



DuPage Sierran

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Chatter From the Chair

I hope this newsletter finds each of you well and starting to venture out safely with friends or family members in small groups. Nature has been a solace for many of us as we deal with the past year and a half of isolation, fear, and loss. With medical advancements and vaccinations protecting many of us, we are dipping our toes back into society and reclaiming our very much missed social contacts. Yippee!

As always, our newsletter celebrates the activities of the River Prairie Group and local environmental efforts. The notable author and prairie enthusiast Cindy Crosby shares her thoughts and love of the prairie plants and critters in her Tallgrass blog. In this entry that Cindy is kindly permitting us to excerpt, she explains the purpose of prescribed burns. With her photos and descriptive imagery, you will feel as though you too are gently fingering the enduring stems of lovely prairie plants. Should monarchs be your passion, do not miss the article from the DuPage Monarch Project highlighting their amazing outreach with communities and the Bioblitz planned for June in cooperation with partner organization the Forest Preserve of DuPage County. And, if you'd rather get your hands on direct experience making a difference in restoration of a local gem, see Bruce Blake's article on working at the Glacial Ridge Forest Preserve in Churchill Woods of Glen Ellyn.

Recent programs are recapped, with a summary of a visit with Kay McKeen of SCARCE, and also the very informative astronomy presentation by Dr. Susan Wilson, who discusses night Skies and their viewing. And speaking of invigorating programs, if you are not familiar with the Prairie Food Co-op, the article in this issue is a must read as they close in on funding for a brick and mortar building, where Lombard will host this fabulous resource for local and responsible food choices. Lastly, check out the results of an “all hands on deck” effort to pass the Clean Energy Jobs Act with the lobby day held April 26 and the May push to move it over the finish line.

Pandemic or not, the volunteers of the RPG continue to be movers and shakers in our area, working to protect and enhance our communities. We welcome your participation. Contact me if you'd like to be more involved.

Connie Schmidt
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Fermilab Natural Areas Joins DuPage Monarch Project as Associate Member

By DuPage Monarch Project

When we think of Fermilab—America’s particle physics and accelerator laboratory—we can’t help but focus on science and technology, on the study of the smallest particles and the most expansive forces in the universe.

But Fermilab’s 6,800-acre site in Batavia also provides a variety of habitats for many of the more familiar treasures of nature, including butterflies and bees. The campus includes 1,000 acres of restored grasslands, to mention just one ecosystem. These habitats are under the care of ecologist Wally Levernier, and are supported by the Fermilab Natural Areas (FNA), a not-for-profit organization. [More...](#)



Fall of 2019 Springfield Rally, photo courtesy of Clean Jobs Coalition website

Lobby Day and CEJA Marching Forward

By Connie Schmidt

On April 26, multitudes of organizations joined together across Illinois to present concerns to our state legislators regarding several environmental bills. The Illinois Environmental Council coordinated the effort and hosted many training sessions in preparation. Leaders in the River Prairie Group acted as captains for several teams, scheduling meetings, assigning roles to volunteer lobbyists, and facilitating the virtual contacts with representatives and senators of our area. [More...](#)

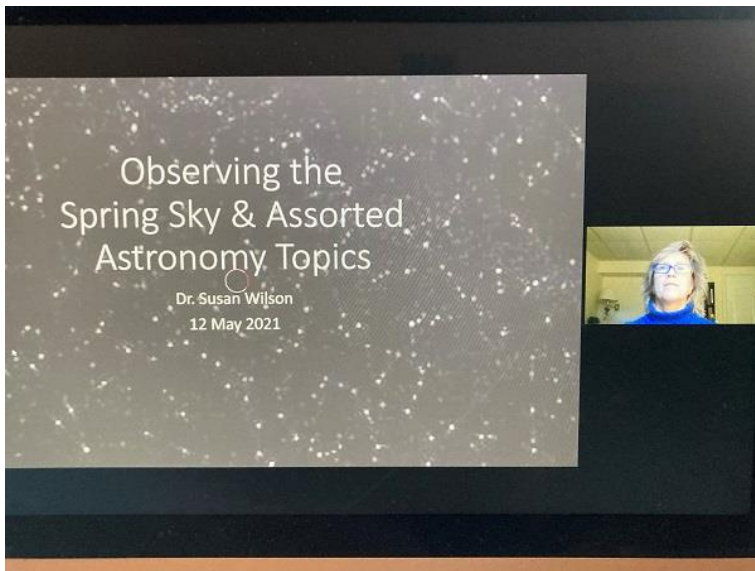


Let's Join the Dark Sky Movement

By Adam Kreuzer
Delegate, International Dark Sky Association

Recently, during International Dark Sky Week, the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) invited visitors to its website to "Join the Dark Sky Movement." Almost two years ago, after being a member of the Glen Ellyn Environmental Commission for many years, I decided to join the Movement as a member and spokesperson for the IDA. Like so many other Dark Sky advocates, I am now filled by the wonders of the Night. [More...](#)

Photo by Al Braden



Recap of Our Spring Programs

By Connie Schmidt

Although the Pandemic continues to alter how work is done in many organizations, the River Prairie Group continues to thrive and engage members with on-line programs. Our attendance is actually up from in-person events, which is quite encouraging. We are grateful that so many of you are tuning in and finding these presentations engaging. [More...](#)



Prairie Fire Season

By Cindy Crosby

"Fire works best in nature as it does in the lab, as a catalyst. It interacts. It quickens, shakes, forces." — Stephen Pyne

It's time.

