



***A SENSE OF PLACE AND BELONGING –
DO
MEADOWLARKS AND OAKS SPEAK TO US?***

PRAIRIE STATE CONSERVATION COALITION

Steven Byers



E.O Smith wrote:

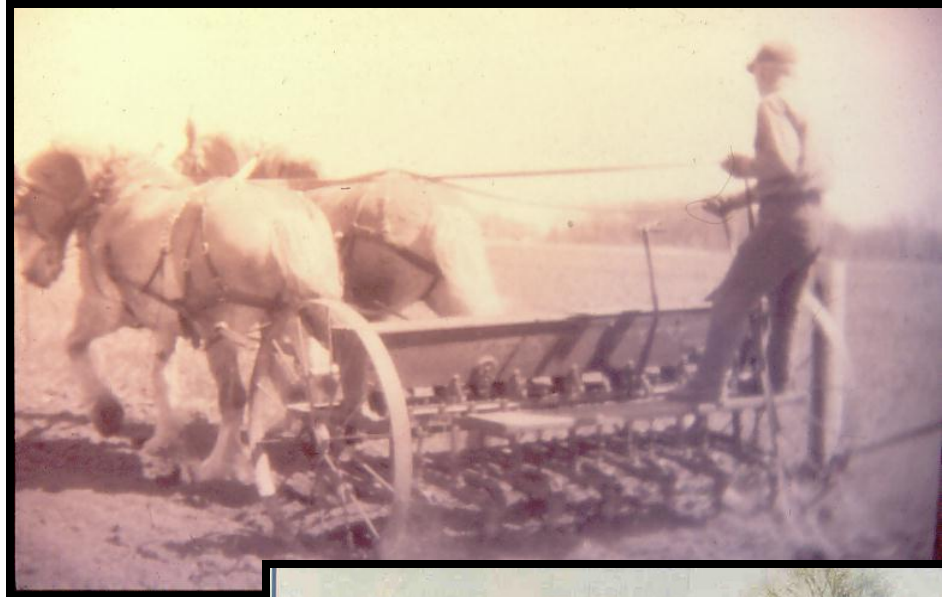
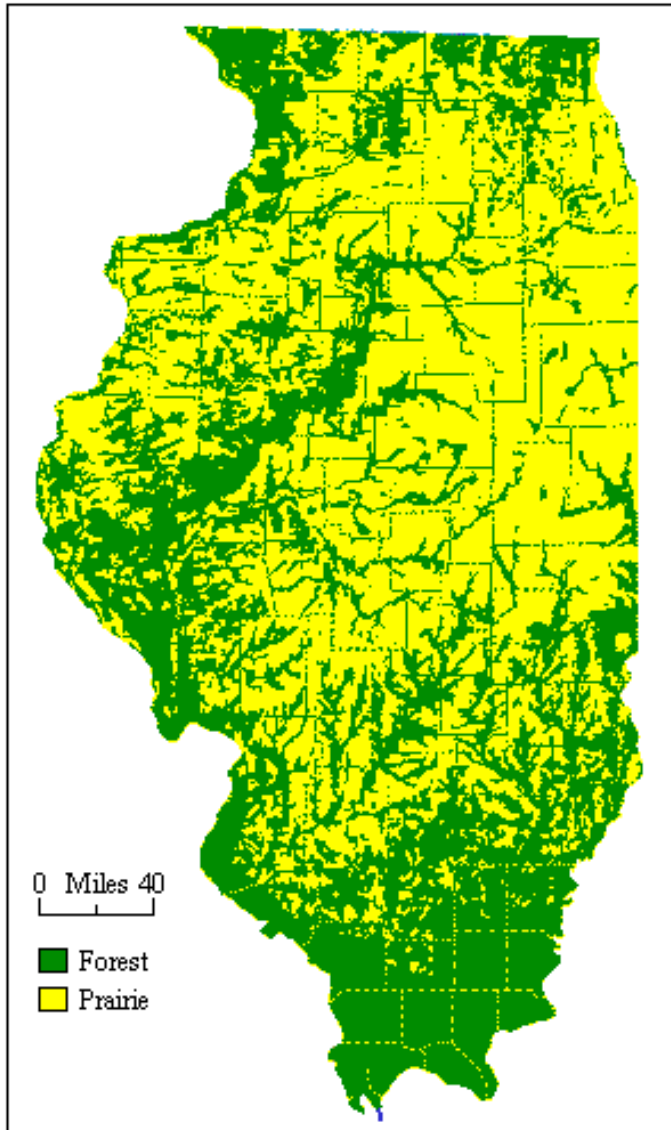


Unknown traveler between Chicago and Madison (1835) wrote:



least bitterns

The landscape was nearly irreversibly lost during the course of only 5 generations; and remains under threat today.

