

The **Blaze**  
Winter 2013 / Spring 2014



# from the director

I hope everyone is having an enjoyable holiday Season! Be sure to look through this issue of the Blaze for some upcoming events to help chase away the winter blues. The District has some new staff and some great changes in store for 2014. I would like to welcome Mark Herman as the new Superintendent of Education. The District is very excited to add Mark to our team and look forward to showcasing his expertise that he brings to us and the community.

I am also very excited to inform all of the dog lovers that the District is now allowing dog walking at the Ripplinger/Gouker/Etnyre Preserve. All dogs must be leashed with a leash of 15' or less. The parking for the preserve is off of Townline Road and is marked with signs. Please inquire at the main office at the Jarrett Prairie Center at 7993 North River Road, Byron, for more details and rules pertaining to the dogs, hours, and a map of the site. I would like to also inform you that there are many adjacent land owners and property that could cause an issue if your dog is not leashed so please keep them leashed and on the trails. The District will also be strictly enforcing the rules of NO DOGS ALLOWED in all the other preserves since the new opening to allow dogs at the 104-acre site.

I am also happy to announce that the District's recent purchase of the old Mt. Morris Boat Club and Davis Property will be opening this spring/summer as a boater park. We will be open for boaters to come and enjoy the shelter, shade, sand volleyball, horse shoes, and restroom facilities. Look for new signage and call the District at 815-234-8535 x200 or visit the website for more information at [www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com).



Todd Tucker  
Executive Director



## New Superintendent of Education

The Forest Preserve is pleased to announce that Mark Herman has been hired as the new Superintendent of Education to head up the district's education department. He brings over 20 years of experience in public education, environmental education, history, and recreation programming from several local organizations.

Most recently, Herman served seven years as the Curator of Education with Midway Village Museum in Rockford, Illinois where he won state and national awards for excellence in innovative educational programming. He has also served as the Superintendent of Recreation with the Oregon Park District and is on the board of directors of the Chana School Museum in Oregon, Illinois.

Herman has a Master of Science in Education degree in recreation resources administration from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Maryville College in Maryville, Tennessee.

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**President**  
Jeff Ludwig

**Vice President**  
Sandy Brooks

**Treasurer**  
Trevor Hogan

**Secretary**  
Dave Breen

**Commissioner**  
Brad Auker

## BOARD MEETINGS

Held on the third Monday of each month at 7pm at the Jarrett Prairie Center.



## THE MISSION

*Preservation ~ Education  
Recreation*

To provide for Preservation of openspace/natural resources, to provide Education concerning our natural environment/heritage, and to provide Recreation opportunities and enterprise operations that are consistent with our District goals.



## THE BLAZE

Issue #32 - Winter 2013 / Spring 2014  
Please keep this issue thru April 2014.

**Editor, Design, & Layout**  
Michelle Gerke, CPRP

**Cover Photo:**  
**Heritage Farm in Winter**  
*Photo by Gary Gullett, Photo Safari Network*

# contents



Easter Egg Hunt - Page 5



Fall Preschool Registration- Page 9

|       |                           |
|-------|---------------------------|
| 2     | from the director         |
| 4-5   | special events            |
| 6-7   | programs                  |
| 8     | homeschool / observatory  |
| 9     | preschool / kids concerts |
| 10-11 | scout badge workshops     |
| 12-13 | butterflies / buckthorn   |
| 14    | prairie preserve notes    |
| 15    | turf notes (pvgc)         |
| 16    | prairieview golf club     |
| 17-18 | good stuff                |
| 19    | directory                 |



Maple Syrup Festival - Page 4

**Byron Forest Preserve District**  
**7993 North River Road, P O Box 1075, Byron IL 61010 ~ P-815-234-8535 ~ F-815-234-8635**

Connect with us!



Register online at [www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com)





# maple syrup festival



**Relax and enjoy this returning favorite!**

Hayrides ~ Tree Tapping

Pancake Breakfast ~ Kids Crafts

Tour the Sugar Bush

See the Maple Sap Evaporator Process

**Saturday, March 22**

**7 - 11 am**

**Jarrett Prairie Center**

**Free admission ~ Fee for breakfast**

**Pancake breakfast advance tickets available  
at the Jarrett Prairie Center.**

Co-sponsored by the Byron Kiwanis.





# annual easter egg hunt

**Saturday, April 19 ~ 11 am SHARP!**

There will be lots of prizes and candy for kids in preschool through fourth grade. The event will be held at 7993 North River Road, Byron and is co-sponsored by the Byron Lions Club.



Connect with us!



