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By John Schwegman, Illinois Native Plant Conservation Program
Illinois Department of Conservation

Comments

The death of George Fell on March 5th marks the end of an era in American nature conservation. As The Nature Conservancy's first Director and the father of Illinois' nature preserves system, he laid the foundation for a movement that has grown beyond his state and nation. George was always looking to the future and leading the way. While not blessed with charisma, he was gifted with a vision of a world with room enough for nature and possessed the determination and persistence to achieve much of that vision. He motivated many to join his cause and leaves a cadre of dedicated professionals to pursue his mission beyond his lifetime. I am honored to have known him.

The release of insect biocontrol agents for purple loosestrife in Illinois this spring marks a new era in the struggle for survival of native Illinois ecosystems. Biocontrol agents hold the only promise of controlling some of our most aggressive and destructive exotics. We are fortunate in Illinois to have research underway at the Illinois Natural History Survey on biocontrol of both purple loosestrife and garlic mustard. We also need to urge congress to establish a national program of biocontrol for serious weeds of natural ecosystems. The 1995 farm bill would be a good time to establish this new program. Garlic mustard and Amur honeysuckle are at the top of my list for biocontrol research.

John Schwegman

George Fell Dies

George B. Fell, first director of The Nature Conservancy, founder of the Illinois Nature Preserve System and director of the Natural Land Institute of Rockford, died at his home in Rockford on March 5, 1994. See the comments section above.

Neil Gaston Dies

Neil Gaston, an attorney who directed the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy from 1975 until 1982 died April 22 in San Francisco. Neil played a pivotal role in preserving many Illinois natural areas. One of his most notable achievements was overcoming the problem of multiple landowners and acquiring Markham Prairie southwest of Chicago. He was a native of East St. Louis.

New Director for TNC

The Illinois Chapter of the Nature Conservancy has appointed Bruce W. Boyd as its Director replacing Al Pyott. Mr. Boyd is an

attorney who has handled litigation for a wide range of clients and has experience in business administration as well.

New Native Plant Society President

Mr. George Johnson of Harvard assumed the presidency of the Illinois Native Plant Society at the society's annual meeting at Forest Glen Preserve near Danville on May 21. George has a long history of leadership in native plant conservation in Illinois.

New Audubon Society Director

Marilyn Campbell has been appointed Director of the Illinois Audubon Society to succeed Warren DeWalt who retired. Marilyn has a long association with nature conservation in Illinois through her years of service to the Vermilion County Conservation District.

Lake County Adds Staff

Ken Klick has joined the Lake County Forest Preserve District to work on natural community restoration and management.

New Residents at DOC

The Department of Conservation's Natural Heritage Division has expanded its year-long paid residency program for graduate degree candidates from 3 to 6 positions. New residents include Jack Rozdilsky of Sangamon State who will work in the Springfield Office, Todd Bittner, botanist from SIU Carbondale who will work at District 2 in Oregon, IL and Dean Corgiat, zoologist of SIU Carbondale who will work in District 8 at Pittsfield.

New Research Director at Morton

Dr. Christopher Dunn has joined the Morton Arboretum as Research Administrator. He is a plant ecologist with an interest in landscape scale plant communities of the past and present. Much of his work has been done in Wisconsin.

New Botanist at Survey

Dr. Steven Hill joins the Illinois Natural History Survey as a botanist on August 15. Dr. Hill comes to Illinois from Clemson University and will work on plant surveys along highway projects.

Mark Schwartz Leaves Survey

Conservation Biologist and plant ecologist Dr. Mark Schwartz will leave the Illinois Natural History Survey in August for the University of California at Davis. Mark intends to continue some of his interests here including work on the impact of fire on insects.

Plants of the Chicago Region

Dr. Gerry Wilhelm of the Morton Arboretum advises that the new edition of "Plants of the Chicago Region" will be available in mid-August. It is being published by the Indiana Academy of Science.

Carex of Illinois Delayed

Dr. Robert Mohlenbrock says that publication of the Illustrated Flora of Illinois volume on Carex by the SIU Press has been pushed back to 1995. The third edition of his "Guide to the Vascular Flora of Illinois" will probably be available in 1996.

