

Woods
of
Wisdom

Newsletter
of the
Forest Preserve
District
of the Kankakee
River Valley

"All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or collectively, the land ... a land ethic changes the role of Homo Sapien from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it... it implies respect for his fellow members, and so also respect for the community as such."

— Aldo Leopold, "Sand County Almanac"

Our Audubon Walk at Aroma Forest Preserve

Saturday morning our Audubon group of 7 headed down the trail looking for fall migrants. In the parking lot a pair of Black-throated Green warblers were working the trees for insects. Warblers are the migrants most sought after by birders whether spring migration or fall with some 36 species possible.

The drought has changed everything as far as food for birds. The Ruby-throated hummingbird, once numerous here because of fall blooming Jewelweed, was not to be found. Just two flowering orange blossoms in the boggy open, not enough to fill even a hummingbird's appetite. No Eastern Bluebirds either. They nested here and left for southern winter states along with Robins, their cousins. Hundreds of Cedar waxwings stood out on bare branches. Two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks gave a call that sounded like "Chink". In the tall trees, more warblers. The Connecticut with its distinct white eye ring, a beautiful Magnolia warbler which has black streaks on its yellow breast. Down at the island on the Kankakee River, two Osprey were circling high looking for a fish dinner. The river has come up lately from recent rains and was calm, perfect for this predator. One dove down into the water on the opposite side of the island and splashed in. Did it get the fish? We could only guess. A turtle basked on a log near the island bank. Back down the trail, but something was missing. No mosquitoes in the low wet woods. It was too dry now.

On the way back we took the shortcut through the pine woods. Markers guided the way which was a new and welcome addition. Alas, a dead warbler on the path. An Ovenbird recently deceased. Its call is soft to start then loud "teacher, teacher, teacher, Teacher, Teacher, TEACHER". It nests on the ground and walks rather than hops. The Kentucky warbler also says "teacher, teacher, teacher" but on one pitch and volume. The Kentucky was identified by its voice by two birders in our group. A Mourning Cloak butterfly was photographed in Macro setting along the way. Back to the parking area and time to tally what we saw and heard. 33 species were counted. A good birding trip.

— John Baxter

*Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees.
The winds will blow their own freshment into you, and the storms
their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.*

— John Muir

Man's heart away from nature becomes hard.

