

AUGUST 2021

THE NODDING ONION

Newsletter of the Northeast Chapter of the Illinois Native Plant Society



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Photos from the Field

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Liatrix scariosa var. *nieuwlandii* by Mark Kluge

From the Editor

The Northeast Chapter has been busy in the field, hosting at least six field trips since May 2021. The fun continues with more events planned during the week of the statewide Illinois Native Plant Society 2021 Annual Gathering. I hope to see many of you in person or virtually during what's bound to be a fun week of Illinois botany! Stay tuned for additional events to be added to the Northeast Chapter calendar during the Annual Gathering week, as planning is still underway.

What stories or features have stood out to you in recent *Nodding Onion* issues? Are there topics you'd like to see more of, such as plant ID, history, or research articles? Let me know! I'd be happy to hear your reviews, ideas, or work with you on something you'd like to submit. Reach out at inpsnews@gmail.com.

—Katie

Illinois Native Plant Society 2021 Annual Gathering September 11th-18th

Register and see presentation details at
<https://illinoisplants.org/2021-annual-gathering-virtual/>

Saturday, Sept. 11th @ 5PM
Members' Night (virtual)

Sunday, Sept. 12th @ 10AM
Northeast Chapter Tour of Bunker Hill Savanna

Monday, Sept. 13th @ 6PM
State Governing Board Meeting (virtual)

Tuesday, Sept. 14 @ 7PM
Northeast Chapter Board Meeting (virtual)

Thursday, Sept. 16th @ 7PM
Keynote Speakers/Presentations (virtual)

Saturday, Sept. 18th @ 2PM
Northeast Chapter Tour of Somme Prairie Grove

[Join the INPS 2021 Sunflower Week project on iNaturalist](#)



Nabalus racemosus (purple rattlesnakeroot)
by John Boldt, CC BY-NC



Deer Grove East on July 30, 2021

By Ingrid Felsl

Deer Grove Forest Preserve was Cook County's first forest preserve. Divided into east and west sections by North Quentin Road, many of us are familiar with the trails, picnic areas, sledding hill, and Illinois Nature Preserve on the west side. On the east side, however, resides a magnificent example of restored tallgrass prairie, oak savanna, and wetlands.

In late July, a group of us met at Deer Grove East with Jeff Weiss, an ecological steward, environmental educator, and originator of the Chicagoland Winter Plant ID project on iNaturalist. The prairie was bursting with the yellows of *Cassia hebecarpa* (American Senna), *Solidago juncea* (Early Goldenrod), and *Ratibida pinnata* (Gray Headed Coneflower) and the wetlands were surrounded by purple bands of sweet-smelling *Eutrochium maculatum* (Spotted Joe-Pye Weed).

We began the walk with an introduction from Jeff. We learned that Deer Grove East was most recently farmland before it was acquired by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. Volunteer stewards have been working to restore the natural ecosystems at Deer Grove East for decades, but even more help came along when Openlands

acquired wetland mitigation funds from the O'Hare Airport expansion and hired Stantec to perform contract work at Deer Grove East. Funds went towards breaking drain tiles, removing unwanted shrubs and trees, planting plugs, and vegetation and avian monitoring.

A welcome sight that we spotted during the tour was numerous flowering stems of *Silphium integrifolium* (Rosinweed). As the sky gradually darkened, we were gifted with a gorgeous sunset, views of *Lobelia spicata* (Pale Spiked Lobelia), a stem of *Lilium michiganense* (Michigan Lily) that had already senesced, and the hoots of a Great Horned Owl.

At the end of the evening, we were sad to go, but were glad to have enjoyed an evening outdoors with like-minded people who care about our natural ecosystems. I would like to thank everyone who has touched Deer Grove East over the years, from the Indigenous Americans (Potawatomi, Odawa, Sauk, Ojibwe, Illinois, Kiikaapoi, Myaamia, Mascouten, Wea, Delaware, Winnebago, Menominee, and Mesquakie) who continue to steward our land, to the tree swallows who live there, and to the individuals who advocate for the area today.



