

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 Watershed

The Kankakee River and its Tributaries

EARLY DESCRIPTIONS

The first section of this article is from portions of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources publication, **"Kankakee River Area Assessment, volume 5; Early Accounts of the Ecology of the Kankakee River Area"**. Descriptions of the pre-settlement landscape of the Kankakee River Basin can be found in the accounts of early French traders and missionaries who used the river as a travel route between the Great Lakes and the Illinois River, as well as later surveyors, hunters and settlers in the Kankakee River Basin.

In 1679, René Robert Cavelier, the Sieur de La Salle, commanded the first French effort to establish a trading colony in Illinois. According to the official report of the expedition, as the canoeists emerged from the Kankakee marshland near Momence...

"After traversing these marshes, they found no game as they had expected, because there are only great open plains where nothing grows but very tall grass, which is dry at this season, and had been burnt off by the Miamis in the chase of wild cattle [buffalo]. Animals are usually very numerous there, as it was easy to judge from the skeletons and the heads of these cattle which were seen on all sides. The Miamis hunt them at the end of autumn in the following manner: when they see a herd, they assemble in great numbers and set fire to the grass all round, with the exception of a few passages which they leave open, and at which they station themselves with their bows and arrows. In attempting to escape from the fire, the cattle are thus compelled to pass these [hunters] who

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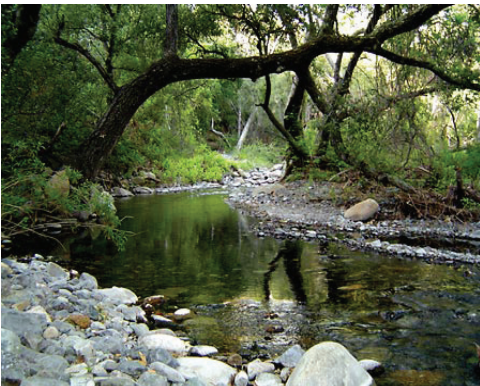
"The movers and shakers on our planet aren't the billionaires and the generals — they are the incredible numbers of people around the world filled with love for neighbor and for the earth who are resisting, remaking, restoring, renewing, revitalizing."

- Bill McKibben

Man's heart away from nature becomes hard.

— Standing Bear

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sometimes kill as many as two hundred in a single day. Instead of hair, these cattle have a very fine wool, which is still longer on the females than on the males; their horns are nearly all black, much bigger than the horns of European cattle, though not quite so long. The head is of monstrous size. The neck is short and strong with a great hump between the shoulders; the legs are big and short, covered with very long wool. Upon the shoulders and around the neck and horns there is a great black mane, falling over the eyes, and giving them a terrible appearance. The body is much larger than that of our cattle, especially in front, but this great bulk does not prevent them from running very swiftly, so that no Savage can overtake them in the chase, and they frequently kill those who have wounded them." (page 8)

An early account of the area was written by Henry S. Bloom, who came to the town of Rockville (one of the earliest white settlements in the township along Rock Creek in and around the present-day Kankakee River State Park) in 1837.....

"Originally there were about 2,000 acres of fine timber in the town, of wonderful heavy growth, consisting of white, red and bur oak, black walnut, sugar maple, shell-bark hickory, red elm, bitter hickory, white ash, white walnut or butternut, and wild plums and crab apples were very abundant. Rock Creek was originally fringed with a dense growth of red cedars on either side, which lent it a very picturesque appearance.

"... Deer and prairie chickens were abundant; of the latter tens of thousands filled the prairies, and late outstanding corn crops suffered severely. We also had an unlimited number of sand-hill cranes, ducks and geese. Deer banded in groups of from 50 to 120. I once saw in Essex 110 in one herd. The crane would flock in groups of about 50 and engage in a dance. They would form an irregular circle, two would commence circling about each other, and all would follow, jumping over one another, frequently jumping from twelve to fifteen feet; by the time all were joined in, it presented the most grotesque sight imaginable. It would fairly make an anchorite laugh till tears would run down his cheeks. I have actually laughed, until my sides were sore for days, at witnessing one of these festivals; it beat a circus or a bear dance." (pg 190)

J. H. Battle wrote this description of the Grand Prairie:

"The first sight of a great prairie in the height of its native beauty is one never to be forgotten. The beholder strains his eyes to take in its extent until the effort becomes painful, while its beauty and variety foils the power of expression. It is a new and wonderful revelation. Strange sights and sounds greet the senses on every side. The piping cry of the ground squirrel, as he drops from his erect position and seeks the protection of his burrow at the first alarm, the shrill notes of the plover, scattered about in countless numbers, fitfully starting and running over the meadow; the booming of the prairie-cock; the mad scream of the crooked-bill curlew, as you approach its nest; the distant whoop of the crane; the pump-sounding note of the bittern; the lithe and graceful forms of the deer, in companies of three or five, lightly bounding over the swell of the prairie; the beautiful harmony of color and rich profusion of flowers - it all seems like a new creation "an earthy paradise." (page 187)

Jim Sweeny's Recommended Reading On The Kankakee

Over the years, several people have asked me where have I read about what was once in the Grand Kankakee Marsh. Most of these books are more cultural and 'folksy' but a lot of the information they cite has appeared and reappeared in other publications. This is my list.

