



Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve, Inc.

Dedicated to Service in Conservation

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To our members and friends:

June 2018

Annual 4th of July Village Picnic: 11am-2pm

This annual event hosted by the Preserve together with our partners, the Village of Homewood and the H F Park District, is a favorite of many local residents. The event follows right after the Village's 4th of July parade which steps off at 10am. The Preserve provides the facilities and offers food and refreshments while the Park District provides the entertainment and activities for this family friendly event. Board member Mark Leschuck, will again be managing the event this year with the additional help of Food Service Committee members Steve and Betty Baker, Jay and Amy Eagle, Sam Casella and Bob Enright. This event brings out our largest group of volunteers. We are fortunate to have a strong dedicated returning core of volunteers but we could always use more. Every year we encourage new volunteers to join the team. We need people to work on various jobs on 3 different days: July 2nd, 3rd and 4th. On the 4th itself, we need workers before, during and after the event. Please contact Mark at 630/619-9312 or mleschuck@comcast.net if you would like to join the dedicated team that volunteers for this event.

Trail Mix Music Event July 21, 2018

During the past two summers, a fund raising music event called Trail Mix has been conducted in our West Pavilion on a Saturday in July with the organizers renting the West Pavilion as would any group. In those years, we also received voluntary donations. The success of the event for a good cause and the quality of the music caused us to offer to become a co-sponsor this year. Accordingly, the 3rd annual Trail Mix Acoustic Music Fest is scheduled for July 21st from 12 noon until 8:30pm. This year the stage will be in front of the Black Bear Lodge, allowing music-fancying picnickers to enjoy the music in this larger area on the lawn among the trees. This is a free, family friendly event, but sponsorships, concessions and proceeds from a fine art auction, a 50/50 raffle, and rented VIP seating will help support the Theatre & Arts Leadership Kouncil (TALK). TALK helps teens become difference-makers in the community through the arts and in addition to organizing and running some concessions, a few talented teens play music at the fest.

The majority of the acts, however, will be regional favorites including, Andy Palmer from the Nice Boys Band, Jim Joyce from Thing 3, the Zack Brodie Band and Work in Progress, to name a few. Trail Mix 2018 will also be in support of an acoustic music listening room that is in development by TALK and St Paul Community Church. The listening room is scheduled to open with a series of concerts by the end of the year and will feature folk, Americana, bluegrass, blues and jazz music. Please visit www.TALKsouthland.org for more information about Trail Mix, TALK and to get updates on the music venue.

In addition to the Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve, this year's sponsors include the Village of Homewood, the Law Offices of Thomas Brabec, Upsadaisy Boutique, the Bottle & Bottega, St. Paul Community Church and Rabid Brewing. (yes beer will be available after 4p; dogs, chips. water and soft drinks available all day) Please plan to spend some time on July 21st, bring the family, pack a lunch or dinner, have a concession or two and most importantly, sit back and enjoy some chill acoustic music amongst the trees in Homewood's Izaak Walton Preserve. Voluntary donations from concert goers will benefit TALK and the Preserve !

Controlled Burns in the Spring....

For the benefit of our new members, for many years we have organized controlled woodland and prairie burns in the spring and fall. These restoration burns are useful to control brush and other woody and invasive species that would eventually smother and replace the native wildflowers and grasses that are naturally fire resistant and whose growth and propagation we are encouraging. Spring burns are particularly difficult due to wet conditions thanks to frequent spring rains. But this spring with some favorable dry conditions, our burn chief, Steve Wlodarski, led volunteers out to conduct controlled burns on April 29 and May 6. They were able to burn some areas that are normally difficult to burn and which had either not been burned for many years or had never been burned. These areas were to the west and south of the trail on the western/southern shore of the prairie lakes and on the island in the restored wetlands area. Contributing to the success of the effort were the following volunteers: John Newgard, Will Wooldridge, Craig Johnson, David Rauch, Ron and Ethan Tomek, Sam Casella, Todd and Brannon Wittenberg, Kevin Jennings, Jeff Maharry, Thomas Striton, Greg Busler and Henry Kreis.

.....and more Progress at the Oak Savannah/Woodland.....

We have reported this activity in prior newsletters. The restoration effort (which began in the spring of '16) continued from mid-April to early June restoring the oak savannah/woodland. The restoration work has proceeded from west to east in the following order: remove invasive and unwanted trees, gather up the remaining smaller wood pieces and branches into large piles, brush cut the smaller saplings and bushes, and lastly burn the piles of wood and branches. We can now report that the project is over 90% complete as the amount of work begins to diminish. We found a concentration of black locust trees at the eastern edge of the woodland/savannah. Though not technically

an invasive species we have been advised to remove them from this area. This we should accomplish in the fall of this year. Next year we will begin controlled burns of the savannah/woodland (about 1/3rd of the area per year) followed by selective seeding and planting of native/desirable plant species in the cleared area. The work this spring was mostly done by Dan Galen and John Brinkman.

...And Progress on Homewood Prairie Restoration

Recognizing the growing deterioration on the edges of our high quality prairie, in the spring of '17 we began efforts to restore those areas which had been invaded by gray and red dogwood bushes. This work, which is in addition to phragmites removal efforts that we have undertaken for many years, consists of using powered brush cutters to cut the bush at its base and then apply a high concentration of roundup directly on the stump to kill the plant. The gray dogwoods are all eliminated; the red dogwoods are thinned out. More progress was made this spring on the northern and northeastern edges as well as our first efforts on the southern edge. The improvement in the look of the prairie is easily visible from the curvy bridges on the trail just north of our Ashland Ave entrance. From this vantage point you can also view the prairie vegetation replacing the areas where the gray dogwood has been eliminated. This is a multi-year effort that may take another 3-4 years before complete. The work this spring was done by Dan Galen, John Sailor, John Sandala and John Brinkman.

Canadian National Interns

If you didn't already know it, one of our supportive corporate neighbors is the US Headquarters of a great North American railroad: Canadian National. They recently opened a training center on the west side of Ashland, just north of their west gate, where all of their US field personnel receive training once they are hired. Their summer intern program includes a community service component which is an afternoon of service. So we got an offer of several recruits to perform their community service at the Preserve from CN's Jim Kvedaras, a Homewood native and longtime Preserve member. On May 18, the interns put in an afternoon of work on various projects in the oak savannah/woodland, on the eastern trail and around the grounds/cabin. Managing them were our volunteers Mark Leschuck, Bob Enright and Dan Galen. A big thank you to these interns who were hard working and enthusiastic: John Zalewski, Garek Strouse, Michelle Hart, Claire Hill, Robert Wolf, and Ryan Brooks.

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 4th of July Village Picnic. The event starts at 11am and ends at 2pm but volunteers are also needed on July 2nd and 3rd as well. Find more details in this Newsletter for anyone wishing to volunteer to help with this effort.

Date: Wednesday, July 4th, 2018, 11 AM - 2 PM

Trail Mix Music Event

Come on out and enjoy an afternoon and evening of music and refreshments in our beautiful grounds and support the Preserve and TALK, a good cause. Find more details in this Newsletter.

Date: Saturday, July 21, 2018, noon - 8:30 PM