



HOMEWOOD IZAAK WALTON PRESERVE

Dedicated to Service in Conservation

To our members and friends:

January 2021 Newsletter

COVID 19 PANDEMIC V

Happy New Year ! The pandemic is still with us; however, the vaccine is now rolling out and more and more of us will have the opportunity to be vaccinated in the not too distant future. Someday, we may look back and think of this time as the “covid winter.” Consequently, we must announce more cancellations: our two winter concerts normally held in February will not take place and no nature themed programs will be scheduled until late spring at the earliest. Spring will bring migrating birds and sprouting vegetation; we wait and hope for a rapid return to some semblance of “normalcy” as the vaccine gets disseminated. Our Preserve remains our sanctuary: a wonderful place to enjoy nature.

For now, we will repeat the guidance written in the September newsletter: We continue to ask that you practice social distancing at the Preserve when outside of your immediate household group. When passing others on the trails you should do one of three things to prevent transmission of the virus 1) step aside to become at least 6’ apart, 2) put your mask on while you pass or 3) simply hold your breath for 2-3 seconds while you pass by other people. These are easy mitigating steps to minimize this risk that exists among us.

SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES IN 2020.....

Trail Mix Concert: Entirely organized through social media with only 10 days advance notice, a 3 act concert was held on the evening of October 2nd at the east picnic pavilion. Existing restrictions on gatherings were followed so the attendees never exceeded 50 persons. The performers were Kelly Campos, Butterfield Creek, and Work in Progress. Funds were raised to support the Preserve. Though a bit cool, this music event was delightful. Our thanks to Steve Ploum for his organizing efforts. What we learned is how well this venue can accommodate a dusk to nightfall concert, setting the stage for future similar concerts later this year.

Run Forest Run: On Saturday November 7th we held our 14th annual 4-mile trail race through the forests and prairies of our beautiful Preserve. Strict rules on masking, social distancing, gathering, and participation limits were implemented due to the pandemic. The event was quick and subdued. Many thanks to Nick Quirke and John Brinkman for organizing the race appropriately given the unusual circumstances. Also many thanks to all of the volunteers that helped make the event run smoothly: Amy Eagle, Brian Violet and Penny Quirke, Ashley Zagotta, Greg Busler, John Sandala, Dave Zaber, and Judy Johnson,

MALE WINNERS:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1) Eric Hoffman | 22:38 |
| 2) John Hockemberry | 23:29 |
| 3) Chris Dudek | 27:09 |

FEMALE WINNERS:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------|
| 1) Mia Caporale | 29:16 |
| 2) Valerie Valente | 29:20 |
| 3) Priscilla Cordero | 29:48 |

Link to the full results can be found at: <http://www.runtheforest.com>

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CONTROLLED BURNS—FALL 2020

After two very wet and disappointing fall burn seasons in 2018 and 2019, Mother Nature cooperated last fall with generally dry conditions lasting for weeks. Consequently, Steve Wlodarski, Controlled Burn Coordinator, was able to conduct 5 controlled burns on 5 successive Saturdays beginning on 10/31/20. Two additional burns were conducted by Dave Zaber (also credentialed for these burns) on Saturday December 5th and Wednesday December 9th.

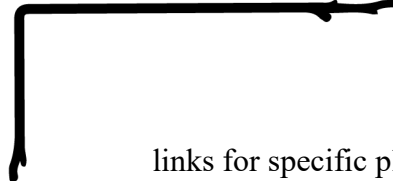
We conduct these burns in the fall to keep the invasive plant species from taking over and crowding out the native prairie plants. The burning process also puts nutrients back into the soil, especially as with rain and snow over the winter months. If we did not do these burns periodically, a thick mat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

Our 7 burns last fall were quite productive and were concentrated in the northwest sections of the Preserve including the northern third of the Homewood prairie, large sections west, north and east of the oak woodland and along the western shore of the prairie lakes. We had many different volunteers assisting with the burns on different dates. We extend our thanks to: Greg Busler, Sam Casella, Todd Wittenberg, John Sandala, Amy Eagle, Clayton Wassilak, Carolyn Bury, Mark Caryn and David Becker, John Brinkman, and special thanks of course to the coordinators Steve Wlodarski and Dave Zaber.

