

"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"

Owls in the Forest Preserve

Our forest preserve at Hieland Road has owls. This past weekend on Saturday as the Cubs played for the NLCS title, an intrepid group of owl watchers made the hike to hear owls. I thought they might be White Sox fans. We met at 8:30 pm and after a brief tutorial of species we might see, and a few shared owl stories, it was off down the trail. Well, more like up the trail as we started at #1 post and hiked up the sandy dune.

At each post is a handy picture map with a well-marked path diagram. 1st, a stop at the porta potty, well placed and maintained by the FP. As we hiked in the dark, flashlights pointed down on the mowed pathway, a stillness made everyone think of the stories of past owl adventures. A pack of coyotes howled, night varmints growled nearby, but then an Eastern screech owl whinny, then another answering back. At #4 post juvenile Great Horned owls begged for food with a loud raspy voice, at least two of them over the bog meadow.

Bright stars shown above the trees, the 7 Sisters and Great Square along with the Milky Way were visible. We continued down the trail, up one dune and down the other side through pine trees and hollow owl roosts.

Coming out on the parking lot fireworks went off in the distance, CUBS WIN!!!

This evening's diversions will be long remembered by all, but not for the outside crowds and hoopla.

— John Baxter



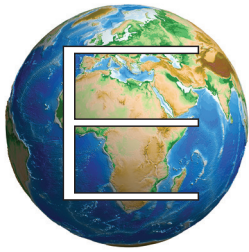
Photo by Mike Quigley

Announcement: Hieland Lakes Nature Preserve is closed until further notice

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

— John Muir

Woods of Woods in the Forest Preserve District of the Kankakee River Valley



Earth Dumpplings

Do you want to add wildflowers to your landscaping, convert lawn area to native plants, create a rain garden, a butterfly garden, or develop an area in your yard that is planted in native wildflowers that provide food and shelter for native pollinators?

Consider an ancient method that uses no cultivation, no chemical fertilizers, and saves time and energy. This technique is also a great way to add diversity to areas that are already planted, for restoration projects on disturbed areas, or to create a “food forest” of edible plants that also develops a healthy soil.

Sowing seeds using “earth dumpplings” is a method described by Masanobu Fukuoda, in his book “One Straw Revolution” and “Sowing Seeds in the Desert”. He advocated utilizing an ancient technique for sowing seeds without opening up the soil with cultivation tools such as a plow. He believed that tillage of large acreage is labor and energy intensive, destructive to soil health, and unnecessary waste of time and energy. The method he used employs a simple preparation of the seeds in a ball of compost and clay,

which he called “earth dumpplings”.

This ancient “no till” method is used by natural farmers and restoration biologists throughout the world. The same methods can also be used in a residential landscape to increase biodiversity, protect and improve the soil, attract butterflies, pollinators, birds and wildlife, while using less labor-intensive methods without chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

