



Thorn Creek AUDUBON SOCIETY

VOLUME 43 - ISSUE 1 JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2015

NEWSLETTER

TCAS AWARDS FOUR GRANTS FOR 2014

Each year the Thorn Creek Audubon Society gives grants to groups or individuals who are working to help preserve the environment and to educate others about environmental issues. In most years TCAS receives requests that exceed available funds. Again this year requests were greater than the year's \$1,200 budget. The grants committee awarded the funds to four different groups.

Willow School of Homewood received a grant of \$150. TCAS has awarded grants in the past to this school to develop a garden where children may interact with native plants, birds and animals. This year the school requested a grant to add more bird houses, a bird bath and more plants with fruits and berries to attract birds.

Friends of the Kankakee received a grant of \$400. TCAS has also awarded grants to this organization in the past to help with its ongoing project to purchase additional land to add to the Illinois Kankakee Sands, which the Nature Conservancy describes as "a naturally functioning landscape which remains almost unchanged since pre-settlement times." The Nature Conservancy is now working with Friends of the Kankakee and other local groups to protect this unique environment.

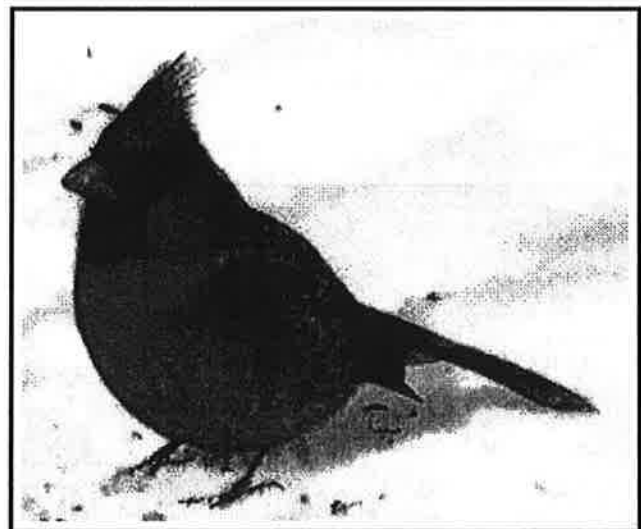
The Illinois Audubon Society received a grant of \$400 to help with a project to increase the Illinois population of Greater Prairie-chickens. This is done by relocating birds from Kansas to the flock at the Prairie Ridge State Natural Area at Newton to maintain genetic fitness within the Illinois flock. These birds, members of the grouse family, were once common in the Illinois landscape.

The Illinois Natural History Survey is also participating in the relocation of the Greater Prairie-chickens and received a grant of \$250 to purchase equipment for monitoring this project.

NATIVE PLANT SALE UNDERWAY NOW

Native plants can bring color to your garden while saving money on water and fertilizer because they are adapted to our soils and climate and often have deeper root systems than other garden plants.

The Thorn Creek Audubon Society is holding another native plant sale this year. Pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter provide the forms and information. Just choose the plants you want, cut out the page and mail it back with your check. Orders must be returned by February 23.



*Northern Cardinals like this are sure to be seen on the Christmas Bird Count January 3.
Photo by Alice McBride*

PROGRAMS

THE THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY HOLDS PROGRAMS THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH FROM SEPTEMBER THROUGH MAY. THEY WILL BE HELD IN THE PARK FOREST LIBRARY UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

**Wednesday, January 7, 2015, 7 p.m.
SEABIRDS OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS**

Vernon Kleen

PARK FOREST LIBRARY

While working in the Pacific Islands as a research biologist on seabirds for the Smithsonian Institution, Vernon Kleen assembled a series of photos of these birds. The western-most Islands of the Hawaiian chain were ideal locations for nesting albatrosses, frigatebirds, boobies, tropicbirds, shearwaters, petrels, and terns. Kleen, an avian ecologist recently retired from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, is a licensed hummingbird bander and has sponsored several hummingbird festivals here and throughout the state.

**Wednesday, February 4, 2015, 7 p.m.
ELEMENTS OF BEING A BETTER BIRDER:**

BIRD TOPOGRAPHY

Geoffrey A. Williamson

PARK FOREST LIBRARY

Bird topography concerns the different parts of a bird, how a bird is put together, and how to map what we see on the surface of a bird. Knowing the names of all the different parts of a bird gives us a language for communicating about what a bird looks like. It also provides an access point for deepening our appreciation of how incredible birds are. Conversance with bird topography is so critical

that you'll be hard pressed to find a field guide that fails to have a section covering the topic. However, that section is often neglected. For birders to whom bird topography is new, this talk will provide an introduction. For others, it will be a chance to refresh our knowledge and hone our skills.

