



The Harbinger

Newsletter of the
Illinois Native Plant Society

SUMMER 2018
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“...dedicated to the study, appreciation, and conservation of the native flora and natural communities of Illinois.”



Bountiful blazing stars (*Liatris spicata*) at Cook County Forest Preserve Camp Pine. Photo: Ken Schaefer.

Editorial

It's been a great season of botanizing and a friend and I have been searching for rare plants and their unique habitats in southern Illinois. Abel's story of his search for all 3 species in the *Styracaceae* in Illinois (which are all state listed) is the first of many stories we hope to publish about exciting finds in the plant world in Illinois. Have a story to share? Please let me know! Christopher David Benda.

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Message from the President



I'm sitting here writing this President's message from my hotel room in Marquette, Michigan, trying to escape Illinois' new normal climate change-influenced summer, and at the same time, chase rare orchids and, of course, sedges. I'll be joining fellow botanist friends from throughout the Midwest and Ontario, Canada on this adventure and hope to see 50-75 Illinois state-listed species, along with several new lifelist plants for me. All in just over one week's time.

Since the last *Harbinger*, the Illinois Native Plant Society held its Annual Gathering. Special thanks to Floyd and Janine Catchpole and the INPS Kankakee Torrent Chapter crew for organizing an amazing meeting. We were all treated to an amazing presentation by *Flora of Chicago Region* author, Gerould Wilhelm, as well as field trips to some of northeast Illinois best natural areas. It was an incredible weekend of fellowship with native plant lovers.

Congratulations to new INPS Life Members Bob, Loretta, and Trevor!

Take care as you explore the Illinois wilds this summer and fall.

Happy trails,

Paul Marcum

INPS President

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Check out the [Illinois Native Plant Society Events Calendar](#) for Chapter meetings and workshops.

Welcome New Members

Central Chapter

May Bach
Sue Cozzens
Lee Gurga
Mark Johnson
Kay McChesney
John Meece
Julie Schuette
Mari Whitney

Grand Prairie Chapter

Michele Carroll
Jack Pfaffman
Sam Stuber
Troy Waldschmidt

Kankakee Torrent Chapter

Jeffrey Butler
Trevor Edmonson*
Scott Saffer
Victoria Tracy
Judith Wallace
Denise Wessman

Southern Chapter

Michael Gallagher
Julie Murphy
Bob Stamps*
Loretta Satterthwaite*

Forest Glen Chapter

Kayla Myers
Amy Thoren

Northeast Chapter

Elsa Anderson
Linda Karlen
Kate Kruesi
Michelle Mann
Frederick McGuire
Monica Paniagua
Kristin Pink
Thomas Priscal
Ayesha Qazi
Erin Spear
Donna Tuerk
Karly Tumminello

*** New Life Member**

Chapter News

2018 INPS Research Grant Awards

Seven students, citizen scientists, conservation groups and institutions were awarded grants in 2018 to fund one-year research-focused projects on Illinois native plants that support the mission of the Illinois Native Plant Society. The 2018 grant awards were announced in the last issue of the Harbinger and more details about each research project are available on the INPS Research Fund Grant Program webpage at <https://ill-inps.org/2018-research-grants-awarded/>.

An additional grant was referred to and awarded by the INPS Central Chapter's grant program:

- Jessica Fowler. Illinois State University (graduate student): *Invasion of silky bush clover (Lespedeza cuneata) in midwest prairies.*

Advance notice for those interested in applying for a grant in 2019 is available at <https://ill-inps.org/2019-research-grants/>.

Southern Chapter's Sedge Identification Workshop

Thanks to all those who attended the 2018 Sedge Identification Workshop hosted by the Southern Chapter on June 2 & 3 at Giant City State Park and Rothrocks' prairie in southern Illinois. We saw an amazing diversity of graminoids during the two-day workshop.

The workshop began with a short introduction in the visitor center of Giant City State Park. After covering the basics, we went into the field and started at the little grassy boat landing at the end of the road that leads to the campground. After seeing a number of wetland and upland forest species, we went to Shelter #1 for lunch. After lunch we looked at more material that was seen in the nearby area. Thanks to David Barfknecht and Marisa Szubryt for helping find many of the species presented.

The next day we met at Rhonda and Robert Rothrock's prairie in Jackson County near Little Grand Canyon. Their property is a nature sanctuary for plants and animals and an amazing diversity of sedges was seen here. The total number of plants learned during the workshop was 49 and 39 of those were in the *Carex* genus.

It's like Justin said, 20% of the sedges you see 80% of the time. There are 193 species in the *Carex* genus in Illinois and we saw 39 species which is 20%! A selection of sedges seen during the workshop is available on our website at <https://ill-inps.org/sedge-identification-workshop-photos/>.



Many thanks to Justin Thomas of [NatureCITE](#), who instructed the workshop. Justin's teaching style was very easy to learn from and we all appreciated his patience and tutelage.



Carex hirsutella.



Carex planispicata.



Carex bushii.

