90, on Rte. 72, Higgins Road, just west of Rte. 59.

Illustration: Lynda Wallis



## Bird Monitors' Brunch



Illustration: Lynda Wallis

## DuPage County Recognizes Invasive Species Awareness Month

Learn about invasive species and pull some of them up as part of **Invasive Species Awareness Month** in May, hosted by the DuPage County Forest Preserve District.

**Saturday, May 7, 1:30pm – 4:00pm**  
Danada Parson's Grove in Wheaton

**Saturday, May 21, 9:00am – Noon**  
Fullersburg Woods in Oak Brook

Maximum of 25 participants for each event.

Please register with the Volunteer Office  
630-933-7681 at least five business days prior to  
the event; include your name and phone number.

Work is appropriate for ages 8 and up.

**The annual Monitors' Brunch** will be held at Schaumburg Road Grasslands in northwestern Cook County on Saturday, July 9. This is the southwest section of Poplar Creek Forest Preserve. A morning of birding at the grasslands will be followed by a picnic or a lunch at a nearby restaurant. All BCN monitors are invited. There will be no charge for the meal, but reservations are required. Further details, when confirmed, will be announced on the BCN website and on BCN eBird. Save the date! Judy Pollock [jpollock@audubon.org](mailto:jpollock@audubon.org).

## Become a Weed Scout and make a significant contribution to the restoration of Spring Creek Preserve.

**No prior expertise required – training provided.**

**About a half dozen site visits per year.**

**For as many years as you continue to find it rewarding.**

Weed scouting is a critical but often overlooked component of a successful land management program. Stewards need to know the locations of troublesome weeds – especially those weeds that spread exponentially from only a single plant. But it's very hard for stewards to find time to both control the weeds and to scout them.

This is where **Weed Scouts** come in. Trained Scouts tell the stewards where the weeds are lurking each year.

Your data will prevent terrible outbreaks of aggressive weeds that threaten the health and native diversity of the site. You will be making the stewards' work more effective, allowing them to focus weed control where it is needed most.

Weed Scouts have become integral parts of successful restoration at Bartel Grassland, Skokie Lagoons, and many other sites in the region. The Spring Creek stewards say this is their greatest need for the coming year.

It's a great way to become part of this beautiful site's conservation team and get to know its inhabitants more intimately.



Wild Parsnip illustration: Kathy Gorness