



Friends of the Sangamon Valley



Spring 2008

Volume 9, Issue 1

Friends Complete First Land Purchase

As 2008 dawned, the Friends realized our greatest accomplishment so far. As you may have already heard, the Friends have closed on a land purchase of 50 acres of old growth sand forest in Cass County.

Not much in the way of extensive management needs to be done, but management plans call for elm reduction, garlic mustard removal, introduction of fire, and installing signage. Survey work to inventory plant and insect species will begin this spring.

In early January, the Friends hammered out the last of the details concerning our purchase of Boyle Woods. With funds provided by a grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, our land acquisition capital campaign, fall fundraiser and raffle, we were able to finalize the purchase of this rare woodland.

The Friends have a \$30,000 balance on the property, payable over the next two years. Other potential grants are being explored. The Friends have applied to the Department of Natural Resources, Conservation -2000. We anticipate hearing more by October or November 2008.

This is a very exciting event for the Friends. This is a rare natural community which is represented by only three other sites in central Illinois totalling about 120 acres. Also, the Friends have shown we can accomplish our mission of preserving ecologically significant lands in the watershed, not only in partnership with generous parties that donate their land to us, but also through the challenge of raising significant funding. This should help strengthen our profile in the area and throughout the state. A proven track record may assist the Friends

in working with other partners to protect more land.

Additionally, the funding we raised from our members lets us know that our mission is important and relevant to central Illinois. Being able to close on the property has been a great sign of your faith in the Friends.

If you have not yet contributed to the land acquisition capital campaign, it's not too late. Land is expensive and our resources are few. State grant funds are particularly tenuous and we rely on your continued support to help us achieve our mission.



Light shines through the canopy of an old oak in Boyle Woods. Photo by Vern LaGesse.

Wolf Restoration Gets a Boost from Illinois Land Owner Incentive Program

The Friends have applied for a Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to help restore the Wolf Preserve. Our request for \$22,462.50 will be matched by about \$7,500 in in-kind labor furnished by the Friends, for a total project cost of close to \$30,000.

If awarded, the grant money will be used to address non-native invasive species on 53 acres of woodland. Overall, the forest is dominated by white and red oak in the overstory, but the middle canopy is dominated by maple, elm and honey locust, with a 4.5 acre portion densely reforested in these species since having been cleared for pasture. Maples are notorious shade-producers, such that native forest understory plants and tree seedlings don't survive under a maple canopy. The shrub layer at the Wolf is dominated by bush honeysuckle and as a result, there are few native understory species present.

Restoration plans call for removing these species to open up the canopy and allow sunlight to reach the forest floor. This will promote the germination of oak seedlings and allow young oak saplings to thrive. This will also create better conditions for native understory plants, including flowers, grasses and sedges.

The grant will fund rental of heavy equipment to clear brush and trees in the reforested pasture area, purchase of a warm season grass/forb seed mix, a baseline inventory of vegetation, a follow-up controlled burn, and follow-up chemical control of invasive species, over a two-year period. The Friends will provide labor and should conduct follow-up plant surveys to track any changes that occur.

The Friends are finalizing the budget and will have a signed contract this spring. Surveys will start and mid-canopy thinning will continue throughout the spring.

Much of the Friends' stewardship work involves the removal of non-native invasive species. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources offers this explanation of invasive species: *Exotic species are those organisms introduced into habitats where they are not native. Invasive exotic species are organisms not native to a region, and whose introduction causes economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. In their natural habitats, these organisms developed stable populations and complex relationships with other species. When removed from the predators, parasites, diseases and competitors that have kept their numbers in check, species introduced into new habitats often overrun their new home and crowd out native species. Once established, exotic species can rarely be eliminated.* (Illinois Department of Natural Resources web site, <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/education/ExoticSpecies/exoticspintro.htm>).