— Standing Bear

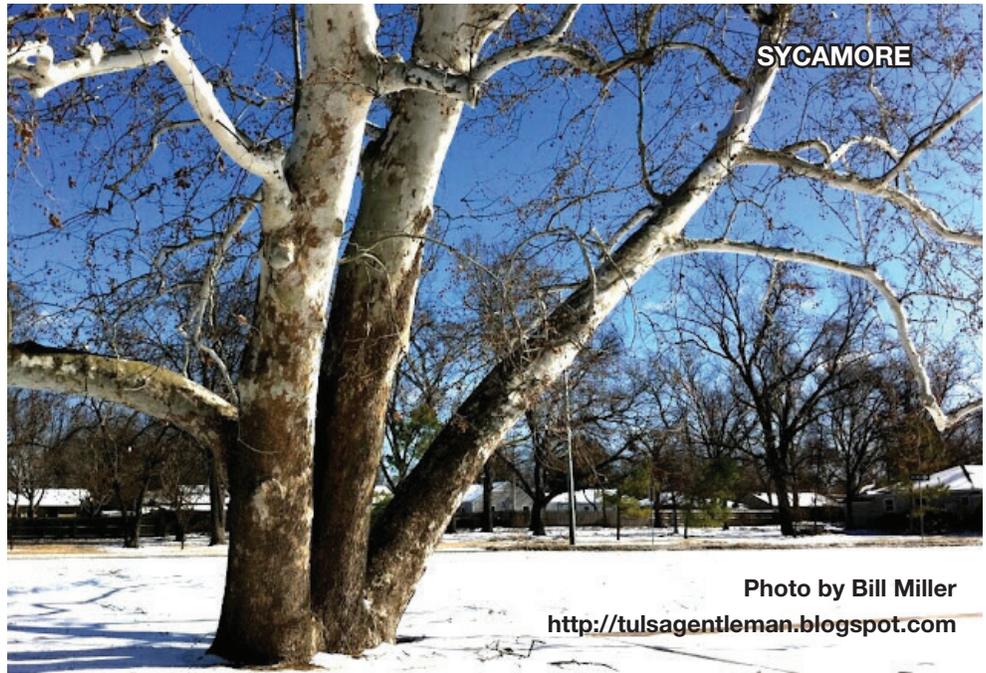
Bird Sanctuary at Shannon Bayou



BLACK WALNUT

This Spring your Forest Preserve began the tree planting for the bird sanctuary, with 700 saplings of four species of trees. The sanctuary area is at the edge of the field near the wooded bayou. The saplings are 12" size, and include 100 Black Walnut, 200 Sycamore, 200 White Oak and 200 Bur Oak. While the summer drought took a toll on the young trees, a number of these hardy native trees have survived the heat and lack of rain.

The Oaks and Black Walnut not only produce acorn and nuts that provide high quality nutrition for wildlife, but are hosts to butterflies, caterpillars and many insects, which in their turn attract birds which feed on them. Oak trees provide habitat for a high number of species, including a remarkable diversity of lichens and insects. Large numbers of moth larvae feed on oak leaves. With such an abundance of insects which live on oaks, it is not surprising that many species of insect-eating birds feast on the rich food source provided by Oak trees. Other species of birds will feed on the acorns, which are also highly favored by many woodland mammals. Many cavity-nesting birds will find shelter in mature oaks. Morton Arboretum has found that oak trees attract more than 60 species of birds, which feed on acorns and insects, and find shelter



SYCAMORE

Photo by Bill Miller

<http://tulsagentleman.blogspot.com>

and nesting sites in the Oak. Due to their large size and longevity, the Oak tree plays a unique role in forest ecosystems and many species are adapted to live with it.

The Sycamore is known for its beautiful bark, and while it is not known as a major food source for wildlife, it attracts many insects which provide high quality food for birds. Songbirds such as finches and juncos eat the seeds of the Sycamore, which is also called the American planetree, Buttonwood, or Buttonball tree. Many cavity-nesting birds such as owls, flycatchers and chimney swifts inhabit the nearly hollow trunks of older trees. Wood ducks are known to build nests in the old tree trunks and some bats use the Sycamore as nursery trees.



BURR OAK

The Streams of Kankakee County



MINNIE CREEK



ROCK CREEK

Perhaps some of you have participated in the River Cleanup or the Riverwalk Celebration earlier this Fall. As we enjoy the beauty of our local rivers, we might consider spending a moment in thanks for our good fortune in having this beautiful natural resource as our home. We might further consider what it takes to restore, protect and preserve this natural wonder.

While the Kankakee and Iroquois Rivers are well-known features of our local landscape, the vital role tributary streams play in our ecosystem is often overlooked. Tributary streams may comprise up to 80% of the total surface waters of a watershed. These smaller streams are a critical factor in the health of a river system. Restoration scientists tell us that when the streams that feed into a river are not part of overall stewardship, the larger-scale measures taken on the major river system will have little effect on river quality.

Water Quality

The water quality of mainstream rivers depends on what they receive from their many smaller tributaries. If the water quality is allowed to deteriorate in the smaller streams, the mainstream quality will inevitably decline, regardless of protective measures taken on the main rivers. Small streams are especially vulnerable to human disturbance because they respond quickly and dramatically to erosion and scouring of the stream banks; in addition, adjacent lands are affected by changes in the vegetation in the surrounding landscape. Due to their smaller water volume, these tributary streams are especially defenseless against sedimentation and pollution. Smaller, shallower rivers and streams are more vulnerable to stream heating during hot dry periods, becoming depleted of oxygen, and are often plagued by increasing algae growth and increased concentration of pathogens.

Flooding Control

Alterations such as removing stream bank vegetation and forest cover, or placement of buildings in proximity to small stream banks will impair the ability of tributary streams and wetlands to retain and absorb flood waters and storm waters during snow melt or high rainfall events. Smaller headwater streams are often found on steeper land, or land that is relatively more prone to erosion. Infrastructure or buildings sited on a smaller stream are likely to have a greater impact on flooding conditions than if the same project were sited along a larger river.

