

Land Conservancy of Lake County



NEWSLETTER

MEMBER OF NATIONAL LAND TRUST ALLIANCE

Spring 2009

Capstone Activity for 2008: Dover Pond Controlled Burn

The Dover Pond Controlled Burn on the 23rd of November was one major closeout activity of the Land Conservancy of Lake County for 2008.

Dover Pond is a 6.5 acre natural area located in Ela Township off Long Grove Road in the Dover Pond Subdivision of Deer Park. LCLC's portion of Dover Pond is part of a larger 14 acre area found off-site. Although our holding is mainly water there is a strip of dryer land found along the eastern boundary that supports grasses and scattered trees. Early land records show that Dover Pond was once a deep-water marsh surrounded by an oak savannah. The area was drained and farmed dating back to the 1900's and as recent as the late 1980's it was used for grazing/hay. Several areas of trees took root during this grazing/hay period.

The area was plated as an out lot for stormwater detention and conservation purposes on the final plat of subdivision for Dover pond during 1989. The existing field tiles were broken and freestanding water once again became prominent. Today the out lot has again become an open water emergent wetland. The new wetland, however, is likely not as deep as in the past due to an outlet drain found in the southeast corner of the pond. The "pond" started out as a relatively barren area after it's initial flooding and had numerous dead trees scattered off the shoreline and very little vegetation present. The dead trees along with the standing water provided an outstanding habitat for large birds, such as great blue heron and egrets.

As time has passed the existing seed bank and off-site influences have led to the profusion of cattails, Phragmites (on fire in photo 1), and willows plants on the area adjacent to the open water. The watertable is very near the surface in this shoreline area. Almost all of the dead trees have fallen into the wetland and been lost for nesting habitat. The last several years have also seen a

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Photo 1: Phragmites (Common Reed Grass) ablaze on the shore of Dover Pond.

drop in the water levels and have led to an increasing infill by cattails outward from the shoreline. According to Peter Winkler, LCLC Director and biologist, the site is

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Dover Pond *Cont'd from p. 1*

difficult to manage because off-site properties and use of the area as a detention pond make management decision difficult. Currently, LCLC manages the property as a natural area for local wildlife. Controlled burns, willow harvesting, and limited herbicide uses are elements in our management "toolbox" which have been utilized on-site.

Throughout the latter half of the year LCLC conducted several site surveys to plan locations for firebreaks based on likely directions of prevailing winds. Coordinating participation by board members and the neighbors for the burn proved especially challenging. Several past dates had to be cancelled because of wet conditions and scheduling conflicts between LCLC, neighbors, and Village (permit renewal). LCLC prides itself on being a strictly all-volunteer organization and we had a good showing of Directors and members. Directors Kevin DuPont, Jeff Koziel, and Pete Winkler planned and managed the activity. The residents, a few captured in Photo 2, provided a fire suppression crew, moral support, and tap water.

Especial mention belongs to Meg Black who did an outstanding job of handling public relations duties during the less intensive movements. Flames and smoke were visible from miles away! She artfully explained the purpose of a burn and managed to take a number of photos. Among the passersby drawn to the burn is what we like to think of as LCLC's unofficial sponsor-Red Bull. You can see the neighbors and Pete mugging with the car in Photo 3. This was the first time that the Dr. DuPont tried Red Bull and offers as a testimonial the energy boost helped him when lugging the 45-pound water pack used for fire suppression around for a several hours. Perhaps Red Bull is for regular people too?

We consider the effort a success with an observation from Dover Pond Neighbor, Eileen Andrews upon



Photo 2: Dover Pond residents from left to right: Mike Petrovic, Kevin Adams, John Andrews, Tim and Vicky Froderman, and Eileen Andrews.



Photo 3: Director Pete Winkler and the Red Bull Girl waving from within the car.

experiencing her first controlled burn, "I have a new respect and understanding of the delicate and unpredictable nature of the pond and conservancy area."

Signage for Henrietta Skala Bartizal Property

Three volunteers worked two Saturday mornings to install three signs in the Fall of 2008 on The Henrietta Bartizal Property. A local manufacturer constructed the signs each about 16 inches wide by 24 inches high out of an aluminum material. The signs were installed on posts and were erected in locations visible from the channel, the lakeside and the rear entry road. Inclement weather prevented the installation of the final sign, one that is slightly larger and which is scheduled to be installed this year.

The signs serve to identify the property status as a preserve; the property donor and the LCLC name. LCLC is grateful for the property donation by Henrietta Bartizal as well as the financial support for the signs themselves.



LCLC member John Jacobs stands by new sign for Fox Lake property.

Good-bye Sean!

LCLC wishes to extend heart-felt congratulations to Sean Wiedel who, in November 2008, accepted a position with the City of Chicago, Department of Environment. In his new position he will have new opportunities to direct sustainable development activities. And, he will be able to pursue his interest in renewable and green energies.