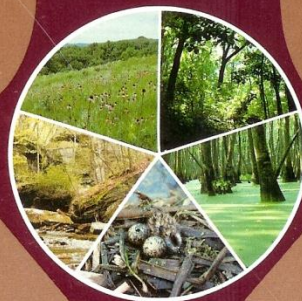


**The Illinois
Natural
Areas Plan**

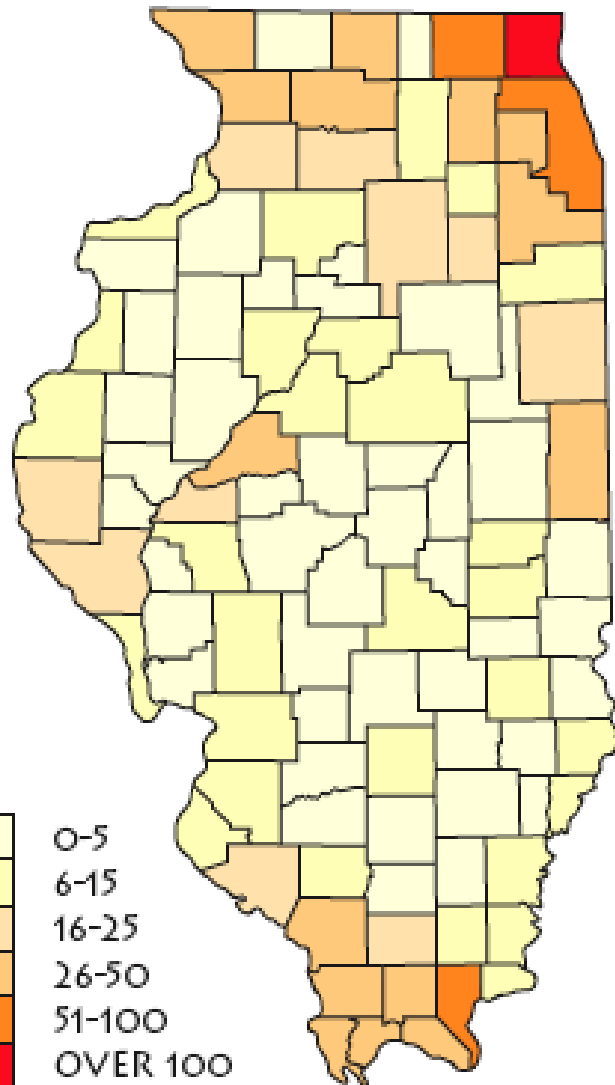
To Preserve
and Protect
Our Heritage

ILLINOIS NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY

- the first inventory to focus on natural plant communities,
- statewide survey conducted 1976-1978,
- used a grading system (A-B-C-D),
- less than 7/100 of 1% of our original landscape survives



ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES IN ILLINOIS



INAI sites in Illinois

Forest Preserve District Act-1913

“...to preserve, protect, restock and restore, our natural lands in their natural state and condition...”

\$1.4 billion in referenda (last 10 years to support land acquisition and development) for 6 agencies

A painting of a wooded landscape. The foreground is filled with trees and brush with autumn foliage in shades of orange, yellow, and brown. The trees have dark, slender trunks. In the background, a body of water is visible, reflecting the sky. The overall scene is serene and captures a sense of place.

A SENSE OF PLACE AND BELONGING...

Dayton Bluffs
by Joel Sheesley

PERHAPS YOU FIND DELIGHT WITH...



trout lily



blood root



red-eyed vireo

OR THESE?



ovenbird



pileated woodpecker



A detailed oil painting of a wetland landscape. The foreground is dominated by tall, thin, reddish-brown grasses and reeds. In the middle ground, a stream flows through a field of golden-brown grasses. The background features a line of bare trees and a pale, overcast sky. The overall mood is quiet and somewhat melancholic.

YOUR SENSE OF PLACE MAY BE DIFFERENT?

Ferson Creek Fen
by Joel Sheesley



swamp milkweed



blue flag iris



button bush



sedge wren

OR – THE PRAIRIE MAY SPEAK TO YOU...





OR – PERHAPS THE LOSS OF IT...

BLUFF SPRING FEN – MY REFUGE...





Kalm's lobelia



Riddell's goldenrod



false asphodel



Baltimore checkerspot



skunk cabbage



marsh marigold

**The first restoration in April 1980,
removing shingles from a hill
prairie...**



Seed Collecting Time is Here!

Yes, Fall is just about here, and with it comes the big push for seed collecting. Many of our Fall workdays will devote part of the time to just this. We have quite a few areas in the Fen that need to be cleared of brush, but before we can clear them, we have to clear without seeding. Obviously, weeds take over and keep out the prairie plants. The foreign seed collecting is not hard. We show you exactly which

plants to collect from and how to do it. It's not strenuous work, and with a group of us doing it, it becomes a lot of fun. It's our equivalent of a berry picking party. If you want to help collect, call Mel Manner at 888-4426. I will make sure and notify you of when we'll be working. Otherwise, just show up during any of the October and November Workdays. You will be walking in among all sorts of plants, so thick pants are recommended. We provide everything else.