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THE STREAMS OF KANKAKEE COUNTY

Name... USGS Topographic Map	
Baker Creek.....	597
Bertrand Branch.....	600
Black Walnut Creek.....	669
Brainard Creek.....	604
Bull Creek.....	627
Canavan Creek.....	666
Crane Creek.....	574
Davis Creek.....	581
Deer Creek.....	604
East Branch Horse Creek.....	584
East Branch Tower Creek.....	630
Exline Slough.....	614
Farr Creek.....	650
Gar Creek.....	600
Horse Creek.....	538
Iroquois River.....	597
Lehigh Raymond Run.....	597
Marshall Slough.....	669
Minnie Creek.....	597
North Bonfield Branch.....	587
Pike Creek.....	623
Rock Creek.....	554
South Bonfield Branch.....	591
South Branch Rock Creek.....	630
Spring Creek.....	597
Terry Creek.....	541
Tower Creek.....	607
Trail Creek.....	597
Trim Creek.....	617
West Branch Horse Creek.....	584
Wiley Creek.....	574

Habitat

Many species depend on vegetated streams during all or part of their life cycle, regardless of the size of the main stream. Salamanders are an example of a species that is dependent on smaller streams. It is critically important to protect the corridors of vegetation along smaller creeks and streams, especially juvenile fish populations, even when the larger adult fish inhabit the main river. The headwater areas of tributary

streams are critical in providing the vegetation and insect populations that provide the base of the food web for the entire aquatic ecosystem. Water temperatures are kept cool by stream side forests in the upper portions of the watershed, providing important spawning sites, protection for small fry from larger fish, and providing a cooling effect on the main river channel. During periods of lower flows and higher tem-

peratures, fish will often retreat to these cooler tributaries when the mainstream water becomes too warm.

In addition, a high quality vegetated stream bank region, called the riparian zone, serves as a subsurface reservoir, capturing rainfall and providing critical groundwater to the overall stream flow during hot dry periods. Sportfish, fish food animals and insects, and water plants, all critical to the health of a river system, depend on a stable, continuous flow of water – especially during the dry periods typical of late summer in the Midwest. Groundwater discharge is a major source of stream flow for smaller streams, especially during hot dry summers, where the discharge both adds to the amount of water in the tributary streams and moderates harmful temperature extremes. Hydrologists estimate that groundwater contributes between 40-50% to overall stream flow in small and medium sized streams. Examples of groundwater discharge include seeps, springs and seepage from riparian zones. This groundwater discharge is key to supporting aquatic life in both streams and the main river system by maintaining adequate water levels and moderating high water temperatures in the summer, and freezing temperatures in the winter.

For free, printable maps of the streams of Kankakee County, go to this link for USGS topographic maps shown below. From the drop-down menu, select the state of "Illinois" and the county "Kankakee". To print a copy of the USGS topographic map, scroll down below the Google map (and below the link to download Google Chrome), and select "get free printable map":

http://www.anyplaceamerica.com/topographic_maps/

You can learn more about the importance of stream quality for fish populations, and the methods used for stream restoration projects, by visiting this site provided by Trout Unlimited:

<http://www.tu.org/conservation/watershed-restoration-home-rivers-initiative/driftless-wi-mn-ia-il>

This site by the Kane County Dixie Briggs Fromm Stream Corridor Project; the before-and-after pictures are clear evidence that we can be good stewards of our local ecosystem once we put our minds to it:

<http://www.co.kane.il.us/kcstorm/dixieBriggs/index.asp>

and another by the United States Army Corps of Engineers:

<http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/permits/Illinois%20Method.pdf>



1907 postcard of Rock Creek Falls at Low Water

Once Upon Our River

... A J Ciaccio-Jarvis

Once our mighty river was clean and pristine,
 Straightening its many natural bends, sand now chokes and
 fills its streams.
 Once inhabited by rare flowers and birds,
 Plastic bags, bottles and barrels are quite common I
 heard.
 Once presidents and dignitaries from around the world
 boated, hunted and fished,
 You cannot improve on God's original design, we should
 have wished.
 Once Indians silently canoed its forests and prairies,
 Now urban sprawl and noisy power boats.....I hear the
 noise carries.
 Once in a while man has to stop and look back,
 Is this progress? Can man counteract?

