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Comments

This past January marked the 20th anniversary of the establishment of a nature conservation program within the Illinois Department of Conservation. This initial "Natural Areas Section" grew from one person in January of 1972 to 3 by the end of that year. The Department's Wildlife Division hired its first nongame biologist in 1972 also. A prairie burning program began in 1973 and the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory in 1975. The Endangered Species Protection Board hired a program coordinator in 1978. These programs came together in 1980 as a new Natural Heritage Section of 8 professionals. This section grew to a staff of 15 in January of 1986 when it was elevated to Division Status. The Division now boasts a staff of 30 and a comprehensive nature conservation program. This progress is a tribute to the support and vision of Illinois' citizens and government.

In spite of what you may think about the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development this past June in Rio, Illinois conservationists have to be proud of the recognition that our state received. The United States National Report to the Conference cited Illinois' program of Nature Preserves and Biodiversity protection as a "case study" in how to do it. This is yet another tribute to Illinois' national leadership in nature conservation. Copies of the "case study" are available from Illinoensis.

John Schwegman

Survey Staff Reduced

The State budget crunch has resulted in a reduction from 83 to 63 general revenue funded staff positions at the Natural History Survey. The new plant Systematist position being interviewed for last winter was not filled.

DOC Budget Impacted

State Budget reductions have hit the Department of Conservation but their impact on various programs have not been announced as this issue of Illinoensis goes to press. It is anticipated that the reductions will affect sites and personnel.

Promotions at Shawnee NF

Dr. Lawrence Stritch, Botanist for the Shawnee National Forest, was recently promoted to Regional Botanist for the Northeast Region of the Forest Service and is also serving as Zone

Botanist/Ecologist for the Shawnee and Wayne-Hoosier National Forests. Larry will continue to work out of Harrisburg for the foreseeable future. Beth Shimp is now serving as Forest Botanist for the Shawnee.

State Museum Herbarium Moved

The Illinois State Museum Herbarium has moved from the third floor of the Museum in the Capitol Complex in Springfield to the Museum Collections Center at 1920 South 10 1/2 Street in Springfield. The new west entrance to the Collections Center also recently opened.

Native Plant Society News

The annual meeting of the Illinois Native Plant Society was held at the Jake Wolf Fish Hatchery in Mason County on June 6 & 7. Approximately 50 attended and elected Dr. Kenneth Robertson of Champaign President for the coming year. Field trips were taken to many sandy habitats and copies of the keynote address on the "Origins of the Inland Sand Prairie Flora of Illinois" by John Schwegman are available upon request to Illinoensis.

Erigenia Due Soon

The 1992 issue of *Erigenia*, Journal of the Illinois Native Plant Society, is nearly set to go to the printer according to Beth Shimp. Beth is handling production of the Journal and says it will be out before the end of the year. She and Editor Larry Stritch already have 3 papers for a following issue and are soliciting more papers which can be sent to them c/o Shawnee National Forest in Harrisburg.

Vegetation Sampling

The Shawnee National Forest and The Nature Conservancy are jointly funding a project to sample and describe the vegetation of the various plant communities of the Shawnee Hills and Coastal Plain of southern Illinois. The data will be used to guide intensive community restoration efforts under way on the Shawnee Forest and the Cache River Joint Project which includes the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Max Hutchison and Tim Voigt are directing the project from the Cache River offices at Shawnee College, Ullin.

Critical Trends Study

The Illinois Natural History Survey is conducting a study of "Critical Trends" in Illinois. Among other things, the study covers changes in forest and prairie vegetation over the past 40 years.