Powderhorn Prairie and Marsh on June 19, 2021



Butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) at Powderhorn Prairie and Marsh



Field trip to Powderhorn Prairie and Marsh, the only Illinois Nature Preserve in Chicago city limits. All photos by Kirk Frazier



Orland Grassland on June 19, 2021



On June 19, a gathering of dedicated naturalists from INPS and the Chicago Ornithological Society braved the prairie's afternoon heat at Orland Grassland during the groups' third collaborative field trip. Highlights spotted by leaders Pat Hayes and Mike McNamee included numerous dickcissels and slimflower scurfpea in bloom. All photos by Sheri Moor

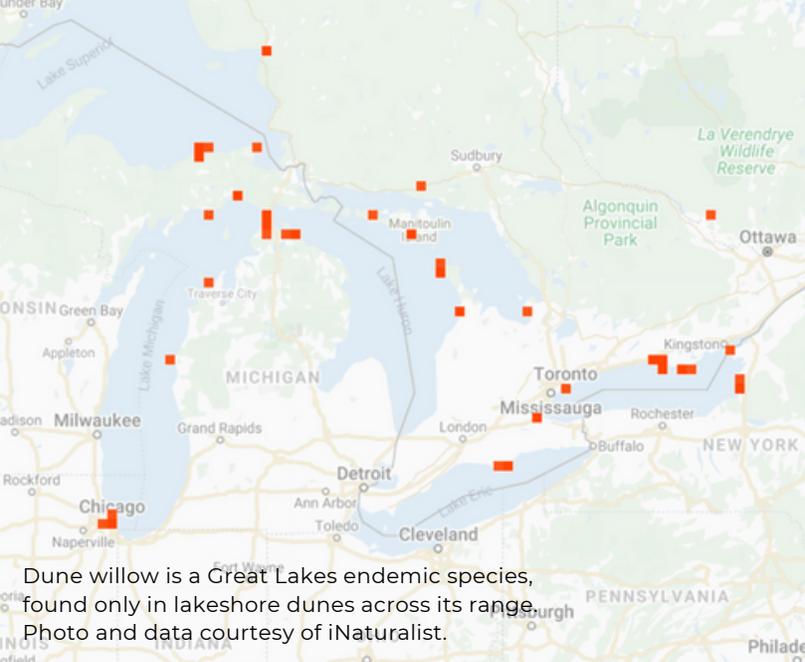
Saving Dune Willow

By Gretel Kiefer

Dune willow (*Salix syrticola*) is an Illinois Endangered species found at only a few lakeshore sites in northeastern IL. David Johannesen, a Plants of Concern volunteer, raised an alert in 2020 when he discovered plants were being lost to lakeshore erosion, and flooding had submerged half of the 10 remaining dune willows at Illinois Beach State Park (IBSP). Plants of Concern staff worked with Brad Semel, an endangered species biologist with the Illinois DNR, to collect a cutting from seven of the dune willows. From those cuttings, the Chicago Botanic Garden's plant propagation team, led by Cathy Thomas, was able to grow 66 plants. Genetically mixed groupings of propagated plants were planted back at IBSP along moisture gradients in close proximity to existing dune willows for the best chance of survival and cross-pollination. Nearly 60% of the plants survived over the winter of 2020-2021. We are hoping that the mixed genetic material will lead to recruitment of new individuals at IBSP, safeguarding the existence of the species at the site and in Illinois.