Acorns ^{to} Mighty Oak Trees

Have you ever wanted to grow a mighty oak tree from a tiny acorn? The prime time for collecting acorns is from late September through early November, depending on the oak tree species. Lawns and paved areas are good areas to collect acorns, where identifying acorns is easier. Always identify the tree and mark your collection bags so you will know what species you have collected. Make sure the acorns are not allowed to heat up or dry out, because they will lose their ability to germinate very quickly once they've dried out.

Immediate planting can be done with the acorns of the white oak family – white oak, burr oak, chestnut oak and swamp oak. The acorns of red and black oak species take two years to mature, and must be planted in the second season – the following spring, after stratification, a cooling period.

White Oak Acorns



White oak acorns mature in one season – the season of collection. White oak acorns will start to germinate very soon after maturing and falling to the ground. You can plant these acorns immediately, or refrigerate for later planting.

Storing Acorns for Planting

Place the acorns in a 4-10 mil polyethylene plastic bag, with a damp peat mix or sawdust. The polyethylene bags are a good choice for storing acorns, because the bags allow the passage of carbon dioxide and oxygen, but are impermeable to moisture. Close the bags loosely and store in the refrigerator. Check the acorns throughout the winter and keep them just barely damp. Red oak acorns need about 1000 hours of cold at 40 degrees, or about 42 days; don't allow them to freeze however. These can be planted in late April of the following season for the best success, but can be planted later.

Red Oak Acorns



Red oak acorns mature over two seasons, even as they are dropping this year's crop, there are half-grown acorns that will overwinter on the tree and mature the following year. These first year acorns of the red oak group needs some seed dormancy and stratification (a cooling period) and generally won't germinate until the following spring.

Germinating and Potting Acorns

After determining the best time to plant, select the best looking acorns (plump and rot-free) and place in loose potting soil in pots that are one gallon or deeper. The tap root will grow quickly to the bottom of containers and root width is not as important. The pots should have holes in the bottom to allow for drainage. Many gardeners advocate lining the bottom with small rocks or pot

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shards to enhance drainage and keep the roots from getting water-logged, which will drown the young plant. Place the acorns on their sides at a depth of one half to one times the width of the acorn. Keep the soil moist, and do not allow the pots to freeze.

Transplanting Oak Seedlings

Transplant the seedlings as soon as the first leaves open and become firm but before extensive root development. Don't allow the oak seedling's tap root to grow out of the container bottom and into the soil below, as the tap root will break when it is time to transplant the seedling.

The planting hole should be twice as wide and deep as the pot and root ball. Carefully remove the root ball and set it gently in the hole with the root crown at the level of the soil surface. Fill the hole with soil, firmly tamp and soak. Tree nurseries often recommend that you not amend the native soil with fertilizer, as that will discourage the young seedling from sending out roots. Organic soil microbes are a useful addition, however, simple compost is the best.

Reference: Steve Nix, a professional forester, writes, blogs and maintains a forestry information web site:

<http://forestry.about.com/>

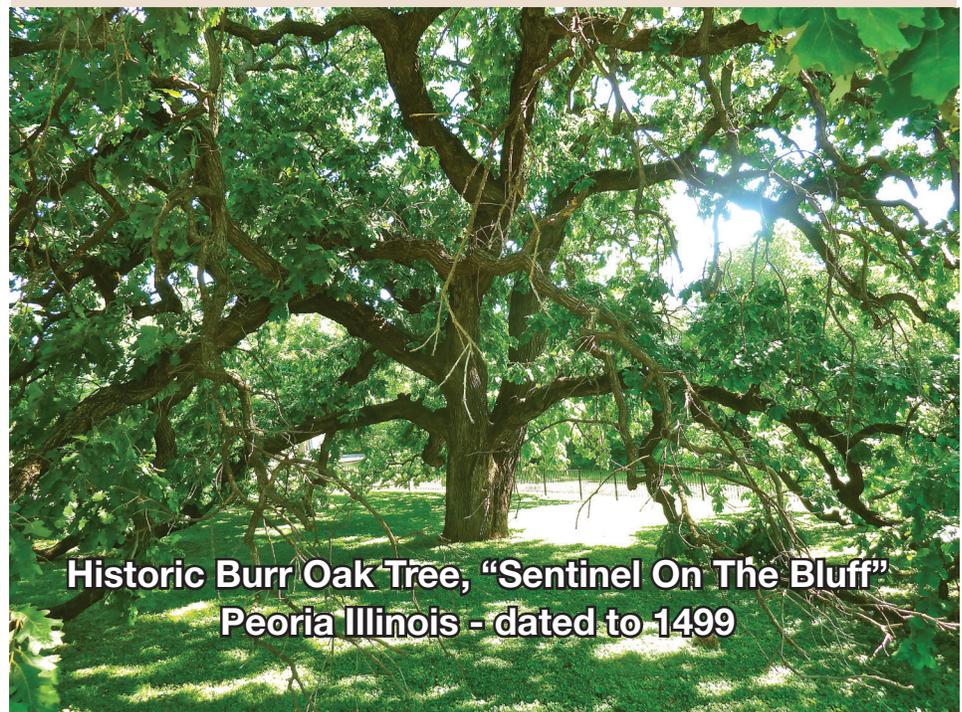
ADVICE FROM A TREE

Stand Tall and Proud
Go Out On A Limb
Remember Your Roots
Drink Plenty of Water
Be Content With Your
Natural Beauty
Enjoy the View

PLANTING TREES

In the mating of trees,
the pollen grain entering invisible
the doomed room of the winds, survives
the ghost of the old forest
that was here when we came. The ground
invites it, and it will not be gone.
I become the familiar of that ghost
and its ally, carrying in a bucket twenty trees smaller than weeds,
and I plant them along the way
of the departure of the ancient host.
I return to the ground its original music.
It will rise out of the horizon
of the grass, and over the heads
of the weeds, and it will rise over
the horizon of men's heads. As I age
in the world it will rise and spread,
and be for this place horizon
and orison, the voice of its winds.
I have made myself a dream to dream
of its rising, that has gentled my nights.
Let me desire and wish well the life
these trees may live when I
no longer rise in the mornings
to be pleased by the green of them
shining, and their shadows on the ground,
and the sound of the wind in them.

--- Wendell Berry



**Historic Burr Oak Tree, "Sentinel On The Bluff"
Peoria Illinois - dated to 1499**

FOREST PRESERVE SITES

Shannon Bayou Environmental Education Center and Administrative Office

This 46-acre preserve is located at 3301 Waldron Road in Aroma Park, along the Kankakee River. The Center provides space for programs about natural history, ecology and preservation of open space in the Kankakee River Valley. The walking trail area features plantings of many native trees and plants, including native tallgrass prairie species, a butterfly garden of native plants. The site includes $\frac{3}{4}$ mile asphalt and fine gravel walking trail, a picnic shelter, and picnic tables.

3301 Waldron Road
Aroma Park, IL 60910
41° 04' 47.61" N
87° 48' 44.31" W

Waldron Arboretum

Located 1.1 miles south of I-57, this site was once a landscape nursery. On this 90 acre site there is a fine gravel hiking trail suitable for bicycling and cross country skiing. The trail winds through 30 acres of woods, including a small prairie restoration area.

In the winter of 2008, the District acquired an additional 60 acre parcel which had been primarily in agriculture. Future development plans are pending based on the district's needs and funds available through federal and state grants.

2755 Waldron Road
Aroma Park, IL 60910
41° 05' 36.28" N
87° 49' 26.51" W

Gar Creek Trail and Prairie Restoration

Approximately 85 acres, this site is located about one-half mile east of Route 45 on River Road adjacent to Kankakee Community College. The 16-acre restored tall grass prairie was planted in

1992. A 2.5 mile trail, suitable for hiking, bicycling, and cross country skiing, is a cooperative project with the Kankakee Valley Park District. The trail begins at the prairie, winds along Gar Creek, through oak woodland, and down to the banks of the Kankakee River.