Rising temperatures. Light winds. Rain, forecast later in the week. There's a sense of urgency. This is the moment.

Time to burn the tallgrass prairie. [More...](#)



Would You Like to Help Restore a Local Woodland?

By Bruce Blake

There are very few remnants left of the old prairie lands: less than 1/2 % of the land in Illinois. Fortunately, several isolated spots within our county have been purchased or donated to preserve them. The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County has several restorations going on. One of these is at the Churchill Woods/Glacial Ridge Forest Preserve between the Illinois Prairie Path and the Union Pacific Tracks in Glen Ellyn. This secluded area is just north of the Illinois Prairie Path, which has an ongoing restoration program of its own.

We are looking for volunteers to help remove invasive plants, and collect and plant native seed. You will also learn a lot about the approximately 300 species of plants that grow on one the highest Glacial Kames in DuPage County. [More...](#)



A Breath of Fresh Air: How Food Co-ops Benefit Their Communities & Our Environment

By Jerry Nash

Food co-ops are grocery stores that are owned by thousands of members of their communities that exist to meet the needs and desires of that community, and almost every food co-op focuses on selling as much locally, sustainably produced food as possible. One such co-op is Prairie Food Co-op, a food co-op that has been organizing since 2012 to open in Lombard, but will serve the greater DuPage area.

Supporting more local farmers and food producers means that more money stays here in our community, but food co-ops are also great for our environment. [More...](#)



Shopping With a Purpose

Leaders of the River Prairie Group were contacted with an exciting opportunity! Altar'd State is a clothing store in the Oak Brook Shopping Center that has a mission to benefit a local organization each quarter. From April to July, on MONDAYS, 10% of the shopping receipts will be donated to the Sierra Club! They want the funds to go toward an issue that involves water, so our leadership has chosen to send the funds to a Centerville, IL, resident organization that has experienced severe damage to their community due to poor water infrastructure and flooding.

This is an opportunity to purchase a gift that will keep on giving! If you need to shop for an item, please consider visiting this store on a MONDAY when a percentage of your purchase will go to help this worthy community. Contact Connie Schmidt if you have any questions: 630 234 3029.

Do You Feel the Call?

The River Prairie Group is looking for passionate Group members who want to run for a position on the Group Executive Committee. The "Ex-Com" sets the budget, programs, and priorities for the local group. They also network with other groups in DuPage with like-minded agendas.

If you feel called to this exciting role and want to help with the leadership of the RPG, contact Connie Schmidt, Chair, for application information and to discuss the responsibilities of this critical and enriching volunteer role. twenstr111@msn.com (Connie's e-mail), or 630-234-3029 (phone).



Celebrate pollinators and help ecologists with the DuPage Monarch Project get a snapshot of wild DuPage!

Simply take photos Jun 21 – 27 of any pollinators you see — hummingbirds, bees, butterflies, beetles, etc. — in a DuPage forest preserve or park and upload them to the iNaturalist app.

Here's how:

1. Download the free iNaturalist app to your smartphone, and create an account. Make sure to let the app use your location so it can record where you take each photo.
2. When you're ready, open iNaturalist, select **Observe** under the camera icon at the bottom, and snap your photo.
3. Select **Next** and then **Share**. Once your photo uploads, you're done (although you can always share more than one)!
4. Ecologists with the DuPage Monarch Project will review everyone's images to get a better idea of pollinator activity in DuPage.

For more on this fun citizen scientist program, **including a tutorial on how to use iNaturalist** and a list of DuPage Monarch Project member agencies, visit dupageforest.org/bioblitz.



Forest Preserve District of DuPage County

dupageforest.org



Last Word

By Margaret Nuccio

ON THE POND

The Geese arrive, honking disapproval.
They land gracelessly on the pond.
Ducks look on smugly.
Why so much fuss, they seem to say,
you don't bother us,
We have stuff to see to.

But the geese have an issue
that must be settled.
A sentinel issues a strident call.
Come over here he bellows!
He means it but no one
pays attention.

He collapses into himself.
Then there is a stirring,
a quiver of excitement.
From beyond the bridge
with much fluttering and fanfare,
come the girls.

Photo by Jeff Gahris

GET OUTSIDE

 Facebook

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

Follow us on Facebook for news, events and updates on the work we do to keep our communities green!

Donate to Sierra Club Illinois Today!