Central Chapter's Plant Sale

The Central Chapter's April 28 native plant sale again was a resounding success, the result of the phenomenal efforts of the chapter's talented and dedicated growers and volunteers. And again, customers began claiming their positions in the opening line beginning at 7:45 AM, patiently waiting for the 9:00 opening. Between 125 and 150 customers were anxious to be first to score their favorite native plant selections. Sunshine made an appearance and gave everyone—sale volunteers and customers



alike—a special boost. The new pre-selected pollinator gardens were a big hit, and nearly every tree, shrub, and herbaceous plant was sold not long after noon!

As always, special recognition is given to our talented growers: Lois and George Fox, Guy and Edie Sternberg, Alana McKean, Henry Eilers, and Jim Struebing. This year, Lois had excellent assistance from Carol Anderson as they worked together, making daily trips to the greenhouse to start seeds and manage the growth of the majority of the herbaceous plants sold at the sale. Guy, Edie, and Alana manage woodies at Starhill Arboretum, and Henry always has a diverse selection of offerings from his home gardens. Special thanks this year to Wendy Weisenburn for the use of table space in her heated greenhouses and germination room, and for making bulk purchases of our growing supplies. We also had access to her specially-fitted cargo trailer for transporting the plants to the sale location. Jim Struebing grew dozens and dozens of wonderful plants at his greenhouse and donated them for the sale. Thank you to all of these devoted members.

Funds from the sale will support the on-going Central Chapter grant program (<http://ill-inps.org/central-chapter-grant-info/>). Planning for next year's sale is already underway. If you have ideas you would like to share about the sale, please take a moment to send an email to the INPS Central Chapter president, Trish Quintenz (trishquintenz@gmail.com) or to the plant sale coordinator, Mary Ring (westring@frontier.com).

Save the date for next year's sale: **Saturday, April 27, 2019**

See more photos from the sale at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/129574475@N02/sets/72157666483133207>

Annual Gathering Report

By Floyd Catchpole

The 2018 Illinois Native Plant Society Annual Gathering was held at Governors State University and organized by the Kankakee Torrent Chapter. Governors State sponsored the site and the Field Museum sponsored lunch. The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy of Indiana, Limestone Park District, and the Forest Preserve Districts of Cook and Will counties all helped out by providing field trip leaders. Food at GSU was quite good and the Friday mixer and Brag Bucket were big hits. It looks like the Brag Bucket may become a standard for future annual gatherings, and the wine and beer provided liquid courage for timid folks to speak their piece.

The weather forecast for Saturday was ominous, with heavy rains forecast and drizzles abounding. Nonetheless, we dispersed across the urban landscape on a journey of discovery. And what a fine day it turned out to be. Alice Brandon (Cook County Forest Preserve District) showed off Sand Ridge Nature Preserve and Powderhorn, some of the finest lands that CCFPD has to offer. Brent Panozzo of Urbana was amazed at the number of species in a tiny patch of ground at Sand Ridge, and we marveled at what Illinois must have once looked like.

Paul Marcum's sedge ID workshop received rave reviews. With the help of GSU's Mary Carrington and Jon Yunger, Paul helped members identify many pesky sedges. Many ID'ers then went to Chicago Ridge Prairie and vicinity, where Lou Mulé led a tour of the beautiful 12-acre urban prairie he helped save. Afterward someone remarked that he had toured Loda Cemetery Prairie and others, and was astonished to see such a large, beautiful prairie in the heart of the city.



For the all-day experience in Illinois, a hardy group went to the Indian Boundary Prairies, where they were treated to Ron Panzer's pictures and a discussion of the sites in a McDonalds restaurant while the rain abated. Probably the most unusual meeting ever at a McDonalds. Ron and George Derkovitz then led the prairie enthusiasts across the hundreds of acres of glorious prairie that makes up the Indian Boundary and discussed land management and recovery.

Others snuck into Indiana, as we decided that there was such great stuff over there and what's a state line really matter to plants? A large group went to Pine Station Nature Preserve just over the line and saw glorious nature there and at Clark & Pine and Ivanhoe preserves. Paul Labus (The Nature Conservancy) and Emily Stork (Indiana Department of Natural Resources) showed folks around. These astounding sites were overlooked for decades because it was hard to believe that some of the finest natural lands in Indiana could persist in the midst of industrial areas. I was astonished to hear some say they liked Ivanhoe more than Clark & Pine, despite the latter having more endangered species than any other Indiana Nature Preserve. I've got to get out to see Ivanhoe!

I went with the group on the longest drive to Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. We met Gia Wagner at the Douglas Center in Miller Woods and went on a brisk stroll through the recently thinned savanna to Lake Michigan. What an amazing display of wildflowers; the puccoon and marsh phlox were blooming gloriously and the ground was carpeted with flowering plants. I enjoyed discussing restoration with Gia, and then it was lunch and off to meet Dan Mason at Cowles Bog. Wouldn't you know, the field trip organizer got lost on the way there, but I was told that it had just stopped raining before my arrival, so perhaps it was all for the best. We strolled around the large restored area south of the bog, seeing another area restored in a big way by the National Park Service.

Sunday, the weather cooperated for three field trips before we all dispersed. Hickory Creek Barrens Nature Preserve, where Juli Mason led a tour of a savanna that had recently been opened and was still in the early stages of recovery. Conversations about land management abounded and comments were heard about the benefits of having Forest Preserves to save and manage large tracts of land.