Salix syrticola (dune willow) by Mark Kluge



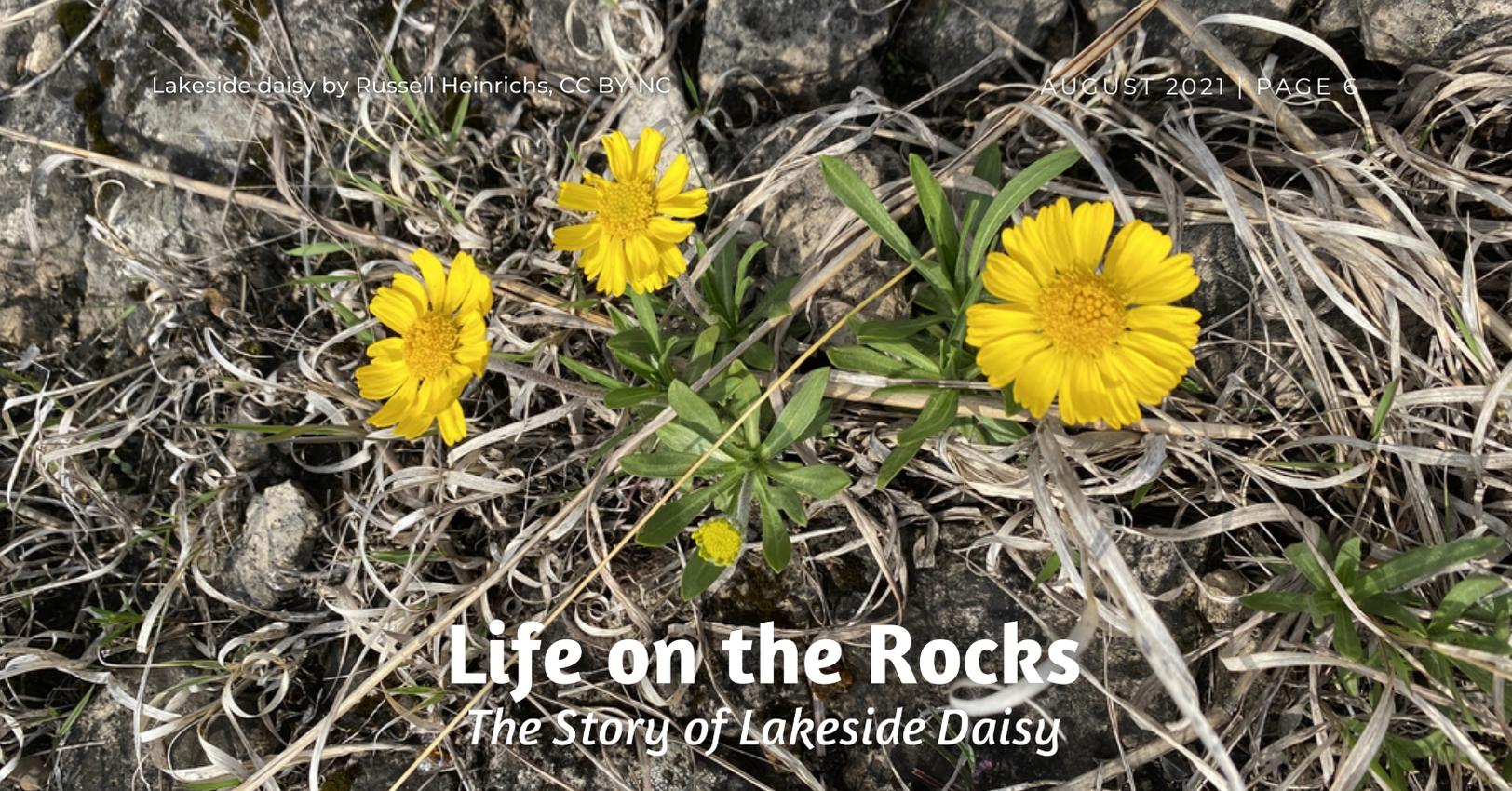
Dune willow is a Great Lakes endemic species, found only in lakeshore dunes across its range. Photo and data courtesy of iNaturalist.



Propagated dune willow plants make their way from the Chicago Botanic Garden to Illinois Beach State Park.



Dune willow successfully transplanted at Illinois Beach State Park.