Williamson is co-editor of the Illinois-Indiana region for *North American Birds*, the journal of ornithological record published by the American Birding Association. He is a past president of the Chicago Ornithological Society (COS) and the Illinois Ornithological Society (IOS) and currently serves as chair of IOS's Ornithological Research and Data Committee.

He received the Ludlow Griscom Award from the American Birding Association and also a "Service to Chicago Area Birders (avocation)" award from the Chicago Audubon Society. He leads bird walks, compiles the Lisle-Arboretum Christmas Bird Count, and has given many presentations on birds and birding. When not birding, he works as a professor of electrical engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Wednesday, March 4, 2015, 7 p.m.

INDIAN BOUNDARY PRAIRIES

Karl Gnaedinger

PARK FOREST LIBRARY

Located in the bed of ancient Lake Chicago, the Indian Boundary Prairies offer a glimpse of what Chicago looked like 200 years ago. Comprised of five sites totaling 470 acres, these prairies contain some of the last high quality prairie remnants surviving within the Chicago Lake Plain.

Less than 0.01 percent of the vast prairie ecosystem that was once Illinois now remains, so these prairies are a unique remnant. Gnaedinger is project manager of the prairies for the Nature Conservancy in Illinois.

JON MENDELSON 1940—2014

Jon Eric Mendelson, chair of the Thorn Creek Nature Preserve Management Commission and Emeritus Professor of Environmental Biology at Governors State University, died peacefully November 22 at his home, surrounded by his family.

"He was a great advocate for all local conservation activities," said Al Thomas, president of Thorn Creek Audubon Society.

A field ecologist and land preservationist, Jon worked tirelessly to acquire land for Thorn Creek Woods and to protect local watersheds. He taught courses in ecology to generations of students, played blues and folk with the Moose River Band, and grew garlic for Thorn Creek's Garlic Fest.

"He was a consummate ecology teacher," said Michelle O'Connor, who once worked with him and his students on a project at Irons Oaks. "He knew more about oak tree dynamics than anyone I've ever met."

He is survived by his wife, Judith Dolan Mendelson, three children, Nina (Riyaz Kanji), Robin (Joss Delage), Claudia (Josh Pincus), and five grandchildren, Laura and Evan Kanji, Miles Mendelson-Delage, Celia and Oliver Pincus.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Friends of Thorn Creek Woods, P.O. box 159, Richton Park, IL 60471. A memorial celebration in his honor will be held at a later date.

Those who wish to send cards or letters may send them to Judy Mendelson and Family, 24300 Western Avenue, Park Forest, IL 60466.

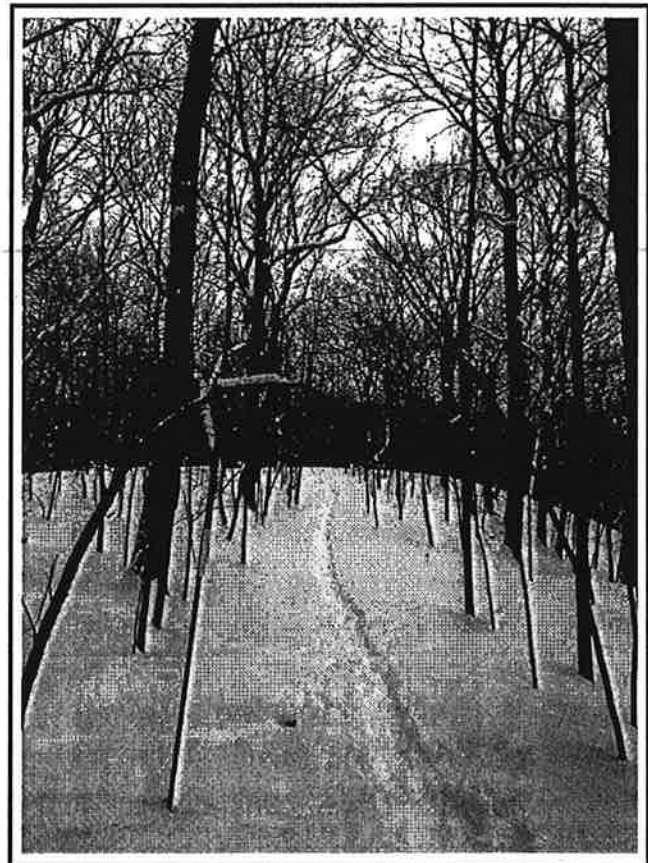
At right, Thorn Creek Woods in Winter. Photo by Sue Zelek

WILD THINGS CONFERENCE SET FOR JANUARY 31

This is the year for the Sixth Biennial Wild Things, a Chicago Region Conference for People and Nature. The 2015 day-long event is set for January 31 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Student Center East at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

A highlight this year is the story of putting the bison back on the Illinois prairie at the Nachusa Grasslands. Other presentations and workshops will explore the latest in natural areas conservation and advocacy, wildlife protection and monitoring. Wild Things brings together the region's experts, both professionals and dedicated volunteers.

