



CFG News

Saving Living Room for Living Things

A conservation newsletter published by Citizens for Conservation, Inc.

Barrington, Illinois

Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 1986

SATURDAY SESSIONS

WHO'S WHO February 22, by Schuyler Holston, Arthur Alexander School.

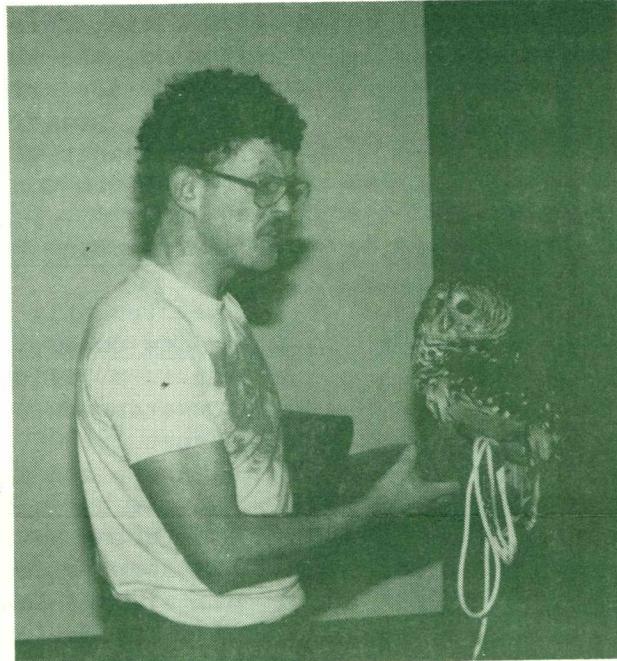
We went to Crabtree Nature Center. We saw the owls. The owls were the great horned owl and the barred owl.

We saw slides of the owls, too. They showed the screech owl and the barn owl. I wonder why he (Mark Spreyer) didn't bring the snowy owl and the elf owl.

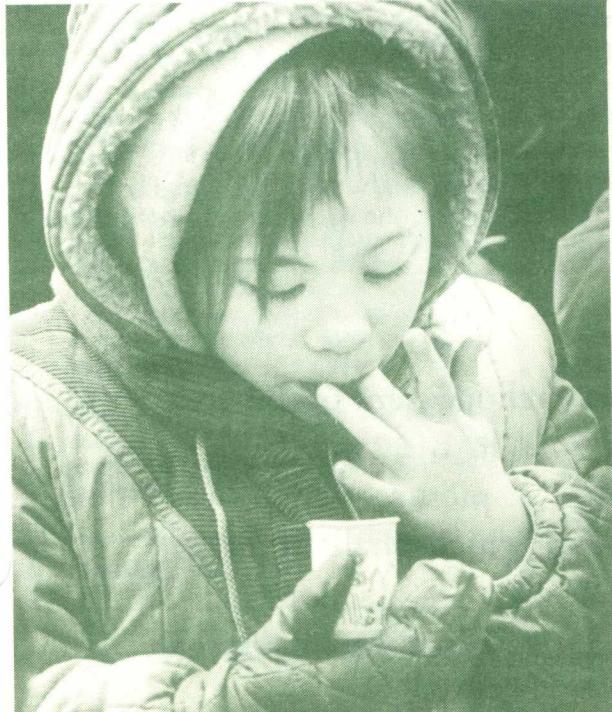
Owls live in nests that birds have already given up. The great horned owl, which is over two feet long, takes over a home of a big bird so it can sit in it.

The lecturer took the great horned owl close to the kids so they could see it. He also said that when owls eat a rat they spit up a furry ball called a pellet.

We could hear the owls hooting on a tape.



MAKING MAPLE SYRUP March 8, by Alison Hargreaves, Countryside School.



A bus took us to Coral Woods and there we learned how to make maple syrup. It is a process that the Indians used at first. It is a fairly easy method and it turns out delicious.

First you "tap" the trees which means you drill a hole in a tree. Then you put a spout in the hole and let the sap run out. Sap is a mixture of water and sugar which is like the "blood" of the tree.

After you collect the sap, you boil it down so almost all of the water is evaporated. (If you boil all the water out, the sap becomes sugar!) What you are left with is sticky, sugary, delicious maple syrup.

You can make syrup with almost any kind of tree sap. We got to try some and it was a lot better than the kind you get at the grocery store that has all those ingredients added to it. We had lots of fun even though it was very cold.

SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

This summer, CFC will sponsor three field excursions to local natural areas. Each will be led by an expert guide. Transportation will be by bus from the CFC office on Station Street. Families are welcome. Cameras, binoculars, field guides, appropriate clothing, and insect repellent are recommended. To register, call 382-SAVE. \$4 for non-members, \$2 for members.

Spring Lake Nature Preserve, Saturday, June 14

Part of the Cook County's Spring Creek Valley Forest Preserve holdings, this 400-acre area is bounded by Lake-Cook, Bateman, Donlea, and Sutton Roads. It was dedicated as an Illinois nature preserve in 1962. We'll explore the marsh, fen, sedge meadow, prairie and savanna communities included in the preserve. Tour leader will be Steve Packard of the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Bus leaves 8 a.m., returns 11 a.m.

Bluff Spring Fen, Saturday, July 19

Just recently committed to dedication as a state nature preserve by its owner, the Metropolitan Sanitary District, Bluff Spring Fen is a living testimony to the care and hard work of volunteer stewards and preservationists. The 90-acre area was once a magnet for ORVs and garbage. Now, thanks to years of volunteer clean-up and management, it boasts a remarkable variety of natural habitats and rare plants. Cotton sedge, false asphodel and tufted hair grass thrive in the low-lying fen, while little bluestem, sideoats grama and prairie smoke grow on the adjacent hillsides. Leader will be Steve Byers of the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation. Bus leaves at 8 a.m., returns at 11:30 a.m.

Shoe Factory Road Prairie, Saturday, August 23

This 9-acre prairie should be in its prime in late August. It, too, has received regular stewardship from volunteers in the past several years, including a prescribed burn in April. The prairie lies in the Cook County Poplar Creek Preserve and is the closest gravel hill prairie to Chicago. Big and little bluestem, porcupine grass, compass plant, rough blazing star, and silky aster grow abundantly, among other native prairie species. Leader will be Mary McCarthy who gave a slide presentation on this prairie at the CFC annual meeting. Bus leaves 8 a.m., returns at 11 a.m.

To the attentive eye, each moment of the year
has its own beauty, and in the same field, it
beholds, every hour, a picture which was
never seen before and which shall never be
seen again.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

FROM THE STAFF DIRECTOR

New Sign. When you visit the office, take a look at the new sign out front. Henry Gron, a friend of CFC, designed and made the sign. Steve Burval of J. B. Metal Works in Des Plaines made and donated the ornamental ironwork. Many thanks to both!

T-Shirts. \$5 will buy you a bright green t-shirt with the CFC logo -- just in time for short sleeve weather. The shirts come in adult sizes, medium, large, and extra-large. Call 382-SAVE to get your household's supply.

July 4 Parade. CFC will again participate in the Barrington 4th of July parade.

Jeanette Muench is heading up the project and welcomes assistants. She has chosen prairie restoration as the focus of our entry. Anyone interested in helping please call the office, 382-SAVE.

Nature Camps and Trips. An information file has been started in the office about camps, tours, trips with a focus on nature and conservation. Please feel welcome to browse through it and to contribute any brochures you might want to share.

Nature group acquires land

The Barrington area environmental group Citizens for Conservation has acquired property in the village of North Barrington donated by former resident and renowned botanist Julian Steyermark.

The land, about three-quarters of an acre located on the ravine side of Grassy Creek near the intersection of Eton Drive and Drury Lane, is heavily wooded, primarily with maple and basswood. It is important for its understory, the life it supports underneath the trees, which includes many native wildflowers. Steyermark, who has since done research in South America and is now associated with the Missouri Botanical Garden, did some of his early studies on the property.

The property was transferred to CFC from the Nature Conservancy, the nation's third largest conservation organization, which owns, manages, and protects the largest privately owned nature sanctuary system in the world. Steyermark gave his property to the Conservancy.

CFC acquisitions head Walter W. Dallitsch Jr. said the property would need little work other than a cleanup — "a junk expedition" — and some attention to erosion control. The group will maintain the property in its natural state, and provide access to it by the public on a limited basis.

Prairie Restoration Project.

As announced in the last newsletter, a prairie restoration on the Richards property on Oak Knoll and Buckley Rds. will begin this summer. Ray Kath is chairman of the project and Tom Vanderpoel is consultant. A detailed schedule of tasks is available at the office.