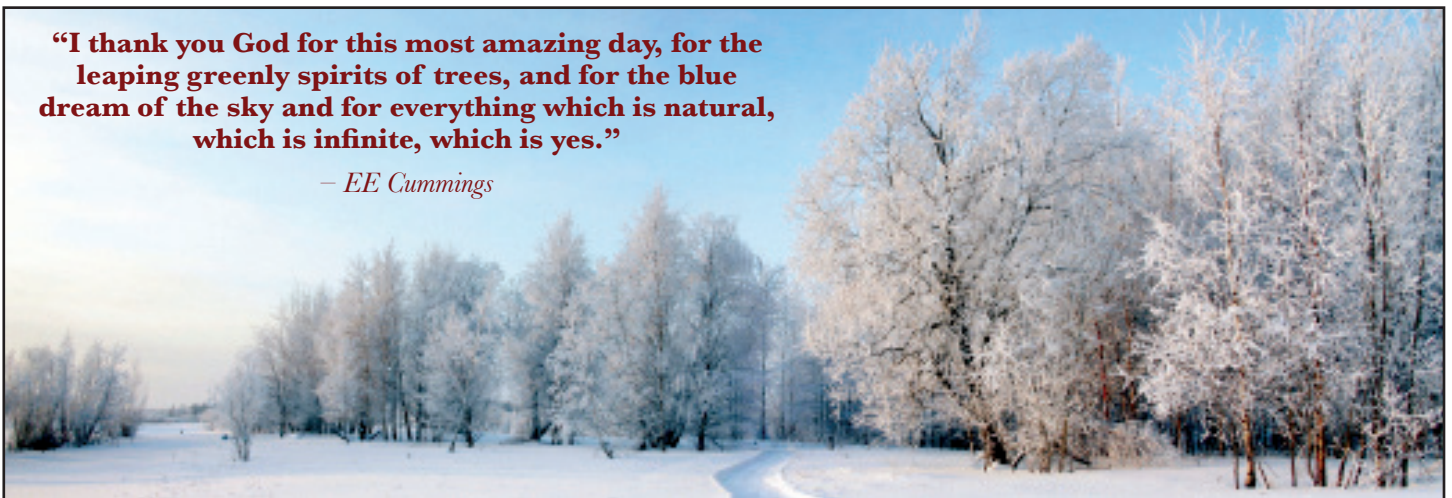
Making Fukuoda’s “earth dumpplings” is a simple process, using only compost, clay, and seeds. Earth dumpplings, sometimes called ‘seed balls’ or ‘seed bombs’, offer moisture and predator protection as compared to broadcasting seed. The seed balls are designed to protect seeds from seed-eating insects and mice. They protect the seeds until there is sufficient moisture, and the clay and compost matrix breaks down once there is sufficient rain to have moistened the soil enough to support new seedlings. Earth dumpplings can be thrown or blown into inaccessible areas – hence the name “seed bomb”. It requires no special skill, and does not require complex machinery or the use of fossil fuels to plant seeds. Seed balls

have been used to regenerate pasture on degraded highlands with steep slopes, wooded areas and shallow exposed soil and bedrock make the use of heavy machinery and seed drills impossible to use. Seed balls can also be used to overseed existing plant communities without damaging the existing growth or the soil structure. Plants can be seeded into forested areas and steep hillsides where tillage is not possible.

The basic “earth dumping” recipe is a mix of compost, clay and seed, with enough moisture added to shape into small dumpling sized balls. Other elements can be added, such as pest repellants to prevent insects from breaking open the balls and eating the seeds. Artemisias, alliums, mints and black pepper all have pungent scent which may help repel insects. Inoculating the seed balls with native forest soil, for woody areas will help provide essential diverse fungi for woody perennials. Mycorrhizae inoculants are a valuable addition to the mix. Legume inoculant can also be included. If you have collected the seed from native sources, include a bit of the soil from the rhizosphere of the parent plants.

**“I thank you God for this most amazing day, for the
leaping greenly spirits of trees, and for the blue
dream of the sky and for everything which is natural,
which is infinite, which is yes.”**

– EE Cummings





The basic recipe that Fukuoka used is as follows:

By weight:

- 4 parts compost
- 1 part clay (dry, powdered – Fukuoka used red, volcanic clay)
- 2 – 3 seeds per ball

By volume:

- 5 parts dry powdered clay
- 2-3 parts fine sifted compost
- 1 part seed mix
- 1-2 parts water

Mix these together to form seed balls about the diameter of a dime – ½". This diameter is ideal to provide good contact with the soil, protection from predation and help retain moisture. If you use the first mix, form the balls and then poke a hole in the middle, adding the seeds. If the seeds need light to germinate (the seed packet instructions will say to cover very slightly with soil), simply press them onto the seed ball.

The second mix is often used for larger amounts to cover more extensive areas. With this method, the seeds are mixed directly into the clay and compost matrix, and as water is added, stir the matrix until the dough forms into small balls.

Once you have made the seed balls, they can be scattered onto the ground right away, or dried for further use. Keep in mind that many native plants scatter their seeds in the fall, and the seeds are designed to overwinter in the cold for best germination. Seed dumplings of native plants are best scattered in late fall, after the first frost. If you are planting annuals which are not hardy in your zone, scatter the seed balls in the spring after the last frost. An example of spring planting would be when adding annual flowers into a garden bed or interspersing vegetable plants into your vegetable and herb garden.