The Goodenow Grove trip was led by Judith Wallace. She commented that everyone had a great time. Conversations about land management and the impressive displays of shooting stars and blooming purple milkweed caused the trip to run long and cover little ground. But all had a good time and parted with smiles.

But the biggest event of Sunday was the Limestone Park BioBlitz, where the Kankakee Torrent's own Trevor Edmonson organized and led the event, with Limestone Park District pitching in free lunches.

See more photos from the 2018 Annual Gathering at <https://ill-inps.org/2018-annual-gathering-photos/>.

Limestone BioBlitz Finds 257 Plant Species

By Trevor Edmonson

This past weekend was the Illinois Native Plant Society annual meeting, an event where plant enthusiasts gather from across the state to socialize and botanize.

This year the Kankakee Torrent Chapter of the INPS was the host and as part of the gathering I helped organize a floral bioblitz at Limestone Park.

A bioblitz is an event where experts and citizen scientists get together at a designated spot and try to catalog every living thing they can during a set time. It can be extremely valuable at discovering new species and giving the landowner large amounts of information for future management considerations.

So why do this at Limestone Park? I joined the Limestone Township Park Board more than a year ago and quickly started discovering that the park was a unique sandy dune/flatwoods habitat.

Most people who visit the park visit for the quality baseball diamonds but never set foot a few feet away on the loop trail in the woods.



Paul Marcum, professional botanist with the Illinois Natural History Survey and INPS president, dissects a sedge species for identification at Limestone Park.
Photo by Trevor Edmonson.

Doug Kripple, also a park board member, and I have developed a restoration plan for the park based on historical maps and current habitat clues. We started invasive species management and brought back prescribed fire to the site over the last two years. Things have already started to change and this bioblitz serves to fill in our flora blind spots as well as to confirm that our management plan is on track.

This past Sunday we had 15 INPS members from many parts of the state come to the park to conduct a bioblitz focused on logging as many plant species as we could during a two-hour event. So, from 10 AM until noon we worked preprinted lists of known plants of Kankakee County to use as a checklist and flags to mark species that couldn't be identified.

We had piles of guidebooks, two microscopes, and most importantly, trays of sandwiches to help with the endeavor.

As the event concluded the next day results started coming in. We created a project on iNaturalist (app and website) so people could upload their findings and to centrally catalogue the species found.

As of writing this, we have identified 257 different plant species occurring at the park.

For the first time we found wild lupine (*Lupinus perennis*), just a few plants but a sure sign our management is working. We also found many new sedge species including one that could be a county record. The elusive Michigan lily (*Lilium michiganense*) was documented at the park and we can now focus some management efforts there.

Many of the observations did come with pictures and locations which we can sort through and map our park's sensitive habitat areas.

Sunday's effort was a good start to better understanding our local ecology.

Finding 257 plants in such a short time on one day in June tells me that as the seasons change and more time allows, we will find many, many more. Not to mention that as we continue to heal the landscape from decades of overgrowth and lack of fire, other species will reappear from their seed bank slumber.

Thank you to all the INPS volunteers, Doug and Dana Kripple for logistical help, and the rest of the Limestone Township Park District Board for their commitment to protecting and better understanding our local natural areas.

Originally [published June 14, 2018 in the Daily Journal](#), Kankakee, IL, and republished with permission.

Exploring Southern Illinois for Rare Plants, Part I: *Styracaceae*

By Abel Kinser, Botanist and INPS Member

Searching for Illinois' native plants and documenting my discoveries through digital photography has become an obsession of mine. Few things in this world bring me more pleasure and joy than finding and identifying a new species of plant I've never laid eyes upon. During my botanical searches I have seen representative species from nearly every plant family in southern Illinois, but one family, *Styracaceae* (storax family), has proven elusive until this spring. Three species, all listed as endangered or threatened in Illinois, can be found in our state from the *Styracaceae*. I was lucky enough to see all three (Carolina silverbell, big leaf snowbell, and

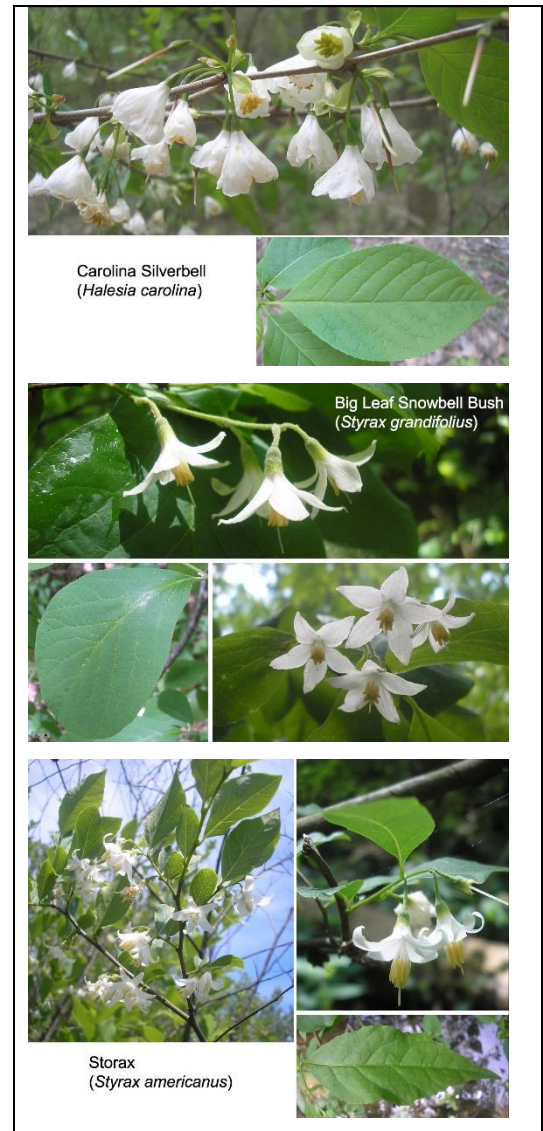
storax) in bloom during the month of May this year. Close encounters with venomous snakes and other rare plants added much excitement to my adventures of finding this trio of rare woody plants.

