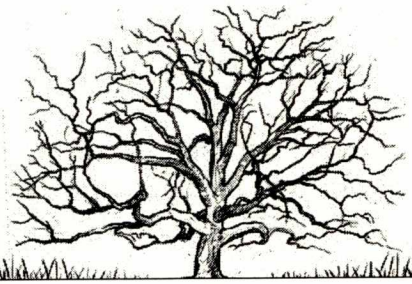


SPRING CREEK REVIVAL



Vol. 4, Issue 2 News about the Spring Creek Forest Preserves from the Spring Creek Stewards Summer 2007

Meet the Volunteers *The Heart of Spring Creek*

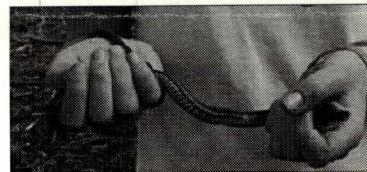
By the Spring Creek Stewards

The most important part of any volunteer organization is, of course, its people. That's why we're starting a new Revival feature that will introduce you to these great folks.

In this issue, we will focus on a group of volunteers we affectionately refer to as "The Family." Grandmother, Mary Ann Tate, her son Mike, his three children Christopher, Ellyse and Emily, Mary Ann's daughter Kim, and her two sons Mathew and Dan. Some of the family members come from as far away as Park Ridge.

An obvious family trait is that they're all hard workers with big smiles. "I'd love to run a chainsaw," said Chris, 15. Forest preserve rules require that Chris waits until he's 18 years old. In the meantime, he does a terrific job tossing brush on the fire.

Even 8-year-old Emily, our youngest steward,

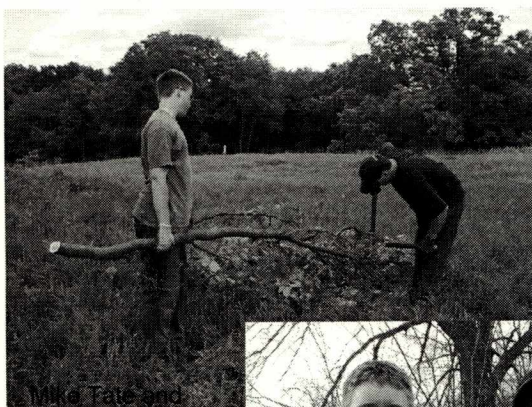


Mary Ann Tate
photographing grand-
daughter Ellyse's latest
find at Spring Creek.

does the important job of flagging cut stumps and picks up our trail markers at the end of the day. When there would be a lull in her task, she would walk all around the area looking for snakes.

One afternoon while working at Headwater's, Ellyse, 12, found several Chicago Garter snakes. She happily picked one up and carried it over for the rest of us to see. "They can bite", Ellyse told the interested onlookers. We knew she was speaking from first-hand experience.

"I love it that three generations all come together on weekends to build memories doing something useful, selfless, and lasting together at Spring Creek," says Jim Voris, steward of Oak Bluff. In fact, we all share Jim's appreciation of "The Family." We are the Spring Creek Stewards, and we're proud to say that our mission and our people make us who we are.



Mike Tate and
son, Chris.



5 Ways You Can Help Revitalize Spring Creek

If you think restoration work is limited to cutting buckthorn, building brush fires or pulling weeds, then Spring Creek's volunteer opportunities will surprise you.

For instance, you can be a citizen scientist and monitor rare plants or animals, scout for seeds and plan a restoration strategy, lobby a congressman to fund an important project, organize or publicize an event, write or illustrate a trail guide, and more.

It's all needed at Spring Creek and you can jump right in and do most of these, with or without previous experience. All you need is willingness to help and a little spare time – as little or as much as you can give.

The Spring Creek Stewards are currently focusing on five different areas: Advocacy, Outreach, Monitoring, Work Days and Logistics. Take a look below and see if there's an area that sparks your interest. Then email our website or call us, and we can discuss how to best put your talents and interests to good use.

How the Spring Creek Stewards are Organized and Where You Fit In

1. Advocacy Group

Reaches out to elected officials, the media, federal, state and local agencies, and others who may be able to contribute directly or indirectly to the good stewardship of the Spring Creek Forest Preserves.

We are currently working on education and lobbying to secure a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project that would restore hydrology, protect a permanent trail system from flooding, and restore natural vegetation.

2. Outreach Group

Reaches out to neighbors, forest preserve users, potential users and all interested people with information about the stewardship and ecology of the Spring Creek preserves to assure compatible use and public understanding.