Here, at the Wolf Preserve, we are also trying to control sugar maples, a native species. This seems counterintuitive, and doesn't always endear us to area environmentalists. The Friends' Vern

LaGessee stopped cleaning out herbicide sprayers long enough to answer a few questions about the whys and wherefores of managing native invasives:

Editor: We're pretty familiar with garlic mustard, bush honeysuckle, kudzu, and the like which have all come to us – with good intentions or not – from far away. What are some other native invasives, or species we might be surprised to know ecologists consider invasive?

Vern: There are opportunistic natives like sugar maple, elms, sassafras and paw paw. But in an oak hickory upland, these species have invaded from the floodplain or from northern slopes and ravines.

Ed: So, what's your specific problem with sugar maples?



A recent volunteer crew at the Wolf pauses to admire their work: Back row, left to right: Scott Hewitt, Gary Cramer, Nick Klobuchar, Vern LaGessee. Front row, left to right: Dustin Cramer, Joe Feiden, Pete Levin, Randy Speck. Not pictured, Charlene Falco

Vern: They're big shade producers and prevent other species, such as oak seedlings and flowers from germinating or thriving. And this becomes a problem because we don't see much oak regeneration in our forests. Acorns germinate, but get shaded out so they can't grow up. Many of our forests don't have oak saplings because they never make it beyond their first year because of shade.

Ed: What would be considered the sugar maples' *right place* to be in Illinois?

Vern: IDNR would call this natural community red oak-sugar maple northern slope community. It usually has several fern species and patches of wild ginger.

In restoring the oak hickory uplands, we are re-establishing balance to the natural community. We are returning elm, paw paw back to the floodplain forest, sugar maples back to northern ravines and slopes, and reducing sassafras back to a woodland

shrub. Once species balance has been restored, natural functions return. Then prescribed fire will be able to maintain this community, and only in these balanced systems does biodiversity of plants, animals, reptiles/amphibians and oak seedlings return.

Ed: Why did these certain species get out of control?

Vern: There are many historic accounts of native Americans burning everything that could burn after the first killing frost of the fall. Some accounts also describe the oak-hickory uplands as being very open and park like. And able to drive a covered wagon through with no problems, with an understory of grasses, flowers and some woody shrubs. It was these fires that created our natural communities. So without these fires species migrate.

We look forward to making some big changes at The Wolf Preserve. We'll have more reports in future issues of the newsletter.



Cindy Feiden scrubs some stones, Joe Feiden pitches in, and volunteers span the beach at Mohang-ni.

Friends Volunteers Bring It to South Korea

By Joe Feiden

Joe Feiden, one of our regular volunteers and main resident-organizer of the Old Salem Chautauqua wetland restoration, visited South Korea recently with Cindy, his wife. On vacation visiting their daughter, they helped in the aftermath of a devastating oil spill...

On the morning of December 7, 2007, the oil tanker Hebei Spirit was hit by a barge that had been torn loose from its tug in heavy seas near the port of Daesan on the Yellow Sea, west coast of South Korea. 10,800 tones (11,900ST) of crude oil spilled out in what has been called Korea's worst oil spill, one third the size of the Exxon Valdez disaster. By December 9th, the spill was 21 miles long, 33 feet wide, and 4 inches thick in places. The area contains 30 beaches, a national maritime park, and one of Asia's largest wetland areas. One half of the 445 sea farms in the region were effected.

We were in South Korea visiting our daughter who lives about 100 miles from the spill. I googled "Korea oil spill volunteer", and on Sunday, February 10th after a 40 minute bus ride, we met Thom Walls from Expats Helping Hands, who supplied us with containment suits, face masks, and rubber gloves. After a 20 minute car ride and two more buses, we arrived at the fish-

ing village of Mohang-ni. There we walked to a big staging area, got fitted for rubber boots and put on our containment suits. Next we were instructed to get in a van, given a plastic bag full of rags, and driven about 2 miles to a beach made up of smooth stones. There were about 200 volunteers, mostly school age. Our task was to wipe the oil from the stones. The most efficient method was to dig down with a shovel about a foot and wipe the entire area at once. Volunteers brought us hot ramen noodles and soy milk. About 3 p.m. the tide came in and we headed back to the staging area. The people there were very appreciative. They took our picture and e-mailed it to us, as well as gave us a ride to the bus station 20 miles away.

