



Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve, Inc.

Dedicated to Service in Conservation

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To our members and friends:

May 2017

Electing Officers and Directors Thursday May 25th 7:00 PM

As required by our constitution, “At the May general meeting each year, the Spokesman, chosen by and from among the Nominating Committee, shall read that Committee’s list of candidates for the various offices. This will be immediately followed by the Presiding Officer calling for nominations from the floor. The candidate for each office receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.” The new officers will take office at the beginning of our coming fiscal year on September 1st.

May General Meeting and Program Thursday May 25th 7:00 PM

Marianne Hahn, local conservationist and longtime friend and supporter of the Preserve will present a program on “The Newest National Wildlife Refuge” which has just been established about a year ago. It is formally known as “The Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area” which is located in Iroquois County about an hour’s drive south of Homewood. This property is located in what has come to be known as the Kankakee Sands Section of the Grand Prairie Natural Division (one of 14 geographic divisions in the state of Illinois). This area has received increasing attention recently including the PBS Nature documentary “Everglades of the North” which we featured in a program a few years ago. Marianne will update us on conservation developments in this general area and provide an overview of the interesting natural phenomena, flora and fauna in this preserve. Also on Saturday May 27 at 9:00am, the Audubon Great Lakes and Friends of the Kankakee groups will conduct a Spring Bird and Butterfly walk at this location. More details about that walk will be provided at the program.

Lift Station Repair

Yes we have our very own lift station on the Preserve which is located in the woods just east of the Homewood Baseball fields. The sewage from the Homewood Baseball bathrooms and our bathrooms located on the north side of the cabin flow into this large

underground tank in which a grinder/ejector pump “lifts” the sewage so that it can safely be pumped into the Village of Homewood sewage system. Late in the afternoon of Friday March 31, we were informed that sewage was backing up at the baseball toilets which meant that we had a problem at our lift station. Upon request and within 20 minutes both Dirk French and Mark Leschuck sprang into action to help identify and remedy the problem. Aleck Plumbing also was able to be on-site quickly to assist with a temporary pump. By Sunday, with additional consultation from Jerry Tienstra, we had repaired the electrical issue that had caused the problem and the pump was working again. Our thanks to Dirk and Mark for their quick response and to John Sailor once again for his volunteer electrical repair work and to Aleck Plumbing who agreed to grant us a substantial discount for their on-site work until 8:30pm that night. We encourage our members to call Sailor Electric and Aleck Plumbing both in Homewood with your electric or plumbing issues.

Prairie Restoration and Invasive Plant Species Eradication

Considerable work from many dedicated volunteers has taken place in February, March and April to accomplish prairie restoration and the never ending battle against invasive plants. There were 3 phases to the work:

Phase 1 consisted of the removal of heavy invasive growth from about a 35 yard stretch along the old railroad bed except for three native trees that were left standing. Looking from the west entrance one can now view both the Homewood prairie and the prairie lakes prairie further to the northwest. “Merging” these prairies remains a long term goal and a future project. Working on this phase were Mark Leschuck, John Sandala, Bob Enright, Greg Busler and John Brinkman.

Phase 2 concentrated on prairie restoration in the northern 20-25% of the Homewood Prairie. This area is generally far from the trails and difficult to see when the prairie plants are full grown. Two woody species had invaded: gray dogwood and blue fruited dogwood. Tony Merisko, a prairie expert from the Nature Conservancy advised us to eliminate the gray dogwood and thin out the blue fruited dogwood. The process involves using a powered brush cutter with a rotating blade to cut the stems at ground level and then immediately applying a herbicide on the stump which is especially effective at this time of year. Other than phragmites control and regular prescribed burns, prairie restoration work of this type had not been done in many years. The work was done by Dan Galen, Greg Busler and John Brinkman. These efforts will continue every spring until we have covered the entire Homewood Prairie which may take another 3-4 years.

Phase 3 was concentrated at the western entrance. Large amounts of buckthorn (which had been cut down last summer by John Newgard) was cut again at ground level and herbicide then applied. Additionally gray dogwood and blue fruited dogwood out on the prairie just north and east of the parking lot were dealt with as previously described. The brush was gathered up and burned in large piles on two days, March 31 and April 8. Working on March 31 were John Sandala, Sam Casella, Dan Galen, Greg Busler, Mark Leschuck and John Brinkman. Steve Wlodarski and Shawn Straney recruited a group of boy scouts to assist on April 8th which included Alex Bertucci, Andrew Gaughan, Gabe Griffith, Zack Green, Zach Rodriguez and Isaac Shores. In addition to Steve and Shawn,

adult volunteers working that day included Mark Leschuck, Craig Johnson, John Sandala, Greg Busler and John Brinkman.

Pollinator Paradise: Create your Own !

At our April general meeting, Brittany Buckles from the Naperville Park District presented a program on incorporating native plants into the home landscape with a special emphasis on pollinators that are helpful to native bird and insect species. The program was well attended and much useful and interesting information was learned. Did you know that there are 40 different species of bees in Illinois and that 1/3rd of what we eat depends on successful insect pollination ! And May is now known as Garden for Wildlife Month ! In our audience that evening was Kay MacNeil who leads the Garden Clubs of Illinois Milkweed for Monarchs Campaign. Kay was able to pass out milkweed seed packets to many of the attendees. In our demonstration gardens in development, we intend to have a dedicated milkweed section. At Kay's request we have included the following information and we will have milkweed seed packets available at our May 25th general meeting.

The GARDEN CLUBS OF ILLINOIS (www.gardenclubsof illinois.org) is doing a yeoman's job in working to save the Monarch Butterfly. Key to their effort is the propagation of milkweed, as Monarchs lay their eggs exclusively on milkweed which, subsequently provide food for the caterpillars.

Regretfully, many people including farmers and Highway Departments, consider the Milkweed to be useless and they therefore cut it down. Consequently milkweed populations have dropped and along with them, the Monarch Butterfly population. Aside from the Monarch's natural beauty, they are truly remarkable in that they (a) turn from caterpillars to butterflies right here in the Midwest, (b) migrate to Central Mexico for the winter, (c) and then return north to lay more eggs before they die. The GARDEN CLUB OF ILLINOIS, is appreciative of this creature and recognizes that populations are falling. Therefore they are working to spread the word and to spread Milkweed seeds to those willing to plant them. They hope to distribute 1,000,000 seed packets this year! Kay MacNeil, Chairman of the GARDEN CLUB OF ILLINOIS, has 100 packets of seeds available for \$25 plus \$5 for shipping. The price simply covers cost; the GARDEN CLUB OF ILLINOIS is not working to make a profit. While they last, Kay also has compact Save Our Monarchs drop boxes, (postage required) which hold swamp milkweed seed packets, which could be placed in libraries and businesses. One can also view a new, 45-minute, award winning Youtube program about Monarchs. Go to youtube.com and search "Kay MacNeil Milkweed To Monarchs". For additional information contact Kay MacNeil, Garden Clubs of Illinois, 689 Golf Club Ln., Frankfort, IL 60423. Phone: 815-469-1294. Email: kaymac60423@yahoo.com

Your President, John Brinkman

HOMEWOOD IZAAK WALTON PRESERVE PROGRAM

The Newest National Wildlife Refuge

Marianne Hahn will present a program on the Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area which is just an hour's drive south from Homewood and has just been in existence for only a year. Pick up a free milkweed seed packet at the meeting !

Date: Thursday May 25th

Time 7:00 PM

Place: Arthur Senior Hall 1100 Ridge Road Homewood, IL