Early registration ends January 5, and on-line registration ends January 19.



BARTEL WINS WILDERNESS AWARD

The Bartel Grassland in Matteson is one of three sites in the Forest Preserves of Cook County to receive the Chicago Wilderness Conservation and Native Landscaping Award this year. These awards recognize the Forest Preserve's leadership in restoring biodiversity.

The other two sites named were the East Thatcher Woods Oak Woodland Savanna on the Des Plaines River near Oak Park and the Somme Nature Preserve Restoration at Northbrook. The award was presented December 11 at Loyola University's Mundelein Center to Bartel Steward Dick Riner. This is the second year Bartel has received this award.

Chicago Wilderness is a regional alliance of more than 300 organizations working together to restore local nature and improve

the quality of life for all who live here. It includes local, state and federal agencies, large conservation organizations and volunteer groups.

In 2006 Bartel won a Chicago Wilderness Award for Grassroots Conservation Leadership, given by the Chicago Wilderness Habitat Project. The National Audubon Society has named Bartel Grassland an Important Bird Area for Bobolinks.

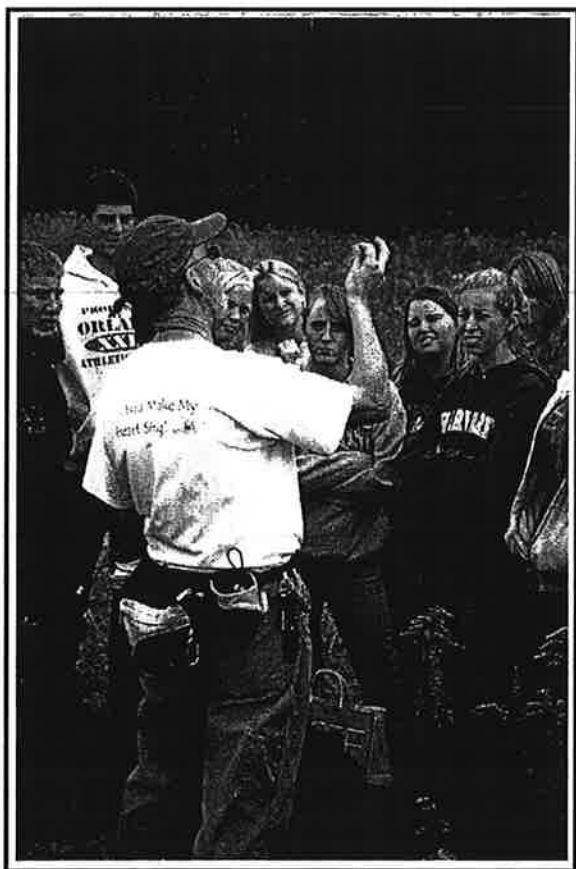
Bartel has also been recognized in National Audubon publications. The 2014 Audubon Annual Report, a publication which goes to all chapters in the nation, includes a two-page photo spread showing youngsters exploring Bartel. Four inner-city kids from the Wild Indigo Nature Explorations are standing ankle deep in a pool in the center of the grassland, eyes big with excitement at the tadpoles they have been watching. They were among the 86 kids at Bartel that day with Riner and Judy Pollock.

Youngsters of many ages and from many areas have toured Bartel over the years, and some high school students who took the tour have come back to volunteer on workdays.

TCAS NOMINATING COMMITTEE TO MEET

The Thorn Creek Audubon Society's nominating committee will be meeting soon to choose a slate of officers to serve for the next fiscal year,

Committee Chair is Aura Duke, and members are Terrie Spillers, Alice McBride, and Joan Crabb. Any member of TCAS may suggest a candidate for nomination for any of the Audubon Society offices by calling Aura Duke at 708-748-6407 before February 8.



Steward Dick Riner introduces a group of high school students to Bartel Grasslands.