Register online at [www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com)

5



# programs



## Cross Country Skiing

Let's hope for some good snow so we can start the skiing season! There will be hot chocolate waiting for us upon our return. Skis and instruction for beginners included. All ages and levels welcome.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Fridays, Jan. 17 & 31, Feb. 7, Mar. 7  
Saturdays, Jan. 18, Feb. 8, Mar. 8  
Time: 2 - 5:30 pm  
Cost: \$2/person & \$5/family  
Ages: All  
Min./Max.: 5 / 15

**Register by the previous Wednesday.**

## Art Workshop for Kids

Ever want to make a really big mess but never really had a good place to do it? Let us handle the supplies and the clean up! You just wear clothes you can get dirty and bring your imagination. We'll explore lots of different kinds of art and you'll have some masterpieces to take home!

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Sunday, January 19  
Time: Noon - 4 pm  
Cost: \$10 / person  
Ages: 6 and up  
Min./Max.: 5 / 20

**Register by January 16.**



## Evening Ski and Scope

The moon will be just past full for this evening skiing trip. We'll have hot chocolate in the observatory when we get back and we'll check out the night sky through the telescope. Skis and instruction included, all ages welcome.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Saturday, February 22  
Friday, March 14  
Time: 5 - 8:30 pm  
Cost: \$2/person & \$5/family  
Ages: All  
Min./Max.: 5 / 15

**Register by 2/19 and 3/12.**

## Snow Day!

We'll spend the day doing everything winter has to offer--sledding, skiing, building forts and igloos, looking for animal tracks, and more. We'll also do some crafts and games inside to warm up and have some hot chocolate. Bring a lunch and plenty of warm clothes. Snack and drink included.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Monday, February 17  
Time: 9 am - 4 pm  
Cost: \$15 / person  
Ages: 6 and up  
Min./Max.: 5 / 20

**Register by February 13.**

## Beekeeping Workshops

Did you hear the buzz? These workshops are the place to bee!! You will learn techniques and tools of the trade.

Where: Jarrett Prairie Center  
When: Sundays  
Jan. 12, Feb. 9,  
Mar. 9, Apr. 13  
Time: 2 - 4 pm  
Cost: \$2 / person  
Ages: 3 and up  
Min./Max.: 5 / 25

**No registration required.**

## Winter Hike

Join us for a walk through the woods and prairie to find some of those special things we can only see in winter. We'll look for tracks, owl pellets, scat, animal nests, and more. Don't miss this opportunity to see the trails at one of the prettiest times of the year. Dress for the weather.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Saturday, January 25  
Time: 9 - 10 am  
Cost: FREE  
Ages: families welcome  
Min./Max.: 6 / 20

**Register by January 23.**

## Winter Night Hike

Join us for a hike on the trails just as it starts to get dark and let your eyes adjust to the uniqueness of the woods in winter. We'll make owl calls and seek evidence of other animals, talk about night vision, and take part in activities that will teach you about what goes on during a winter night.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Saturday, February 15  
Time: 7 - 8 pm  
Cost: FREE  
Ages: families welcome  
Min./Max.: 6 / 20

**Register by February 13.**

# programs



Bobcat



Tree Frog



Fox Snake

## Mitchell Conservatory & Boerner Botanical Gardens Trip

We'll head to Milwaukee to visit two of its great destinations--Boerner Botanical Gardens and the Mitchell Conservatory. The Botanical Gardens include a garden house, arboretum, bog garden, rose garden, and beautiful landscaping including fountains and statues. We'll start at the atrium and have brunch, which includes..."Breads, terrines, pastries, domestic and European cheeses, fresh fruit, soup, flavored butters and jams, made-to-order omelets, pasta, and waffles, sausage, smoked bacon, salads, grilled vegetables, chef-carved meats, smoked salmon, and not to mention a full selection of desserts!" Of course, we'll need to walk off those calories, so we'll tour the garden and then drive to the Mitchell Conservatory, which houses three domes: a desert landscape, a tropical garden, and a flower dome with rotating shows. Registration includes transportation, brunch, and admissions to Boerner Gardens and Mitchell Conservatory.

When: Sunday, April 27  
 Time: 8:30 am - 6 pm  
 Cost: \$55 / person  
 Ages: 18 and up  
 Min./Max.: 5 / 12  
**Register by April 18.**

## Prairie Winter

This is a great time of year to find animal tracks, tunnels, scat, and other signs. We'll learn a bit about what's going on under the snow and then head out for a hike through the prairie. Nothing beats a beautiful hike in the winter...except maybe the hot chocolate afterwards! Dress for the weather, of course. Pack a lunch and stay for the Hands-On Animal program.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
 When: Saturday, February 22  
 Time: 10:30 am - Noon  
 Cost: \$2/person  
 Ages: 5 and up  
 Min./Max.: 5 / 20  
**Register by February 20.**

## Hunter Education

This 3-day class covers ethics, firearms, and archery.