Resources:

One Straw Revolution, an Introduction to Natural Farming, by Masanobu Fukuoka

<http://www.onestrawrevolution.net/>

<http://www.americanmeadows.com>

<http://seed-balls.com/>

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



Juneberry

BERRY

Bonanza

found on rocky cliffs, sand dunes and well-drained woodlands with light soils. Typically found as an understory amongst larger plants, it requires a site protected from winter wind, and does well in full sun or light shade. It is a very hardy understory shrub, with smaller berries than the highbush blueberries, producing large amounts of fruits in June, earlier than many of its taller relatives. Like the highbush blueberry, it requires acidic soil. It grows to two feet in height and width, and will sucker to as much as 4' in width. The fall color is a deep red.

As winter solstice signals that the season turns towards lengthening days and the return of spring, the thoughts of lovers of nature and the outdoors also turn towards plans for gardens, plants and seeds. Perhaps birds and wildlife have visited winter food sources in the yard. Summer berries have been made into jam, dried or preserved in the freezer, are relished on the cold snowy days of winter.

There are a number of native berries that not only provide winter food for birds, but are nourishing and tasty food for people. No need to purchase expensive and often imported berries, promoted for their health-giving nutrients, when they can easily be grown in the backyard. Fruit bearing shrubs often produce much sooner than fruit trees, and bear for years. Being small, they can be tucked into edge areas or thrive as understory plantings amidst taller trees.

The following plants are all native to the Midwest, and once established will thrive with little care other than seasonal pruning to increase production and remove older growth.

Berries to Plant Where Soil Moisture is dry to medium:

Juneberry, or Serviceberry – *Amelanchier arborea*; *Amelanchier alnifolia* (photo above)

These grow as a small tree or large shrub, with beautiful fall color of red, yellow and orange. *Amelanchier* thrives as a shrub border, is shade tolerant but needs at least four hours of sunlight per day.

Wild Plum – *Prunus Americana*

The American Plum is a small tree or large shrub, growing to the height of 15' or so and it easily suckers to form thickets. This growth habit makes it a good choice for naturalizing, with a fall color of maroon-red. While the fruit is smaller than domestic cultivars, it is highly edible with sweet flesh and a tart skin.

Early Low Blueberry – *Vaccinium angustifolium*

This small shrub is the blueberry to plant if your soil has medium to dry moisture levels. Native to Illinois,

Berries to Plant Where Soil Moisture is medium to medium-moist

Nannyberry *Viburnum* – *Viburnum lentago*

Nannyberry grows as a small tree or large shrub, and may grow to 30' in height. It is a shrubby plant that loves sun to part shade. It can be planted as a shrubby border and can get leggy, best planted with lower growing shrubs or perennials in front. It is a beautiful large shrub with deep red and orange color in the fall.



Nannyberry Viburnum



Wild Plum



Wild Black Currant

Wild Black Currant – *Ribes americanum*

Doing well in full to partial sun, Wild Black Currant has a very tasty berry growing to about 3' in height and bearing in mid-summer. Unlike its gooseberry cousins, wild currant does not have thorns. It will do well as an understory plant in partial shade such as under oak or maple trees. Fall color is red and orange.

Wild gooseberry - *Ribes missouriense*

Gooseberry pie is an old favorite made from the fruit of this small shrub. Gooseberry grows to 2' in height and will grow in sun or shade. It is a good understory plant and does well in soil that is medium wet to medium dry.

Blackberry – *Rubus allegheniensis*

Blackberry tolerates dryer conditions than its cousin black raspberry, often found growing amongst native grasses. It is a hardy growth habit, often overtaking an area. The berries generally have excellent flavor.



Berries to Plant Where Soil Moisture is medium-moist to moist (but not soggy):

Black Raspberry – *Rubus occidentalis*

The arching canes of black raspberry can be up to 6' long, bearing in their second year of growth. This small shrub likes partial sun and medium-moist to moist conditions, producing delicious and nutritious berries. It tolerates partial shade and makes a good understory planting amongst larger trees. Although the arched branches are very prickly, it is well worth the effort in harvesting the highly edible fruit.



Common elderberry - *Sambucus nigra canadensis*

This common native of streambanks and moist meadows prefers full to partial sun and moist conditions. It is found 4 – 12' in height, with distinctive white flower panicles 3 – 10" across. The small fruits are dark purple to black in color, and are edible when ripe and cooked. The fruit is used to make wine, elderberry jelly and pie.