RECOMMENDED READING ON THE GRAND KANKAKEE MARSH AND THE PROPOSED NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

"Hoosier Hunting Grounds or the Beaver Lake Trail"
by Bill Bat 1904

Reprinted by Newton County Historical Society 2008

"Tales of Kankakee Land" by Charles H. Bartlett 1904

"Tales of a Vanishing River" by Earl H. Reed 1920

"Pioneer Hunters of the Kankakee" by J. Lorenzo Werich 1920

"Legends and Tales of the Homeland on the Kankakee"
by Burt E. Burroughs 1923

"Tales of an Old Border Town and Along the Kankakee"
by Burt E. Burroughs 1925

"The Kankakee River of History" by Marion Isaacs 1964

"The Kankakee; Chronicle of an Indiana River and its Fabled Marshes" by Fay Folsom Nichols 1965

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS:

"The Kankakee River Valley: An Inventory of the Region's Resources" Critical Trends Assessment Program;
Illinois Department of Natural Resources 1997
<http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/pfc/assessments/kap/pagei.htm>

"The Grand Kankakee Marsh National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Assessment" US Fish and Wildlife Service 1999
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/GrandKankakee/>

"2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation" US Fish and Wildlife Service 2011
<http://digitalmedia.fws.gov/utis/getfile/collection/document/id/860/filename/861.pdf>

"Banking on Nature; the Economic Benefits to Local Communities of National Wildlife Refuge Visitation"
US Fish and Wildlife Service 2007
<http://www.fws.gov/refuges/about/bankingonnature.html>

Kankakee River Valley Critical Trends Assessment:
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dnr.state.il.us

Lightening Bugs

Lightening bugs fly without any thunder,

But they are just as great a wonder.

Each makes a light to attract a mate.

They flit around but never wait.

Their light is cool so they don't get hot.

It isn't as much as even one watt.

But their mate must be one of their kin

For no one else they'd want to win.

Little kids may put them under glass

Making a bright light of bugs in a mass,

But if they can't fly their light will fade.

But kids will enjoy them in evening's shade.

The rest of us carry flashlights to mark

Where there's a bench in a local park.

One that's safe from a policeman's check

And no one drops peanuts down our neck.

We'd like to find a possible friend,

One who a parent would recommend.

We want to sit with one about our age

Never mind a rich old sage.

– Betty Buck Reynolds

A Flower Garden of Thought

SITTING STILL



If you sit still long enough,
The cardinals come close and dare,
To show the colors that they wear,
If you sit still long enough.

If you sit still long enough,
The thrasher no longer hides,
To his curiosity he must abide
If you sit still long enough.

If you sit still long enough,
From the ground the voles will peek,
And smuggle seeds by your feet,
If you sit still long enough.

If you sit still long enough,
The fox quietly will slink by,
With white throat's tattletale cries,
If you sit still long enough.
If you sit still long enough,
So many worries that belong to man,
Will seem so tiny in your hand,
If you sit still long enough.

If you sit still long enough,
The wind becomes a choir,
And the oaks are temple spires,
If you sit still long enough.

If you sit still long enough,
What was once the earth and you,
Are now one where there were two

If you sit still long enough

– Nighthawk



Good Summer Reading for Children

PBS Recommended Books for Children: Earth and the Environment

Audubon: Painter of Birds in the Wild Frontier

By Jennifer Armstrong and Jos. A. Smith

Published March 2003

Grade Level: PreK-2, 3-5

Audubon's paintings and journals reveal an America long past: flocks of passenger pigeons so large they darkened the sky for hours, Sycamores so big their hollow trunks could shelter 9,000 swifts, and packs of hungry wolves driven off by flocks of geese. The events described in this illustrated biography took place from 1804-1812. Extended author and illustrator notes explain their techniques and suggest resources for further study.