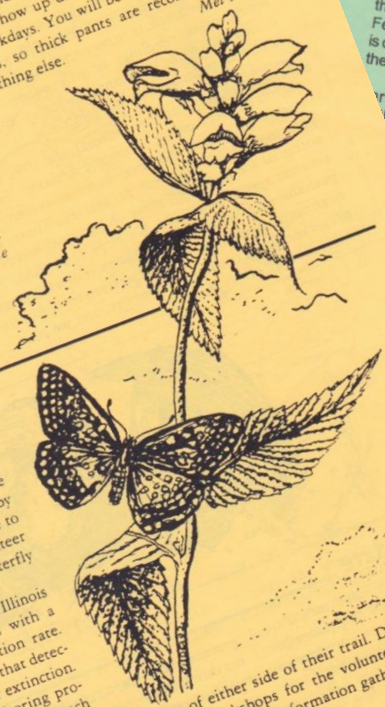
Mel Manner

Seed Processing Party

The annual seed processing party will once again be hosted by Doug Taron. (Call Doug at 695-4568 for directions). This year it's on November 22nd at 1 p.m. We'll be crushing, sorting and mixing a variety of seeds. It's a lot of fun, but you do get dirty, so wear old clothes. We also have a potluck dinner at the same time, so make your favorite dish and join the fun!

Newsworthy Netting

On July 5, 1992, The Elgin-Courier News featured an article about "Fen Friend" Doug Taron and his pursuit of researching and monitoring butterflies. The article traced Doug's initial interest in butterfly collecting back to his childhood in Massachusetts where he received a butterfly net one Easter; to his days at Colby College in Maine, where he bought his first real guide to butterflies; to present, where Doug is the volunteer manager of the Illinois Nature Conservancy's butterfly monitoring program. One of many interesting points covered was that Illinois has approximately 100 varieties of butterflies with a variety of names and sizes and a 5% extinction rate. Through the monitoring program, it is hoped that detection of species in trouble can prevent further extinction. Also, Doug has expanded the butterfly monitoring program from 10 to 40 sites with a volunteer assigned to each. The program is primarily interested in butterflies that are specific species of plant—known as



...meters of either side of their trail. Doug also runs field training workshops for the volunteers during the off-season and, enters information gathered into a computer database.

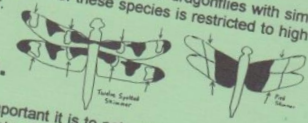
JoAnn Benight

Insects for the Casual Observer A Paler Shade of White: More Dragonflies from the Fen



Insects for the Casual Observer has devoted the last several columns to dragonflies and damselflies. There remains one final set of dragonflies that is readily apparent to the casual Fen visitor. These are the dragonflies that show conspicuous areas of a chalky white coloring, called pruinescence, on the wings or body. Three of the Fen's dragonflies show these markings. The pattern and location of the pruinescence identifies the species. As is often the case with birds, it is males of these species that show the conspicuous markings. Females do not have the pruinescence, and are harder to identify. All are medium sized black or brown dragonflies. Particularly during the month of June. As the name implies, the pruinescence extends over the entire abdomen of the males. They can be seen in many places at the Fen, however they are especially conspicuous near the Fen's common dragonflies where the pruinescence is on the body rather than the wings. The Common Whitetail (*Libellula lydia*) is one of the Fen's most abundant and conspicuous dragonflies, particularly during the month of June. As the name implies, the pruinescence extends over the entire abdomen of the males. They can be seen in many places at the Fen, however they are especially conspicuous near the Fen's common dragonflies where the pruinescence is on the body rather than the wings. The Twelve Spotted Skimmer (*Libellula pulchella*) is visible in sedgy parts of the Fen in midsummer. Both females have three black spots on each of the four wings. This is the only one of the common whitetail. The Widow Skimmer (*Libellula luctuosa*) is most apparent late in the summer. The wings of this species have a bold white stripe on the outer edge of a bold black stripe. The stripe extends through both the hindwing. Pled skimmers can be observed in most of the sunnier parts of the preserve, and are

...three of these species can be identified by looking for dragonflies with similar wing patterns, in the company of males. None of these species is restricted to high quality areas like Fen, all are worth looking for.



people, too.

...reminded me how important it is to not only savor each moment as we live it, but to share these moments. Two of our volunteers have lost their spouses within the last several people, myself included, lamented the fact that we had missed the chance to know these people and to help them deal with the frustration of dealing with a volunteer who has moved to California, leaving a large hole to fill. At his funeral, I know and enjoy spending time with were there. We couldn't remember to each other. I really involve myself in more than just my one site. While this means I am not really my own, I am getting to know a truly wonderful bunch of people and dedicated. Without the support of each other, none of us would be able to do what we do. It is common to all volunteer groups. As friends and partners, we enrich each other. We are not only protecting and restoring our plant and animal communities, but we are also providing a place where we can all come out of it feeling well. My "neighborhood" doesn't consist of the houses and...