Unfortunately, his relocation to Chicago has meant that he can no longer continue his commitment to serve on the Board of Directors. Dr. Kevin DuPont has assumed the responsibilities of President in the interim. While we shall surely miss Sean's dedication and expertise on the LCLC Board, his years of service to the organization have done much to maintain our group's stability.

Good-bye and good luck, from us all!

Collaboration with Liberty Prairie Conservancy

LCLC and Liberty Prairie Conservancy (LPC) received a grant from the Grand Victoria Foundation in September 2008 to explore new ways our organizations might collaborate. As you might guess, this requires that we consider the kinds of properties we own, types of outreach and restoration activities we undertake, and a comparison of our underlying philosophies.

The initial phase of the grant involve a review of the conservation value of the LCLC properties, determination of each property's status as a conservation trust by the law offices of George M. Covington assessment, and a future market assessment.

The LCLC Board of Directors has spent time during our last several monthly meeting discussing these issues and outlining future strategies as they pertain to collaboration. The grant period runs through the end of 2009. Please feel free to contact Board Members with any questions or just to discuss issues.

***Get out and enjoy some of
LCLC's landholdings:***

Walnut Creek

Pohickory

Henrietta Skala Baritzal Nature Preserve



ANNUAL MEETING April 5, 2009

Wow! Was that a hawk? I wonder what kind it was? Questions like that can be answered along other information about hawks and other raptors at LCLC's annual meeting April 5th.

Vic Berardi is widely respected by the prominent leaders in the hawk watching community of North America. He is the founder and site coordinator for the Illinois Beach State Park Hawk Watch. Mr. Berardi is also the co-founder of the Illinois Winter Raptor Survey, is on the Board of Directors for the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) and is central continental flyway editor for Hawk Migration Studies for HMANA's biannual publication.

His talk, with slides and photos, will be at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 5th at the Lake Villa Library meeting room.

Please join us for our Annual Meeting. The program will be last about 45 minutes to an hour. A short business meeting will follow. Refreshments will be served.

Summer Solstice - June 21, 2009

May is American Wetlands Month

For more information see: See USEPA's website at www.epa.gov or visit your Lake County Forest Preserves at www.lcfd.org



Thanks to College Student Volunteers!

The goals that we had in mind as we set out to recruit volunteers from local community colleges for the Pohickory Restoration project were both practical and idealistic. These included:

- o Balance the workload to take advantage of student volunteers in order to allow project funding to be most strategically applied.
- o Interpret the project planning, methods, and results for students of all levels so as to accomplish educational objectives and broaden the appeal of volunteer participation.
- o Guide students into the discovery of the oak-hickory forest, the tallgrass prairie, and the rare fen biohabitat, harboring the state-endangered queen-of-the-prairie (*Filipendula rubra*).

While we weren't entirely sure how the work in the field with the volunteers would progress, the educational value of the project was clear. The project goal to promote educational benefits to students through direct involvement and information dissemination was stressed during all phases of activities. Based on the interactions between students and project leaders, this goal exceeded our expectations in terms of numbers and scope by the end of the restoration. The development of a modest college scholarship program was an added bonus for several lucky student volunteers.

LCLC's educational goals did include the use of elementary school students and their teachers, along with LCLC's members, but the primary target group was college-level students. According to Peter Winkler, project biologist, "We felt the Pohickory Nature Preserve would be a perfect location for college students by providing a unique educational setting for instruction in basic ecology and environmental restoration techniques and management". All volunteers experienced "hands-on" real life activities aimed at instilling a conservation ethic in their future endeavors.

Working under the direction of LCLC project leaders, the college students volunteers provided a large amount of physical labor in brush clearing and stacking, hand seeding, and burning activities done throughout the restoration period. The students also provided additional program support by



HAPPY VOLUNTEERS SPRING 2008

assisting in seed collecting, seed cleaning, and the hand pulling of invasive plants, especially garlic mustard and honeysuckle. Over 400 students were recruited from Triton, Oakton, and the College of Lake County and logged upwards of 1,500 hours on site activities from 2003 through 2008. These numbers demonstrate the importance of volunteer efforts and educational outreach for a successful project working with a limited budget. The educational goals attained by the project also include and are summarized as follows:

College Faculty:

- o Development of field visit learning module on restoration ecology and the oak-hickory forest ecosystem
- o Development of classroom learning modules on restoration ecology, and applications of data management in conservation biology

College Students:

- o Lessons in plant biology including the life cycle and ecosystem interactions
- o Experience in the collection and processing of seeds, stratification to simulate winter dormancy, and planting to grow
- o Learning about the history of PNP, the general region, and about becoming part of the history!
- o Helping to restore the land to its original "natural" state and developing a greater appreciation for community service
- o Development of an appreciation for, and an understanding of land conservation, and the establishment of a sense of "ownership" for the land and its ecosystems

Know of someone who wants to volunteer? LCLC is now developing spring and fall workday schedules for continuing restoration activities at the Pohickory Nature Preserve in Wadsworth Township. Activities include brush cutting, controlled burning and hand seeding.