For more information about the Taean oil spill, see the NY Times, at www.nytimes.com/2007/12/10/world/asia/10skorea.html

Friends Board Continues to Grow

The Friends board has recently added one new member, Dustin Cramer. Dustin is halfway through his third semester at Lincoln Land Community College as a non-traditional student. He is hoping to major in botany or restoration ecology and is considering the University of Illinois as an option after completing his studies at LLCC. Says Dustin, "My passion for conservation comes from a connection to the natural world that was developed during my childhood. I often spent my youth wandering the restricted forests of Menard County, watching the encroachment of development, knowing that something was not quite right, yet not fully aware of my own capacity to affect change. Finally, as an adult, I have decided to make the preservation of nature my life's work." And even though Dustin is our junior member by at least a good 20 years, the lad is teaching us a few lessons. He has somehow corralled his dad into coming out to workdays at the Wolf Preserve, and has managed to convince one or two friends to come along, too. Thanks for the energy and extra hands...Welcome, Dustin!



As part of Dustin's orientation to the Friends, he participated in a Land Trust Alliance regional conference, and filed this report.....

My spring break from Lincoln Land Community College began with a drive, nearly to the Wisconsin/Illinois boarder, to attend the Land Trusts Alliance's Midwest Regional Conference in Mundelein, Illinois. The conference was held at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake, a Catholic seminary. The grounds were wooded and of a decent acreage, which provided a much-needed natural element to the moderately developed area in which the conference was held. The conference was diverse in respect to the size and type of the groups participating. There were groups that were focused on securing farmland and green space in a rapidly developing landscape, as well as groups mainly involved in the preservation of natural heritage, such as ours. Some groups were large, with paid staff and large budgets, while others were small and all volunteer. There is strength in diversity and a different perspective is valuable to all.

I attended classes in which I learned about fundraising, accreditation and serving as a land trustee. During the fundraising class, I learned it was desirable to have a majority of a group's support come from many small memberships. A stronger foundation is built this way, as we do not become dependent on only a few large donors. I spent my second day in two separate classes about being a board member. We covered many topics related to boards and their dynamics. The most important thing that I learned was the importance of committees. Properly functioning committees are imperative for an effective board.

I was proud to represent our group, and particularly happy to tell new acquaintances about Boyle Woods and the Wolf Preserve. I came away from this conference with the feeling that the Friends are doing a great deal considering our size, budget and lack of paid staff. Overall, I had a great time. I met a lot of people who care about the land and are passionate about preserving it, farmland, forest and prairie alike.

The Friends of the Sangamon Valley is a charitable membership organization dedicated to the preservation of our natural heritage by acquiring, restoring, and protecting ecologically significant lands in the Sangamon River Watershed.

Membership is available to individuals for \$25.00, and to families for \$40.00. Participation on various committees is open to members. We currently have openings on the following committees: membership, fundraising, and public relations.

Board and Officers

Vern LaGesse, President
525-1410
vlagesse@fosv.org

Bill Crook, Vice President
522-3372

Mark Rabin, Treasurer
mrabin@insightbb.com

Charlene Falco, Secretary
525-1410

Dustin Cramer, 652-1334
Mike Ewan, 546-9632
Catherine O'Connor, 793-8997
Sally Robinson, 546-9632
George Rose, 787-1940

The Friends of the Sangamon Valley's monthly board meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm. at the Lincoln Library, Carnegie South room.

Our web site provides updated information on volunteer opportunities and events, and may be accessed at www.fosv.org. This newsletter is published three times per year. Contributions are welcome.

Friends of the Sangamon Valley merchandise is available:

Coffee mug	\$ 5.00
T-shirt (dark green)	\$ 10.00
Baseball hats (green or tan)	\$ 10.00
Polo shirt (dark green)	\$ 15.00
Thermal Bottle	\$ 20.00

Send checks for merchandise or memberships to PO Box 13352, Springfield, 62791. Please contact any board member regarding the newsletter, membership, participation on committees or other volunteer opportunities.