The committee especially needs seed gatherers this summer and fall. If you'd like to participate -- it's a hands-on way to learn about native Illinois plants -- or if you're just curious to find out more, call the office at 382-SAVE.



There is a pleasure in the pathless woods . . .

GEORGE NOEL GORDON, LORD BYRON

Thursday, April 3, 1986

Barrington Courier Review

CONSERVATION ARTICLE by Wendy Paulson

Wild Encounters at Home

When I first came to Illinois, I thought I'd come to an ecological wasteland. I gazed on the interminable flatness, the monotonous roadsides and I pined for the Virginia countryside where I recently had lived, for the ravines choked with spring wildflowers, for the dogwood and redbud that graced the woodlands, for the bluebirds that nested in the fencepost across from our cottage and the pileated woodpecker that raised a family in the oak at the far edge of the garden. I figured I would have to relegate my curiosity and taste for wild things to vacation times, to distant locations.



SHAGBARK HICKORY
Carya ovata (Mill.) K. Koch

Twelve years later, I'm amused at those first impressions. Now I have to struggle with a heavy reluctance to leave my Illinois home surroundings, to be away when the bobolinks return, to miss the peak of the prairie coneflowers, to not hear the distant overhead trill of migrating sandhill cranes.

The difference, of course, came from getting to know an unfamiliar landscape, to discover and appreciate its treasures instead of lamenting the omissions.

For me, that meant going outside as often as I could, exploring the forest preserves, visiting nature centers, walking with guides who knew the local plant and animal life. As I opened my eyes and ears to the wild things that grew and bloomed and flew and crawled and moved about, it became abundantly clear that northern Illinois was alive with wild drama and natural beauty.

One of the first real thrills that pulled me back for many walks afterwards and still stands as a landmark experience was the meeting with a long-eared owl. I was taking what had become for me a regular walk, by then a well-familiar route but always offering unexpected discoveries. I turned the corner along a drainage ditch and found myself face-to-face with a long-eared owl, who was obviously as startled as I at the confrontation. I stared, it stared back and leaned forward in mock menace. Eventually we parted company.

That brief meeting in the forest preserve -- and hundreds of other events since then, some of them as uncommanding as a momentary bath of light on a field of exploding milkweed seeds -- set me to wonder at the things we don't see, the display, the flight, the nest-building, the web-weaving that goes on while we look other ways or don't bother to look at all.

When we think of a place primarily as our place of work, as our base of daily operations, we tend to rivet our attention on tasks, schedules, logistics and close our eyes to the natural setting. In our hurry to carry the trash out to the garbage can, we fail to see the perfect pattern of opossum prints that tells of a nocturnal prowl. As we maneuver along Route 14, trying to determine the best access to the mid-town grocery at 4:30 p.m., we don't even notice the black-crowned night heron overhead, aiming with steady wingbeat for an evening meal at a nearby marsh. Absorbed in the Wall Street Journal on the train ride into the Loop, we speed by the blazing stars bursting into magenta along the tracks without so much as a glance.

Not that any of those activities is undeserving of our attention. Of course we must take out the garbage, shop for groceries, read the paper. But if, at the same time, we keep an outlook open to the unexpected, the fresh observation, even the most mundane task can take on a richness that warms a whole day. I forget the garbage but oh, that splayed-out star left by the opossum's foot!

It's so easy to overlook the natural wealth at our doorstep. Wisconsin, Michigan, Wyoming beckon with dreamy promise of encounters with nature. It's another version of the definition of an expert, "someone who comes from at least 50 miles away": for many, a true encounter with nature is something that happens at least 100 miles from the back door.

Any place where trees grow, where flowers bloom, where a bird sings or a spider spins a web, there is much to see, to hear, to learn. We needn't wait until next weekend or next summer to schedule for ourselves an interlude with nature. At this moment a prairie violet lays back its petals to the sunlight; a barn swallow wins a barnyard for the summer after a 3000-mile flight from Brazil; a great blue heron pokes a fresh twig into its penthouse nest on the island in Baker's Lake; a fox squirrel nurses its brood in an elm tree on Lake Street.

These are wonders, every one of them. And there are others, countless others, quietly taking place in town, along the roads, in woods and fields and thickets and marshes, while we move through our days and think on that trip two months from now when we can get away from the routine and our wildless surroundings and go where nature really happens.