Carolina silverbell (*Halesia carolina*) is known only from the counties of Massac and Pulaski where it grows in wooded ravines as a shrub to medium-size tree. I caught my first glimpse of this gorgeous tree on April 20 less than a mile from the Ohio River in Massac County. Leaves were emerging and young flowers developing; but a second visit on May 2 was required to capture photos of mature flowers. I missed the flowers for most of the smaller silverbells, but was rewarded with beautiful white flowers hanging from last year's twigs on the largest silverbell on this wooded slope. The flowers were seen high into the tree and luckily I found a few low branches to capture my photos. These first sightings of the *Styracaceae* were thrilling, but not quite the adventure I would have locating the other two.

Nestled in the steep hills of the Illinois Ozarks hides one of Illinois' rarest plants. John Schwegman discovered **big leaf snowbell bush** (*Styrax grandifolius*) in 1968 at Wolf Creek Botanical Area, Alexander County. This remains the only known locality for this *Styracaceae* member in Illinois. A friend, who also enjoys searching for plants, invited me to find this rare and endangered plant with him. Our trip on May 11 was a huge success. We located big leaf snowbell along with several other interesting plants for southern Illinois. Climbing the steep Ozark hills we saw cow parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*), yellow-wood (*Cladrastis kentukea*), richweed (*Collinsonia canadensis*), and blooming cucumber magnolia (*Magnolia acuminata*). A population of big leaf snowbell was discovered near the bottom of a cherty hill. There were several small shrubs in the area, but one or two were taller (~3 meters). The larger ones had several inflorescences with green flower buds, but no mature flowers. I returned on May 19 to find them in full glorious bloom; what a sight! The white flowers were seen at the tips of this year's growing twigs in a raceme-like inflorescence. Mohlenbrock (1978), in his illustrated series, reports that big leaf snowbell doesn't flower in Illinois possibly because it's so far out of its known range. Is it possible I'm the first person to see big leaf snowbell blooming in Illinois? I'd like to think so!

The third and final member of the *Styracaceae*, **storax** (*Styrax americanus*), would also be photographed in flower, but not as relatively easy compared to the first two. Storax grows in swampy woods or swamps and is listed as a threatened species in Illinois. After coming up short in a handful of swamps over the last few years, I discovered from an online source that storax grows at Mermet Swamp Nature Preserve, Massac County. This swamp is located on the south end of Mermet Lake Conservation Area. One of the reasons this plant is not seen blooming by many is the fact that one will have to walk through water with some interesting and at times unnerving fauna. An employee of Mermet even suggested I stay away from the swamp since I would likely encounter "snapping turtles as big as me and cottonmouths everywhere." I was determined to see storax and wasn't going to let a couple reptiles scare me away. I put on my knee-high rubber boots and walked into the swamp, but was constrained to the edge since the water was so high. No storax, snapping turtles, or cottonmouths, but a pair of nesting bald eagles was a pleasant sight.

It was going to require some help to find storax and time was running out to see it flower this year. Another botanical friend told me of a couple sloughs along the Tunnel Hill Bike Trail, Johnson County to look for storax. I entered these areas with my knee-high rubber boots and eyes open for flora and fauna. The first



slough was a large open wetland with buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) and flooded woods along its edge. It was just a few steps into the water before it was over my boots. Standing in thigh-high water, contemplating what to do, I decided to continue. Working my way through thigh- or sometimes waist-high water, I found lake cress (*Rorippa aquatica*) and blooming Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*), but no storax. Disappointed, but not discouraged, I emptied the water from my boots and continued to a second slough. While entering the second slough and only in a few inches of water, a cottonmouth swam a foot in front of me. Standing in shallow water while a cottonmouth swims by makes for an uncomfortable situation, but as it swam by I spotted my first storax! Snake out of sight and out of mind, I proceeded to find several storax shrubs and Virginia sweetspires in full bloom. Back in thigh-high water and taking dozens of photos, I spotted my second cottonmouth. This time it was on the lower branches of a buttonbush a few feet from where I was standing, but as soon as it saw me it dropped into the water and disappeared under the duckweed. After convincing myself the snakes were not coming after me, I took my last photos of the white-flowered storax and slowly moved to dry land.