WORK DAYS and EVENTS

April

2 Friends monthly board meeting	6:30 pm	Lincoln Library, Carnegie South
12 Wolf Preserve	10:00 am	Exotics removal
26 Revis Hill Prairie	10:00 am	Prairie Dandelion Count
27 Carpenter Park Tour	1:00 pm	Meet at Stone Shelter in parking lot

May

3 Wolf Preserve	1:00 pm	Exotics removal
7 Friends monthly board meeting	6:30 pm	Lincoln Library, Carnegie South
24 Revis Hill Prairie	10:00 am	Brush removal
31 Wolf Preserve	10:00 am	Exotics removal

June

4 Friends monthly board meeting	6:30 pm	Lincoln Library, Carnegie South
7 Revis Tour—Members Only	10:00 am	Members will receive an invitation soon

Wolf Preserve

Assist volunteers with stewardship at the *Friends'* preserve in Menard County. Carpool leaves a half hour earlier from the Hardee's at Walnut & Jefferson, in Springfield or meet us at the Preserve at the time listed above. Wear sturdy boots, bring your own work gloves. **Dates subject to change**; please contact Charlene Falco or Vern LaGessee, 525-1410 to RSVP.

Revis Hill Prairie

Join the Friends in restoration of one of Illinois' premiere hill prairies. Carpool leaves an hour earlier from the Howard Johnson's motel on Rt. 29 North near the Springfield Airport or meet us at the preserve at the time listed above. Wear sturdy boots and bring your own gloves. Work days last about two hours, followed by a walk or tour. **Dates subject to change**; please contact Charlene Falco, 525-1410 to RSVP.

Washington Park

Our steward for Washington Park, George Rose, will be out of the country for a few weeks. It's possible that some Washington Park workdays will be scheduled for late spring or early summer. Please check our web site after mid-May for the latest information about Washington Park.

Carpenter Park

Join Vern LaGessee for a guided tour of Carpenter Park. Learn about trees, trees, and more trees, as well as forest structure, ecology, insects and summer flowers in Springfield's old growth upland and floodplain forest. Meet at the Stone Shelter in the parking lot. Wear sturdy boots or shoes and bring a beverage.



Don't forget to visit our web site at www.fosv.org for latest updates.



Nature Photography Show Chases the Winter Blues Away

On February 23, Springfield's nature lovers braved a winter storm to ooh and ahh over photographs of flowers, birds and bugs in central Illinois, some right from our own backyards. The atrium of the State Journal Register became a gallery for images of cardinals, endangered butterflies, delicate flowers, cranky possums, close close-ups of a cicada, magnificent deer and tranquil river scenes. More than one observer was heard to sigh, "I can't wait for spring."

Almost 70 photos were contributed by 43 amateur photographers. The quality of the photos was quite impressive. The Youth Division featured photographers from age 8 to 18, and these pictures were some of the most talked about. Twenty-four photographers generously donated their photos to the Friends for future promotional or fundraising uses.

The State Journal Register hosted the showing, while the Friends provided a reception for the photographers and public. Chris Young, Outdoors editor and photographer for the paper, and the Friends' Vern LaGessee entertained visitors with talks about the Friends' work and beautiful photographs of our natural world.

The photos were moved to the Springfield public library for display throughout the month of March.

We hope we provided a respite from a tough winter, and made some new Friends too. Thanks go out to all the people that made the show possible. Joe Feiden and Tom Ezerhart did a great job on construction of the display panels; Crook's Prairie Press, LaGessee & Associates, Rabin, Myers & Hanken, Mike Ewan, John Melin, Carol Herndon, and Sally Robinson provided for a wonderful reception catered by Secret Recipes; Chris Young provided expert advice and access to the SJR; the SJR's Edie Weaver designed the fliers seen around town; the SJR's security staff were patient and helpful during our take over of their atrium, and Jim Huston with the Lincoln Library helped enhance our display and was altogether professional and gracious. Thanks, everyone for a great event!