Backyard Detective: Critters Up Close

By Nic Bishop

Published August 2002

Grade Level: PreK-2, 3-5

Common critters, 125 insects and other small animals appear in this ingenious field guide to the backyard. Creatures found in seven areas including on the ground, around flowers, and in tool sheds are presented in two-page representative settings. Two pages of explanatory field notes follow. A section called "Be a Backyard Detective" supplies hints and project ideas. The book features a picture index. Bishop's photographs are amazing. Wait until you read how he created them

The Big Caribou Herd: Life in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

by Bruce Hiscock

Published March 2003

Grade Level: PreK-2, 3-5

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of the last completely wild places on Earth. Follow a caribou band from the Porcupine River Valley as it joins the larger herd migrating to the calving grounds on the Beaufort Sea. Hiscock's realistic watercolors portray the changing plant and animal life along the route. A final section provides additional information on many of the animals encountered, a description of the caribou year, and an author's note.

Black Whiteness: Admiral Byrd Alone in the Antarctic

By Robert Burleigh

Published February 1998

Grade Level: 3-5

Students age 7-11 will be amazed as they read how in 1934 Admiral Richard Byrd spent a dark winter in frigid Antarctica. He recorded the weather and confronted life completely alone in some of the harshest conditions. This telling text is complemented by Walter Krudop's dramatic illustrations and also contains excerpts from Byrd's firsthand account of survival. This book is the perfect addition to a unit on Antarctica.



Blizzard!

By Jim Murphy

Published November 2000

Grade Level: 6-8

From March 11-14, 1888, before Doppler radar, before long range weather forecasting, before snowplows, the East Coast was hit by hurricane-force winds and so much snow that every city from Virginia to Canada was shut down. Hundreds died. This history of a natural disaster is filled with maps, etchings, and photographs.

Cave

By Diane Siebert

Published August 2000

Grade Level: PreK-2, 3-5

This poetic introduction, describes the creation and evolution of limestone caves. Children 4-8 will learn about flowstone and draperies, helictites and rimstone, and the animal life that inhabits cave entrances and their deepest regions. The preservation of the fragile cave environment is also addressed.



The Change in the Weather: People, Weather, and the Science of Climate

By William K. Stevens

Published December 1999

Grade Level: 9-12

How has human behavior affected climate and are we too late to do anything about it? In this book, high school students are introduced to the science of climatic change; meet the international community of scientists trying to determine if we have entered a new era of climate; and explore the links between humanity and climate, from human evolution to the destruction of civilizations.

Chasing Science: Science as Spectator Sport

By Frederik Pohl

Published December 2000

Grade Level: 6-8, 9-12

This memoir by an award winning science fiction writer takes readers on a tour of astronomy, space exploration, volcanoes and earthquakes, water, cave sand tunnels, fossils, and archaeology and more. Part science primer, part travel guide, this book is for middle school students and up.

The Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours

By Jane Goodall

Published October 2001

Grade Level: 3-5, 6-8

Since the early 1960s, Jane Goodall has studied the chimpanzees of Gombe on Lake Tanganyika. This autobiography outlines her career from enthusiastic 22-year-old in a largely unmolested forest to her present efforts to protect what little remains of Africa's forests and chimpanzees. The book features marvelous full-page photos, many close-ups, of chimps in their natural environment.

Cloud Dance

By Thomas Locker

Published September 2000

Grade Level: PreK-2, 3-5

Anyone familiar with Locker's previous

books knows what to expect with a book devoted to clouds. His illustrations resemble the work of the Hudson River painters. Children 4-8 can follow two figures, one old, one young, as they move through a landscape dominated by clouds at different times of the day and under different weather conditions. An appendix provides general information about clouds and images of different cloud types.



The Complete Book of the Seasons

By Sally Tagholm

Published September 2002

Grade Level: PreK-2, 3-5

After the introductory chapter discussing different seasonal changes, each season is examined in turn. Activities, festivities, and natural phenomena are highlighted. A final section is a calendar of seasonal events.

Cool Careers for Girls As Environmentalists

By Ceel Pasternak

Published October 2001

Grade Level: 6-8, 9-12

Girls interested in environmental sciences will read about eleven women who share their interest and who have made careers pursuing it. Fields covered include botany, naturalist, biologist, electrical engineer, farm manager, entomologist, researcher, and more. Each entry examines the background, training, and career path of each environmentalist. A final section suggests ways girls can get started on their own careers.

"In every adult there lurks a child ... an eternal child, something that is always becoming, is never completed, and calls for unceasing care, attention, and education. That is the part of the human personality which wants to develop and become whole."