The Friends of the Fen formed; advocating for stewardship and protection of the fen...

The Friends worked hard to reverse traditions of misuse and abuse...



...and establish new traditions of appreciation and awareness.



**CELEBRATING A SENSE OF PLACE - DEDICATION OF
BLUFF SPRING FEN AS AN ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVE**

Everybody needs beauty
as well as bread,
places to play in and pray in,
where **nature** may heal and give
strength **to body and soul.**

– John Muir

**OTHERS – ACROSS CULTURES AND ACROSS TIME
SPEAK OF A SENSE OF BELONGING...**





To be whole. To be complete.
Wildness reminds us what it means
to be human, what we are
connected to rather than what we
are separate from.

— *Terry Tempest Williams* —

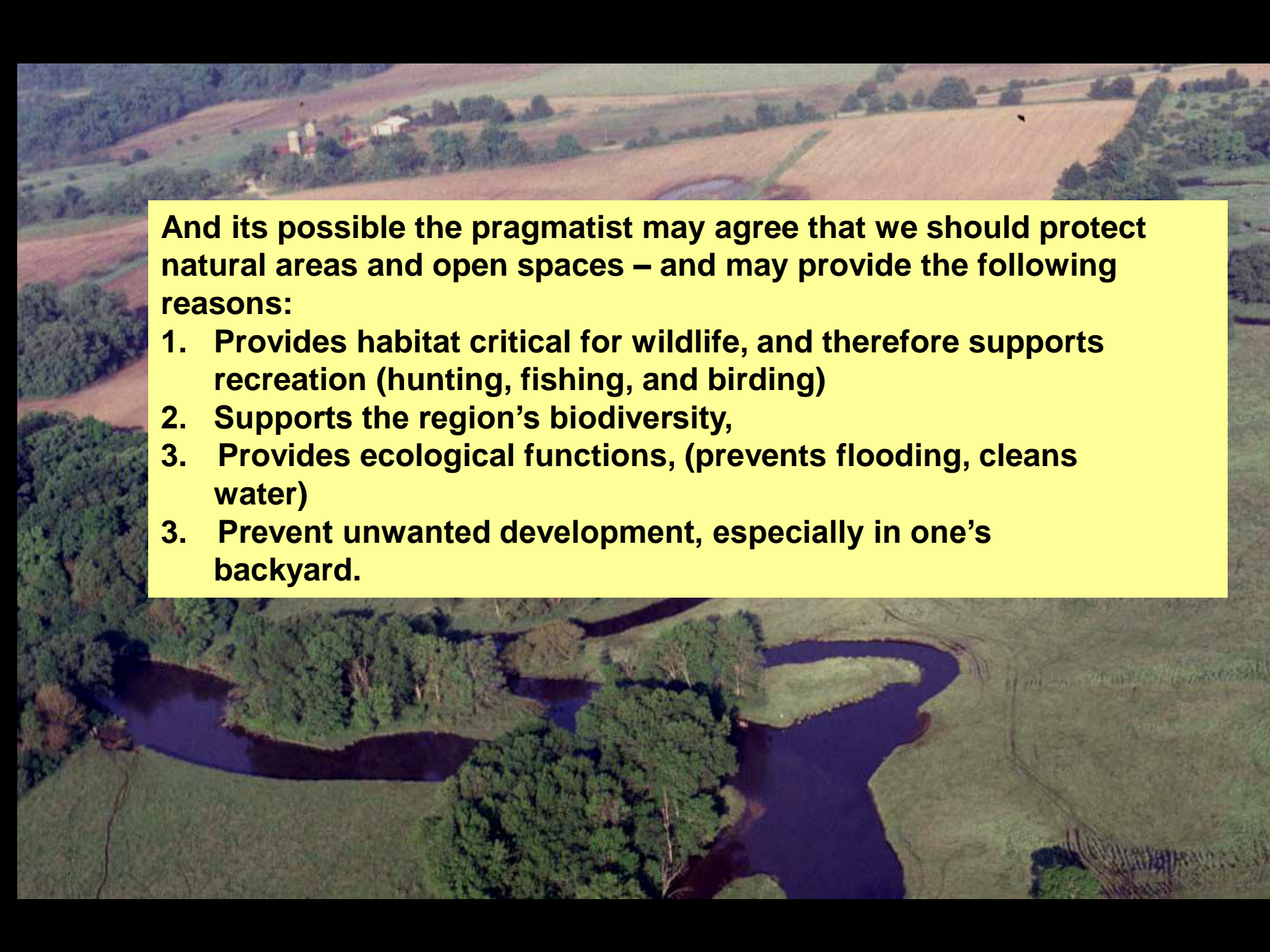


Keep the child alive. A child
never tires of hearing the birds
sing, never gets bored
looking at flowers...

— *Mata Amritanandamayi* —

The uninformed or ignorant may state that natural areas and open spaces are nothing more than vacant land...



