

# ILLINOENSIS, WINTER 1996 Vol 12(1)

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## Comments

While it is popular nowadays to say that technologically we are in or entering the information age, USDA weed scientist Randy Westbrooks points out that ecologically we are entering the homogenization age. Species that evolved on 5 separate continents are being transported by modern man and homogenized into a common worldwide biota. Continents that have been "engines of species evolution" since the breakup of Pangaea 185 million years ago are having their unique assemblages of co-evolved species invaded and disrupted by this homogenization. If we set back and let it happen, the result of this process may be large scale extinction of species and the loss of many ecosystems as we gain new (and fewer) homogenized ecosystems. Expect to hear more of the age of homogenization, whether you want to or not.

The U. S. Department of Interior hosted an Eastern and Tropical States "Weed Summit" in Ft. Lauderdale, FL Nov 30 and Dec 1. The goal of the summit was to gather input and ideas from a broad spectrum of interest groups on actions and implementation strategies to combat invasive alien weeds. Representatives from this "summit" and an earlier western states "weed summit" will convene in Albuquerque February 11 to 14 to produce a recommended national strategy. This is indeed a promising development.

The retirement of John Ebinger as Professor of Botany at Eastern Illinois University may well be the end of an era in Illinois. Students desiring in-depth training in native plant identification have found it increasingly difficult to find in recent years, and Ebinger's departure eliminates what has been their best opportunity in my opinion. The future of classical plant taxonomy and floristics in Illinois is unclear at present.

Dr. Jerry Franklin of the University of Washington had a sobering message for those assembled for the Natural Areas Conference this fall in Fayetteville, Arkansas. After years of wrangling and lawsuits over management of the pacific northwest National Forests, he expects a move by the timber industry and congress to "privatize" their management and turn them over to industry to manage. Thus insulated from citizen lawsuits which have made management virtually impossible, harvest would proceed based on economic and industry goals.

## Brian Anderson Leaves INPC

Dr. Brian Anderson has resigned his position as Director of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission to become Ecosystems Project Coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources. He now

coordinates the DNRs Ecosystems Program from his new office at 320 Washington Street (7th floor) in Springfield.

#### Carolyn Grosboll Directs INPC

Carolyn Grosboll, Deputy Director of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, has been appointed acting Director of the INPC pending announcement of a permanent replacement for Dr. Brian Anderson who moved to a new position at the DNR.

#### John Ebinger Retires

Dr. John Ebinger, Professor of Botany at Eastern Illinois University, retired January 31, 1995. John intends to remain in Charleston and will continue his plant ecology and taxonomy studies in Illinois as well as his work with the genus Acacia.

#### New Position for Dan Holm

Dan Holm, former District Natural Heritage Biologist for the DNRs Natural Heritage Division District in Pekin, has moved to the position of Northern Waterfowl Project Manager with the DNRs Division of Wildlife Resources. Among his new duties are management of resident Canada geese, wood ducks and diving ducks.

#### Joe Kath joins Natural Heritage

Joe Kath has joined the DNR Division of Natural Heritage as project manager in the Endangered Species Program. Joe is a biological sciences graduate of the University of Illinois and has worked with environmental consulting firms and the DNRs Division of Natural Resource Review and Coordination.

#### Heritage Division Resident Changes

Bob Edgin has joined the Natural Heritage Division's graduate student residency program at the Prairie Chicken Sanctuary in Jasper County. Bob is a biological sciences graduate student at Eastern Illinois University. Current residents Shannon Horn at Silver Springs State Park, John Wilker at Sangchris Lake State Park and Matt Russell at Heritage's Charleston office all complete their residency January 15, 1996.

#### Two Botanists Ailing

Dr. Robert Evers, retired botanist for the Illinois Natural History Survey and expert on Hill Prairies has been admitted to a nursing home in Indianapolis, IN suffering from Alzheimer disease. Dr. Paul Shildneck, avid plant collector from Decatur, has been admitted to McKinley Court Nursing Center in Decatur following a series of small strokes.

#### Floyd Swink Honored

Plant taxonomist Floyd Swink of the Morton Arboretum received an honorary Doctorate from Western Illinois University at their commencement ceremony December 16, 1995.

