



To our members and friends:

March 2021 Newsletter

### **WATER MAIN CONSTRUCTION UPDATE**

We've written extensively about this project in previous newsletters which can easily be found on our website; we'll continue to provide monthly updates. The general contractor for the project, Spiess Construction, hired Homer Tree Service to clear trees and brush from the waterline path (i.e. the abandoned rail road line) so that trenching & pipe-laying equipment can have room to maneuver. (See the November/December Newsletter for a map of the route). The path cleared by Homer is roughly 40 feet wide. Their work is not yet complete because logs and brush were discarded in a helter-skelter fashion thus obstructing the trails. Homer intended to remove those logs and chip the brush & branches during the week of March 8. However, they pushed their schedule out one week. This delay was surprising and disappointing to The Village of Homewood and to the Izaak Walton Board. We apologize for the disruption this caused to your ability to use the trails. Beyond the clean-up, silt fences will be installed in late March, followed promptly with the start of excavation just west of the Ridge Road viaduct. You'll recall that the pipeline must traverse about 200 yards of prairie on the western side of the Preserve. As reported earlier, pipe below the prairie will be laid utilizing horizontal boring (jack boring), thus minimizing digging within the prairie. Some digging will occur, specifically a pit near the old RR line, a pit near our west entrance, and a pit in between. The ecological disruption of these 3 pits will be only a small fraction of the disruption that would be caused by trenching over the full 200 yards of prairie.

Getting back to trees that were cut down, we acknowledge that this old RR line can now be viewed as a *path of destruction*. We further acknowledge that once trenching begins along the RR line, things will look even worse. We ask for your patience and understanding as we tolerate the disruption of this project. We will indicate closed trails as best we can with signs. We reiterate that close to 95% of what was cut down were undesirable or invasive species. As soon as we can, hopefully this fall, we'll start a replanting effort with native trees and shrubs. Specific species to be planted will be chosen by our Conservation Committee (see next article) and they will consider many factors including soil type and moisture conditions. We believe that when all is said and done, we'll eventually have an improved Preserve.

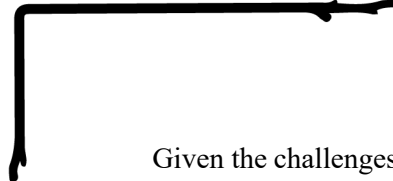
### **FORMATION OF CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

The Board recently approved the formation of a Conservation Committee for the Preserve. The mission of this committee is to provide expert advice to the Preserve relating to all issues concerning conservation including invasive plant eradication, wildlife management, micro environmental management, planting native species and many others. Over the last several years we've come to know several individuals who have strong backgrounds in these areas either from careers, recent activities, or just a passion for nature. We receive many ad hoc suggestions and observations from these Preserve enthusiasts so we thought we should channel their energy & knowledge into a structure that would recommend the best practices to the volunteers of the Preserve. The Committee is co-chaired by Kevin Jennings & Dave Zaber; Kevin is a Board member and Director of Environmental Affairs and Dave has a lifelong career in environmental issues and natural resource management. Also serving on the committee with deserving credentials are Patricia Messersmith, Brannon Wittenberg, Jim Helke, Clayton Wassilak, Tony Merisko, and Carolyn Bury, also a Board member. The Committee has already met twice and has many issues on their agenda.

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Given the challenges of the after effects of the pipeline project, their guidance promises to be much needed and very timely. We thank all of these volunteers for their valuable service !


### WILL YOU MISS OUR OLD BATHROOMS ? (PART 2)

In our last newsletter we wrote about new bathrooms for Senior Hall. The initial step of dismantling the interior of the old bathrooms was described as a work in progress. Since our last edition, Mike McDonnell devoted two additional days to this project.

It was initially assumed that the thickness of the concrete over the 93 square-foot area was 4” thick, an industry standard. However, Mike soon learned that most of the floor was a full 9” thick. This caused him to abandon the 60 lb. electric jackhammer and replace it with a 90 lb. model powered by a large gas engine and an air compressor. This more-powerful equipment led to quick completion of the job. Eagle Scout candidate Adam Kramer once again assembled his crew for removal of the old concrete to near-by dumpsters. On this last day of work, Adam was assisted by Greg Busler who brought The Preserve’s Kubota tractor to the scene. Greg was able to position the tractor’s front bucket just inside the bathroom’s double doors, where heavy chunks of broken concrete were placed into the bucket and then lifted into the dumpsters. This added greater safety to the process as it reduced the amount of man-handling of the heavy chunks of concrete. The total rubble removed was about 20 tons or double the original estimate. Adam’s crew included Drew Bingham, Greg Busler, Blake Carlson, Andrew Gaughan, Michael Gaughan, Mick Gaughan, Emily Kramer, Lucas Kramer, Paul Kramer, Chris Kush, Shawn Straney, Mark Thompson, and Ellie Wojcikowski. The Preserve sends a big hand of thanks to Mike McDonnell and also to Adam Kramer & his crew for their work in dismantling and disposing of the old bathroom interiors. These were essential first-steps in the construction of new bathrooms. We hope to complete the project no later than July 4 !

### MILKWEED SEEDS AVAILABLE.....SAVE MONARCH BUTTERFLIES !

Once again this year we have milkweed seed (butterfly weed) packets available in the cabin **for no charge**. Kay MacNeil distributes these packets in our area every Spring. Kay’s passion for these remarkable creatures motivates her to do yeoman’s job in working to save the Monarch Butterfly. Key to these efforts 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: you can also order your own seeds: just send Kay \$2 cash and a self-addressed business size envelope. You will receive 3 kinds of milkweed seeds and literature on the monarchs. For additional information contact Kay MacNeil directly at 689 Golf Club Ln., Frankfort, IL 60423. Phone: 815-469-1294. Email: [kaymac60423@yahoo.com](mailto:kaymac60423@yahoo.com). Also check out Kay’s informative website: [MilkweedForMonarchs.info](http://MilkweedForMonarchs.info)





## **FISH STOCKING**

Tony Talarico, our lakes and fish manager, reports that brook and rainbow trout will be stocked in the sandpit lakes in late March followed by catfish stocking in early June. Dates are never exact because the supplier is never quite sure when they can deliver.

## **OFFICE HOURS HONEY, AND MILKWEED SEED PACKETS**

We will now staff the office on Saturday mornings from 9-noon until mid-November. Stop by to renew your membership and/or pick up some honey (\$8 for a 12oz bear). Also, milkweed seed packets are available **for no charge**.

## **PLEASE CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOGS !**

Every spring we notice an accumulation of dog poop from our canine friends leftover from the winter or as a result of spring walks due to better weather. Our ground rules require that our members clean up after their dogs and membership is required to walk dogs in the Preserve. So once again please clean up after your dogs and also please refrain from throwing the poop off the trails into nearby areas. That is also not good for our native landscape. We will redouble our efforts to provide poop clean up bags at our entrances. Thank you for your cooperation.

## **JOIN THE GARBAGE BRIGADE**

At the end of winter, we notice lots of garbage leftover from last year and windblown in the spring all around the perimeter of the Preserve. We need 10 volunteers to join the Garbage Brigade, each one of which would be assigned a manageable section of our perimeter. They would then be responsible for picking up garbage in that section. We will provide picker uppers and large bags. The volunteers can then work whenever their schedule permits. So far we have 2 volunteers but need 10 more. If interested, please call John Brinkman at 708/ 638-9418.

## **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](http://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*





**THINK SPRING !  
BRIGHTER DAYS ARE AHEAD!  
WE WILL GET  
THROUGH THIS TOGETHER !**