Finding all three species of Illinois' *Styracaceae* blooming was a special treat. In my humble opinion, very few native plants rival the beauty I saw with these rare species. As I explore southern Illinois and add plants to my "life list," I am constantly reminded I don't have to travel to exotic locations for experiences of a lifetime. I will continue to search out new areas for rare and exceptional plants from the south end of our state. Southern Illinois is loaded with botanical diversity and exceptional natural areas for one to explore for many years.

References:

- Mohlenbrock, Robert H. (1978) *The Illustrated Flora of Illinois, Flowering Plants: Hollies to Loasas*. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press.

Illinois Environmental Council Update

By Jennifer Walling, Executive Director, Illinois Environmental Council

With the Spring legislative session completed, the Illinois Environmental Council is ready to work with your organization to prepare for 2019. INPS is one of 80 environmental and community organizations represented by IEC. It may seem early to even think about 2019, but as you'll note below, our environmental community has significant challenges and opportunities ahead.



[The retirements of many environmental champions](#) and the pending gubernatorial and attorney general's races require that we work very hard to educate potential new legislators about environmental issues if we are going to build up new champions.

We will also be engaged with the staff of both gubernatorial candidates. Should J.B. Pritzker win the gubernatorial race, this will present a significant transitioning challenge, and IEC will need to be ready for a large transition of personnel and possibly focus at every agency in state government. Should Governor Rauner be reelected, there could also be staff turn-over.

I wish to underscore that all of IEC's candidate education activities are conducted in accordance with 501(c)(3) rules for interacting with campaigns. We are proactively offering educational materials to all candidates, regardless of party.

IEC Legislative Director Colleen Smith is coordinating much of our candidate education work, which we began in August of last year. Our plan and approach are detailed below. Between now and the November general election, IEC will have the following priorities and we welcome your organization's continued involvement in this work:

1. **Education:** Educate legislative and gubernatorial candidates on our top priorities. IEC and our member organizations are meeting with legislative candidates and the attorney general candidates. We have had several meetings with gubernatorial candidate J.B. Pritzker's staff about our top priorities with respect to water, energy, transportation, recycling, and conservation. We have also reached out to Governor Bruce Rauner but as of the time of this writing, Governor Rauner's campaign has not yet accepted. In addition to meetings, we will continue to also send regular news alert emails to candidates, containing suggested tweets and other briefing materials.
2. **Priority Plans:** Prepare a four-year priority plan in each issue area for the next Governor. Whether it be Governor Rauner or J.B. Pritzker, it is important that we present achievable environmental victories that could be accomplished in the first 100 days, first year, and over four years. Meetings to hone this plan are already scheduled in each issue area, and staff at each IEC member affiliate has been invited to participate and help in their respective fields of interest and expertise.
3. **Candidate Policy Commitments:** Persuade candidates to take policy positions in support of our priorities. A critical example is that, with support from the Energy Foundation, we will be asking legislative and statewide candidates to commit to 100% renewable energy by 2050. On another front, we are working with environmental allies to focus on the critical topic of stopping efforts to bailout failing coal-fired electricity plants. We will press candidates to expressly oppose legislation that would subsidize coal plants. IEC is using questionnaires, candidate forums, and face-to-face meetings to secure policy commitments.

As we know, the case for candidates to support environmental issues is a strong one. IEC's analysis of environmental supporters found that environmental voters are 3 times more likely to vote in primary elections and 2 times as likely to vote in general elections. This impressive turnout presents a tremendous opportunity to galvanize elections around environmental issues.

Analysis

Working with legislative staff of our environmental organizations, IEC has analyzed every State House and Senate race and developed a candidate education plan in two phases: competitive primary elections and competitive general elections. For state legislative races, we are providing information on the growth of clean jobs in Illinois and shared environmental priorities on energy, transportation, local food and sustainable production, water, and conservation.

Communications

During the primary, IEC sent periodic news alerts and sample social media to candidates on critical issues, encouraging candidates to use their platform to speak on environmental issues. These communications highlighted important news stories and reports released by our affiliates.

Gubernatorial candidates regularly used these materials on the campaign trail, at forums, and on social media. The engagement on social media from these briefings elevated IEC and our affiliate members' platforms, and it also drove substantial traffic to our sites.

Education

Following the primary, IEC began meeting with numerous candidates in top tier races. We have also briefed candidates who are replacing retiring legislators and will not face a general election. During these in-depth meetings, we are providing issue briefings, our vision for the future, and district-specific information on clean jobs, nature preserves and open space, and environmental activism amongst constituents.

For gubernatorial candidates, IEC and our member organizations hosted breakfasts during the primary with Alderman Ameya Pawar, J.B. Pritzker, Chris Kennedy, and Senator Daniel Biss. At these meetings, we educated the candidates on issues that are especially important to the environmental community, and we tried to underscore how the Governor's office could make the biggest impact. Topics covered included open space protection; fracking and mining; clean energy jobs; our concern about a potential bailout of Illinois' coal-fired

electricity generating plants, green stormwater infrastructure; sustainable agriculture and local food; protecting the Great Lakes; and sound transportation planning.