Northern Highbush Blueberry - *Vaccinium corymbosum*

Growing to a height of 6-12', this large shrub is loved for the delicious flavor and high nutritional value of its fruit. The highbush blueberry produces large berries in abundance as hedgerow plantings, shrub borders and ornamental feature plants in the home landscape. It requires acidic soil (pH 4.5-5.5), and prefers full sun to partial shade.



Tips for Foraging

- Never eat a berry unless you are completely sure it's edible.
- If you see a bird eating a wild berry, don't assume that berry is safe to eat. Birds eat many wild berries that are toxic to humans.
- If you're just learning how to identify wild berries, always carry a field guide with color photographs to help you safely identify berries.
- Avoid foraging for berries in locations that have been sprayed with pesticides or near heavily-polluted rivers, roadways, or industrial areas.
- Children are especially susceptible to the temptation of eating wild berries, so it's important to teach them to identify berries commonly found in your yard or local area -- especially those that are poisonous.
- Summer and fall are the best times to find ripe berries, ripe berries are easier to identify.
- Before foraging for berries in any area, be sure it's legal.
- Many state parks offer foraging classes. Contact your local state park to see what they offer.
- Your local university, botany, or horticulture group may offer foraging field trips to help you learn to identify wild berries and other edible plants.

References:

<http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info>
<https://www.arborday.org>
<http://plants.usda.gov>
<http://www.eattheweeds.com>
<https://www.possibilityplace.com>

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°04'47.61N
87°48'44.31"W

Aroma Land and Water Reserve

One of the best sites in the area for woodland wildflowers, this 140 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.

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. There is ample parking in the parking lot

on Hieland Road, and a playground, maintained by the Kankakee River Valley Park District, for children.

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 starts at the Aqua Illinois property at Hawkins and Water Streets, goes through Shapiro Developmental Center, Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve, Kankakee Community College, and connects 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

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 districts 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

Hieland Lakes Nature Preserve

(Closed until further notice)

The Forest Preserve has a new site located about three miles east of Kankakee on Route 17. The new site is 64 acres, including two connected lakes. An aquatic survey will be conducted to determine the fish population; meanwhile, limited fishing is allowed. Bluegill may be kept by anglers - all other fish are catch-and-release.

Plans for the site include planting native wildflowers, prairie restoration and creation of a walking path. At this time, there is a mowed walking path, a parking lot, fencing, and a bridge at the point where the two lakes connect.

The site is a former sand gravel quarry, and while at this time, before restoration gets underway, there is not much in the way of native ecosystem remaining, the site offers a sparse population of native plant life, the area is abundant with wildlife such as deer, fox, coyote, and waterfowl including wood ducks, great blue heron and egret.

6692 Route 17 East
St. Anne, IL 60964
41°7'02.23"N
87°44'24.82"W

Strasma Grove

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

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.

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

Zeedyk Meadows

Four acres of trees and grasses.

Warren Street
St. Anne, Illinois 60964
41° 06' 24.92" N
87° 44' 35.77" W

Snake Creek Preserve

5800 Darline Dr
St Anne, IL 60964
41.109752, 87.756308

Chase a prairie winter through swirling mounds of snow
while winds unharnessed wail and blow
and eyes peak out through frosty lash
to joy at thirty five below a circling sundog's flash.

Ponder prairie winter midst darkness of the night
while age worn ways are whispered white
and soft descending flakes declare
that earth, to snowy hope's delight
will chart new paths to share.

Sing a prairie winter as plodding through the deep
young children awakened from their sleep
without the weight of ancient woe
and frozen choices left to reap
make angels in the snow.

Taste a prairie winter deep in the lungs the fill
of calloused cold, the tingling chill
that favors none yet bears no shame
although perverse its twisted thrill
to nip each nose the same.

Hold a prairie winter for just a few more days
then just before the river frays
sling one last skate without a care
while folks debate why spring delays
as if that were quite rare.

Praise a prairie winter just wait until July
when feeling like we're going to die
'cause thirty five contains a plus
it's then that we recall just why
our winters rate no fuss.