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a dark, winding river flows through a lush green forest. To the right, a large, open green field is visible. In the background, a farm with several buildings and silos sits on a hillside. The surrounding area is a mix of green fields and brown, tilled soil.

And its possible the pragmatist may agree that we should protect natural areas and open spaces – and may provide the following reasons:

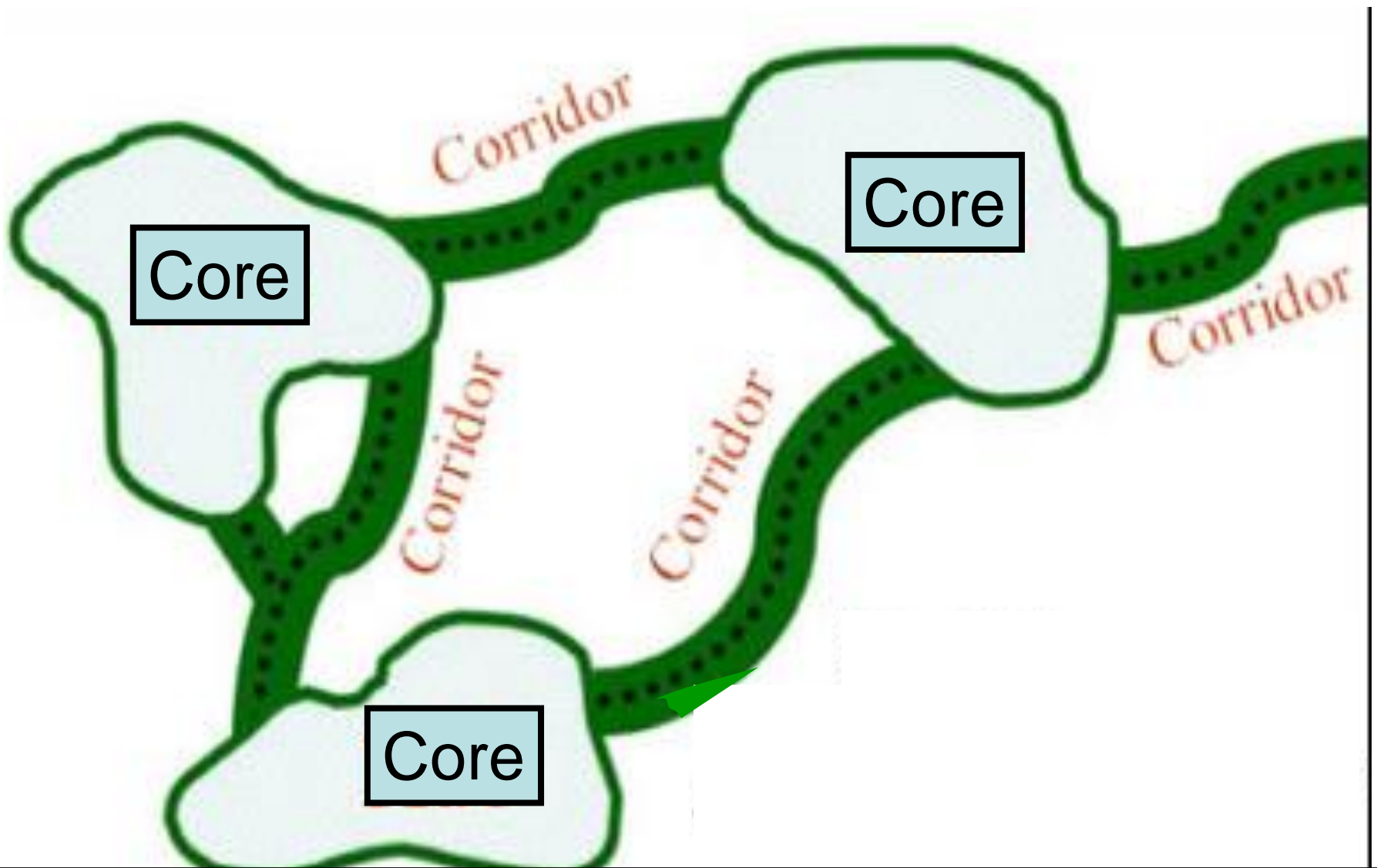
- 1. Provides habitat critical for wildlife, and therefore supports recreation (hunting, fishing, and birding)**
- 2. Supports the region's biodiversity,**
- 3. Provides ecological functions, (prevents flooding, cleans water)**
- 3. Prevent unwanted development, especially in one's backyard.**

The background of the slide is a photograph of a natural landscape. It features large, vibrant green leaves with prominent veins, some showing signs of insect damage. Interspersed among the leaves are clusters of small, delicate pink flowers. The overall scene is bright and natural, suggesting a healthy ecosystem.

