

ILLINOENSIS, WINTER 1991 Vol 7 (1)
By John Schwegman, Illinois Native Plant Conservation Program
Illinois Department of Conservation

New Staff at Endangered Species Board

Jim Herkert has joined the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board as Project Manager working out of the Springfield Office. Jim comes to the Board from the University of Illinois where he is completing his PhD with a dissertation on effects of habitat fragmentation on grassland birds.

DOC Heritage Staff Transfers

District Heritage Biologist Ed Anderson has transferred from District 10 at Alton to District 1 at Mt. Carroll. Until the Alton position is filled, questions concerning District 10 should be addressed to Dave Cooper at the Benton Regional office at 618/435-8138.

New Conservation Biologist at Survey

Dr. Mark Schwartz has joined the staff of the Center for Biodiversity at the Illinois Natural History Survey in Urbana. Dr. Schwartz is a plant community ecologist with an interest in fire ecology. He has indicated an interest in management oriented research.

New Field Botanists at Survey

Scott Simon, a Univ. of Wisconsin graduate, joined the survey this summer and Paul Tessene of the University of Minnesota was hired this fall to conduct botanical field surveys for highway projects. They work through the Office of Biogeographic Information.

New Director at Morton Arboretum

Dr. Gerard T. Donnelly has been appointed Director of the Morton Arboretum. Dr. Donnelly is an ecologist who comes to Illinois from Michigan State University where he headed a botanical garden.

New Nature Preserve Commission Members

Governor Thompson recently appointed six new members to the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. They are Gerald Adelman, Chicago; Thomas Donnelley II, Chicago; Anthony Dvorak, Argonne; Francis Farwell II, Chicago; John Schmitt, Chicago and Judith Spasovich, Dupon. They join Tanner Girard, Elsau; Michael Schneiderman, Chicago and Valerie Spale, Westchester on the Nine-member Commission.

New Director at Nature Institute

The Nature Institute of Alton has announced the appointment of Dick Norton of Godfrey as its new Executive Director. Norton is a native Altonian.

Center for Plant Conservation Moves

The Center for Plant Conservation plans a move to the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis in early 1991. The move of this important privately funded conservation organization from the Arnold Arboretum to the Midwest should have a positive impact on the Illinois plant conservation program. They handle all of our long term seed storage needs at present.

Exotic Weeds Seized

Some \$4,000.00 worth of purple loosestrife seedlings were confiscated by DOC law enforcement officers this fall. The plants were taken from a Chicago area grower and were the first ever seized under the Illinois exotic weed act which prohibits sale and planting of this species in the state.

Exotic Species Conference Planned

The Indiana State Museum is planning a national conference on invasion of natural communities by exotic plants and animals for October 24-25, 1991 in Indianapolis. Bill McKnight (317-232-8178) is directing the planning for the conference.

Feds Consider Noxious Weed

The U. S. Department of Agriculture is considering listing *Melaleuca*, an Australian tree that is overrunning the Everglades, as a noxious weed. If listed, this would be the first time a weed of non-agricultural lands is so designated under the Federal Act. This designation would restrict interstate transport of the plant and should help get federal funds for biocontrol research. The decision should be made in January.

Exotic Weed Alert

The Illinois Department of Agriculture has issued a "weed alert" for Serrated Tussock Grass (*Nassella trichotoma*), a serious invader of pastures and possibly prairies. Tall fescue seed contaminated with seeds of this weed was sold in Madison, St. Clair, Clinton, Marion, Jefferson, Macon, Livingston and Warren Counties according to the alert. Copies of the alert leaflet can be obtained from Patrick Giordano at the Illinois Department of Agriculture in Springfield and from many Agricultural Extension Service offices.

Exotic Weed Testimony Available

Testimony presented in 1990 by the DOC and the Natural Resources Defense Council to Congress on the need and content of federal laws needed to address the problem of exotic weeds in natural areas and wildlands is available from the DOCs Natural Heritage Division, Botany Program.

TNC to Hire Exotic Species Specialist

John Humke, Chief of Stewardship for The Nature Conservancy, advises that they plan to hire a staff person for exotic species problems in 1991.

Garlic Mustard Locations Needed

Victoria Nuzzo of 124 Dawson Avenue, Rockford, IL 61107 is compiling the current distribution of garlic mustard in Illinois. If you have location information on the current distribution of this weed that you have not already provided to her, please drop her a line with the information. Her work is being supported by the Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund (Income Tax Checkoff).

Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Beneficial Insects Laboratory, are petitioning the Technical Advisory Group of the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for permission to release a weevil and two Chrysomelid beetles for control of this weed during summer 1991. The weevil has larvae that attack the roots and both larvae and adults of the other beetles feed on leaves of purple loosestrife. Some release sites are planned for northeastern Illinois.

Corridors for Tomorrow

An interagency pilot project to landscape interstate highways with native plants is underway. Personnel from the Natural History Survey, U of I, EIU, DOT and DOC are involved. Planning will be completed in 1991 with the first plantings scheduled for 1992. Dr. Kenneth Robertson of the Natural History Survey is the principal investigator of the project which is funded by the Environmental Protection Trust Fund Commission.

New Prairie Plant Book

"Prairie Plants of Northern Illinois: Identification and Ecology" by Russell Kirt of the College of DuPage is now available from Stipes Publishing Co. Box 526, Champaign, IL 61824. This well written and useful booklet sells for \$8.80.