We have a number of projects under way, including:

- Publishing our newsletter – the Revival.
- Posting Information on several websites.
- Weekly email announcements.
- Displays and recruitment at events.

Spring Creek Stewards Mission Statement

To restore the ecological health of the Spring Creek Forest Preserves. We strive to increase public awareness, participation and appreciation of the preserves.

Outreach to media.

Planning and coordinating events, tours, classes, open houses, etc. (often in cooperation with the Work Days Group)

3. Monitoring Group

We recruit and train monitors, coordinate with the Forest Preserve District (FPD) and monitoring organizations and providing stewards with monitoring data and analysis.

We currently monitor birds, butterflies, frogs, dragonflies and plants.

4. Work Days Group

We recruit and train volunteers for brush control, seed gathering, burns, etc. We develop site work plans, schedule workdays and interns, coordinate with FPD Resource Managers and plan special events.

The Work Day Group holds events most weekends and is currently holding training classes. See page 4 for more info on the work day and training schedule.

5. Logistics Group

We work to assure good communication among the various groups, plan general meetings, and help tie up loose ends.

So do you see a group or groups you're interested in? Additional volunteers are needed to help on all the work groups and on all the workdays. It's a very friendly, enthusiastic and positive group. Come join us! If you have any questions, please visit our website, springcreekstewards.org, and click on "Contact Us" or call Ginger Underwood at 847/381-5567.

Winter Work Brings Summer Surprises

By Claire Carlson

Remember how you used to feel as a kid on Easter morning, if your parents were the kind who hid treats here and there? This may be over the top – but I think that's how the Spring Creek prairies and woodlands feel each summer these last few years. They wake up from a winter's sleep, and what a thrilling surprise awaits them.

It's the same for the birds who come back from the south. Acres of suffocating brush are magically gone, choking thatch is burned off, and an ancient ecosystem is suddenly providing the kinds of great habitat that heretofore had been dwindling for decades.

Sandhill cranes were the first to try out the newly opened slough and grassland that for years had been buckthorn, cottonwood, box elder, and other invaders. (Wait a minute! Isn't cottonwood a native tree? Yes, indeed. But it's a native species of wooded floodplains, and not a regular part of the prairie ecosystem.)

I looked at some of the Audubon and the Forest Preserve District's planning documents to get a better understanding of the decision making. I love to read what experts say when they're dragged out into real world ecosystems and have to make decisions. Here are some excerpts from a field meeting at Spring Creek Headwaters in the summer '06 – to decide on priorities for the winter '07:

Brad Semel (Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources): when you can, choose areas first that will be easiest. Leave areas till later if (invasive) brush will just be replaced by (invasive) reed canary grass.

Doug Stotz (Field Museum): Areas of dense shrubs need to be surrounded by grassy openings for shrubland birds to thrive.

Brad Semel: Cover the cornfields with timothy and reedtop grass – or, if you can get the seed, plant prairie after a year of "Roundup-ready"

soybeans (at which time the weeds should be reduced).

Brad Woodson (McHenry County Conservation District): This series of wetlands that go gradually up hill are an important feature, if we can get the brush out of them. The turtles will move up into the higher marshes during wetter seasons and then back down to the lower areas in dry weather.

Tom Vanderpoel (Citizens for Conservation): Flag the young oaks so they don't get mowed, but then burn, and don't worry if some of them get burned back. A good natural community in a place like this wants both big old oaks and resprouting "oak grubs" as part of the shrubland and savanna.

Why all the planning? A big project like this needs to coordinate many partners: volunteers, conservation not-for-profits, FPD staff, interns, and contractors. And then there are the funders, especially the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which has enabled some of the most important work. At Headwaters, for example, the goal was to free some prairie and wetland from brush, open up a shrubland, and "connect through" to a savanna and oak grove to the west. The FPD's Resource Management crews under John McCabe and Kevin Neary mowed the small

brush with a high powered Seppi Mower. Volunteers did highly selective clearing in the savanna and oak grove (saving many an oak, hickory, Iowa crab and hazelnut). Then Homer Tree Service was the low bidder for the heavy lifting. Thanks to a grant from Fish and Wildlife, Homer cut, chipped and hauled away the denser brush and cottonwoods while the ground was frozen. And this spring Sandhill Cranes and hundreds of other species of plants and animals were the beneficiaries.

One result? We get to watch the unfolding of increasingly wonderful restored ecosystems, summer after summer.