Window Pains

Wish to send two articles to you for publication. The first concerns the problem of birds hitting windows. It is the result of many years of research by me and my wife, **DANIEL KLEM, JR.** We have been able to determine the cause of these collisions. As we maneuver along Route 1A, trying to determine the

Windows can hold fatal consequences for birds. Unaware of their presence, an estimated 80-million birds crash into these surfaces each year. Not all of a bird's encounters with windows lead to injury or death. During spring and summer, male birds sometimes thrash against reflective surfaces as they attempt to defend their territories against their mirror image. These attacks are usually harmless. However, you may have had the unhappy experience of finding a dead bird lying beneath a window. While eliminating window strike casualties may not be possible at every location, a few precautions can reduce the number of victims.

Move attractants. Feeders, bird baths, and berry-producing shrubs often bring birds near windows. While this is enjoyable to the viewer, these attractants can be deathtraps for birds. A simple method for preventing collisions may be to move attractants to a new location, out of harm's way. Another alternative is to place them very close to windows. Feeding birds may fly into windows after being frightened by real or imagined danger. If attractants are within a foot of the surface, birds won't have enough momentum to hurt themselves if they do hit the window.

Alter window appearance. If moving attractants is impossible or impractical, you may need to change the appearance of dangerous windows so that birds will avoid them. Problems arise when windows are transparent—providing a seemingly unobstructed flight path, or reflective, providing a mirror image of the vista they face. By examining windows around your home or office, you may be able to determine how these surfaces are deceiving passing birds.

If your problem windows are transparent, try making them appear less so by changing the light inside the house. Pull a shade, close the curtains, or open or close a door. Also, try to place indoor attractants, such as house plants and Christmas trees, away from windows so

they won't confuse passing birds. Mirrors apart. Anything you can do to uniformly disrupt the window's mirrorlike quality will help to prevent accidents. A drawing drapes or shades will prevent these collisions.

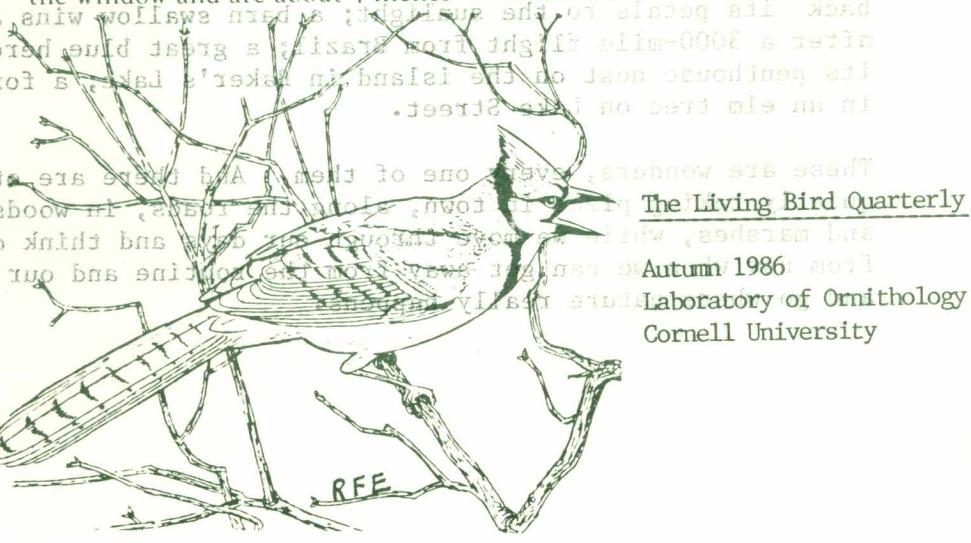
You can also render transparent windows more visible by uniformly covering the glass surface, either inside or out, with objects separated by 4 inches or less. Almost anything may be used—sheets of paper, strips of cloth or cardboard, owl decals or hawk silhouettes. Work, not necessarily because they look like predators, but because they make the clear surface visible.

Building designers and persons remodeling their homes should consider installing windows at an oblique angle rather than the conventional vertical position. Angle windows so that they reflect the ground instead of the facing habitat and sky. Birds are less likely to fly into an illusion of the ground than into one of sky or trees.