Life on the Rocks

The Story of Lakeside Daisy

By Jennifer Finfera and Cathy Pollack

Lakeside daisy's (*Tetraneuris herbacea*) rocky road to recovery began in 1988 when it was listed as a federally threatened species. This designation was determined in part by the limited availability of suitable habitat, and the potential loss of that habitat as a result of stone quarrying operations in major parts of its range (namely Ohio). Lakeside daisy is a long-lived perennial species that occupies the harsh, dry environment of alvars (Figure 1), which include sparsely vegetated rock barrens with shallow soils on limestone bedrock. Competition is reduced in alvars as few species thrive in this habitat, many of which are also rare or listed species. In the United States, alvars are primarily found in the Great Lakes region in limited areas of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio. Lakeside daisy is thus considered a Great Lakes endemic species.

Funding provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) program has provided unequalled opportunities for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) to work with partners to introduce new populations at several abandoned quarries within the existing habitat range of Lakeside daisy. Abandoned quarries provide modified alvar habitat that can support Lakeside daisy populations.

However, in addition to the challenges posed by its specific habitat needs and limited habitat availability, Lakeside daisy is also a self-incompatible species, meaning that individuals cannot produce viable seed if they are pollinated by a genetically similar individual. Therefore, populations must contain a variety of genetically diverse individuals to be self-sustaining. Long-distance pollinators including bumble bees (Apidae), halictid bees (Halictidae), small carpenter bees (Xylocopidae), and syrphid flies (Syrphidae) (Figure 2) help maintain the genetic diversity of this species by providing pollen from plants farther away, which aids in the production of highly viable seed. A final threat to the persistence of Lakeside daisy populations is herbivory, especially in small populations. Mammals including deer and rabbits will feed on the foliage of plants, while small mammals will hoard seed heads in caches (Figure 3).

To establish genetically diverse populations at new sites and maintain genetic diversity at existing sites, the Service has worked with partners in Ohio to collect seeds and plants for establishment of new populations and augmentation of existing populations. Seeds are collected at different times to capture diversity from earlier and later blooming plants. Transplantation occurs in the fall, when mature plants are moved from unprotected, active

quarrying sites to publicly-owned, protected locations with management agreements. Plants selected for transplantation come from geographically distant populations to decrease the likelihood of collecting genetically similar plants. These establishment and genetic augmentation activities in Ohio are expected to continue thanks to funding from the GLRI.

In Illinois, there are historical records for two naturally-occurring populations of Lakeside daisy, but both of these populations are long extirpated. Therefore, efforts in Illinois have focused on introducing Lakeside daisy to six sites that have appropriate habitat. Only three of these six introduced populations persist in Cook and Will counties today. Lakeside daisy can also be viewed at the Chicago Botanic Garden as a “living museum” specimen in the Dixon Prairie.

Despite obstacles to recovery, progress for this species is hopeful. Additional modified alvar habitat in Ohio has been permanently protected and GLRI funds have supported seed collection and transplanting for the last 5 years. Seeding and transplanting are expected to continue for several more years in an effort to maintain as much genetic diversity within each population as possible.

Lastly, the Service is collaborating with the Chicago Botanic Garden, Northwestern University, and the Chicago Park District to conduct a range-wide genetic study of Lakeside daisy. Results will provide information on the actual genetic diversity and genetic limitations of remaining populations. This information will, in turn, guide efforts to recover this species as the Service and partners continue working to protect this species and its habitat, and enhance existing populations.



Figure 1: Lakeside daisy growing in its preferred alvar habitat. The peak bloom period is typically in mid-May. Photo courtesy of USFWS.



Figure 3: Small seeds of Lakeside daisy have been hoarded and cached by a small mammal. Photo courtesy of USFWS.



Figure 2: A transverse flower fly (*Eristalis transversa*) pollinating Lakeside daisy. Photo courtesy of USFWS.

Recollections of Prairie Discovery

By Dennis W. Nyberg

When my parents moved to Northbrook in 1951, the entire area between Crabtree Lane and Dundee Road was prairie and unchanneled west fork of the north branch of the Chicago River (except for a handful of houses on the north side of Crabtree Lane near Western Ave). Many natural prairie areas that had never been farmed still existed in the 1950s, but they were disappearing to residential development (which was the fate of the prairie surrounding the home my parents built). For a couple years before houses were built, I enjoyed the prairie and the west fork. The species I remember were mostly animals: meadow larks, snapping turtles, pheasant and massasauga. The only plant I specifically remember was *Echinocystis lobata*, wild cucumber, but I became familiar with many prairie plants without attaching names to them.