#### Harty and Stritch Recognized

The Eastern Region of the U. S. Forest Service has bestowed its 1995 "Vision Award" on The DNRs Fran Harty and the U. S. Forest Service's Larry Stritch for their tireless work toward preservation of the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant as Illinois' first national grassland.

#### Todd Fink Memorialized

District Natural Heritage Biologist Todd Fink, who died of tick-borne Granulocytic Ehrlichia disease in July, is being memorialized in many ways. The DNR has named the Heron Pond trail at Heron Pond Nature Preserve the Todd Fink trail and the U. S. Forest Service has renamed its Trigg Natural Area in Johnson County the Todd Fink Natural Area. Donations to a memorial fund established in Todd's behalf at the Illinois Conservation Foundation are being used to establish annual grants to a student of natural history at SIU-Carbondale.

#### Survey Herbarium

The new compactors for storage of the Illinois Natural History Survey herbarium have been completed. Transfer of specimens from their old cases into the new compactors is underway and the herbarium should be ready for use in the near future. The collections are being rearranged alphabetically by family, genus and species under the headings Pteridophytes, Gymnosperms, Monocots and Dicots.

#### Shawnee Forest Management on Hold

Major vegetation management activities on the Shawnee Forest are on hold pending court decisions on a series of law suits filed in opposition to management planned by the Forest. It is anticipated that a ruling by the court will be made in this matter in the near future, perhaps as early as January.

#### Purple Loosestrife Biocontrol

Using leaf beetle control agents (Galerucella sp.) provided by Cornell University through the Natural History Survey, 5 supplemental releases were made at 1994 release sites and 2 new releases were made. Seven releases of the root boring weevil (Hylobius) were also made. These were the first releases of this control agent in Illinois. All 1995 releases were in northeastern Illinois. The Illinois Natural History Survey has established a rearing program for leaf beetles that promises to produce large

numbers of these control agents for 1996 release. They conducted a workshop on rearing and releasing leaf beetles in July. Their work is largely supported by funds allocated by the Army Corps of Engineers. Lake County Forest Preserve District is Cooperating with the Natural History Survey research into the use of an established exotic aphid Myzus lythri in loosestrife control. The District planted cherry trees that function as the alternate overwintering host for the aphid near a marsh with a large loosestrife population.

#### Natural Biocontrol

A tiny native weevil that naturally feeds on native water milfoil (Myriophyllum verticillatum) turned to feeding on European water milfoil (M. spicatum) in McHenry County's McCollum Lake this past spring. The European milfoil is an aggressive exotic invader that chokes up lakes with its dense growth. The weevil (Eurhychiopsis lecontei) is no larger than a grain of rice and apparently kills the weed by nibbling on its underwater stems. The weevil had never been noticed in Illinois before this spring. It may turn out to be a natural biocontrol for this weed.

#### Native Plant Society

President Glen Kruse has announced that the 1996 annual meeting of the Illinois Native Plant Society will be May 31 to June 2 in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. This will be a joint meeting with the Missouri Native Plant Society. Field trips are planned for both sides of the Mississippi River.

#### Call For Papers-Erigenia

Editor Gerould Wilhelm of Erigenia, Journal of the Illinois Native Plant Society, is soliciting papers and articles for the 1996 edition of this periodical. Papers are especially wanted on cryptograms of Illinois. Submit manuscripts to Wilhelm at The Morton Arboretum, Route 53, Lisle, IL 60532.

#### New Flora of Winnebago County

The Flora and Vegetational History of Winnebago County, Illinois by Michael D. Jones has been published by the Natural Land Institute of Rockford. It includes information on individual plant species found in the county as well as a complete reprint of Egbert W. Fell's 1955 "Flora of Winnebago County, Illinois". Order copies for \$23.00 postpaid from the Institute at 320 South 3rd Street, Rockford, IL 61104.

#### Natural Areas Conference

The 1996 Natural Areas Conference will be held October 23-26, 1996 at the Pheasant Run Resort and Conference Center in St. Charles,

IL. This same meeting will include the North American Prairie Conference and an Indiana Dunes Ecosystems Conference. The Natural Areas Conference theme is Natural Areas in Urban Settings.