Reflective surfaces. Windows that mirror the habitat in front of them must be altered from the outside. As a temporary measure, you can paint the window with soap or wax, or try affixing strips of paper or cardboard. Also effective are ribbons, colored strings, or mobiles, hung in front of the window. These objects are most effective when they cover the window and are about 4 inches

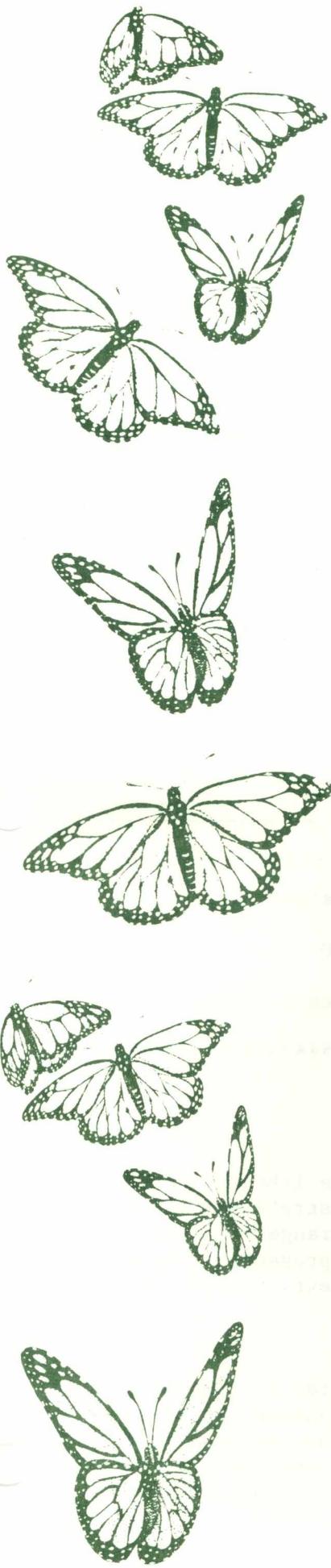
Routinely check under windows. You may not know you have a problem window, so periodically check outside. By moving a feeder or changing the appearance of your windows, you may prevent untold numbers of needless deaths.

Daniel Klem, Jr. is an assistant professor of biology at Muhlenburg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania, and has studied window-bird collisions for almost a decade.



The Living Bird Quarterly

Autumn 1986
Laboratory of Ornithology
Cornell University



SUMMER SESSIONS IN NATURE STUDY 1986

Citizens for Conservation will again offer summer nature study classes for children. Parents are welcome, too (parents need not pay, but they should register). All classes, unless otherwise indicated, will meet in the building at Crabtree Nature Center. They will take place on Wednesday mornings from 9 to 11. Registration will be limited.

JUNE 11 BIRDS OF BAKER'S LAKE. We'll study and observe the large wading birds that crowd the island in Baker's Lake in the summer: great blue heron, American egret, black-crowned night heron. Meet in the parking lot behind Grove Avenue School, pick up at campground on Highland Avenue. Ages 8-13.

JUNE 18 KNEE-HIGH NATURE. A class for pre-kindergartners and their parents. We'll prowl along the Giant's Hollow trail at Crabtree Nature Center, hunt for the creatures that live in a log, peek at the pond to see who and what lives there. Ages 4-5.

JUNE 25 ANIMAL HOMES. What animals build their homes and what animals find and use a home already built? What animals build with mud? twigs? grass? paper? How many names of animal homes can you think of? What's the smallest animal home you can find? We'll try to answer these questions -- and more -- as we explore forest, field, and marsh at Crabtree Nature Center. Ages 6-11.

JULY 9 POND STUDY. What lives in a pond? around it? What grows in the water? near the water? Come explore the world of Sulky Pond and maybe bring back samples of water to the nature center to examine with microscopes. Ages 7-12.