Endangered Plant Status

The Illinois Natural History Survey is conducting statewide status surveys of Eleocharis wolfii, Napaea dioica, and Agalinis skinneriana this summer and fall. Funding for the first two species is provided by the Endangered Species Protection Board while the latter is contracted by the Department of Conservation with funding from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dalea foliosa

The Department of Conservation is contracting for a statewide search for additional extant populations of the endangered Dalea foliosa with the Morton Arboretum this summer. Anyone with information on possible new populations should contact Marlin Bowles of the Arboretum. Marcella DeMauro of the Will County Forest Preserve District has been contracted by DOC to prepare a recovery plan for the species. Funds for both contracts come from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Endangered Species Protection Board has contracted with the SIU Department of Plant Biology for a genetic comparison between Illinois and Tennessee/Alabama populations of this species.

Illinois Plant Translocation Guidelines

The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Endangered Species Protection Board and Department of Conservation have jointly developed guidelines for establishing new populations of native plants in the state. The establishment of new populations of rare plants, especially endangered and threatened species, has many implications for plant conservationists and geographers. The guidelines cover both single species plantings and whole community restorations. Everyone interested in propagation of plant species and restoration and management of natural communities will find this interesting. Copies are available upon request to Illinoensis.

Rare Plant Reintroduction Workshops

The Center for Plant Conservation at the Missouri Botanical Garden is hosting a series of Rare Plant Reintroduction Workshops around the country. These are a prelude to a conference planned for next year to try and reach a national consensus on the subject.

Exotic Weed List

The DOC Botany Program prepared an updated list of exotic plants that are known problem weeds in Illinois Wildlands this past spring. Copies are available free upon request to Illinoensis.

Exotic Control Reprint

A paper by John Schwegman entitled "The Need for Federal Action to

Control Weeds of Natural Lands" was published in the Proceedings of the Yosemite National Park Centennial Symposium this past spring. Copies are available upon request to Illinoensis.

Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol

Dr. Richard Malecki of the New York Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at Cornell University reports that the release of insects for control of the exotic purple loosestrife weed in the United States has received required federal approvals. Work will proceed in Minnesota and Washington State, which provided state funds to keep the project moving when federal funds were depleted.

Garlic Mustard Beneficial?

Dr. James Duke of USDA's Agricultural Research Service is reporting finding a potentially beneficial medicinal chemical in the exotic Garlic Mustard weed (Alliaria petiolata). Let's hope a big market develops for it and herb gatherers are motivated to gather and remove it from our forests where it is a major problem for conservationists.

Chicago Flora Revision

Jerry Wilhelm and Floyd Swink have begun work on the 4th Edition of "Plants of the Chicago Region". Jerry says the new Edition will include species descriptions and will add flowering dates for grasses and sedges among other improvements over the 3rd Edition. He points out that preparation of the update manuscript is a slow process, and that it will be several years before the 4th Edition is printed.

Carex of Illinois

Dr. Robert Mohlenbrock advises that the Carex volume of the Illustrated Flora of Illinois is nearly ready to go to the printers. All illustrations are complete and most of the text is written. It will cover 153 taxa as it now stands, and his best estimate is that it will be published by SIU Press about the fall of 1993.

Posters Available

A new full color poster titled "Streams of Illinois", depicting the fishes, other animals and plants typical of medium-sized Illinois streams, is now available from the DOC's Natural Heritage Division. The first poster in this series "Illinois Woodland Wildflowers" has also been reprinted. This latter poster has been in short supply for many years. The posters are available for a donation of \$3 each to cover postage and handling from the Division of Natural Heritage, Illinois Department of Conservation,

524 South 2nd Street, Springfield, IL 62701. Make checks payable to Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund.

New Natural Heritage Column

The DOC Natural Heritage Division is initiating a biweekly column "Our Natural Heritage" that will be issued as a news release. It is being written by botanist John Schwegman, but will deal with the whole spectrum of biological and physical phenomena that comprise Illinois' natural heritage. Its goal is fostering public appreciation of this rich heritage and an understanding of its conservation. Short news items are also included. If your local paper does not run it, consider asking that they do so. The first column was sent out the first week of August.