Thorn Creek Audubon Society Annual Native Plant Sale-2015

Pricing:

Perennials, Grasses, Trees & Shrubs as indicated
 6 Plants(all of one kind of \$3.75 Perennials-\$18.50)

Mail orders to:

Jan Heideman
 26826 South Melrose Lane
 Crete, IL 60417

ALL ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 23, 2015

Questions:

Jan 708-672-5083

Pick up orders on Saturday, May 16, 2015 at
 Izaak Walton Preserve, 1100 Ridge Road, Homewood, IL.
 Between 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

#	Trees& Shrubs (5 Gallon)	Price	Qty.	\$ Total
1	Bitternut Hickory**	\$25.00		
2	New Jersey Tea**	\$20.00		
3	Redbud	\$25.00		
4	Sweetbay Magnolia**	\$30.00		
5	Hill's Oak**	\$25.00		
6	Wild Black Current**	\$20.00		
7	Sassafras**	\$25.00		
	Total			\$

#	Perennials	Price	Qty.	\$ Total
8	Maidenhair Fern	\$8.00		
9	Columbine	\$3.75		
10	Butterfly Weed*	\$3.75		
11	Whorled Milkweed*	\$3.75		
12	Calico Aster*	\$3.75		
13	Arrow-leaved Aster	\$3.75		
14	Turtle Head	\$3.75		
15	Prairie Coreopsis*	\$3.75		
16	Pale Coneflower*	\$3.75		
17	Wild Geranium	\$3.75		
18	Prairie Smoke	\$8.00		
19	Early Sunflower*	\$3.75		
20	Rose Mallow	\$3.75		
21	Blue Flag Iris	\$3.75		
22	Ostrich Fern	\$8.00		
23	Missouri Evening Primrose	\$3.75		
24	Floxglove Beardtongue	\$3.75		
25	Jacob's Ladder	\$3.75		
26	Black Eyed Susan*	\$3.75		
27	Wild Petunia	\$3.75		
28	Royal Catchfly*	\$3.75		
29	False Solomon's Seal	\$8.00		
30	Riddell's Goldenrod*	\$3.75		
31	White Wild Indigo#	\$3.75		
	Total			\$
	Grasses			
32	Common Fox Sedge	\$3.75		
33	Sweet Grass	\$3.75		
34	Bottlebrush Grass	\$3.75		
35	Little Blue Stem	\$3.75		
36	Northern Dropseed	\$3.75		
37	Star Sedge#	\$3.75		
	Total			\$

*Attracts Butterflies

**This plant is a butterfly host plant or nectar source

New for this year!

For 2015: prices on trees and Shrubs

remained the same or were reduced in price!

Slight price increase in Perennials and Grasses, but
 larger plants are being provided!

Earlier delivery!

Plants provided by: **POSSIBILTY PLACE NURSERY**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY

Grand Total \$ _____

THORN CREEK AUDUBON SOCIETY
2015 NATIVE PLANT DESCRIPTIONS

Perennials	Scientific Name		Soil	Height	Color	Bloom
Maidenhair Fern	Adiantum pedatum	S, W	W-WM	2'		
Columbine	Aquilegia canadensis	S,W	M-D	1-2'	RED/YEL	April-June
Butterfly Weed*	Asclepias tuberosa	P,S	M-D	2-3'	ORANGE	June-Aug
Whorled Milkweed*	Asclepias verticillata	P,S	M-D	2'	GREEN/WHITE	June-Aug
Calico Aster*	Aster lateriflorus	P,S,W	WM-DM	1-3'	WHITE	Aug.-Oct.
Arrow-leaved Aster	Aster sagittifolius	S,W	M-DM	2-3'	BLUE	Aug.-Oct.
Turtle Head	Chelone glabra	P, S	W-WM	2-4'	CREAM	July-Sept.
Prairie Coreopsis*	Coreopsis palmata	P,S	M-D	2-3'	YELLOW	June-Aug
Pale Coneflower*	Echinacea pallida	P,S	M-D	2-4'	LAVENDER	June-July
Wild Geranium	Genanium maculatum	P,S,W	M-DM	1-2'	LAVENDER	April-July
Prairie Smoke	Geum triflorum	P, S	WM-DM	6-12"	RED	April-June
Early Sunflower*	Heliopsis helianthoides	P, S	WM-DM	2-5'	YELLOW	June-Sept
Rose Mallow	Hibiscus militaris	P,S	W-WM	5'	WHITE/PINK	July-Sept.
Blue Flag Iris	Iris virginica shrevei	P,S	W-M	2-3'	LT.BLUE	May-July
Ostrich Fern	Matteuccia struthiopteris	S,W	W-M	2-4'		
Missouri Evening Primrose	Oenothera macrocarpa	P,S	DM-D	8-14"	YELLOW	June-July
Floxglove Beardtongue	Penstemon digitalis	P,S,W	M-DM	2-4'	WHITE	June-July
Jacob's Ladder	Polemonium reptans	P,S,W	WM-DM	8-24"	BLUE	April-June
Black Eyed Susan*	Rudbeckia hirta	P,S	WM-DM	1-3'	YELLOW	June-Oct.
Wild Petunia	Ruellia humilis	P,S	M-D	1-2'	VIOLET	July-Aug.
Royal Catchfly*	Silene regia	P,S	M-DM	2-4'	RED	July-Aug.
False Solomon's Seal	Smilacina racemosa	S,W	WM-D	1-3'	WHITE	April-June
Riddell's Goldenrod*	Solidago riddellii	P	W-M	2-3'	YELLOW	Aug-Oct.
White Wild Indigo#	Baptisia alba	P	WM-D	3-6'	WHITE	June-July
Grasses						
Common Fox Sedge	Carex stipata	P,S,W	W-M	1-3'		May-June
Sweet Grass	Hierochloe odorata	P,S,W	W-M	1-2'		April-June
Bottlebrush Grass	Hystirx patula	S,W	M-DM	3'		June-July
Little Blue Stem	Schizachyrium scoparium	P,S,W	M-D	2-3'		Aug.-Sept.
Northern Dropseed	Sporobolus heterolepis	P,S,W	WM-D	2-3'		Aug.-Sept.
Star Sedge#	Carex radiata	S,W	WM-M	18"		May-June