Photographer Zoey Pritchett was our youngest photographer, and entered two photos in our youth division. One of Zoey's photos, In the Beginning, is displayed, top right.

Glenwood Woods Proposal Under Review

The Friends' Vern LaGessee and Charlene Falco met with CWLP's Steve Frank in February to discuss potential management of Glenwood Woods. Glenwood Woods is located north of Glenwood Middle School off of Chatham Rd. This roughly 75-acre tract is owned by CWLP, and was noted by the Friends' Inventory of Sangamon County Natural Areas to include 52 acres of Grade C upland oak hickory forest; 3 acres of hardwood floodplain forest; and 13 acres of dry upland slopes dominated by chinquapin and bur oak.

Said Vern, "This is one of the best public-owned uplands outside Carpenter Park, it shows few exotics and we think this will be a great opportunity to develop a learning curriculum to work with Glenwood Middle School as an outdoor lab."

The Friends have drafted a management plan and provided it to CWLP for review. With approval from CWLP, we hope to start management later this summer. You can check out the draft management plan on the Friends' web page. The Friends' Bill Crook will be spearheading this stewardship effort.

Thank You!

The Friends are also pleased to acknowledge donations, new members, and membership renewals received since December 22, 2007:

Brad Baldwin
Scott T. Beard
Scott Bergman
Brooks Family
Lawrence A. Bussard
Pat & Russell Casper
Ann Charland
Linda Connelly

Judy Donath
Dan & Carolyn Dungan
Mike Ewan
Al & Joan Gardner
Ted Gietl
Barbara Greening
Susan Hardesty
Carol Herndon
Patrick & Diane Hughes

Jerome Jacobson
Bob & Carol Jessup
Edward W. Kwedar
Joanne Lake
Peter Levin
Lloyd Lounsberry
Curtis Mann
John S. Melin

Patrick Nudo
Don & Sheri Ramsey
Douglas E. Reynolds
Sally Robinson
Don & Mary Schaefer

James E. Scott
George Sinclair
Don Springer

Tih-Fen Ting
Phil Tinsley & Janice DiGirolamo
John Washburn
Sharon Whalen
Linda Wheeland

Crook's Prairie Press
LaGesse & Associates
Rabin, Myers, and Hanken

A special thank you goes out to the photographers who donated their photos:

Helen Adorjan
Richard Adorjan
Jim Armbruster
Kari Beyers
Richard Castelman
Bill Crook
Abby Dalsin
Richard Dalsin
Linsay Dycus
Debbie Greene
John Greene
Lindsey Koch

Vern LaGesse
Rhonda McCombs
Curt Neitzke
Catherine O'Connor
Robyn O'Connor
Zoey Pritchett
Wayne E. Thomas
Emily Thompson
Stephen D. Warren
Erik Welch
Courtney A. Westlake

The Friends of the Sangamon Valley gratefully acknowledge the following contributors to our Land Acquisition Capital Campaign, since December 22, 2007:

Lawrence A. Bussard
Linda & Kevin Cox
Ted Gietl
Jerome Jacobson
Edward W. Kwedar

Joanne Lake
James Potter
Don & Sheri Ramsey
Mrs. Robin Read
Randall & Connie Speck

Phil Tinsley & Janice DiGirolamo
Ron & Ann Tucker



**You can help Friends of the Sangamon Valley
in one or more of the following ways:**



1. Become a member of Friends or make a tax-deductible cash donation.
2. Support the purchase of ecologically significant lands by donating to the Land Acquisition Capital Campaign.
3. Volunteer your time for planting, invasive species control, fundraising events, etc.

Yes, I would like to:

- Be a member \$ 25.00 .
- Make a tax-deductible donation of \$ _____.
- Donate \$ _____ to the Land Acquisition Capital Campaign.
- Donate my time. Please let me know how I can help.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Send this form and check to:
**Friends of the Sangamon Valley,
PO Box 13352 Springfield, IL 62791**

**Friends of the
Sangamon Valley**

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