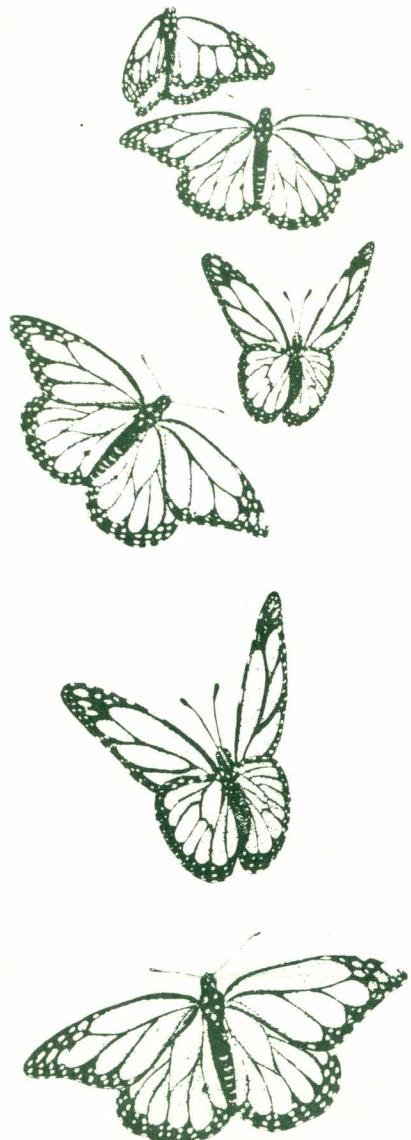
JULY 16 KNEE HIGH NATURE. See June 18 listing. Ages 4-5.

JULY 23 SUN FUN. We'll make solargrams, sun dials and do other projects that require the sun to make them work. Cancelled if it's raining. Ages 7-12.

JULY 30 NATURE DRAWING. Work with colored chalk to capture a wild creature or plant on paper. Ages 11-14.

AUGUST 6 INSECT SAFARI. Late summer is the best season for bugs. We'll see how many different kinds we can find crawling in the grass, munching on milkweed, sipping nectar, flying through the fields. This will not be a collecting trip but we will examine some insects close up. Ages 6-11.

AUGUST 13 EXPLORING BEESE PARK. This park, located at the southern end of Baker's Lake, has a large cattail marsh, ponds, field, and a little bit of woodland. We'll go on a nature scavenger hunt through the different areas. Meet at parking lot at Princeton and George Streets. Cancelled if raining heavily. Ages 8-12.



AUGUST 20 PRAIRIE PROWL. We'll find out what plants grew in Barrington before the town was settled. Our classroom will be the Phantom Prairie at Crabtree where we will measure ourselves against turkeyfoot and Indian grass and find out what creatures live in the prairie today. Ages 7-10.

Summer Session Director: Wendy Paulson

Cost per session: \$2 members; \$4 non-members.

Be prepared: Wear long pants, socks, comfortable shoes (boots if wet). Bring a clipboard, pencil (except Knee High Nature students), insect repellent if desired. Questions? 382-SAVE.

SUMMER SESSION REGISTRATION

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Class(es) _____

Mail with check to: Citizens for Conservation, Inc.
Box 435
Barrington, IL 60010

Registration deadlines: one week before each class.



BOOK BROWSING

Tree Flowers, by Millicent E. Selsam

This is another book shelved in the children's section of the library that would interest many adults. Twelve trees have been chosen to illustrate various methods of pollination and seed production in trees. Their flowers range from the showy (magnolia) to the inconspicuous (elm). Each tree flower is presented with full-page lavish drawings in color and a facing page of concise text. (1984: Wm. Morrow and Co.)

Natural Chicago, by Bill and Phyllis Thomas

The cover promises, "A nature-lover's guide to the parks, wildlife sanctuaries, hiking and bicycling trails, botanic gardens, zoos, nature centers, prairies, recreation areas, forests, working farms, rare flora and fauna, museums, and wild places within a fifty-mile radius of Chicago." The guide is succinct, surprisingly comprehensive, and includes directions and telephone numbers to call for more information. (1985: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, \$12.95).

SPRING CONTROLLED BURNS by George Luehring

A number of Citizens for Conservation board members, members at large, and a group of willing volunteers took part in approximately 12 "controlled burns" this spring, chiefly in Lake and McHenry Counties. CFC sponsored three of the burns in the Cyril C. Wagner Fen, the outstanding wetland owned by the organization in the Tower Lakes area. The other burns were at Ski Hill Prairie, Cary Country Club, Spring Hill Fen, Bluff Spring Fen, Spring Creek, Pleasant Valley Farm, and Glacial Park.

A round of applause and heartfelt thanks to all who took part, but especially to the volunteers who gave unstintingly of their time and labor. But be warned. For those who still have the energy to grab a flapper or shoulder a water pumper and the fortitude to inhale another quantum of smoke, CFC is planning some fall burns -- in the Barrington Bog and possibly the Richards prairie restoration and the CFC property along Roberts Road. You'll be notified in plenty of time to participate.

