



## **Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve, Inc.**

*Dedicated to Service in Conservation*

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To our members and friends:

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### **Dogs Off Leash/On Leash Policy**

Our most contentious issue at the Preserve is likely our policy of allowing dog walkers to walk their dogs off leash in certain parts of the Preserve. This has been a long standing policy for us in conjunction with the requirement that all dog walkers at the Preserve be members in good standing. Incidents of dog bites or attacks from dogs off leash have been minimal, perhaps one or less per year. Our current Ground Rules specify where, in the Preserve, dogs must be on leash at all times but arguably “east of trail marker 2.74” has not been easily understood resulting in confusion among our members. The Board has discussed this issue frequently this year, especially in light of incidents where dogs wandered out on to unsafe ice covered water only to be sometimes followed by their owners putting both of them in real danger. We have also noted the colorful commentary on social media on both sides of the issue. There is not a clear consensus either way.

The Board considered many options but ultimately decided to continue to allow members to walk their dogs off leash but in somewhat less area of the Preserve than before and with improved signage. Basically, dogs off leash will be allowed only on the trails that surround the Homewood Prairie and the Prairie Lakes. Dogs will be required to be on leash in the parking lots, grounds and picnic areas, and the trails around the Sandpit lakes and the Dunes area. As part of this change, we will soon be placing signs on the trails where these two areas intersect bringing clarity to where “dogs off leash” is and is not permitted and will place additional signage as necessary. The Ground Rules will also be updated. Worth republishing again are the existing Ground Rules pertaining to dogs that will NOT change:

- M-2) Owners are fully responsible for damage or aggravation caused by their dogs.
- M-3) Anyone bringing a dog into the Preserve must have the dog under his/her control at all times.
- M-5) Dogs off leash must have been trained sufficiently to abide by the owner’s command.
- M-6) Dogs off leash must be kept within 20 feet of the marked trails to avoid disturbing ground-nesting birds and other wildlife.

M-7) Pet owners shall remove their pet's waste material from anywhere within 5 feet either side of the trail center-line.

Rule M-3 talks about dogs being under the owner's control at all times. It's appropriate to expand on the meaning of this rule and so, we comment as follows:

- If your dog approaches a stranger at a gallop, he's out of control and should be leashed.
- If your dog greets people by putting his paws on the person's legs, he's out of control and should be leashed.
- When dog meets dog, they might show their teeth and growl while sizing one another up. Many people find this threatening and so, such dogs should be leashed.
- If your dog won't stay close to you and come when called, he's out of control and should be leashed.

Members in violation of these rules will be issued warnings and repeated violations will result in revocation of membership. We ask cooperation from all of us to help make these changes work for everyone.

### **Recycling at the Preserve**

In past years, we have put out receptacles for recycling purposes only during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Village picnic. Spearheaded by our Secretary Betty Baker, the Board has approved an effort this year to encourage recycling in the grounds/cabin area. Three recycling receptacles have been placed adjacent to our existing trash containers which will be maintained from Spring to late Fall. We ask that you do not place garbage and other non-recyclable materials in these bins. This has been a recurring issue with recycling efforts in public areas and this effort will fail if we aren't careful with what we place in these receptacles. Your cooperation is appreciated.

### **Teasel Eradication Brigades**

In the past 3-5 years, several areas of invasive Cut-Leaved Teasel has established itself in the Preserve. Last year we tried some broadcast spraying of herbicide on one area of teasel near the wetlands area with some success. But thanks to the knowledgeable consulting advice from Anthony Merisko who works for Northeastern Illinois University overseeing the Gensberg Prairie, we have a better strategy. The plant has a two year life cycle sending up a tall shoot in its second year which forms a seed pod from which the seeds fall to germinate in the following spring. Tony has advised us that if we cut off these tall shoots at the right time, the plant will not send up a second shoot and we will have taken away its ability to reproduce. If we consistently do this each year in late Spring/early Summer we will eventually get this invasive under control, and without any further use of herbicides. Therefore, we are planning a large volunteer effort on two Saturday mornings June 23 and June 30 from 9-noon to attack the teasel. We will need 15-20 volunteers who will be organized into 4-5 groups who will be assigned areas of teasel concentrations to attack. The actual work will be relatively easy: just snip off the tall shoot and place the cut off piece in a garbage bag. We welcome volunteers of all

ages: long pants, long sleeve shirts and heavy shoes/boots are required. To volunteer for this effort, please sign up on our web page: click on "Volunteer" and follow instructions.

### **Revised and Updated By Laws Approved**

Pleased to report that our revised and updated bylaws were approved by unanimous voice vote at the conclusion of their second reading at the April General meeting on 4/26. Our thanks to Board member Greg Busler who lead this effort and did most of the work. We will soon have the revised Constitution and By Laws available on our website.

### **New Benches on the Trails Installed**

John Nieszal, an Eagle Scout Candidate from Boy Scout Troop 348 recently built and installed 5 benches. Three of them replaced existing benches: along the North Channel, on the island in the wetlands area and at the southwest corner of the prairie. Two new benches were located on the south side of Lake Akela and the far east side of Prairie Lake. The bench design was first introduced two years ago when two were placed in the Oak Savannah. The 5-foot benches are made of pressure-treated wood and include backs slanted at a comfortable angle. Carpentry work required precision angles, dado cuts, and the careful placement of nuts & bolts. John worked on the carpentry portion of the project over the winter. Installation at The Preserve took place in April and May on weekends as weather allowed. The three old single-plank benches (anchored by 10" poles) that were replaced had been part of the preserve for several decades. Two of the three old benches were removed by Dan Galen and John Brinkman. But the third one, which was much more challenging, was removed by John and his team using a fulcrum & lever arm device. The benches are a nice upgrade and have generated many positive comments. The Preserve thanks John Nieszal and his team (Ava John and Alex Nieszal, Cindy Joe and Evan Urback, Andy and Wally Quintanilla, Dan Carey and Matt Olsen) for a job well done and we wish him good luck as he pursues the rank of Eagle Scout.

### **Milkweed Seed Packets Available**

May is Garden for Wildlife Month so once again we have obtained milkweed seed packets that are available for free to our members in the cabin. Kay MacNeil who leads the Garden Clubs of Illinois Milkweed for Monarchs Campaign distributes these packets in our area every Spring. From Kay:

The GARDEN CLUBS OF ILLINOIS ([www.gardenclubsof illinois.org](http://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. So spread the word and plant Milkweed seeds: 100 packets of seeds are available for \$25 plus \$5 for shipping. The price simply covers cost; the

GARDEN CLUB OF ILLINOIS is not working to make a profit. One can also view a new, 45-minute, award winning Youtube program about Monarchs. Go to [youtube.com](https://www.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](mailto:kaymac60423@yahoo.com)

Your President, John Brinkman

## **Annual 4th of July Picnic**

Our largest volunteer effort of the year and our largest event at the Preserve is our traditional 4<sup>th</sup> of July Village Picnic. The event starts at 11am and ends at 2pm but volunteers are also needed on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> as well. Watch for details in our June Newsletter for anyone wishing to volunteer to help with this effort

**Date: Wednesday July 4<sup>th</sup> 2018**