#### Directory of Systematists

An updated version of the Illinois Directory of Systematists, Ecologists and Field Biologists has been compiled by the Illinois Natural History Survey. It is accessible through the Internet Home Page of the Survey at <HTTP://WWW.INHS.UIUC.EDU/INHSHOME.HTML>. It may also eventually be published in written form.

#### Savanna Depot

The Base Realignment and Closure Commission voted in June to close the 13,000 acre Savanna Army Depot in JoDaviess and Carroll Counties. The site includes extensive sand prairie, dune and lowland forests along the Mississippi River which support 32 listed endangered and threatened species. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has requested 10,000 acres of the site for addition to their Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge. A decision on this request from the Department of Defense is expected this spring.

#### Joliet Arsenal

Bills have passed both the U.S. House and Senate authorizing the establishment of a 19,000 acre Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Will County from a portion of the deactivated Joliet Army Ammunition Plant. If finally approved by the Congress and the President, it will become the first national grassland east of the Mississippi River and will be administered as a part of the Shawnee National Forest

#### Little Vermillion River

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources purchased 1,039 acres along the Little Vermilion River in Vermilion County this summer. Purchased from Peabody Coal Co., the tract is mostly forested and includes a 1.5 mile stretch of the river that contains 5 species of endangered and threatened fish and mussels. The site also includes a heron rookery and stands of beech and tulip tree.

#### TNC Purchases Glade

The Nature Conservancy purchased a part of the Collier limestone glade in easternmost Hardin County at auction this summer. They are negotiating with the owners of the remainder of the glade for protection of the total ecosystem. The site was recognized by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory and may eventually be transferred by TNC to the Shawnee National Forest for management.

#### Shawnee Land Purchase

The Shawnee National Forest recently acquired the remaining privately held limestone glades at the Whoopie Cat Mountain natural area in Hardin County. The tract lies about 1.5 miles north of Elizabethtown and contains two high quality glades. This purchase completes ownership of the natural area by the Shawnee.

#### New Book

Persons interested in landscaping with Illinois' native trees should check out the new book by Guy Sternberg and Jim Wilson "Landscaping with Native Trees". Sternberg is an Illinois landscape architect and DNR employee while Wilson is best known for his 10 years as co-host of the Victory Garden television series on PBS. It is available from Chapters Publishing for \$34.95 hardcover or \$24.95 softcover by calling 1-800-892-0220.

#### FWS Drops Category 2

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has dropped its list of candidate species (C2 species) for endangered and threatened listing under the Endangered Species Act. They cite inconsistent information on candidate species, which makes this list detract from their ability to concentrate on species truly in need.

#### Endangered Plant Status Report

The 1995 Illinois Endangered and Threatened Plant Status Report is available from Illinoensis free upon request. The 3 page report contains conservation news and status information on the 10 federally listed and 20 federal candidate plants now or formerly occurring in Illinois.

#### Species News

Fifty potentially blight resistant American chestnut seedlings were planted by the DNR at Chestnut Hills Nature Preserve in Pulaski County in early December of 1995. The seedlings were obtained from the American Chestnut Cooperator's Foundation of Newport, VA.

Eric Ulaszek of the Shawnee National Forest reports the discovery of Erianthus giganteus from Pope, Massac and Saline Counties this past summer. This native appears to be invading from the southeast. He also reports new locations for Polygala incarnata and Bartonia paniculata, some occurrences of which appeared following prescribed burning of barrens areas.

Marlin Bowles of the Morton Arboretum reports that the extremely hot weather of August killed all seedlings of Pitcher's thistle at

the reintroduction site for this species in Illinois Beach Nature Preserve.

John Ebinger discovered a population of Scirpus purshianus at sand lake near Havana this summer. It was growing with a large population of another annual, Scirpus hallii.

Thanks to the cool wet spring, 1995 was a banner year for prairie white-fringed orchid (Platanthera leucophaea). It appeared at several new locations, and sites where it has been scarce in recent years had record numbers of this orchid.

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