* attracts butterflies
new this year

SUN EXPOSURE: P=NORMALLY GROWN INF FULL SUN, BUT WILL DO WELL WITH 1/2 DAY OR MORE OF SUN
S= Savanna-partially shaded, woodland edges, openings between trees
W=woodland- heavily shaded by closed canopy of trees with filtered sunlight

SOIL CONDITIONS: W= wet (soggy or marshy most of the year)
WM=wet mesic (medium moist to soggy most of the year)
M= mesic (medium moist- comparable to average garden soil)
DM dry mesic (medium dry- well drained but retains some moisture)
D= dry (excessively drained, sandy soil)

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT WANTS CITIZEN SCIENTISTS

The National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology want you to become a citizen scientist and help them count birds.

You can do this by joining the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) for four days in February: Friday, February 13 through Monday, February 16. Birdwatchers of all ages, from beginners to experts, will be counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations.

Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. If you have never participated in the GBBC or any other Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you will need to create a new account. If you already have an account you can use your existing login information.

If all of this sounds too complicated, there is an easier way, says, Thorn Creek Audubon Conservation Chair Dick Riner. You can call him with your count results at 708-560-5683 and he will report your findings along with his.

TCAS LOSES A FRIEND

We are sorry to learn of the death of our long-time member and friend Pat Braker on December 16. Our sincere sympathy goes to her husband, our past president Bill Braker, and family.

President
Bill Braker, and the family

FIELD NOTES

TO REPORT AREA SIGHTINGS CALL
MARY WHITE AT 708-396-0794

If you leave a message please leave a phone number where we can reach you.

OCTOBER

10/04 Flock of Meadowlarks at Bartel Grassland and a Sandhill Crane at Ridgeland and Vollmer. *Michelle O'Connor*

10/26 Approximately 25 Cedar Waxwings and several Juncos. Cal-Sag Trail near Lake Katherine. *Mary White*

10/29 12 Sandhill Cranes flying very low over Bartel Grassland and many more heard above the clouds. *Dick Riner*

NOVEMBER

11/09 4 adult and 4 immature Mute Swans. Lake Katherine. *Mary White*

11/12 Flock after flock of Sandhill Cranes flying south over Lake Katherine.

Dick Thomas

11/12 200 Sandhill Cranes over Bartel Grassland. *Dick Riner*

11/15 15 Blue Jays in her rural Crete yard, along with 8 Goldfinches, 3 White-breasted Nuthatches, 1 Downy Woodpecker and 1 Red-bellied Woodpecker.

Joyce Freudenberg

11/18 An immature dark-morph Red-tailed Hawk on the ground in Area J Co-op in Park Forest, eating a skunk (yes, a skunk).

Joan Crabb

11/22 At least 100 Crows gathering to roost in trees along the Metra Red Line near 95th Street. *Mary White*

12/13 Between 100 and 150 Common Mergansers and a few Common Loons mixed in at Saganashkee. *Mary White*