Wetlands Creation Guide

With funding from the Department of Conservation, a task force from the Illinois Natural History Survey, Illinois State Geological Survey and the Illinois Department of Transportation are developing an Illinois Wetlands Restoration and Creation Guide. The goal is to publish it in 1995.

New Endangered Species Publications

The Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board has published an updated list of Illinois Endangered and Threatened species that reflects rule changes that took effect January 15, 1994. They are also publishing Volume 3 of their Endangered and Threatened Species of Illinois series that gives species accounts for each of the newly added plants and animals. You can request the list and to be put on the mailing list for Vol. 3 by writing the Board at 524 South 2nd. St. Springfield, IL 62701.

Endangered Resources Plan

The DOC has contracted with the environmental firm Green Strategies of Springfield to produce a plan addressing protection of Illinois' endangered resources. The natural diversity of Illinois is being considered at the genetic, species, community and landscape levels. Public input was obtained from a workshop in Bloomington on June 18 and the plan is scheduled for completion in 1995.

Horseshoe Lake Flood Impacts

The virgin forest at the south end of Horseshoe Island near Cairo suffered severe loss of some trees in the flood of 1993. Visits by DOC staff reveal that many species along the lake shore died and most of the beech and paw paw throughout the woods. Of 48 beech trees alive before the flood, only 16 were alive at the end of June, 1994. Water tupelo in Horseshoe Lake were stressed by the high water and it is not clear if they will survive.

Horseshoe Lake Study

Dr. Philip Robertson of SIU Carbondale is resampling permanent transects in Horseshoe Island Forest this summer to provide quantitative documentation the flood's impact. Mark Baysinger will be doing much of the sampling.

Long Island Study

The virgin forest on Long Island in the Mississippi River just north of Quincy is being studied this summer by Dr. John Ebinger of EIU and Bill McClain of the DOC to determine flood damage. Preliminary observations indicate that most of the hackberrys were killed.

Biocontrol Releases

The DOC coordinated 7 releases of leaf beetles for the control of purple loosestrife in northern Illinois this spring. The beetles had been carefully studied for host specificity and problem potential before being approved for release by the federal Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Illinois' effort was part of a midwest-wide release effort coordinated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Biocontrol Aphids

Dr. David Voegtlin of the Illinois Natural History Survey has demonstrated significant detrimental impact of the aphid Myzus lythri on purple loosestrife in the greenhouse. This exotic aphid has long been established in North America, but has not become a serious pest of loosestrife in the wild at least partly because its alternate (overwintering) host plant Prunus mahaleb is rarely planted here. With the aid of DOCs Wildlife Preservation Fund and cooperation from Lake County Forest Preserve District, Voegtlin is studying the impact of planting the Prunus near loosestrife stands.

Garlic Mustard Biocontrol

Dr. Weidong Chen of the Illinois Natural History Survey has developed 38 cultures of potential pathogens of garlic mustard from apparently sick garlic mustard plants contributed by natural area managers this spring. A powdery mildew that was observed killing garlic mustard in Carroll County in 1993 has not been found yet this year and anyone seeing it should send infected specimens to Dr. Chen. He will study the control potential of his cultures over the next several years.

National Biological Survey

The Illinois Natural History Survey has been selected as one of 4 organizations to participate in pilot efforts to establish a

National Biological Survey being organized by the U. S. Department of the Interior.

Exotic Pest Plant Council

Following Florida's lead, managers and researchers concerned with exotic weeds in California, Oregon and Tennessee have formed statewide Exotic Pest Plant Councils. These statewide membership organizations provide a forum for information exchange and promotion of solutions to exotic weed problems in wildlands. Representatives of the existing state organizations plan to meet at the Natural Areas Conference in Florida in October to consider a national confederation of such councils. Copies of the Florida and California bylaws are available from Illinois for persons interested in pursuing a council for Illinois.

Dame's Rocket

Dame's rocket (Hesperis matronalis) is invading forests in northern Illinois and promises to be a serious exotic pest there. I personally saw it in woods in western Lake County and at Lowden-Miller State Forest in Ogle County. In addition I had three reports from Cook County and several from JoDaviess County. The infestation level is relatively low. An intensive effort might still be able to eradicate this pest from Illinois before it becomes a serious problem.

