



Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve, Inc.

Dedicated to Service in Conservation
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To our members and friends:

March 2024

APRIL GENERAL MEETING—THURSDAY APRIL 18 7 PM SENIOR HALL

Talk title: OAK TREES IN THE CHICAGO REGION

We are very pleased to welcome our own Dave Shepard, a member of our Conservation Committee, into Senior Hall to present a program on trees. Dave has impressive credentials: a certified arborist for 20+ years, teaches graduate level biology and associated courses at Morraine Valley Community College, discovered the Kickapoo Prairie in the early 1990’s and discovered 15 record arborescent species at the Tinley Creek Forest Preserve Valley Community College.

Oaks have been an important component of Chicago area forest and prairie ecosystems for thousands of years and were managed by Native American tribes. Today, however, the effects of habitat destruction, invasive species and fire suppression following European settlement have reduced these great woodlands to just fragments or eliminated them altogether. Despite this, the twenty-six counties surrounding the southern end of Lake Michigan and encompassing the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan have rich diversity. At the program, we will examine the identification, ecology, and restoration management of the 18 oak species still in existence. An acorn give-away representing several uncommon oak species will follow the talk with instructions on their care, maintenance and propagation. This will be a most interesting program for tree lovers of all stripes.

TRAIL MIX CONCERT FRIDAY APRIL 5th 7PM

TRAIL MIX BRINGS BACK LOCAL MUSICIANS !!!

Although April is a very busy month for Trail Mix, we’re excited to bring some of our favorite local artists together for an evening of great music and good times, all in support of the Homewood Izaak Walton Preserve.

Yes, we were able to wrangle some of the south suburbs' most talented folks to donate their time and talents, AND Friday April 5 is the date that worked for all four

acts. That's twelve (yes, 12) people, all in Senior Hall at the Homewood, Izaak Walton Preserve. It's going to be a **hoot**, so put down the remote and c'mon out for a super fun time.

Doors open at 6:00pm and music starts at 7pm with Doug Rafferty and The Uh Oh's, who are both new to this Trail Mix thing. They will be joined by Butterfield Creek and Six of Spades, who are Trail Mix concert veterans.

Tickets are not required; all cash and credit card donations will go to support the Preserve and will be collected at the door (\$10 suggested). Pizza and soft drinks will be for sale as well as adult beverages provided by Family Wine and Liquor.

For more information on all that Trail Mix is doing, please visit www.trailmixmusic.org

ALL HAIL THE TRASH BRIGADE !

Three years ago we asked for volunteers to help pick up trash around the perimeter of the Preserve. We were quite pleased to have received an enthusiastic response with each volunteer person or couple taking responsibility for trash pick up for a specified section along the perimeter. So for the past three years we have noticed trash nearly completely absent around the perimeter of the Preserve. We especially want to thank Harry and Lucy Kocal and Ken Stern who are moving on and relocating out of the area at this time. We have recruited Jim Dudley to take over the Kocal territory. We need an additional volunteer to cover the Stern territory. If you are interested, please come to the cabin on an upcoming Saturday morning so we can meet and recruit you. We extend a huge thanks to all of them for this unglamorous work: Joy Heine, Ken Stern, Peter Stapleton, Mitch and Jody Burks, Janet Hernandez, Harry and Lucy Kocal, Pearlle McRetnolds, Gigi Sappenfield, Carole Sharwarko, Shawn Badar, Karl Wahlstrom, Sharon Sedgwick, Don Harkins, Ann Mitchell and Ingrid Krizan.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILROAD CONTRIBUTES TO PRESERVE RESTORATION

We were contacted by Kari Harris at CN last spring. Kari has responsibility for environmental impact across all of CN's US footprint. Where the goal is to improve conservation efforts even beyond legal requirements. After discussion, Kari/CN agreed to hire a conservation contractor to begin management of 3 parcels of the Preserve that border on CN's property. (See map)

V3, an ecological restoration company, was hired by CN to begin their work in October. They performed one round of herbicide treatment to target common reed and teasel. A Floristic Quality Assessment (FQA) was completed in August 2023 for each of the three natural areas. The FQA provided baseline data on vegetation quality, species diversity, and species dominance. Subsequent FQA's will be completed during each year of V3's management to track the progress of our restoration efforts. In February 2024, they hand-cleared the dense buckthorn thickets and invasive woody species from two of the natural areas. During the growing season, herbicide will be applied to woody sprouts or non-native seedlings that pop up. These



cleared areas will be seeded with a diverse mix of native forbs, grasses, and sedges in the winter of 2024/2025.