Deer Impact Study

Dr. Roger Anderson, of Illinois State University, is initiating a 3 year study of the impact of deer browsing and grazing on prairie plants this summer. The research will be conducted at Goose Lake Prairie Nature Preserve in Grundy County, and will be supported by the DOC with federal Pittman-Robertson funds. Deer impacts on prairie are much less well understood than forest impacts.

Watseka Sand Ponds Saved

A fund raising drive by the Grand Prairie Friends of Champaign has resulted in the purchase of 9.5 acres of a natural area known as the Watseka Ponds in Iroquois County. GPF purchased the area with funds donated by more than 80 individuals, 6 non-profit organizations and one business. The area is home to many rare and interesting plant species but was deemed too small for purchase by the state.

Sinnissippi Forest Acquired

The Illinois Department of Conservation acquired the Sinnissippi Forest tract near Oregon in Ogle County on June 1. This 1,186 acre tract that fronts on the Rock River has been managed as a private forest for many years. The tracts 1,058 acres of bluffs, upland forest and bottomland forest contain many interesting native plants. It is being managed as Lowden-Miller State Forest.

National Wildlife Refuge for Plants

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has announced plans to develop the Lake Wales Ridge National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. It is touted as the first National Wildlife Refuge to be established primarily for the protection of endangered plants and a unique vegetation community. It is planned to contain 10,000 acres of rare scrub vegetation. For more information contact the USFWS at Jacksonville Field Office, 3100 University Blvd. S.W., Suite 120,

Jacksonville, FL 32216 (904/791-2580).

Illinois Forest Conference

The Illinois Native Plant Society and a host of other organizations are sponsoring the first Illinois Forest Conference at Eastern Illinois University at Charleston September 26-27. A grant from the DOCs Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund is helping support this gathering. Not to be confused with a forestry conference dealing with timber production and commercial uses of forests, this conference is geared to persons interested in protecting and enjoying natural forests. It takes the concept of the well-known prairie conferences and applies this approach to the forest community. There will be sessions for amateurs and professionals alike. For registration information write Forest Conference, Forest Glen Preserve, RR 1, Box 495A, Westville, IL 61883 or phone 217/662-2142.

Natural Areas Conference

The 19th Annual Natural Areas Conference will be held October 27-30 at Indiana University in Bloomington. This national conference has been in the western states the past 2 years and its return to the Midwest is a return to the region of its origin. The 4th Conference was also held in the Bloomington, Indiana area and saw the first discussion of the formation of the Natural Areas Association. This year's conference also functions as the 14th annual meeting of that Association, the professional society for natural area workers. For registration information write NAC Registration, Indiana University Conference Bureau, IMU Room 677, Bloomington, IN 47405 or call 812/855-6451.

Great Thismia Hunt II

The Illinois Native Plant Society, The Nature Conservancy and the Morton Arboretum are sponsoring a second attempt to rediscover Thismia americana in the wet prairies of south Cook County. The hunt will be August 22 and will start at 9:30 AM from Powderhorn Lake Forest Preserve near 138th Street and Burnham Avenue on Chicago's far south side. Everyone is invited to participate. Dr. Tony Reznicek of the University of Michigan will give the concluding talk. For more information call Linda Wetstein at 708/719-2419.

Species News

John Taft of the Illinois Natural History Survey discovered a population of Carex arkansana in a flatwoods in Saline County this past spring. This is the first record of this species from east of

the Mississippi River.

Dr. Robert Mohlenbrock reports the discovery of Carex baileyi in Jackson County this spring. This species resembles a small and slender C. lurida and the initial population recognized in Illinois had long been considered to be lurida.

Jon Duerr and Dick Young report the discovery of Spiranthes tuberosa in Kane and Kendall Counties. This is a new orchid for northeastern Illinois.

Dr. Dale Birkenholz reports that the exotic and weedy Heleborine orchid Epipactis heleborine is invading central Illinois as evidenced by its discovery about 5 miles southwest of Fairbury in southern Livingston County.

Written August 10, 1992