



**HOMEWOOD  
IZAAK WALTON  
PRESERVE**

Dedicated to Service in Conservation

To our members and friends:

February 2024 Newsletter

**GENERAL MEETING—WORKING IN WATER, AN INTERNATIONAL VIEW**

**THURSDAY MARCH 21<sup>st</sup>—7 PM at SENIOR HALL**

(You may have seen this announcement in our September '23 Newsletter. That presentation was canceled and rescheduled to this March)

Protecting and managing global water supplies for people and the environment are perhaps the most important environmental challenges of the 21st Century. Human history is closely tied to both fresh and saltwater ecosystems; yet these systems have been abused and damaged for centuries by human activities.

We are very pleased to have one of our own, Dr. David J. Zaber, an environmental scientist and a member of our Board and Conservation Committee to present this program on this critical subject. Dave has worked for decades on ecological assessment, management and conservation with a focus on agriculture, environmental pollution and ecological restoration. Dave will be discussing his experiences in several African countries - Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania - as an expert consultant with The U.S. Agency for International Development's Farmer to Farmer program. Dave Zaber's work highlights global issues related to water use and conservation and the importance of global cooperation in solving environmental challenges.

Our last General Meeting in September (see August '23 Newsletter.) brought us a focus on Antarctica. So this March we move our focus to Africa. What can we learn that is applicable to us from these far-away places? Come to the presentation and you will find out!

**CONCERT IN THE CABIN**

**HOMEWOOD ARTS COUNCIL PRESENTS MILES NIELSEN**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 23 7 PM**

Once again (for the 4<sup>th</sup> time) we are delighted to join with The Homewood Arts Council (HAC) and bring music into our wonderful acoustic cabin. HAC is thrilled to welcome Miles Nielsen to Homewood for a solo performance at Izaak Walton's Senior Hall on Saturday, March 23. From the bands *Harmony Riley* to *Miles Nielsen & The Rusted Hearts*, the Rockford, IL native explores a wide musical palette that could include everything from Otis Redding and early Van Halen to Americana and bubblegum pop music.

Flossmoor native Mark Watson, guitarist/singer, will open the show at 7:15PM. Doors open at 6:30PM. Pizza, water and soft drinks will be available for purchase from volunteers; beer, wine and premixed cocktails will be sold by Family Wine and Liquor.

1100 Ridge Road • Homewood, IL 60430



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Tickets will be on sale on Friday, February 16. Click on link below. More show details will be included !

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/homewood-arts-council-presents-miles-nielsen-tickets-838625420207>

## **THINK SPRING ! 2024 NATIVE PLANT SALE---DEADLINE LOOMS !**

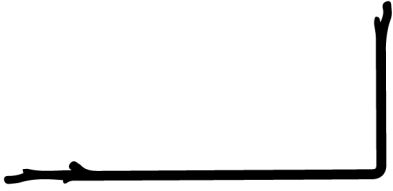
We announced our annual native plant sale in our January newsletter. So a reminder now that the deadline—March 1---is fast approaching. You can find the January newsletter on our website.

### **EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT REPORT**

We often provide much needed project work in the Preserve to allow Eagle Scout candidates to complete their work towards earning their capstone achievement. **Tristan White** managed the demolition and removal of 400 feet of chain-link fence that once separated The Preserve from Washington Park Racetrack. You may know that the racetrack was destroyed by a fire in 1977. Most of the land that the track sat on eventually became part of The Preserve and since then the fence has done nothing more than divide north from south within The Preserve. The fence was in a wooded area, which is full of Buckthorn, an invasive, undesirable bush. Buckthorn sucks up lots of the soil's nitrogen, to the detriment of indigenous trees and shrubs. With the fence now removed, The Preserve will be better able to take measures to reduce the Buckthorn; animals will also appreciate not having to navigate around the fence. Tristan's biggest challenge was cutting the steel fence posts at ground level; his crew used battery-operated electric saws to do the cutting. The batteries were in constant need of recharging, and this was done using gasoline-powered electric generators. Tristan's crew included Tammika, Robin, Tyrone, Nia, Chris, Crystal, Leon, Mr. Rickoff, Jacob, Clayton Wassilak, and Shawn Straney. Also, generators were lent by Mark Leschuck. Thank you Tristan for a job well done!

### **MAJOR INVASIVE VEGETATION CLEARING PROJECT.....**

Last June, we got a call from a resident on Presidents Drive asking us to cut back some vegetation that was invading his west fence along the perimeter of the Preserve. In late June, Dan Galen, Greg Busler and John Brinkman went out to the site and started clearing the invading vegetation. The project then snowballed into a major restoration project along the entire fence line just west of the houses on Presidents Lane on our eastern boundary. On multiple occasions extending into September, volunteer crews working with our preferred contractor (Express Green) methodically cleared a vast amount of buckthorne, chinese elm, bradford pear and honeysuckle. Greg Busler assumed a lead position on the project with help on various occasions from Dan Galen, Kevin James, Clayton Wassilak, John Sandala and John Brinkman. The fence, had badly fallen down in many spots, but with the entangled bushes cut down, it was then slowly repaired over many days by Dan Galen and John Brinkman. By the time we got to November, we were amazed at how much we accomplished for what was essentially an unplanned project.



## .....FOLLOWED BY A LARGE TREE PLANTING PROJECT

Then, on December 7, a large group of volunteers met at that site and, once again, with help from Express Green (Jesse and crew) carefully planted 21 white pine trees. Greg Busler pre-dug the holes with our Kabota so the planting went efficiently. Dave Shepard, our foremost tree expert, selected the planting locations taking advantage of available sunlight and soil conditions. Additional volunteers that day included Carolyn Bury, Dave Zaber, Kevin Barrett, Barb Ferrari, Dan Crespo and John Brinkman.

The very next week on , an additional 15 oak saplings, originally donated to the Preserve by the Village of Homewood, were also planted at the same site. Once again, Dave Shepard directed the careful placement of the saplings to benefit from sunlight and soil conditions. Volunteers Dan Galen, Greg Busler and John Brinkman. Species included burr oak, red oak, swamp oak and scarlet oak. Thanks to all of the volunteers that helped make this 2 week restoration/planting project a great success.

## CONTROLLED BURNS IN FALL 2023

Wet weather conditions last Fall were not particularly favorable for conducting controlled burns. The burn crew, led by Dave Zaber, was able to get out on only one day (November 13) to conduct a controlled burn. However, that burn was quite extensive as we were able to burn the entire Homewood Prairie but for some small patches of land that did not burn. 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, facilitated the rain and snow over the winter months. Native plants tend to grow back more vigorously following a controlled burn. 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 Autumn burns in November and our Spring burns in March, before the vegetation begins growing again. The surviving native vegetation then fully benefits from the rain and sun of the Spring Season. We thank all of the volunteers who helped with this effort: Dave Zaber, Mark Becker, Greg Busler, Carolyn Bury, Dan Galen and Jim Helke

## MERCHANDISE, HONEY AND OFFICE HOURS

We have merchandise and honey for sale. The honey is courtesy of bees who live right here at The Preserve; the price is \$8 for a 12 oz. bottle. As for the merchandise, we have new, colorful hats, shirts, and sweatshirts available; all include The Preserve logo. Purchases can be made during winter Saturday hours of 9am to noon. We can also make other arrangements; please leave us a message at 708-798-1850.

Your President,      *John Brinkman*



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**DEADLINE FOR PRE-ORDERS FOR OUR**

**NATIVE PLANT SALE IS MARCH 1**

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