Northern Illinois Wetland Poster

A poster depicting northern Illinois Wetland plants and animals in their natural habitat is under development by the DOC Botany Program. This project is funded by the Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund and is scheduled for completion by April. Remember to donate to this fund when completing your 1990 state income tax return.

National Institutes for the Environment

Stating that "it is time for the U. S. to treat the environmental health of the nation and the planet with the same seriousness it devotes to the health of its citizens", a group of scientists are proposing the establishment of a National Institutes for the Environment to be funded by the peace dividend from the end of the Cold War. The 3 person steering committee for the effort includes Dr. Henry Howe of the Biological Sciences Dept. at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Northern Illinois Prairie Workshop

The 10th Northern Illinois Prairie Workshop is being planned for March 2, 1991 at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb. For further information contact Ken Klick at 708/668-3788 or Wayne Lampa at 708/790-4900.

Downstate Prairie Conference Planned

The Grand Prairie Friends of Urbana and TNC are in the early stages of planning a prairie conference for central Illinois for September 1991. Persons with suggestions or seeking more information should contact Sharon Dorsey at 217/344-3016.

Native Plant Society

The Illinois Native Plant Society has tentatively scheduled its 1991 annual meeting and banquet for spring in northwestern Illinois. Details will be forthcoming after the Board Meeting scheduled for January 19.

DOCs Mason Nursery Propagates Woodland Wildflowers

The DOCs Mason State Nursery near Topeka IL will begin modest propagation of woodland wildflowers in its newly constructed greenhouse this winter. The initial effort is with species with seeds available for fall collection. DOC Heritage Biologists will attempt to collect seeds of spring fruiting species this year.

Nature Preserve Protects River Segment

On November 13, 1990, Governor Thompson approved the dedication of Carl Fliermans' River Nature Preserve on the Little Vermilion River in Vermilion County. This privately held nature preserve marks the first time the Illinois Nature Preserve Act was used specifically to protect a segment of outstanding stream and its associated animals and plants.

New Wilderness for Illinois

President Bush signed into law a bill establishing 7 new wilderness areas in the Shawnee National Forest in November. The areas are Lusk Creek, Pope Co.; Bald Knob, Union Co.; Clear Springs, Union/Jackson Cos.; Bay Creek, Pope Co.; Burden Falls, Pope Co.; Garden of the Gods, Saline/Gallatin/Hardin/Pope Cos. and Panther Den (addition), Union Co. They total 26,266 acres that will be protected and managed for their natural values. State of Illinois testimony in support of Congressman Poshard's wilderness bill was presented by DOC Heritage Division Chief Carl Becker.

DOC Land Acquisition

During 1990, the DOC purchased several tracts of significance to native plant conservation. These include 635 acres along the Cache River northeast of Karnak in Johnson and Pulaski Cos., a 2 acre addition to Manito Prairie in Tazewell Co., 2 tracts totaling 48 acres at Calamus Lake in Macon Co., a 24 acre addition to Campbell Woods in Kankakee Co., 16 acres at Yorkville Prairie in Kendall Co., 52 acres at Illinois Beach North, Lake Co. and the 19 acre Ramsey Railroad Prairie in Fayette Co.

Clearcutting Banned for One Year

The federal budget bill for fiscal year 1991 (through Oct. 1, 1991) prohibits clearcutting on the Shawnee National Forest, with certain exceptions such as control of disease, through the end of the fiscal year.

Endangered Species Rules Take Effect

Pursuant to authority of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act, rules were promulgated and became effective December 3, 1990 to implement a consultation process to protect endangered and threatened species in Illinois. Consultation between state and local agencies and the DOCs Natural Heritage Division is required to assure minimal impacts of their actions on endangered and threatened species. Copies of the regulations are available from the Endangered Species Conservation Program of the DOCs Natural Heritage Division in Springfield.

Goose Lake Prairie Restoration

A major project to girdle and deaden thorny shrubs and trees that invaded this site prior to acquisition by the DOC is under way. Most of the work on this 1,500 acre preserve has already been accomplished and final completion is expected by spring 1992. The work is being contracted by the DOC. The 300 acres of cropland at the Park is to be planted to prairie over the next 5 years.

1990 E & T Plant Status Report

The DOC Botany Program has compiled an annual status report for all federally listed endangered and threatened plants currently or formerly occurring in Illinois and all candidates for such listing. It covers 8 listed and 27 candidate species. Nine new candidates were added by the Federal Register of February 11, 1990. The species accounts in the 4 page report include data from the DOCs plant monitoring program, contributed data from others and information on various research and recovery efforts. Several status changes seem related to the extreme cold last winter and the wetter than usual summer. Copies are free on request to the DOCs Heritage Division, Botany Program.

Off Site Conservation of Plants

The DOCs native plant conservation program added seed of 4 E & T plants to the long term seed storage program of the Center for Plant Conservation. The seeds are stored at the USDA Seed Storage Lab at Ft. Collins CO. The species are heart-leaved plantain (Plantago cordata), glade mallow (Napaea dioica), Hill's thistle (Cirsium hillii) and decurrent false aster (Boltonia decurrens). Seed storage of the latter species is part of the federal recovery plan for the species.

Price's Potato Bean

An intensive search for Price's Potato Bean (Apios priceana) was conducted by staff of the Natural Land Institute in southern Illinois during summer 1990. The search areas included the Ohio River bluffs in parts of Pope and Hardin Counties and the Wolf Lake/LaRue Swamp/Pine Hills area of Union County. No populations of this federally threatened species were located. A method for identifying A. priceana from leaf venation of leaves from sterile plants was developed as a part of this project.

Written December 21, 1990