

Prospect Heights Public Library/Park District Program

Nature Speaks Program

Dana stated that the next speaker for the Nature Speaks Program on June 26, 2019 is Bill Kleiman, Nachusa Grasslands Project Director. Bill will be presenting “Nachusa Grasslands: 30 Years of Protecting and Restoring Habitat.”

Dana is not having success in establishing contact with Daniel Suarez, Program Associate-Stewardship of the Audubon Great Lakes. Ideally, we would appreciate Daniel Suarez as our Fall Nature Speaks Program presenter. Daniel coauthored with Stephanie Beilke the first “State of the Grasslands” Report to help build a regional strategy and public support for improving our grasslands.

Bird Walks

The Spring Bird Walk of Saturday, April 27, 2019 was cancelled due to the inclement weather. Therefore, our first Spring Bird Walk will be this Saturday, May 11, 2019. Mary Lou Mellon and Lee Ramsey of the Bird Conservation Network will be leading the Bird Walk. A lot of birds are migrating through our area during this time of the year, and Mary Lou is excited about what we’ll see.

The next Spring Bird Walk is scheduled for Saturday, May 25, 2019.

Nature Summer Camp for Prospect Heights Park District

PHNRC (Commissioners and Interns) will be managing a nature camp for the Prospect Heights Park District during the 10th week or last week of summer camp in August for three days from morning until 3:00 p.m. Three to 11 children are anticipated to attend.

PHNRC will manage the Nature Summer Camp on August 12, 13 and 14 from 9:15 am to 12:00 pm. The program will be held two days at the Nature Preserve, perhaps August 12 and 14, and one day at the ComEd Prairie on August 13. PHPD will provide bus transportation from Morava to the prairie.

Commissioners must come together with an organized plan, which should be finalized at our June 13, 2019 meeting.

Jill brought a book entitled “Nature Crafts for Kids,” which has ideas for things to do with the camp attendees, especially if it rains.

Nature Preserve Interpretative Signage

Two, large Interpretative Signs for the entrances to the Nature Preserve path remain to be installed. The work involved is installing four posts mounted in cement and attaching the two, large signs.

Earth Week Activities (April 16 - 27, 2019)

Dana said some of our Earth Week plans did not occur due to rainy weather. However, a few things occurred. In summary, it was a good week. We do not have much to learn differently from this year to apply to next year.

Islamic Women's Earth Day Event

The Islamic Women's Earth Day Event was held on Saturday, April 13, 2019 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm in Rolling Meadows. Our participation in this event was organized by our super-volunteer, Linda Wasey. Linda had been in contact with a woman from the Islamic Center, and they have offered PHNRC a booth.

PHNRC provided two, short (15-minute) presentations at 10:30 am and 12:30 pm regarding our five sites, volunteering, workdays, etc. We utilized a table, displays and easels.

Dana, Agnes and Peter felt our participation in this event was a success. We were well-received. The attendees were very engaged and showed a lot of interest in our work, as well as volunteering with our organization. We received 22 new e:mail addresses for receipt of workday notices.

Wheeling High School Update

Seth said everything is proceeding very well with the partnership we have established with Wheeling High School. The first students' (juniors and seniors) visited us on Wednesday, April 24, 2019 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Seth commented that the teacher was very well organized.

The Program structure has changed slightly. The first subject matter was repeated for two different classes. However, subsequent sessions will be all new subject matter.

On Wednesday, May 15, Seth will present information on watersheds to students in the garage at 9 Marion, and students will pull garlic mustard.

Seth said the Wheeling HS Program is enthusiastic to continue this program next year. PHNRC will work with the HS regarding the subject matter and syllabus, and PHNRC will be co-teaching. We will suggest possible topics for student projects and will have working tasks for each visit. Wheeling High School will provide more of the teaching lesson plan.

Seth said the students were willing to work and displayed a positive attitude.

Next year, the Environmental Studies Class will be participating in this Program. A possible project for this class would be data reporting and quadrant sampling.

Agnes mentioned that Kelly Funks Grade 4 Class at Anne Sullivan is conducting a year-long prairie immersion project. They visited recently and transplanted seedlings while Agnes talked about the interaction of plants and insects. The students were interested and engaged.

Agnes said the 4th Graders would like to plan a field trip to the ComEd Prairie by the end of the school year between June 5 and 7, 2019 (1:15-2:15 pm).

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The Program structure has changed slightly. Instead of two groups, it will be only one group this year, so the planned classes will not alternate to avoid repeated subjects.