– C. G. Jung



Creatures of the Deep: In Search of the Sea's Monsters and the World They Live in

By Erich Hoyt

Published October 2001

Grade Level: 6-8, 9-12

This photo-packed introduction to deep-sea life is divided into three sections providing a tour through the ocean layers; a selection of ocean creatures, from sharks to dragonfish; and finally a descent to the longest mountain range, the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, and hydro-thermal vents. If you are a monster movie fan, wait until you see the deep-sea dragonfish, then sleep soundly knowing the largest is only a foot long.

Deep in a Rainforest

By Gwen Pascoe, Veronica Jefferis, and Monica Jefferis

Published January 1999

Grade Level: PreK-2

Lush illustration introduces very young readers to rainforest animals and habitat. A good basic introduction to the rainforest environment, presented as a puzzle inviting young readers to find hidden objects and animals.



Spix's Macaw: The Race to Save the World's Rarest Bird

By Tony Juniper

Published November 2003

Grade Level: 6-8, 9-12

The Brazilian Spix's Macaw is one of four blue macaws, so rare they can sell for \$40,000 on the black market. The last wild Spix's Macaw lived alone for fourteen years after his mate was captured by poachers in 1987. This exciting and moving account tells of international attempts to prevent its extinction.

El Nino: Unlocking the Secrets of the Master Weather-Maker

By J. Madeleine Nash

Published March 2002

Grade Level: 9-12

El Nino and La Nina are driven by cyclic temperature fluctuations in the Pacific Ocean that lead to world wide disasters as seemingly unrelated as an outbreak of Rift Valley fever in East Africa and uncontrollable forest fires in Borneo. Nash has provided a history of the scientific observations that have added to our understanding of El Nino.

Environmental Detective: Investigating Nature with Cards

By Doug Herridge

Published October 1998

Grade Level: PreK-2, 3-5

This hands-on book will make a junior detective out of any student by looking closely at "evidence" all around them in their natural world. Among the activities are testing for acid rain, making an ant farm and starting a mini-compost pile. Kids will not only learn how to investigate but will learn that they can make a difference, too.

The Extinction Club

By Robert Twigger

Published July 2002

Grade Level: 6-8, 9-12

The Milu, an exotic Chinese deer with the neck of a camel, horns of a stag, feet of a cow, and tail of a donkey, became extinct in

the wild but survived in Bedfordshire, England. In 1986, part of the herd protected by the Duke of Bedford was returned to China. This quirky tale is not your typical natural history, but then the Milu is not your typical critter.

Fire on the Mountain: The True Story of the South Canyon Fire

By John N. Maclean

Published October 1999

Grade Level: 9-12

In July 1994, a series of errors led to the deaths of fourteen firefighters in a forest fire on Storm King Mountain in Colorado. Maclean examines why experienced men and women, smoke jumpers from Montana, hotshots from Oregon, and helitacks were trapped by a blowup, a violent, widespread burst of flame. This book is appropriate for high school students.



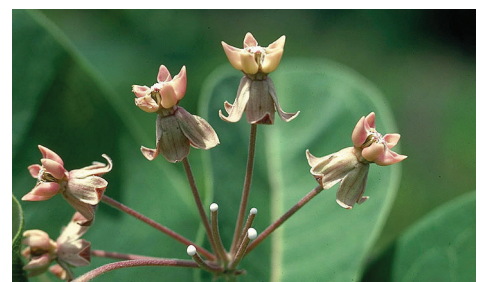
Care for the Animals We Love

By Jane Goodall and Marc Bekoff

Published October 2003

Grade Level: 6-8, 9-12

This book is an argument for a closer connection to the natural world and a more ethical attitude toward other creatures. It is an effort to create a safer and more tolerant world. Ten chapters in two voices, Goodall's and Bekoff's distinguished by plain type and italics, elaborate their ten guidelines for human behavior. The book includes a large list of related Websites.



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, and 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.

Shannon Bayou
3301 Waldron Road
Aroma Park, IL 60910
41°04'47.61"N
87°48'44.31"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 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 were 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.

Aroma Land and Water Preserve
1578 South Hieland Road
St. Anne, IL 60964
41°06'02.90"N
87°45'24.08"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.

Gar Creek Trail and Prairie Restoration
501 River Road
Kankakee, IL 60901
41°05'30.84"N
87°51'32.78"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 hik-

ing 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.

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

Strasma Grove

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

Strasma Grove
Duane Boulevard
Kankakee, Illinois 60901
41°06'28.33"N
87°50'43.56"W

Limestone Reforestation Site

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

Limestone Reforestation Site
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
Warren Street
St. Anne, Illinois 60964
41° 06' 24.92" N
87° 44' 35.77" 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 Hurre 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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