– William B. Petricko, 2014

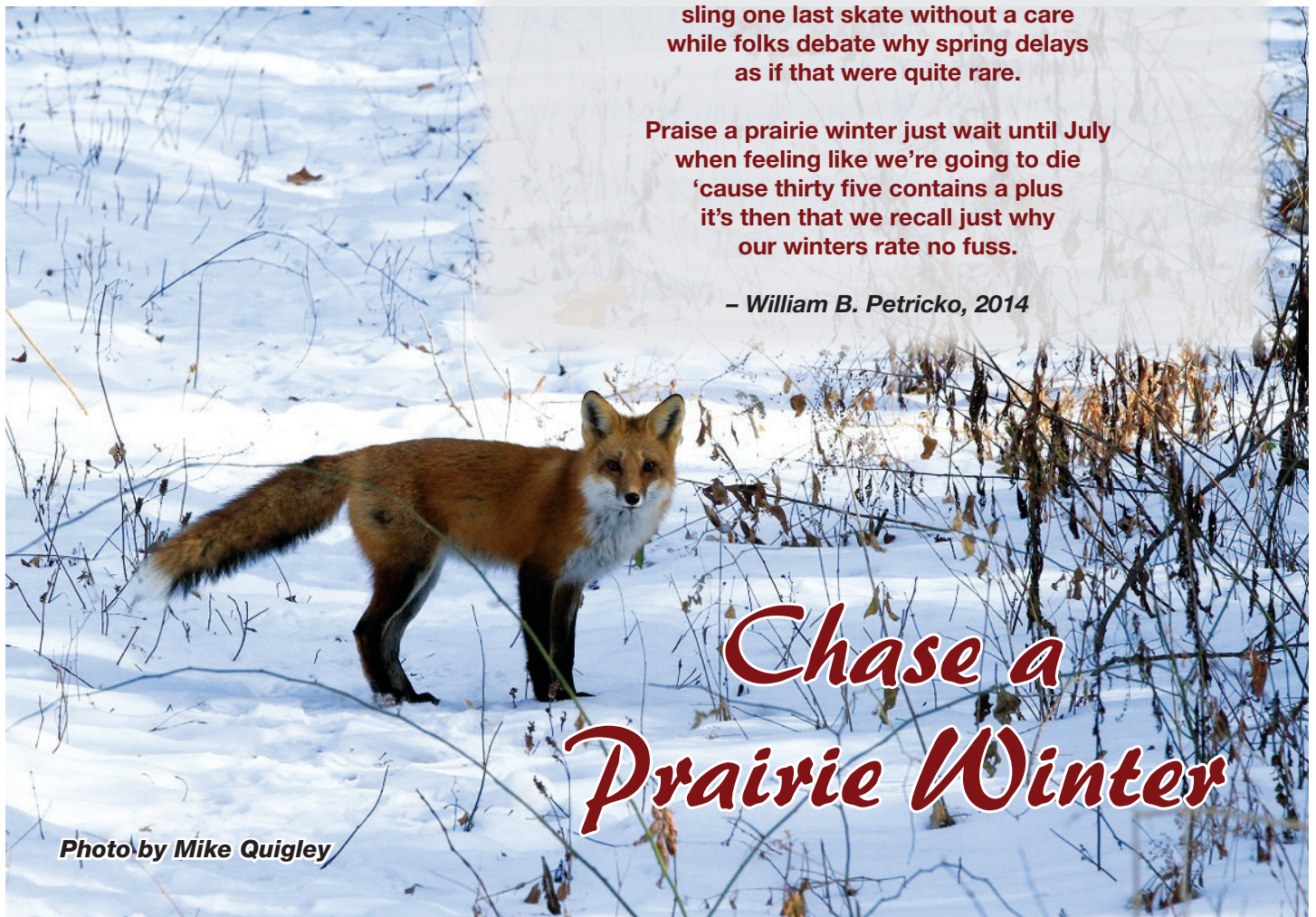


Photo by Mike Quigley

Chase a Prairie Winter



Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve District

3301 Waldron Road • P.O. Box 13
Aroma Park, Illinois 60910
815-935-5630

Web address: www.krvfpd.org

E-mail: forest@krvfpd.org

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/KRVFPD/>

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ON TRAIL... *at the Forest Preserve*

For information on times and dates for current programs at your forest preserve, call Jean Hurrel at 815-549-9072. Our programs include moonlight hikes, wildflower and native prairie walks, and local natural history. You can also find our programs advertised in the Outdoor section of The Daily Journal, 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 live 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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