Seed/Greenhouse Program

Agnes said the weather has been unpredictable, so it is difficult to maintain the correct temperature in the Greenhouse. Therefore, we have lost 10% of the seedlings. Otherwise, the growing season is generally going well. We have 7,000 plants growing outside and between 5,000-7,000 plants growing inside.

Agnes said we have 5,000 plants to transplant. Therefore, Jill suggested conducting an additional volunteer workday on Saturday, May 11 after the Bird Walk to assist in transplanting.

The Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards (PCPS) will be coming out on Friday, May 17, 2019 from 9:00 am to 12 Noon to transplant. We will serve lunch.

Agnes has ordered new trays (thank you, Peter!), and we must purchase soil.

NEW BUSINESS

2019 PHNRC Budget Update

John Kamysz, new PHNRC Treasurer, reported that as far as he knows, as of May 1, 2019, our City Budget is \$5,000. John distributed an PHNRC 2019 Budget Income/Expense Sheet, reflecting two more donations to the PHNRC.

Joanna Prisiajniouk, the newly elected City of Prospect Heights City Clerk, is a member of the Rotary Club and suggested PHNRC to place a request in writing to the Rotary for funds. However, our rules state that we cannot solicit donations. However, we may accept donations made to the PHNRC, and we may apply for Grants.

Wendy suggested that we may simply provide a presentation to the Rotary about our organization and internship program. If they deem to provide the PHNRC funding, that is within their purview.

Wendy said the Rotary conducts Board Meetings the first Monday of each month at 12:15 p.m. and where voting is held. The next Rotary Board Meeting would be June 3, 2019.

Seth and John will work together to update our PHNRC presentation.

Dana said our anonymous donor has, once again, providing funding for one summer intern. Donations are made by making a check payable to the City of Prospect Heights and indicating the funds are for the PHNRC. We are short funding for a second summer intern.

Members of the PHNRC interviewed a potential candidate for the potential second summer intern position. Although considered late in the season, Agnes will post the summer internship position on the Chicago Environmental Network and check our files and contact past years' applicants to see if there is interest.

Commissioners' Monitoring Program

Agnes said that starting in May, Commissioners should resume monitoring project sites. The sites and monitors are:

Heron Pond, the Slough & Hillcrest Lake	John Kamysz
Nature Preserve (Gary Morava)	Peter Hahn
Remnant Prairie	Agnes Wojnarski/Seth Marcus
Saint Alphonsus	Ed Madden
Sedge Meadow	Jill Moskal
Seeded Prairie (ComEd Prairie)	Dana Sievertson
Tully Park	Jill Moskal

Heron Pond (John Kamysz)

John said that Heron Pond is under water, but then again, it is usually under water.

The Heron Pond area has a lot of buckthorn, and it needs to be cut back. Some trees are also down.

John said what we planted is growing.

Nature Preserve (Peter Hahn)

Peter reported that tree branches are down on the east side of the Nature Preserve. John also commented that a tree is down on the path and use of a chain saw for removal is needed.

The trail needs wood chips; the trail is very wet.

Peter believes when the parking lot, tennis courts and/or other construction activities were done at Morava, large amounts of clay and fill were dumped on the south bank of the Creek. This has created a steep slope running down to the creek. The north side of the Creek was not disturbed and did not have fill added to its original slope.

A person can easily see this, and the erosion that is now occurring. When planting trees and other plants along the south slope, one can find rocks, gravel and a mix of clay from this construction activity.

To correct the erosion problem a 3-to-1 slope needs to be implemented along with other measures. We need assistance from outside sources – to correct this very serious erosion problem.

Peter recommended that PHNRC make a presentation to the Park District of the condition.

The plantings by the baseball diamond are growing and are in better condition than Peter originally thought.

Remnant Prairie (Peter Hahn)

Peter said that the Remnant Prairie is under water, but he did not see much buckthorn resprouts.

Peter commented that the Remnant Prairie is holding up well. However, there is still a lot of work to do.

Sedge Meadow (Jill Moskal)

Jill did not provide a report on the Sedge Meadow and would appreciate viewing the Sedge Meadow soon with Agnes.

Seeded Prairie (ComEd Prairie) (Dana Sievertson)

Dana said volunteers worked at the Seeded Prairie on Sunday, May 5, 2019.

Dana said the west side of the Seeded Prairie looks good. The only location with invasive plants was the area that was mowed by a lawn mower two years' ago; however, the patch of invasives is reduced. Dandelions at the Seeded Prairie are only located on the mowed path.