**Reed Noss. 1987. Natural Areas Journal 7:2-13.
*Protecting natural areas in fragmented landscapes.***

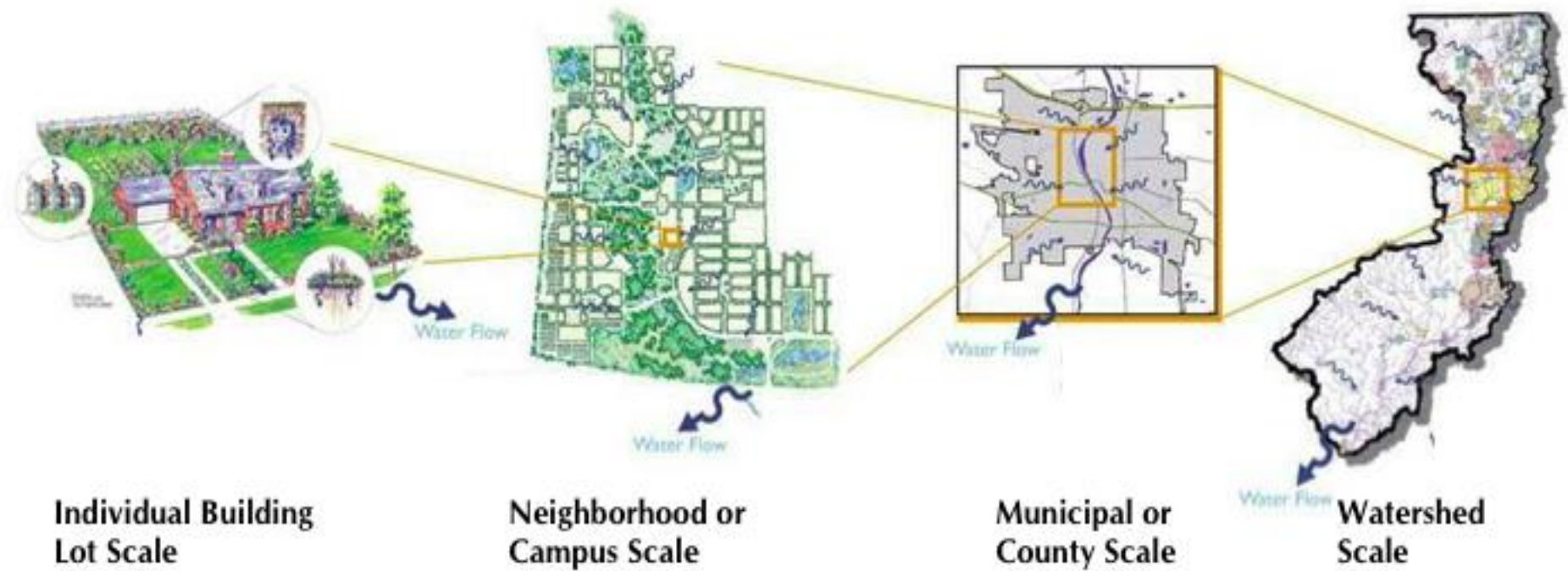
Recommendations:

- 1. Make the islands of habitat bigger,**
- 2. Provide compatible buffers,**
- 3. Maintain/create landscape linkages.**



Recommendations illustrated graphically here, embraced by many conservation organizations...

And these practices can be embraced at multiple landscape scales...



**Rain gardens,
native landscaping,
bioswales**

**Reduce hard
surfaces, storm-
water retention,
buffer strips on
waterways**

**Conservation
design development,
land protection and
habitat restoration**

WHAT ARE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES?

Products	Paper, crops, fish and game, drinking water
Regulating Services	Flood protection, pest control, filtering water
Supporting	Oxygen production, soil formation, habitat provision
Cultural experiences	Spiritual, educational, scientific, or aesthetic value

In many cases, it is hard to quantify these values. However, IF you need oxygen to survive, you ARE dependent upon the natural world...

VALUE OF TOTAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES STUDIED

Natural areas and open spaces provide important ecosystem services...

**\$6.4 billion in 7-county
Region of NE Illinois.**

Natural ecosystems contribute well over **\$6.4 billion per year** of economic value to the 7-county CMAP region—although this is an underestimate.

2013 real GRP of the Chicago MSA: \$551 billion.

Chicago
Wilderness

THE
CONSERVATION FUND



Chicago Metropolitan
Agency for Planning



Flood control	4.2 \$ billion/yr
Ground water recharge.	1.5 \$ billion/yr
Water purification	634 \$ million/yr
Carbon storage	23 \$ million/yr



Science can point out dangers,
but science can not turn the direction
of minds and hearts. That is the
province of spiritual powers within
and without our very beginning –
powers that are the mysteries of
life itself.

— *Oren Lyons* —



The thing that I always remember is the mystery in nature. And when we try and understand it, we do it through academia and try to control it. But because we can't, there's a mystery there, which means that the possibility of that relationship growing, changing, becoming something new is also always there. And nobody controls that either. When a person has an experience with nature that changes you – it's transformative.