Leading up to the March primaries, IEC and our affiliate members also held environmental briefings for the attorney general candidates. We met with candidates Senator Kwame Raoul, Mayor Nancy Rotering, Aaron Goldstein, Representative Scott Drury, Sharon Fairley, former Governor Pat Quinn, Jesse Ruiz, Renato Mariotti, and Erika Harold. With each candidate, we focused on the AG office's ability to use legal settlement funds for conservation purposes; and we emphasized the importance of the Illinois Attorney General's Office supporting energy efficiency in ratemaking and fighting against federal threats to the environment. For more on each of the AG's many responsibilities related to the environment, read our blog post, [*"Why the Race for Attorney General Matters for Environmentalists."*](#)

We have seen the attorney general candidates use the information provided in these briefings at subsequent forums and debates, as well as extensively on social media.

Commitments

IEC recognizes that elections are the most effective time to extract commitments from candidates and we are using the 2018 elections to push candidates to take positions that are very important to the environmental and conservation communities. In all our meetings with candidates we are asking for specific commitments.

First, we are asking every candidate to support 100% clean energy for Illinois by 2050. Each of the Democratic gubernatorial candidates announced their support for 100% clean energy for Illinois by 2050. Additionally, IEC obtained commitments from all candidates to sign Illinois on to the U.S. Climate Alliance, prioritize funds for environmental programs and agencies, and preserve strong environmental protections in the face of federal rollbacks.

A second important example is opposition to coal bailouts. We and our partner environmental organizations continue to be concerned that there will be a legislative effort later this year or early in 2019 to bailout the state's struggling coal-fired electricity plants owned by Texas energy giant Vistra (previously Dynegy). We are asking candidates to state their opposition to a coal bailout and commit to vote "no" on any such legislation. While we are using this time to raise other issues with candidates and obtain commitments, we recognize it is especially important at this time to build commitments to support clean energy and oppose coal bailouts.

We are pleased to have your support and involvement in this important work. If you have questions or would like to deepen your involvement in candidate education efforts, we would be pleased to have your increased support.

INPS renewed its support of IEC with a \$150 contribution in 2018.

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Are you interested in the work of the IEC? Apply to be a member of the IEC Board of Directors!

The Illinois Environmental Council and Illinois Environmental Council Education Fund are each seeking members to serve on the board of directors. Candidates with an interest in fundraising, organizational development, and management are encouraged to apply for each board. IEC and IECEF are seeking candidates with diverse backgrounds—with an emphasis on racial, cultural, and geographic diversity—and a wide range of skills.

IEC is a 501(c)(4) organization which focuses on advocacy and stakeholder involvement in environmental policy. IEC focuses on direct and grassroots lobbying and building political power with Illinois decisionmakers. Candidates for this board should have an interest in environmental policy, political engagement, and advocacy.

IECEF is a 501(c)(3) organization which focuses on educating the public and decisionmakers about environmental issues and environmental policy. IECEF works to achieve this purpose using three strategies: legislative monitoring and analysis; communication and education; and outreach, organizing and coalition

building. Candidates for this board should have an interest or expertise in environmental issues in addition to a desire to build the capacity of IECEF.

Candidates interested in serving on the board of directors should send a resume and statement of interest to jwalling@ilenviro.org to apply.

Natural Area Profile: Rocky Glen Park

This is a new regular feature that will profile natural areas listed on the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI sites).

Story and Photos by Vanessa Voelker, Botanist and INPS Member.

Rocky Glen Park is a hidden gem of a natural area, tucked away in the bluffs behind Kickapoo Creek in Peoria County. The park is a Category I INAI site and features an 80-foot-deep sandstone box canyon with an intermittent waterfall, as well as a series of small hill prairies, each with a lush and unique community of flowering plants, mosses, and lichens. On the prairies closest to the canyon bloom wood betony (*Pedicularis canadensis*), birdsfoot violet (*Viola pedata*), slender false foxglove (*Agalinis tenuifolia*), field milkwort (*Polygala sanguinea*), and bastard toadflax (*Comandra umbellata*). Farther away from the canyon and overlooking the Kickapoo Creek floodplain is the largest hill prairie, which blooms with slender mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*), hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*), leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*), cleft phlox (*Phlox bifida*), large-flowered false foxglove (*Aureolaria grandiflora*), and little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*).

Down in the shaded depths of the canyon and associated ravines, goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*), wild hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*), large-fruited black snakeroot (*Sanicula trifoliata*), and poke milkweed (*Asclepias exaltata*) bloom, while Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), and silvery glade fern (*Deparia acrostichoides*) all grow along the creekbed. The sandstone walls of the canyon still show the cryptic graffiti etched in the early 1900s by miners and labor organizers, who once used the discreet, sheltered glen as a secret meeting place.

Hiking trails have been laid out and interpretive signage is currently in design. Both the trail leading up the bluffs from the parking lot and the descent into the canyon are rugged and challenging hikes, but the flora are well worth the effort. To get to the park, take Exit 5 to Airport Road, off of Interstate 474 in Peoria County. Head northeast on S. Airport Road, then turn onto South Kickapoo Creek Road and drive north about a mile. A small parking area will be on the left, and the trailhead can be accessed there.



Hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*).



Cleft phlox (*Phlox bifida*).

Plant Profile: A Sensible “*arguta*-ment”

By Evan Barker, Pizzo Associates and an INPS member.

About a decade ago, researchers decided to rearrange the genus *Potentilla*. At the time it included a whole bunch of distantly-related plants that looked fairly similar in flower characters, but the state of the genus was clearly a lumpers’ work. Think of the old sprawling genera such as *Polygonum*, *Solidago*, and *Aster*, all of which have been similarly “rearranged.” So *Potentilla* was split up, since splitters almost always win these arguments. In Illinois, this change meant that a few species were moved around: *Potentilla palustris* became *Comarum palustre*, *Potentilla fruticosa* became *Dasiphora fruticosa*, and *Potentilla arguta* became *Drymocallis arguta*.



Prairie cinquefoil (*Drymocallis arguta*). Photo by Chris Benda.

For those not familiar, *Drymocallis arguta* or prairie cinquefoil is a fairly uncommon herbaceous perennial in the *Rosaceae*, typically found in dry to mesic prairies in the northern half of the state. The fuzzy, pinnately compound, serrated leaves emerge fairly early in the spring with up to 11 leaflets. The hairs that make it fuzzy help create a “sparkly” appearance over the whole of the green portions of the plant when in full sun (which is its preference). The five flower petals are white to pale cream with bright yellow centers and are positioned atop a mostly leafless stem up to one meter tall. When fully opened, they create a vibrant pop of color within a messy, tightly-packed jumble of flowers in multiple stages development. Often only a few of the 15-30 flowers are open at a time, which ensures that pollinators are visiting only fertile, un-pollinated flowers.

After the growing season, the stalks and fruit often persist vertically as a fuzzy, khaki-colored pin amongst the nearby flattened forbs and grasses.

Milkweed fuzz and other light material tends to stick to the upper portions of the plant during the winter. If you’ve not felt the foliage and stems of this species in late December onward, it’s a treat. The leaves make a satisfying crunch when fully dry and the stems are strong and fibrous, almost like a dogbane or compass plant stem at that time of year. Seed collection is an easy task for this species, though it should be done in late October or November as some of the seeds get knocked out or blown from the fruit not long after senescence.

Drymocallis arguta supports a wide variety of pollinators, though mostly small bees and hoverflies. Foliage and stems are often parasitized with galls. If the plant is large enough to have two separate flowering stalks, and is in a garden setting, splitting can be a viable option for expansion; though it does grow fairly well from seed and is available as plugs. Plugs are currently available at Pizzo Native Plant Nursery

(<http://www.pizzonursery.com/>) and Natural Communities Native Plants (<http://naturalcommunities.net/>).

Note: Most suppliers still use the old name “*Potentilla arguta*.”

Evan Barker was the winner of the INPS Illinois Botanists Big Year 2016 and is the Quality Control Manager and Prescribed Fire Coordinator at Pizzo & Associates Ltd.

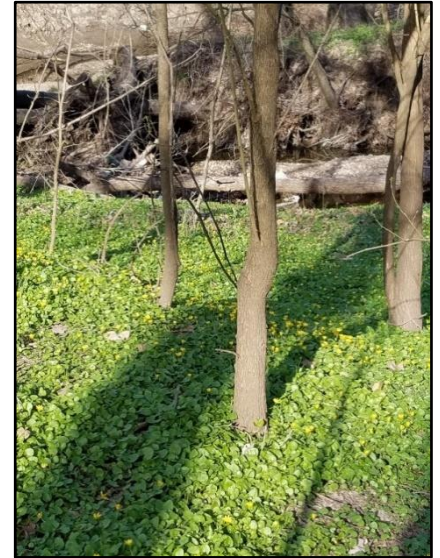
Invasive Species News: Exotic Buttercup

By Allison J. Vaughn, Ozark Highlands of Missouri Blog

A couple of days ago, I heard from a friend that we have a new exotic species in the spring flora world to worry about. First, it was *Veronica hederifolia* (ivy-leaved speedwell), which I’ve written about, an annual weed known from Steyermark 1963 from one county but now spreading throughout the Ozarks, a plant that we’ve been on top of eradicating in sinkholes in certain high-quality sites. But this new one is more insidious, much more along the lines of garlic mustard, a plant that chokes out native flora long before the sunlight can hit the

woodland floor. It's a buttercup—*Ranunculus ficaria* var. *bulbifera*—a real pretty garden plant; but this exotic buttercup creates entire mats of leaves and has no known native host insects. As a side note, I spent a good part of my day looking for native bees nectaring on native spring wildflowers (and found several, including the spring beauty *Andrena* that only lives on *Claytonia virginica* with its pink pollen). Instead, the thick, dense vegetation of this exotic weed chokes out all of the spring wildflowers such as spring beauty.