Peter and Agnes recently herbicided invasives on the East Side of the Seeded Prairie for a whole day.

Wendy said that there are residents expressing some concerns about the Seeded Prairie. Dana said we are happy to speak with them.

Seth has a report on the Remnant Prairie.

Seth has completed a course on butterfly monitoring so, in theory, Seth could perform butterfly monitoring at our sites. However, to be official, it must be approved by an organization. The preference for official butterfly monitoring is no site less than 10 acres.

Most of the Slough is water, so it may not be applicable to the stipulations. Also, Seth could perhaps monitor non-contiguous sites. Dana suggested a combination of the seeded prairie and the Slough.

Seth will contact Doug Taron, Curator of Biology and Vice President of Research and Conservation at the Chicago Academy of Sciences' Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum to confirm butterfly monitoring policy.

Seth and Agnes walked around the Slough. Everything looks good. Eighty to ninety percent of reed canary grass has been diminished. A few small pockets of reed canary grass can be eliminated after a few hours of management.

Until interns are funded and start working, from now until mid-May it is the best, ideal opportunity to get invasives, such as reed canary grass, and it can only be done with application of herbicide.

Agnes said another location is the hill going up to where the wood is located. We could lay erosion control blankets with prairie cord grass. This is a tough grass that has 15-foot roots and can tolerate wet and dry conditions.

Jaycee Park is a wedge-shaped park on 4 Compton Lane in Prospect Heights.

City Civic Meetings and PHNRC Representation Reporting

Ad Hoc Willow Road Project Committee (Hillcrest Lake)

The Ad Hoc Willow Road Project Committee meeting of April 3, 2019 was cancelled and to our knowledge, another meeting is not scheduled.

John Kamysz lives on Hillcrest Lake and would appreciate being a member of the Ad Hoc Willow Road Committee. John stated there is a subset of neighbors that are not represented on this Committee and are also being excluded from the conversation.

When asked, Peter said another meeting date has not yet been planned, probably because no new information from Cook County and MWRD has been received.

McDonald Creek Commission Meeting – April 23, 2019

Jill Moskal, as PHNRC representative for the McDonald Creek Commission (MCC), stated the April 23, 2019 McDonald Creek Commission (MCC) meeting of April 23, 2019 was cancelled.

Next Meeting: The next MCC Meeting is scheduled for May 28, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Prospect Heights Park District Board of Directors

Dana spoke with Christina Ferraro. Christina encouraged us to make another presentation to the PHPD Board of our activities, the progress of our work at our sites and our management plans. Christina said it would be agreeable for us to make a presentation to the PHPD Board for budget considerations for next year. Christina offered to provide her input.

We provided a similar-type presentation to the City Council two years' ago.

Our presentation would be made at the PHPD Board November 2019 meeting when the Park District begins working on their budget for the next year. The PHPD budget process goes through in January of the new year

Agnes said the ComEd Grants process likes to see partnerships within a community. We have had success in the past for receipt of ComEd Grants, and ComEd is very pleased with our work.

Consideration of PHNRC Meeting Locations – June through September 2019

Members discussed that conducting meetings outside during the summer months should be discontinued. The extra work required for Patrick was a consideration. Therefore, going forward, all PHNRC meetings will be conducted in City Hall Chambers.

City of Prospect Heights Community Days – Saturday, June 1, 2019

Dana, Jill and Peter will manage our table during this City event on June 1, 2019 from 9:00 am to 12 Noon. We will have a pop-up tent, a table, plants to give, books, display boards, artifacts, etc.

Dana, Jill and Peter will discuss what we want to do to showcase our organization at Community Days and if we wish to give any type of tokens.

Visitor's Comments

Wendy Morgan-Adams, Alderman of Ward 3, City of Prospect Heights, was present during the meeting and contributed thoughts and comments while attending the meeting.

Wendy mentioned that a question was raised on the waiver we request volunteers to sign before a workday begins.

Dana said that one of our former Commissioners was an attorney that drafted the Waiver of Liability and then provided it to the City's attorney for review and approval. The City Council and Park District approved the Waiver of Liability as first originated.

The Waiver of Liability is good for the time period a volunteer works for us. A volunteer only needs to sign one Waiver of Liability.

Wendy said the City Council is reviewing the waiver to see if it needs to be updated.

OTHER BUSINESS

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Prospect Heights Natural Resources Commission is scheduled for Thursday, June 13, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business to come before the meeting. Therefore, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Jill E. Moskal, CPS
PHNRC Commissioner and Recording Secretary