At river's edge, the trail connects with the Kankakee Riverfront Trail Project, which will start at the Aqua Illinois property at Hawkins and Water Streets, go through Shapiro Developmental Center, Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve, Kankakee Community College, and connect with River Road Park and Splash Valley, of the Kankakee Valley Park District.

501 River Road
Kankakee, IL 60901
41° 05' 30.84" N
87° 51' 32.78" W

Aroma Land and Water Preserve

One of the best sites in the area for woodland wildflowers, this 133 acre site is located on Hieland Road, 1.4 miles south of Highway 17 East. A 1.2 mile walking trail winds through several different types of natural areas, including high quality forest, prairie, and wetland ecosystems. It also has nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of Kankakee River frontage, and the associated floodplain forest. There is ample parking in the parking lot on Hieland Road, and a playground, maintained by the Kankakee River Valley Park District, for children.

In 2008, the District added a 30-acre piece of property adjacent to the Aroma Land and Water Reserve (Aroma LWR). This area has been seeded back to prairie species indicative of the dry sand prairie found within the current preserve. The Forest Preserve mows a loop trail that branches off the existing $1\frac{1}{4}$ mile

trail that meanders through the main body of the Aroma LWR. In the summer of 2011, 49.5 acres of mixed pine and hardwood forest was added.

Approximately 40 percent of the Aroma Preserve is a wetland and lies within the flood plain of the Kankakee River. In the spring, the wet oak forest gives a spectacular wildflower display while the wetland and sand prairie are the most colorful in the summer.

1180 South Hieland Road
St. Anne, IL 60964
41° 06' 02.90" N
87° 45' 24.08" W

Limestone Reforestation Site

This site is a 30 acre preserve and reforestation site, with mixed trees and grasses.

County Road 3750 West
Kankakee, Illinois 60901
41° 08' 38.96" N
87° 56' 51.08" W

Zeedyk Meadows

This is our newest Forest Preserve site, consisting of four acres of trees and grasses.

Zeedyk Meadows
6500 Warren Street
St. Anne, Illinois
41° 06' 24.92" N
87° 44' 35.77" W

Strasma Grove

Nestled in a neighborhood in Kankakee, this site is 2 acres of mature native trees.

1600 Block of E. Duane Boulevard
Kankakee, Illinois 60901
41° 06' 28.33" N
87° 50' 43.56" W

Look at the trees, look at the birds, look at the clouds, look at the stars... and if you have eyes you will be able to see that the whole existence is joyful. Everything is simply happy. Trees are happy for no reason; they are not going to become prime ministers or presidents and they are not going to become rich and they will never have any bank balance. Look at the flowers - for no reason. It is simply unbelievable how happy flowers are.

- Osho



**Kankakee River Valley Forest
Preserve District**

1301 Waldron Road • P.O. Box 13
Aroma Park, Illinois 60910
815-935-5630

web address: www.krvfpd.org
e-mail: dale@krvfpd.org

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ON TRAIL...

Call Jean Hurrel at 815-549-9072 for information on times and dates for current programs at your forest preserve. Spring and summer programs include moonlight hikes, wildflower and native prairie walks, and animal tracking. You can also find our programs advertised in the Daily Journal and WVLI radio, or check out "programs" on our website: <http://www.krvfpd.org>

But when I consider that the nobler animals have been exterminated here - the cougar, panther, lynx, wolverine, wolf, bear, moose, deer, the beaver, the turkey, etc., etc. - I cannot but feel as if I lived in a tamed, and as it were, emasculated country... I listen to a concert in which so many parts are wanting... for instance, thinking that I have here the entire poem, and then, to my chagrin, I hear that it is but an imperfect copy that I possess and have read, that my ancestors have torn out many of the first leaves and grandest passages.

- Henry David Thoreau, *Journal*, 1856

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