JoDaviess County District Vote

The JoDaviess Foundation has been incorporated to promote a county conservation district in this November's election. This is one of the few efforts to establish such a district in Illinois in recent years but is an effective way to protect native plants and natural communities through local action. For information or to donate to the effort contact the Foundation at P.O.Box 6, Scales Mound, IL 61075 (815/845-2624).

Exotics Bill

At the request of DuPage and Lake County's Forest Preserve Districts, Rep. Jeffrey Schoenberg of Willmette introduced House Bill 3755 this spring that would have prohibited sale and planting of common buckthorn, autumn olive, Amur honeysuckle and crown vetch in Illinois. Although opposed by the Illinois State Nurserymen's Association, it passed out of committee with a do pass recommendation only to be killed when the house abruptly adjourned before it could be voted on.

Federal Policy on Natives

On April 26, President Clinton directed the heads of all executive departments and agencies of the federal government to

use native plant materials in landscaping lands under their jurisdiction whenever possible. He cited the savings in fertilization and watering when using native plants adapted to the local area. Copies of his memorandum are available from Illinoensis on request.

Joliet Arsenal

The Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, which is being deactivated by the Department of Defense, is being considered for transfer to the U. S. Forest Service as a National Grassland. Congressional action will be required to make this transfer a reality.

Thismia Hunt

The Illinois Native Plant Society is sponsoring Thismia Search IV on August 6, 1994 to hunt for the lost Thismia americana. The search will concentrate on habitat in northwestern Indiana this year. For information contact George Johnson at 815/943-5256 or meet the group at 10 AM at Gibson Woods Nature Center, Hammond, IN. Mike Homoya will be on hand to sign copies of his new book "Orchids of Indiana".

Prairie Conference

The Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois, Millikin University and the Macon County Conservation District are hosting the 4th Central Illinois Prairie Conference September 17-18, 1994 at Millikin University in Decatur. For information, contact Ruth Green of the Grand Prairie Friends at P. O. Box 36, Urbana, IL 61801.

Savannas and Barrens Conference

A North American Savannas and Barrens Conference will be held October 15-16, 1994 at Illinois State University in Normal. Papers will be given the 15th with field trips the 16th. For information contact the University at Savannas Conference, 8610 Conferencing Unit, Normal, IL 61780-8610.

International Oak Conference

The first International Oak Conference will be held at the Morton Arboretum October 17-18, 1994. For information, contact the Arboretum at 708/968-0014.

Natural Areas Conference

The Natural Areas Association and the South Florida Water Management District are hosting the 1994 Natural Areas Conference October 19-22, 1994 at Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. For information contact Bill Helfferich, South Florida Water Mgt. Dist., P.O.Box 24680, West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680.

Plains Violet

The endangered plains violet (Viola viarum) appeared to have been destroyed at its only known Illinois population when the Mississippi River levee broke last summer. Searches in April found no surviving plants, but a check in July turned up many seedlings, germinating from the seed bank.

Site M Flora

The DOC has contracted with the Illinois Natural History Survey for a flora list and natural area evaluation of the 15,000 acre Site M in Cass County. The information will aid the Department in planning development and use of this exceptionally large site.

Mead's Genetics

Dr. Daniel Nickrent of SIU Carbondale is undertaking a genetic study of Meads milkweeds from throughout the range of the species. This information will help recovery planners ascertain the likely relationships of the various disjunct populations on the periphery of the species range.

Small Whorled Pogonia

Illinois' only known location for the small whorled pogonia orchid failed to produce a plant for the third year in a row. This may indicate that the population has gone extinct.

Dune Thistle Recovery

Marlin Bowles of the Morton Arboretum reports that two plants of Illinois' reintroduced population of the threatened Pitcher's dune thistle flowered and fruited abundantly this summer. The flowering plants were 4 years old.

Osage Orange

Many Osage orange trees in central and western Illinois died last summer and continue the decline this summer. The dead trunks have cankers indicating that its problem is a fungal disease. Trees I have seen in eastern Illinois near the Indiana line did not seem to have this problem.

Dogwood Anthracnose

Flowering dogwood nursery stock infested with dogwood anthracnose was seized and destroyed in Indiana and Missouri this spring but no verified cases from Illinois have been reported to my knowledge. Small dead and larger sick dogwoods I collected from woods in Lawrence County failed to produce evidence of dogwood anthracnose when cultured at the Plant Clinic in Urbana.

Written July 21, 1994