Photo: www.wikipedia.org

Upcoming Events

- Jul. 25, Wed.** Work Party, Steeplechase, 6 – 8 pm
Leaders Kim Keper and Ginger Underwood
- Jul. 29, Sun.** Training – Stephen Packard, Penny Road Pond,
9 am – 12 pm, “Intro to Prairie Restoration in Summer”

Work Party, Healy Road Savanna, 1 – 4 pm
Leader Dave Cook
- Aug. 4, Sat.** Dragonfly Walk with monitor Craig Stettner
Spring Lake Nature Preserve, 1 pm
- Aug. 5, Sun.** Work Party, Headwaters, 9 am – 12 pm, Leader John Yapelli
- Aug. 11, Sat.** Training – Stephen Packard, Penny Road Pond
9 am – 12 pm, “Intro to Savanna and Woodland Restoration
in Summer”
- Aug. 12, Sun.** Work Party, Headwaters, 1 – 4 pm, Leader John Yapelli
- Aug. 19, Sun.** Training – Tom Vanderpoel, Bakers Lake Savanna (one of
the best woodland/savanna restorations in the region)
9 am – 12 pm, “Savanna and Woodland Seeds and Weeds –
Identification and Strategies”
- Aug. 25, Sat.** Training – Stephen Packard, Headwaters, 2 – 5 pm
“Preparing for Planting, Identifications and Strategies”
- Sept. 2, Sun.** Work Party, Headwaters, 1 – 4 pm, Leader Jim Voris
- Sept. 9, Sun.** Training and (optional) Test - Stephen Packard, Flint Creek
Savanna, 2 - 3 pm, “Review of Species Identifications and
Strategies for Weed Control and Seed Collecting”
3 – 5 pm, Exam Part 1
- Sept. 16, Sun.** Seed collecting (place to be announced), 1 – 4 pm
Leader Kim Keper, Call Kim at 847/962-5621, if you have any
questions concerning this workday.
- Sept. 23, Sun.** Training and (optional) Test – Stephen Packard, Headwaters
2 - 3 pm, “Review of Tree and Shrub Species Identifications
and Woody Plant Restoration Strategies”
3 – 5 pm, Exam part 2
- Sept. 30, Sun.** Seed collecting (place to be determined), 1 – 4 pm
Leader Kim Keper, Call Kim at 847/962-5621, if you have any
questions concerning this workday.

Questions about a work day,
call Ginger Underwood at 847/381-5567

Check out our website for more information on our restoration
efforts, www.springcreekstewards.org.

Work Parties: Depending on the season, we will cut invasive brush and burn it, pull weeds, gather native seeds or plant them.

What to Wear: Sturdy shoes and long pants are essential. Old clothes with long sleeves, gloves and a hat are great. In cooler weather, wear layers. In warmer weather, bring sunscreen and insect repellent.

Site Locations

Headwaters is on Higgins Road, north of I-90 and west of Sutton Rd./Rt. 59. Turn north onto Wichman Rd.

Healy Road Savanna, on Higgins Rd, continue west of Headwaters, pass Beverly Lake. Take next right, a small unmarked street, only open for these work days.

Penny Road Pond Take Rt. 59 to Penny Rd. (north of Higgins, south of Dundee). Go west on Penny Rd. through the forest preserves and look for the parking lot on the south side.

Steeplechase Meadow Park behind the Barrington Riding Center, 361 Bateman Road, Barrington Hills. On east side of Bateman Rd., north of Algonquin Rd.

Flint Creek Savanna Park at Citizens for Conservation headquarters (459 West Highway 22, Barrington) across from Good Shepard Hospital on the south side of Route 22, west of Route 59 and east of Kelsey Road.

Bakers Lake Savanna
From 59 or Barrington Rd. heading north toward Barrington, turn right (east) on Hillside Ave. When you see the savanna, turn right (south) on S. Highland Ave. Park at the Bakers Lake sign.

From Rt. 14, go west on Hillside Ave. and turn left on S. Highland Ave. Hillside is about ½ mile south of Lake Cook (also called County Line and Main).

Spring Lake Nature Preserve Pull out .3 miles south of Lake/Cook Rd. on the east side of Bateman Rd.

Sightings

Yesterday at Galloping Hill there was impressive evidence of success... there were many dropseed plants visible alongside the little bluestem we've already seen. Also, lots of yellow coneflower and one rattlesnake master. These looked mostly to be three-year plants - that is, from the first year's seeding. It's harder to find the little second-year plants, although I did find one - a nice little three leaf flowering spurge.

One special treat was the first plant from our seeding I've seen blooming there - a butterfly milkweed. The cutest little thing - about six inches tall with one umbel of gorgeous orange flowers. In a year or two more it will have a dozen umbels or more and be a couple of feet tall.

Soon thousands more quality plants will be everywhere.

Congratulations all.....Stephen P.