THINK SPRING: NATIVE PLANT SALE AT HIWP

This spring, HIWP will once again co-sponsor a native plant sale with Thorn Creek Audubon Society (TCAS). This year, thirty-five different plants will be offered at the sale, including trees, shrubs, flowers, and ornamental grasses. Plants are chosen to represent different colors, textures, sun exposures and bloom times. New this year are plant “packages” consisting of a mix of plants chosen for plot sizes in 3’ x 4’ increments for specific growing conditions (soil and sunlight). This greatly simplifies the plant selection decision for new native plant gardeners.

All plants offered are native to this area of Illinois. Judy Johnson, a board member of both organizations and plant sale organizer, stresses that native plants are beneficial to wildlife and the environment. Local wildlife, including pollinators, depend on native plants for food and shelter. Also, native plants thrive without pesticides or fertilizers and, once established, do not require watering. The very deep root systems also help prevent erosion and flooding. In order to better ensure that you obtain the plants you desire, **we strongly encourage pre-ordering** as the supply of plants not preordered will be limited. The order form can be accessed on our website; just print it out and follow directions. Order forms are also available in the office which is staffed on Saturday mornings 10-noon during the winter. **Deadline to pre-order is March 1. Plant pick up and open sale is Saturday, May 22 from 9-noon at HIWP.** All profits will be split between HIWP and TCAS. More information on **plant packages** and native plants including



links for specific plant descriptions and pictures can be found at:
www.thorncreekaudubonsociety.org Questions/order form requests can be directed to Judy at:
TCASPlants@gmail.com. Think Spring!

OFFICE HOURS, HONEY AND 2021 CALENDARS

We have decided to staff the office on Saturday mornings during the winter from 10-noon. Honey (for \$8) and a dwindling number of calendars (for \$12) are for sale. We have a special combo deal: one honey and one calendar for \$15. Plant sale forms will also be available.

WATER MAIN CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

We have written extensively about this project in previous newsletters which can easily be found on our website. Homer Tree Service will begin clearing a path along the route on Monday January 25th which was delayed from December. This is necessary to allow room for the construction equipment. This will be the first noticeable construction activity for the project. Probably 95% of what will be cut down and removed are undesirable or invasive species. We intend to replace them with desirable native trees and shrubs.


NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

We write the newsletter about 10 issues per year, we have it printed at Andrew's printing in Harvey, then rely on volunteers to put on the address labels prepared by our Membership Secretary Shawn Straney. Over the years we have had many different volunteers help out affixing the labels to the printed newsletters. We are long overdue in recognizing their assistance. From roughly 2000 to 2012, Betty Baker with assistance from Gene and Niesje Parker did the work. Jodi Gosse took over in 2012 (with continuing assistance from Niesje Parker) and did the work until July of 2020. Enter Karen Smith who took over the task from Jodi last year. Karen is assisted by her daughter, Lisa, and good friend Rose Olsar. They have proven to be quick and responsive. In a pinch, my wife, Cassandra, can get the job done in less than 4 hours ! Big thanks to all of them for their help over the years.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Our membership year ends on 3-31-21 so we encourage all members to be renew soon. Last year a larger volume of memberships were purchased on line via our website (www.homewoodizaakwalton.com), likely, to some extent, due to the pandemic (causing record Preserve membership). We encourage you to renew on line soon. On line renewals benefit the Preserve making solicitation letters unnecessary by reducing costs (stamps and paper) and volunteer work (envelope stuffing). Thanks for your cooperation!

Your President, John Brinkman





**NATIVE PLANT SALE MAY 22 BUT
PREORDERS DUE ON MARCH 1**

Details in the article in this newsletter

**THINK SPRING !
WE WILL GET
THROUGH THIS TOGETHER !**



