



# RIVER PRAIRIE GROUP

## DuPage Sierran

Autumn 2021, Volume 40, No. 4



### Chatter from the Chair

Happy Autumn and harvest season to each of you. Although my entire front yard is a prairie (Thanks to landscaper and friend Ed Max of Max's Greener Places) I am a sucker for vegetable gardening and tried a new genre this year. Pictured is a "Three Sisters Garden" which hosts organic sweet corn, pole beans, and summer squash. The beans wind around the corn stalks while the squash shields the garden floor from weeds, providing a happy, mutually supportive ecosystem for the three species.

I was particularly excited to try this garden version, since land acknowledgments, recognizing the original peoples of a territory, have become an important part of our Sierra Club culture. Briefly, we reside in the Council of Three Fires area, primary home to the Potawatomi, Ojibwe (also spelled Ojibwa) and Odawa, as well as several other native tribes. We acknowledge their original home, and it seemed a small gesture to try their gardening practice myself. (Being one of three sisters made it fun as well!)

This newsletter issue welcomes the soft opening of activities for the RPG. Ed Max writes to us of an outing to the northwest of DuPage at the beloved Spring Grove Fen. Forest Preserve staff updates the restoration of the bubbling Springbrook Creek through Blackwell Forest Preserve. Lonnie Morris fills us in with the achievements of the DuPage Monarch Project. There is much more important news included here, but as we write this, increased vigilance is being advised to protect from COVID-19 and its variants. We will continue to watch for guidelines, as our opening to meeting in person is being done very cautiously. Therefore, be aware that our Fall programs may need to be held on Zoom.



## Autumn Programs

We have an exciting lineup this autumn!

**September 15** – *Native American History of Glen Ellyn and Churchill Woods Forest Preserve and Beyond*, with Kirk Burger, Assistant Director, Glen Ellyn Historical Society and Keith McClow, Heritage Experience Manager, Forest Preserve District of DuPage.

**October 13** – *Urban Forest Stewardship: Native Tree Selection & Community Engagement*, with Trinity Pierce, Stewardship Manager for the Chicago Region Trees Initiative, The Morton Arboretum.

**November 17** – *Fox Feats and Shark Tales: Fox Valley's Courageous and Dedicated Environmentalist Jim Phillips, aka "The Fox", and Animal Rights Activist Steve Hindi*, with local author Pauline Gambill.

Our programs are currently planned as in-person meetings at the Glen Ellyn History Center, 800 N. Main Street, Glen Ellyn, on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm. Please note our plans may change due to any changes in pandemic guidance, but for the safety of all, our events have a mask requirement regardless of your vaccination status. Register [here](#) to be assured you will receive updates.

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## Spring Brook Restoration Update

**Editor's Note:** *Over the past few months there have been some questions in the local newspapers about the restoration project in Blackwell Forest Preserve involving Spring Brook Creek. Admittedly, a construction project of any kind looks grim before the beauty unfolds, so we invited the Forest Preserve District of DuPage to share an update with our readers about this science-based restoration project. Enjoy.*

[More...](#)

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## Two Volunteers Reflect

I asked two people to submit short pieces about getting involved in the Sierra Club as we plan to return to in-person meetings, and here is what they said. – Jeff Gahris

[More...](#)

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## A Threat to the Treasured Wolf Road Prairie

Wolf Road Prairie is the largest and highest-quality remnant tallgrass prairie east of the Mississippi River, representing a part of the .01% of these landscapes, which survived American settlement in Illinois. This ecosystem supports one of the densest and most diverse ecological communities in the temperate world. In 1988, the IDNR designated this unique 55-acre site an Illinois Nature Preserve. Because it is surrounded by development, it remains in grave danger of degradation over time.

[More...](#)



## RPG Leads with a Provisional Outing

*Ed Max, one of the many leaders of RPG Outings Committee, organized a provisional outing complete with mountains of paperwork to meet our COVID safety protocols to get folks out into nature's beauty this spring;*

What a time it has been ... waiting for the pandemic to ease just enough to get a hike together at Bluff Spring Fen ... one of the first hikes in Illinois. The annual fen hike never disappoints. What it lacks in acreage, it makes up for in diversity with over 450 species of plants (and counting), plus quite an array of birds, insects and dragonflies. Mike Davis, our resident geologist, did a fine job explaining the kames and glacial history of this place. Thanks! It was great seeing many familiar faces on that warm sunny day.

[More...](#)





## Connie Schmidt Receives Sierra Club's 2020 Volunteer Service Award

This summer River Prairie Group's own Connie Schmidt was honored with Sierra Club's 2020 Volunteer Service Award for "strong and consistent commitment to the environment or club over an extended period of time."

[More...](#)



## Princeton Rallies to Help Pollinators

Nearly all conversations about monarchs these days eventually touch upon the familiar battle cry for the butterfly's recovery, "plant milkweed and nectar plants." Pollinators are in need of healthy, pesticide-free habitat, and there are many ways and places for getting it into the ground. One woman in Princeton, Illinois, opted to take the message to her community and involve them in the solution.

[More...](#)



## Shopping Pays Off in a BIG Way!

Last newsletter, we featured an article asking you to shop at Altar'd State, a clothing store in Oak Brook, where 10% of their Monday sales would benefit an issue that the local Sierra Club supports. We chose the people of Centerville IL who have suffered from serious water issues involving their water infrastructure for over 20 years. Well, some of you must have shopped because ... wait for it ... this wonderful company gave us a check for nearly \$8000! This is an amazing contribution that we will get into the hands of some very worthy residents in the Centerville area. Thanks to all who shopped, and let's continue to support this thoughtful business as they support different causes each quarter!

## Sierra Club Election Notice

The "2021 Prairie State Update" will be arriving in your U.S. mailbox in the next few months. In addition to summaries of your Club Chapter and Groups actions for the past year, the annual Chapter and Group Executive Committee election ballots are included along with statements by each candidate. MEMBERS, PLEASE VOTE. There will be both mail and online voting options. Your input is needed!

# GET OUTSIDE

Enjoy the outdoors by joining our upcoming local outings! [Sign up here.](#)



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