



Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve, Inc.

Dedicated to Service in Conservation

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Tax exempt non-profit 501 c 3 Organization

To our members and friends:

February 2018

MARCH GENERAL MEETING “TOXIC TURF OR POLLINTOR PARADISE”

Dave Ward, Superintendent of the HF Park District’s Coyote Run Golf Course and a former Board member of HIWP, will present a program on THURSDAY MARCH 22 at 7:00pm on his implementation of environmental friendly programs and practices at Coyote Run Golf Course. Dave will discuss how they benefit the native fauna in the area addressing controversies surrounding the use of chemicals on golf courses. He will also include a discussion of native plants in the home landscape and answer common lawn and garden questions. A day after the Vernal Equinox, plan on attending this very informative program as we “think Spring” and plan for our upcoming lawn and garden work.

CHANGING OUR BYLAWS

Our bylaws were last amended in 1991, so a committee of Board members has been hard at work on some long overdue revisions and updates. The bylaws themselves contain a procedure that must be followed in order to change them. That procedure requires a reading of the revised bylaws at two successive general meetings with a vote by members present of at least 2/3rds favorable at the second of those meetings. The first reading of the revised bylaws will take place at the March general meeting; the second, at the April general meeting. Members can view the changes after March 10th on our website or in a printed version which will be available in the cabin after that date. The revisions are almost wholly technical in nature.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

Membership renewal forms will be mailed out this month to all members who have not yet renewed their membership for the upcoming year, which ends March 31, 2019. Please return your forms promptly. We have not raised our dues since 1975 as dues from an increasing membership (now @ 1,250) has provided the growing revenue we need to meet expenses. New this year will be the ability to renew your membership on line. Our grateful thanks to volunteer Matt La Plante who has been instrumental in bringing his IT skills to the Preserve and allowing us to offer this on line functionality. The link is:

<http://www.homewoodizaakwalton.com/membership>. Please keep in mind that we are charged a fee of about \$1 for on line membership so cash or check is still preferred or just add one dollar to your on line renewal. We also encourage you to indicate your preference for receiving this newsletter by email to help us save on printing and postage costs. Thank you to our many members for your dues, your additional contributions, and your many hours of volunteer work. Please help us build on this momentum by asking neighbors and friends to become members of The Preserve.

PROGRESS ON THE OAK SAVANNAH

Last Fall, we again made progress in our multi year project of restoring the Oak Savannah. On numerous days, teams of volunteers came out to the savannah to thin out and clear the unwanted cherry trees and other undesirable small bushes and trees. We cleared out another 20 yard wide section as we clear/restore the acreage moving west to east. The material is cut up with chain saws and piled up for burning roughly ten yards outside the perimeter of the savannah. Special thanks to board member Dan Galen who performed nearly all of the chain saw work. Other volunteers contributing to the effort include Greg Busler, John Sandala, Shawn Straney, Joe Daley, and John Brinkman. Our goal is to finish the restoration work in the Spring at which time we also intend to perform a controlled burn of the entire savannah.

FALL '17 CONTROLLED BURNS

Bad weather and scheduling issues limited our controlled burns last Fall. We were able on three occasions to make the best of it by burning several piles of invasive brush and trees that had been cut down as part of the Oak Savannah restoration. Finally, on Dec 2, 2017, unusually late warm and dry conditions gave us the opportunity to conduct a very successful burn in the western and northern half of the Homewood Prairie. Watch for a noticeable difference in the new bright vegetation that will return to that area in the Spring.

We conduct these burns to keep the invasive plant species from taking over and crowding out the native prairie plants. The burning process also puts nutrients back into the soil, especially when followed by rain and snow over the winter months. If we did not do these burns periodically, a thick mat of dead vegetation would accumulate preventing much needed precipitation and sunlight from reaching the new growth in the spring. We typically conduct our Spring burns from early April through mid-May, before any of the vegetation begins growing again. We then fully benefit from the rain and sun of the Spring Season that help nature along.

Many thanks to the many volunteers who helped with these controlled burns: Greg Busler, Janet Halpin, Sean Harrison, Craig Johnson, Mark Leschuck, John Newgard, John Sandala, Shawn Straney, Todd Wittenburg, Ian Anderson, Alex Bertucci, Andrew and Michael Gaughan, and lastly to Joel and Carlos (whose last names we neglected to obtain-sorry).

If you would like to assist with the Spring Season feel free to send me an e-mail Steve.Wlodarski@att.net We will add you to our list of volunteers to contact in the Spring. Our volunteers range in age from 12 to 70's. We generally keep the volunteer detail to a 2 - 3 hour effort. There are also no minimum or maximum amount of burns that you need to attend. We are appreciative of anyone who would like to help us out.

BRIDGE HANDRAIL PROJECT #2

In late November and early December, an experienced and dedicated crew installed handrails on a second bridge that leads from the southern shore of the island south to the mainland shore in the new wetlands area just west of the northern section of the Prairie Lake area. Recall from the article in the January '17 Newsletter, that we constructed handrails on the first bridge going out to island in the Fall of '16. The addition of handrails on these three bridges in the wetlands area was mandated by our insurance company in order to obtain the liability insurance that the Village of Homewood requires as part of our lease agreement. The insurance company agreed to allow us to "spread out" the expenditures over three years. So you can expect the last handrail construction to take place in the Fall of '18 on the third bridge in that area. The construction design of the second bridge was exactly the same as the first so we benefitted somewhat from the learning curve. Special thanks to Mark Leschuck who donned the "waders" and preformed all work required to be done from standing in the water. Other crew members assisting included Greg Busler, John Brinkman, Dan Galen, John Sandala, John Sailor, and Andy Lindstrom.

ANOTHER GENEROUS DONATION

Once again we would like to thank the folks at Hanson Material Services and Shepley Motor Express, Inc., both located in Thornton, for the more than 200 tons of stone and aggregate materials they so graciously donated and transported to The Preserve during the last months of 2017. The material will be used for our parking lot and trail maintenance. We recieved their last donation on Thursday Nov 30th which was comprised of high quality screenings. A crew consisting of Bob Enright, Greg Busler, Mark Leschuck and John Brinkman promptly went out on Monday Dec 4th and built up the parts of the trail around the parairie lakes that are the first areas to flood at lowest elevation with high water. They've made similar gestures in years past and their support is greatly appreciated. Please consider them for your next suitable project. Again, thank you very much!

. **Your President,**

John Brinkman

HOMEWOOD IZAAK WALTON GENERAL MEETING

“TOXIC TURF OR POLLINATOR PARADISE”

Thursday March 22nd, 2018 7:00p

**Arthur Senior Hall
1100 Ridge Road, Homewood, IL**

Dave Ward, Superintendent of the HF Park Districts Coyote Run Golf Course, will present a program explaining the implementation of environmentally friendly programs and practices at the golf course. Be sure to attend this very informative program.