So, today I saw this *Ranunculus ficaria* var. *bulbifera* or lesser celandine in action. This exotic plant has completely converted a bottomland woodland once rich with bluebells, spring beauty, native buttercups, and toothwort into a monoculture of green basal leaves with showy, but sparse, yellow flowers. Not known in Steyermark, lesser celandine was introduced from Europe to the US in 1867 as a garden ornamental. Yatskievych notes it quickly becomes over aggressive in gardens. The bulbils (hence var. *bulbifera*) quickly spread when transported by floods, as well as the seeds. Yatskievych noted it quickly spread to disturbed floodplains and was well established in drainages around St. Louis not too long after being discovered. Today, we discovered it completely carpeting the bottomland woodland associated with the Missouri River in Cole County. With a seed bank up and down the big river systems, and undoubtedly in creeks and streams in St. Louis County, this weed will spread and continue to choke out native spring flora. Homogenization is happening at a rapid pace. Now it's not just bush honeysuckle and deer that I've been grouching about for the past six years, but even spring flora. If you see this plant, kill it. Spray it with Glyphosate. Hand pulling only encourages it, apparently. I hate herbicides, but when native landscapes are at risk as they are now, and herbicide is the only remedy, use it wisely, surgically, and with good intent. This buttercup is a bad one.



References:

- Steyermark, Julian A. (1963) *Flora of Missouri*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Yatskievych, George (1999-2013) *Steyermark's Flora of Missouri, Volumes 1, 2 & 3*. St. Louis: Missouri Botanical Garden Press.

Originally posted on the Ozark Highlands of Missouri Blog by Allison J. Vaughn, natural resource steward for the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Her current role, based in Jefferson City, involves research, working with controlled burns, and conducting plant and bird surveys in the Ozark region.

Web Links

Monitoring Tree and Plant Health

Prairie Rivers Network is concerned with the steady declines in state and federal monitoring programs and how the resulting decreases in ecological data limit our ability to monitor the health of ecosystems under the pressures of habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change. In recent years, PRN and numerous partners have received an increase in reports of plant and tree injury on both public and private lands. These injuries are symptomatic of herbicide exposure and may be due to drift and/or volatility.

PRN and its partners have developed monitoring guidelines, protocols, and data collection forms to be used by anyone interested in

documenting potential herbicide injury to an off-target species. By helping us keep track of potential herbicide damage to non-target species



you will be helping increase the “eyes on the trees and boots on the ground” and drastically improve our ability to document injury to species on a statewide level. It is our hope that information gleaned from this monitoring effort will help landowners, managers, and scientists better understand what is happening on the landscape and possibly serve as justification for a closer, more in-depth study of this issue by state and federal agencies and/or research institutions.

For more information on participating in PRN’s monitoring program and/or reporting suspected herbicide damage to the Illinois Department of Agriculture, visit <http://prairierivers.org/resources/monitoring-tree-and-plant-health/>.

Sowing the Wild South

One North Carolina farmer has made it his mission to bring back the wild grasses and flowers that once carpeted the Southern landscape—one seed at a time. Read an interesting article by T. Edward Nickens in *Garden & Gun Magazine* about 9th-generation farmer Don Lee’s successful efforts to transform a traditional Eastern North Carolina family farm into a vast, multifaceted seed-growing operation for native wildflowers and the forgotten grassland species of the South. <https://gardenandgun.com/feature/sowing-wild-south/>

Setting Fires and Restoring an American Landscape

Enjoy a photo feature by Steph Yin and photographer Lyndon French of a burn day at Nachusa Grasslands. “Where development and fragmentation have disrupted natural cycles, teams run controlled burns every spring to help sustain prairies and other ecosystems that have long been shaped by fire. Here’s a glimpse into one such burn in April 2017 and the life that sprung up a few weeks later.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/23/science/prairie-fires-nachusa-illinois.html>

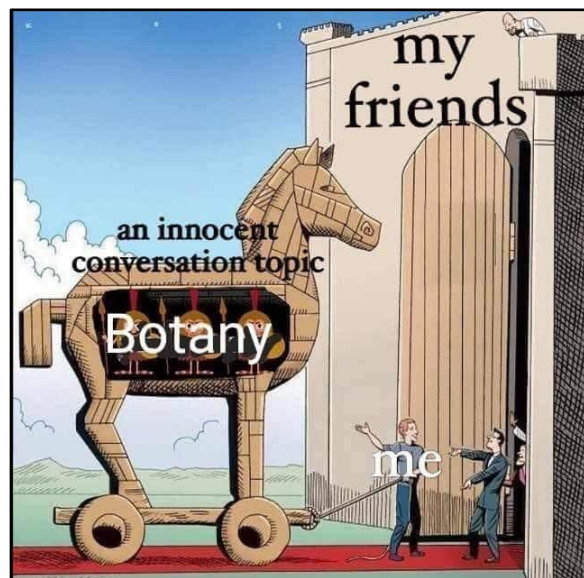
Finding the Elusive Bishop’s Cap

An article in the *Daily Journal* about Trevor Edmonson’s quest to find his species #219 in the Illinois Native Plant Society’s Botanists’ Big Year event for 2018—bishop’s cap (*Mitella diphylla*). http://www.daily-journal.com/sports/outdoors/off-the-trail-bishop-s-cap-difficult-to-find/article_820e11f8-5387-11e8-842e-17d826ed202d.html

Botany Humor



The Germinator



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Bird's-foot violet (*Viola pedata*). Photo: Vanessa Voelker.

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