Additional seed will be hand broadcast in the rest of the natural areas to boost native species diversity and provide competition against the non-native, invasive species. All natural areas will receive multiple herbicide treatments throughout the growing season, which is generally April through October. Select herbicides will be used to target species such as Canada thistle, teasel, and common reed. Mechanical methods, such as weed whipping or hand pulling, will be used to control annual weeds. Our approach for ecological restoration during the first three years of management will include aggressive treatment of invasive species, a prescribed burn, and supplemental native seeding. V3's restoration goals include 1) preserving the remnant native vegetation, 2) decreasing the presence of non-native, invasive species, and 3) increasing native species diversity. **We are most thankful for this effort !**

WAR ON TEASEL

FIGHTING PHRAGMITES

Our efforts continue to reduce and eliminate these invasive plants from the Preserve:

TEASEL: The war on teasel continues. We're now in our 7th year battling this pesky invasive species. We have learned that there are two distinct species: common teasel (*dipsacus fullonum*) and cut leaf teasel (*dipsacus iacinatus*) This is a multiyear campaign required to control and eventually eradicate them; they are clearly the most threatening invasive plants in the Preserve. We apply herbicide in the spring to kill the plants before they can form seed pods. We do this again in the fall to prevent their return the following year. In between, during the growing season, we must continue the work by removing all seed pods from the plants about every two weeks, so the work commitment is continuous. Remember that these plants have a two year life cycle, growing a close-to-the-ground rosette the first year and growing a stalk for seeding before dying after the second year. The seeds can survive for 3-5 years dormant before sprouting so we will be at war with this plant for many more years. We're very pleased to again report a 99% + rate of success at preventing the release of seeds from the seed pods. We are winning ! There are roughly 16 areas of concentration. We believe that in at least 10 of these areas, the concentration of teasel is much reduced, by at least 50% or more. This is much improved from previous years and we have our *teasel warriors* to thank for this: Greg Busler, Todd Wittenberg, Jeff Maharry, Dan Galen, Jim Helke, John Sandala, Warren Becker, Yan Deng, Gordon Pierce, and John Brinkman. We thank our volunteers for their consistent efforts to ultimately prevail in this multi-year effort.

PHRAGMITES: We have been working to control and eliminate this non native perennial reed grass *phragmites australis* for at least 15 years. We have learned that the only effective measure to be taken to control it is to spray the reeds extensively with a glysophate mix in late summer or early fall. The herbicide is absorbed by the reeds and transferred to the roots where it can retard the plant. We post "herbicide applied recently" signs for 24-48 hours after we spray in those areas. This has resulted in the "phrags" having been reduced in their infestation. We need to keep at it annually to ultimately succeed. Last Fall, the contractor (Tallgrass Restoration) hired by the village for the pipeline path restoration sprayed the phrags on the eastern trail. Kevin Jennings, our Environmental Concerns officer, has been leading these efforts for years. Last Fall, Greg Busler, Dan Galen and John Brinkman also assisted in this effort. We thank them for their continuing efforts at "fighting phragmites."

Your President, *John Brinkman*

TRAIL MIX CONCERT FRIDAY APRIL 5

FEATURING FOUR TALENTED LOCAL BANDS

We will welcome 4 local bands to put on a benefit concert for the Preserve. See article in this newsletter for more details.

APRIL GENERAL MEETING

OAK TREES IN THE CHICAGO REGION

Thursday April 18, 7 PM, Senior Hall

Dave Shepard, our very own tree expert, will conduct an informative meeting exploring the many species of oaks in the area and current challenges to their survival. See article in this newsletter for more details.