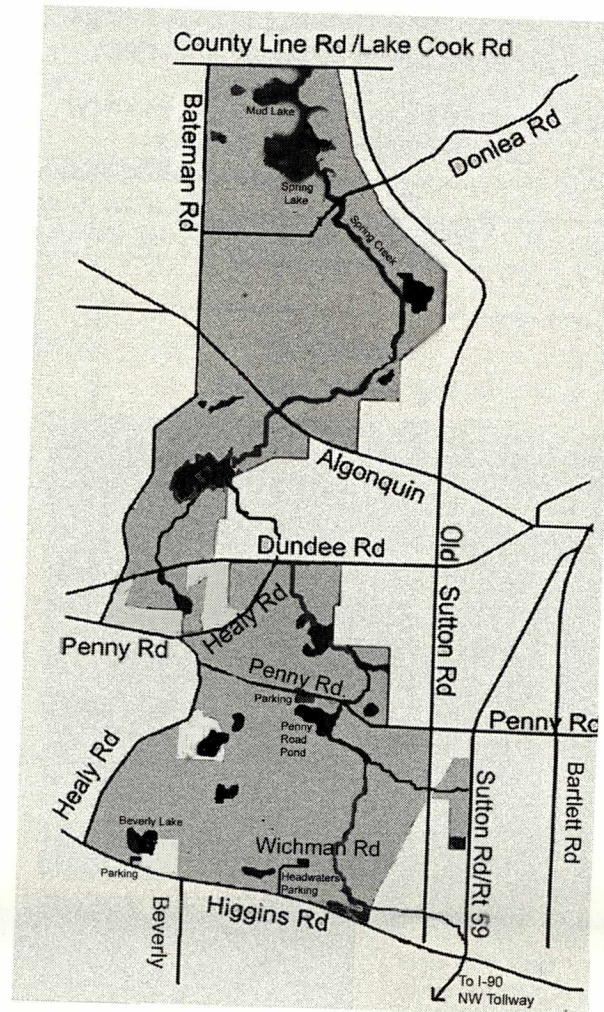
Sandhill Cranes nesting at Headwaters where we have worked to clear the invasive brush and open up the grasslands.

Thousands of Red Admiral butterflies on Bateman Rd.Jesicca U.



Monarchs aren't the only butterflies that migrate. Red Admiral butterflies are returning to our area from their wintering spot in Guatemala. Watch for them at Spring Creek and in your own backyard. They are a dark brown/black with a very distinctive red-orange stripe on the upper wings.

Spring Creek Forest Preserves



Map by Debbie Antlitz and Terri Everwine

Contributors to this newsletter are: Claire Carlson, Kim Keper, Stephen Packard, Craig Stettner and Ginger Underwood

Principal Partners

Forest Preserve District of Cook County
www.fpdcc.com

Audubon-Chicago Region
www.audubon.org

Citizens for Conservation
www.citizensforconservation.org

Bird Conservation Network
www.bcnbirds.org

Supporting Partners

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Riding Club of Barrington Hills
Bobolink Foundation
Grand Victoria Foundation
Chicago Area Tracking Dog Clubs
Sierra Club -- Northwest Cook Group

The *Spring Creek Revival's* purpose is to keep friends and neighbors of the preserve up to date on the progress and happenings of the Spring Creek Restoration Project.

If you would like to receive a copy, or know someone who would, contact

Kim Keper at
Keper@sbcglobal.net
847/ 277-0515

**Deadline
for Next Issue**

Please submit articles/
information for the newsletter by

**Friday
September 14, 2007**

to
Dale Harper
tomanddale@comcast.net
847/352-4085

***Restoration 101b
Summer Field Course***

Stephen Packard of Audubon – Chicago Region, in collaboration with Tom Vanderpoel of CFC and Bill Koenig of the FPD, will offer a seven part field-based training course on restoration ecology. Participants will focus on woodland and prairie management including identification of grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees; seed collection and sowing; invasives management, etc. This series of classes is designed for stewards and people who would like to be stewards. There is no charge but we ask for a commitment to use the knowledge gained for volunteer stewardship at Spring Creek or similar protected lands. The last two sessions will consist of reviews followed by exams. This is a continuing education program for stewards and volunteers. See page 4 for dates and locations.



Join in a time honored tradition

Seed Harvesting

Wednesdays in August

6:00—8:00 pm

We will collect seeds for Spring Creek from various locations depending on availability. An email will be sent on Tuesdays announcing the site and directions.

Contact: Kim Keper 847-962-5621 or keper@sbcglobal.net

Spring Creek Stewards

Restoring Nature's Balance