Dr. Carolyn Finney

What mysteries do natural areas bequeath?

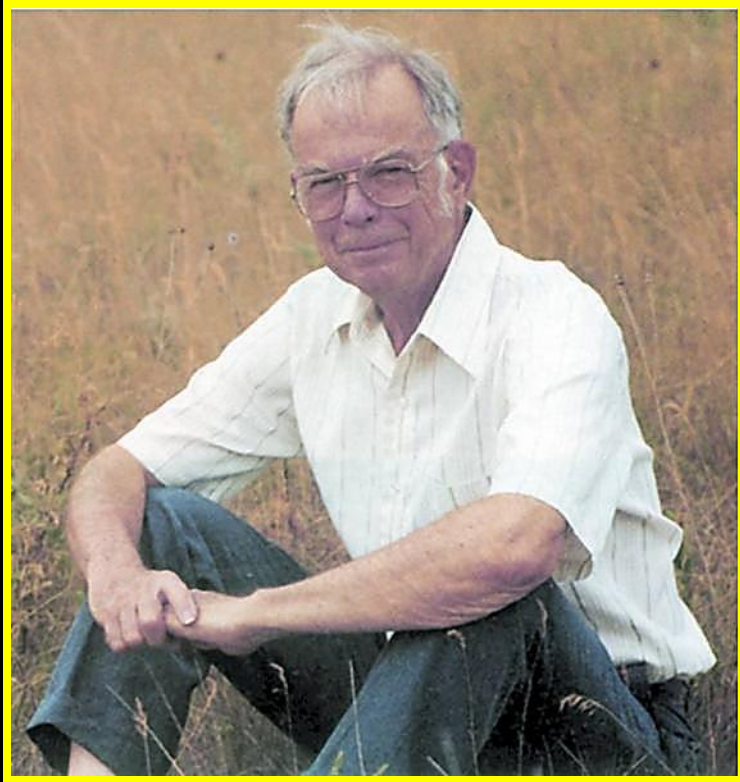
- natural areas serve as a template for restoration,

- natural areas serve as the seed source for restoration,

- living spaces for regional biodiversity ,

- natural areas inspire the public, and

- restoration engages the public.



George Fell

"We are living at the time of man's final conquest over the wilderness. What we have saved in the next few years ... will be all that will remain to pass on from generation to generation. There will never be another chance."



George's legacy:

- Founder of The Nature Conservancy, 1950-1958

- Established The Natural Lands Institute, 1958

- Created the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act, 1958-1963,

- Established the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, 1963,

- Supported stewardship noting: "native plants would recover when given a chance...following burning"

Volo Bog Nature Preserve



**Illinois Natural Preservations Act 525 ILCS 30/
1963**

...the public policy of the State...to secure for the people...an enduring resource of natural areas...by establishing a system of nature preserves...

Areas dedicated as nature preserves are... declared to be put to their highest, best, and most important use for the public benefit...



ILLINOIS NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

Statewide: (as of May 2019)

- 398 sites totaling 60,094 acres
dedicated as Illinois Nature Preserves**
- 192 sites totaling 53,616 acres
registered as Illinois Land and Water Reserve**

Protecting Sites as Illinois Nature Preserves...



Provides for the highest level of protection for land in Illinois.

Engages partners in land protection and stewardship.

Enhances opportunities for additional funding.

Increases awareness of the importance of the site.

Served as model to the United Nations for land protection.

THE NATURAL WORLD SPEAKS TO US ... AND HAS DONE SO ACROSS CULTURES AND ACROSS THE AGES...



A black and white photograph of John Muir, an older man with a long, full white beard and hair, sitting in a forest. He is wearing a dark jacket and is looking towards the right side of the frame. The background consists of tall evergreen trees and a misty or hazy atmosphere.

In every walk with nature one receives
far more than he seeks.

—— *John Muir* ——



Perhaps you have noticed that even in the very lightest breeze you can hear the voice of the cottonwood tree; this we understand is its prayer to the Great Spirit, for not only men, but all things and all beings pray to Him continually in differing ways.

— *Black Elk* —



***SPECIAL CONNECTIONS WITH THE NATURAL WORLD...
with landowners...
Betty Babcock and Spring Hollow Nature Preserve addition.***



With friends...and with volunteers (champions of our natural world).





**Mary "O" and Burt Walker, champions
- Ferson Creek Fen Nature Preserve**



Doug Taron; champion at Bluff Spring Fen



Friends of the Fen on “cookie day” when 30-50 volunteers participate in management activities

Sue Bohne, champion at Trout Park Nature Preserve





**George Dirkovitch, champion at
Indian Boundary Prairies**

June Keibler, champion at Sleepy Hollow Ravine Nature Preserve



Before...



After...