As many readers of the CFC News already know, fire is one of the most beneficial things that can happen to natural areas such as fens, bogs, and prairies. Fire removes accumulating duff that blocks new plant growth, helps keep out invading alien plant species such as buckthorn, and returns nutrients to the soil through ash deposits. Blackened areas left by spring burns absorb heat from the sun and help speed native plant growth.

In the eons before the advent of Europeans, naturally occurring fires set by lightning or Indians swept over North America's wetlands and prairies. History records the awe of early settlers as prairie fires extending for miles turned vast areas into momentary raging infernos. After incoming Europeans plowed virtually all the prairies and drained most of the wetlands, fires that occurred in the few remaining natural sites were quickly put out. Consequently, these areas degraded.

Not until fairly recently - the fifties, in fact -- did scientists realize how important fire is to the preservation of these unique ecosystems. Now, of course, fires have to be set by those interested in saving these vestigial natural areas. The fires are called "controlled burns" because the flames are contained to the specific area to be burned. While invading alien plant species are hopefully destroyed by the fires, native plants thrive on them. It is a joy, indeed, to see a drab, depressed fen or bog literally burst into colorful new life in the weeks following a fire.



Barrington Courier Review

CFC NEWS ALMANAC

- June 14 Field trip to Spring Lake Nature Preserve (info inside)
- June 14, 21, 28 Peregrine falcon lectures at Chicago Academy of Sciences, call 477-HAWK.
- July 19 Field trip to Bluff Spring Fen (info inside)
- August 23 Field trip to Shoe Factory Road Prairie (info inside)

Survey Finds 'Outdoor' U.S. That Wants Nature Areas Kept

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 24 — A survey conducted for a Presidential commission on recreation finds that "the America of 1986 is an outdoor-oriented country."

A key finding of the survey, presented to the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, is that 81 percent of the respondents "strongly agree" that "the Government should preserve natural areas for use by future generations." A large majority also expressed a willingness to "pay taxes which are dedicated to preserve natural areas in this country."

Conflict With Administration View

The finding appears to be in conflict with the Reagan Administration's policy calling for virtually no spending to acquire land for new national parks or other natural areas in light of the nation's current fiscal problems.

The survey was prepared for the commission by Market Opinion Research and underwritten by the National Geographic Society. The findings are based on 2,000 telephone interviews in February. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus three percentage points.

Sightseeing, Walks, Getting Away

"Americans today are very concerned about preserving natural environment and wildlife, shorelines and habitats," the researchers reported.

They added: "Americans recognize that preserving these areas comes at a price. There is a willingness to be taxed to preserve natural areas for future generations and a recognition that costs of outdoor recreation must be borne by a mix of taxes and user fees."

Other findings of the survey were these:

The most frequent outdoor activities are sightseeing, visiting historic

sites, attending zoos, fairs and amusement parks, followed by ball games and running; water sports and golf; fishing, hunting and motorized sports; observing nature, camping and hiking, and skiing and sledding.

The five most popular specific forms of outdoor recreation are walking for pleasure, driving for pleasure, sightseeing, swimming and picnicking. For men only, fishing is added to the top five and picnicking is dropped.

Among the most frequent motivations for outdoor recreation are the desire to "get away," to be active, fit and health-conscious, to be sociable and the desire for "excitement-seeking competitiveness." Less than 10 percent of those responding voiced no motivation to engage in outdoor recreation, the researcher said.

Beauty and Lack of Crowds

When people go to parks their most important criteria are the natural

beauty of the area and whether it is crowded or uncrowded, the survey said.

The researchers reported that the interests of those people born from 1946 to 1961, the "baby boom" generation, "will drive adult usage of outdoor recreation for many years to come." These people, the report said, are highly motivated because of their interests in fitness and health, sociability and their vacation patterns of engaging in outdoor recreation.

The survey also determined that the leisure activity occupying most of Americans' time was watching television and reading. Nevertheless, 48 percent identified themselves as "outdoors people," while 32 percent said they were "indoors people," the survey found.

The 15-member commission, whose chairman is Gov. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, is to report to President Reagan in December.



Citizens for Conservation, Inc.

Box 435

Barrington, Illinois 60011

OFFICERS

Paul Hoffman, President

Walt Dalitsch, Vice President

David Kullander, Treasurer

Betsy Petersen, Secretary

STAFF DIRECTOR

Sam Oliver

EDITOR

Wendy Paulson

Office: 132 W. Station St.
2nd Floor, BACOG Building
Phone 382-SAVE

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