In the 1960s, people noticed there were few preserved prairies in the 'prairie' state and the Peacock Prairie in Glenview and the Goose Lake Prairie in Grundy Co. were the first prairies preserved (in the late 1960s) because they were prairies. Some prairies were preserved in Forest Preserves of Cook County holdings because they were part of large blocks of land the FPCC favored for purchase.

I was in graduate school in the late 60s and visited marvelous railroad prairies near Paxton and Gifford, IL as relaxation from research. (The 1973 oil embargo resulted in conversion to farmland of the mile of abandoned railroad prairie east of Gifford.)

In the 1980s, I was biking a lot. In 1983 I became volunteer steward of Cranberry Slough for the Volunteer Stewardship Network of The Nature Conservancy. On bike trips from my home in Oak Park to Cranberry, I 'discovered' some remnants. (Travelling at the speed of a bicycle allows for greater discovery of surroundings than at automobile speeds.) One was a dolomite prairie in a forest preserve (Theodore Stone Forest Preserve). Another was a truck parking lot the next time I rode by. The best was at 77th & Harlem just north of a drive-in theater. The prairie along Harlem was a minimally disturbed black-soil, wet

mesic prairie. Shooting star, Michigan lily and white wild indigo were among the more attractive species. I took 2x2 slide pictures of plants and scenes. I told my colleague, Dr. Albert Rouffa, Director of the University of Illinois at Chicago's prairie in Glenview (nee Peacock). Dr. Rouffa talked to the local prairie expert Dr. Betz and the two of them visited the Harlem prairie. They encouraged the Illinois Department of Natural Resources biologist, Bill Glass, to consider it for acquisition. I was told the location made the land too expensive per acre for the IDNR to be interested in acquisition even though it was a quality remnant prairie.

About one year later, I rode by and was distraught to see giant earth moving equipment tearing up the drive-in and the south end of the prairie. I took pictures. I can't recall what role, if any, I played in contacting the US EPA, but somehow they learned I had pictures of the prairie. From the EPA I learned that Rich Hyerczyk (who independently knew about this remnant) also had pictures. Our pictures were used in a wetland destruction suit that was won by the EPA. I was told by Carlson (sorry, his first name has not been recalled) of EPA that the fine paid by the developer was the largest collected by the Chicago office and that the remaining prairie would be permanently protected. Not sure of year, but it was probably 1988.



Species from Bridgeview Prairie, clockwise from upper left: *Arnoglossum plantagineum* (John Boldt, CC BY-NC), *Dodecatheon meadia* (cassi saari, and following), *Comandra umbellata*, *Phlox pilosa*

The remnant site extends from Harlem on the west to Sayre Ave on the east. Access is from south border over a berm presumably created in developing a storm water retention pond which is the southeast border. I have been told the Village of Bridgeview is the owner. Unlike some 'saved' sites, this site, which I guess should be called the Bridgeview Prairie, is well managed and has stayed high quality. Lou Mulé, who also manages the Chicago Ridge Prairie owned by the Oak Lawn Park District, is the manager, I've been told. I have visited the site many years, including 2021. Though the trail has not been well maintained, the vegetation has been. Among the species that keep me coming back to the Bridgeview Prairie are *Lythrum alatum*, *Oenothera pilosella*, *Rosa setigera* and my personal favorite, *Arnoglossum plantagineum*. Other more common prairie species are also easily seen. Without an organization and website promoting the site, it still feels like an undiscovered gem when you visit it, which is part of its attraction to me. It is a quality remnant surrounded by commercialization.

To me it is both ironic and sad that the shopping center that was built on the south part of the

prairie was not successful. A part along Sayre has been torn down and a large building with lots of truck docks now occupies the site. The shopping center along Harlem has many unoccupied stores. North of the prairie along Harlem, a large gas station and truck parking area has recently been built. Unfortunately, debris is occasionally thrown over the fence into the prairie.