Bluff Spring Fen Nature Preserve – receives Platinum Award from Chicago Wilderness for Stewardship in 2014



Before clearing invasive brush



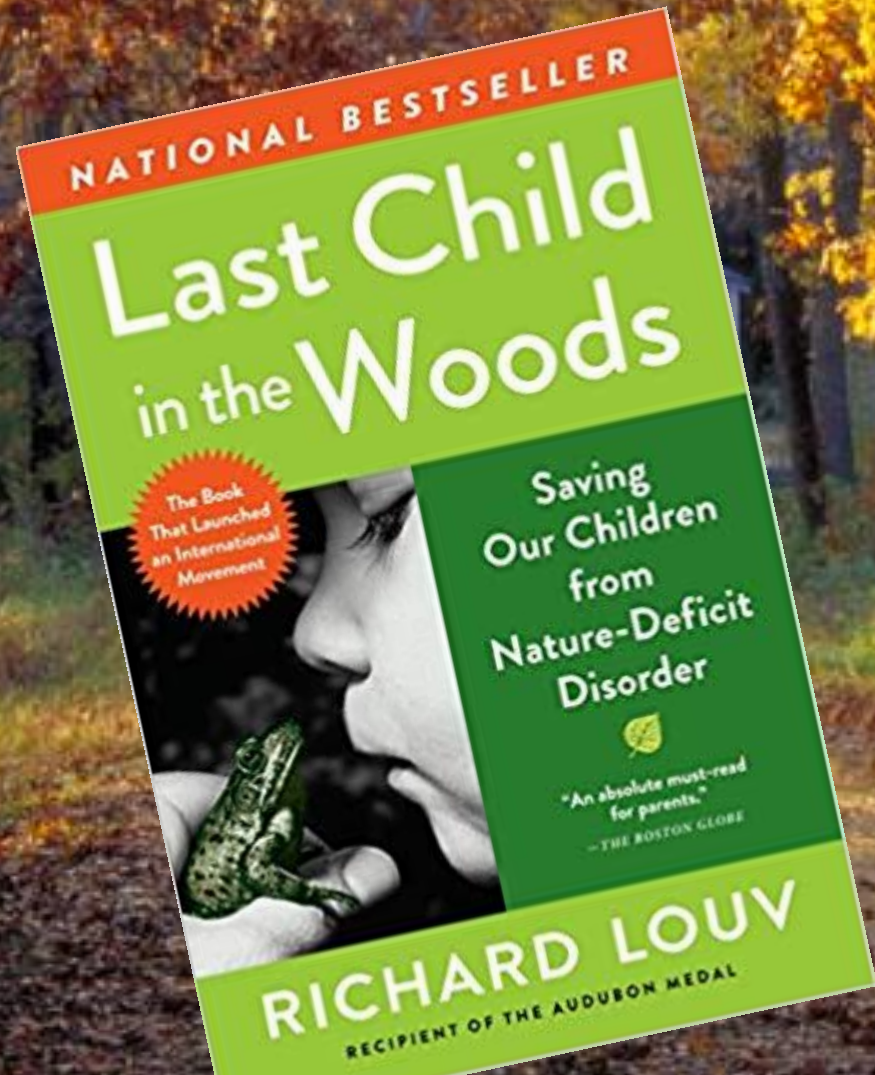


After clearing invasive brush, skunk cabbage in bloom

April 1980 – removing shingles from hill prairie




**SOCIETY JUST NOW BEGINNING TO REALIZE
THE VALUES OF NATURE AND OPEN SPACES FOR
OUR SENSE OF WELL-BEING AND FOR OUR YOUTH**



The (Pretty Much Totally) Complete Health Case for Urban Nature

An annotated, chart-filled look at the scientific evidence.

ERIC JAFFE |  @e_jaffe | Oct 20, 2015 |  5 Comments



Individuals are happier when living in urban areas with greater amounts of open space: (even a single tree can have an effect):

- reduces stress,
- attention spans increased (including children),
- reduces aggression (road rage),
- post-operative recovery improved,
- happiness and well-being enhanced.



Prize natural spaces and shorelines most of all because once they are gone, with rare exceptions they are gone forever. In our bones, we need the natural curves of hills, the scent of chaparral, the whisper of pines, the possibility of wilderness. We require these patches of nature for our mental health and spiritual resilience.

Richard Louv



Sometimes I come across a tree which seems like Buddha or Jesus: loving, compassionate, still, unambitious, enlightened, in eternal meditation, giving pleasure to a pilgrim, shade to a cow, berries to a bird, beauty to its surroundings, health to its neighbors, branches for the fire, leaves for the soil, asking nothing in return, in total harmony with the wind and the rain. How much can I learn from a tree? The tree is my church, the tree is my temple, the tree is my mantra, the tree is my poem and my prayer.

Satish Kumar

To VOLUNTEER; one of the very best ways to learn about and love the land – and be loved in return...



In closing – “Saving bits of pure wilderness...”





fringed gentian



blue flag



tussock sedge



swamp milkweed



winged loosestrife







*All my life
through, the
new sights of
Nature made
me rejoice
like a child.*

Madam Marie Curie