Members Notes & Tidbits

Renovation work is continuing at the Pohickory house in Wadsworth. We are hoping work will be complete by mid to late spring. If you are ever in the neighborhood, stop by to view the improvements.

Earth Day 2009 is on April 22. Take a moment to reflect on the uniqueness of our planet and how each of us can lessen our carbon footprint during the year. Visit/participate in a local event.

Federal tax law for individuals who voluntarily enter into conservation agreements, commonly known as conservation easements, for undeveloped land has been extended to the end of 2009. The incentives provide landowners with significant tax benefits for entering into conservation agreements with qualified organizations. Contact LCLC for further information about protecting your land with a conservation easement.

For those of you that have enjoyed the book **The Barns of Lake County** by Nancy Schumm-Burgess, a new book by Nancy should be released this spring. The title is *The Barns of Wisconsin*. Note: LCLC still has a supply of *The Barns of Lake County* for a discounted price of \$32.00. The book makes a wonderful gift for any occasion. Call the office for ordering info.

Now that another cold snowy winter is almost history, spring is a great time to check your property for invasive plants. If you are the type of person who knows your plants, Spring is for you. Alien plants such as garlic mustard and buckthorn, are often the first to leaf out in early Spring and the soil is "soft" making pulling plants out by the roots easier. If you are using herbicide early spring spraying lessen negative effects on desirable plants not yet growing. Always be careful in your identification and removal technique to make sure plants you want to keep are protected. You can seek help at many garden centers and local and/or state agencies, such as the Cooperative Extension Service.

Private lands in the United States amount to approximately 2/3 of the total 2.3 billion total acres. Private land contains 95% of all threatened and endangered species. These lands also buffer and connect the existing system of properties that are protected, thus making private lands a very important element in the overall natural biodiversity of the country. Contact LCLC if you would like more information on available options on how to protect private lands.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin DuPont, President
Peter Winkler, Vice President
Tim Phelan, Treasurer
Betty Ann Ralston, Secretary
Jeffrey Koziel

Board meetings are the first Wednesday of each month starting at 7:15 p.m. in the Lake Villa Library Conference Room located at Grand Avenue (State Route 132) and Deep Lake Road, Lake Villa. We encourage your participation and comments on any natural resource issue in the County.

LCLC Membership Form

Membership dues and donations help the Conservancy's future endeavors. Be one of the individuals responsible for making a difference protecting Lake County's natural resources and heritage! Your gift to the LCLC is tax deductible.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Circle One:	Student/Senior	\$20
	Family	\$45
	Individuals	\$30
	Organizational	\$100

Donation: \$ _____

Return check and form to:

LCLC, P.O. Box 293, Lake Villa, IL 60046



Unfinished Work

The C-2000 grant administered by LCLC ended December 31, 2008. The end of the grant funding does not mean LCLC is finished with restoration efforts at our Pohickory Nature Preserve (PNP). It takes plenty of time and a lot of patience to restore a property degraded from years of neglect. Even with the use of volunteers the effort is most often measured in years. There will be successes, but these will be accompanied by setbacks. The grant funding may be gone but our will to succeed is not. LCLC will continue our efforts to bring back native flora at Pohickory.

Over the last five years from 2003-2008 LCLC made tremendous progress at the PNP. Of the 31.5 acre property, over 22 acres has had intensive restoration work preformed. This work has not resulted in a complete repair of Pohickory. But the many hours of effort have resulted in tremendous gains for native flora. Management activities such as controlled burning, invasive plant removal, and seeding have resulted in a landscape revival of plants not seen in years. The forest under story is alive with: bloodroot, jack-in-the-pulpit, trillium, shooting star, bottlebrush grass, and Virginia wild rye. The open areas support big bluestem and Indian grass, along with coneflower, black-eyed susan, aster, and sunflower. Wet areas have cardinal flower, marsh marigold, joe pye weed, cord grass, and blue joint grass. This is a good beginning but not the final result. The never-ending quest to keep invasive plants out the ecosystem is constant.



Bloodroot is now common on the forest floor

Resprouts and seed bank releases, such as buckthorn, honeysuckle, reed canary grass, and pipe vine, are constantly causing setbacks that become management priority. Time, energy, and patience are our theme. And the saga continues.

LCLC has already announced continued plans for restoration work during 2009. Spring work dates have been selected for seeding and burning and plans are already underway for continued elementary school support. All the labor and commitment at the PNP would not have been possible without support from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and The Conservation Fund, for partially funding our restoration efforts. Special thanks to the hundreds of college volunteers, our 5th grade elementary partners at Howe and Newport Schools, the College of Lake County, and all the members of LCLC that spent hours assisting in carrying out work activities.