I have not 'discovered' any remnant natural areas since 1990 and I have not heard about other remnant discoveries. Conservation in Cook County is now dependent on vegetation management. The period of acquisition was very important, but it is a model/habit that is no longer effective because there are few remaining unprotected remnants. Management of already protected areas is effective. Great improvements in vegetation nativity and diversity have been made by Forest Preserves of Cook County in the last 10 years.

I have a fondness for natural areas. They are diverse and complex. I am proud I played a small role in preserving the Bridgeview Prairie and satisfied by my roles in managing already preserved remnants.



Lithospermum canescens at Bridgeview Prairie by cassi saari

Calendar

View all event details and COVID-19 safety precautions on the [Northeast Chapter Events page](#).

Northeast Chapter Board Meetings

Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 7 PM and November 9, 2021 at 7 PM

Our organizing team is meeting virtually every other month. If you are interested in attending these planning meetings, receiving meeting notes, or getting involved in other ways, please contact us at northeast.inps@gmail.com.

Tour of Bunker Hill Savanna

Sunday, September 12, 2021 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

RSVP

Join site stewards Erin Faulkner and Rebecca Blazer for a walk through Bunker Hill Savanna (also known as Sidney Yates Flatwoods), a nearly 100-acre forest preserve on Chicago's northwest side. The site features a mosaic of different habitats, including prairie, savanna, open oak woodland, flatwoods, and a bluff overlooking the North Branch of the Chicago River. It will be the season for asters, goldenrods, gentians, and prairie grasses, so be prepared for a dazzling sea of gold and violet!

We will be traveling some narrow and infrequently-used trails, so be sure to wear long pants and sleeves, and protective footwear. We will meet in the first parking lot off of Caldwell Ave across from Tonty Ave ([Google Maps](#)). If the weather is not looking favorable, we will move this event to Saturday, September 11th.



Agalinis tenuifolia
(slender false foxglove)
by Katie Miller, CC BY-NC



Amanita rubescens (blusher)
by Katie Miller, CC BY-NC



Chelone glabra
(white turtlehead)
by [rin_nd](#), CC BY-NC

Tour of Somme Prairie Grove

Saturday, September 18, 2021 from 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

RSVP

This event has reached capacity, but you can still join the waiting list!

Join Stephen Packard and Eriko Kojima for a lovely tour of Somme Prairie Grove. This site, after four decades of restoration, has one of the region's highest quality savannas - in part restored remnants of savanna with associated original prairie, wetland and woodland. It was dedicated as an Illinois Nature Preserve this year. We will enjoy and identify large numbers of uncommon gentians, asters, goldenrods, blazing stars, grasses and sedges, and whatever may interest people, including quite a few species rarely seen these days.

Illustration by Kathleen Garness



Contribute to *The Nodding Onion*

We're looking for submissions!
Do you have an article, artwork,
photos, or other content you'd like
to share with the *Nodding Onion*?
Or, do you have ideas for content
you'd like to see?

Contact Katie Kucera,
Newsletter Editor, at:
inpsnenews@gmail.com

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Spiranthes incurva (Sphinx ladies' tresses) and *Lobelia kalmii* (Kalm's lobelia) by Micah Bowman, CC BY-NC

The Illinois Native Plant Society is a volunteer-led, member-based organization with dues comprising the majority of our revenue. Please renew and encourage friends to join. Join or renew on our website:

<https://illinoisplants.org/member>

As a member of the Illinois Native Plant Society, you contribute to our mission of promoting the appreciation, conservation, and study of the native flora and natural communities of Illinois.



Aureolaria grandiflora (large-flowered false foxglove) by Chris Kozlak, CC BY-NC

As a member, you receive:

Erigenia: our peer-reviewed scientific journal

The Harbinger: the statewide newsletter

The Nodding Onion: our chapter newsletter

Notification for and priority RSVP for events, including the statewide Annual Gathering, guided field trips, lectures, workshops, and other events.



Symphyotrichum novae-angliae (New England aster) by [musicmanz](#), CC BY-NC

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