Where: Jarrett Center  
 When: MWF, April 21, 23, & 25  
 Time: MW-6-9pm, F-6-10pm  
 Cost: FREE  
 Ages: All  
 (Must be able to pass written test)  
 Min./Max.: 5 / 60  
**Register by April 18.**

## Hands-On Animals

We'll open up our storage area and examine the many stuffed birds and other animals that aren't on display. We also have nests, skulls, antlers, and more! Learn how animals are grouped. Our live snake and turtles will also make an appearance. We'll take a short hike to try to spot some animals outside so dress for the weather.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
 When: Saturday, February 22  
 Time: 12:30 - 3 pm  
 Cost: \$2 / person  
 Ages: 5 and up  
 Min./Max.: 5 / 20  
**Register by noon on February 20.**

## Fossil Hunt

We'll be digging through the piles before there's any spring growth to see what we can find. Bring a hammer and a bucket. Fossil guides provided.

Where: Park at the Land Mgmt Center at 6845 German Church Road and walk back to the quarry  
 When: Saturday, April 19  
 Time: 10 am - 2 pm  
 Cost: \$2/person  
 Ages: All  
 Min./Max.: 5 / 20  
**Register by the previous Wednesday.**

Connect with us!



Register online at [www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com)



# programs

## Fun for Homeschoolers!

### Goopy Science!

We'll create at least three concoctions including slime and play dough and learn the science behind how the reactions worked. Of course, you'll get to take your items home with you. Dress to get messy! Parents are welcome to stay and get messy too! Bring a sack lunch. Snacks and drinks provided.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Friday, January 24  
Time: 10 am - 2 pm  
Cost: \$5 / person  
Ages: 6 and up  
Min./Max.: 5 / 20

**Register by January 21.**

### Ready, Set, Snow!

We'll discover the science behind snow, from how it forms to the unique shape of snowflakes. We'll sample and collect, test and examine...but no study is complete without having some fun! We'll focus on the science, through, even when we grab the sleds to go down our hill, create sculptures and snow men, or even have a snowball fight. We'll also learn about staying safe in the cold, so dress for the weather and be ready for lots of hot chocolate breaks! Bring a lunch; snacks and drinks will be provided.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Friday, February 21  
Time: 10 am - 2 pm  
Cost: \$5 / person  
Ages: 6 and up  
Min./Max.: 5 / 20

**Register by February 18.**

### Night Hike / Owl Prowl

A special evening program just for home schoolers...we'll learn about diurnal and nocturnal animals and their habitats, why owls lay eggs in winter, and how animals adapt to a specialized niche in the environment. Dress for the weather. We'll have hot chocolate in the museum to wrap things up.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Friday, March 21  
Time: 10 am - 2 pm  
Cost: \$5 / person  
Ages: 6 and up  
Min./Max.: 5 / 20

**Register by March 18.**

### Signs of Spring

Things will be starting to grow out here on the prairie and in the woodlands. What tells flowers and trees that it's spring? How do insects know when to emerge, and where have they been, anyway? We'll learn about how the plants and animals wake up and prepare for the summer, and along the way, we'll look at leaves, wildflowers, animals and their tracks, and more. Bring a lunch; snacks and drinks will be provided.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Friday, April 25  
Time: 10 am - 2 pm  
Cost: \$5 / person  
Ages: 6 and up  
Min./Max.: 5 / 20

**Register by April 22.**



### Lunar Eclipse

You'll get to see a total lunar eclipse! Just stop by for a quick look through the telescope or stay the whole time.

Where: Weiskopf Observatory  
When: Tuesday, April 15  
Time: 11 pm - 6 am  
Cost: FREE  
Ages: All  
Min./Max.: 5 / --

**Register by April 14.**

### Spring Constellations

You'll learn about the spring constellations and other planets.

Where: Weiskopf Observatory  
When: Friday, March 7 or 28  
Time: 7 - 8 pm  
Cost: FREE  
Ages: All  
Min./Max.: 5 / --

**Register by March 6 or 27.**

### Winter Constellations

Discover how to find the winter constellations and the myths associated with them. You'll also get to view the planets.

Where: Weiskopf Observatory  
When: Friday, January 10 or 24  
Time: 7 - 8 pm  
Cost: FREE  
Ages: All  
Min./Max.: 5 / --

**Register by January 9 or 23.**



# preschool

## FREE Kids Concerts!

Sponsored by Exelon



### Mr. Steve ~ January 11th

Balloons, magic, music, and more!

A great event for the whole family, with lots of laughs and interaction. Mr. Steve has always been one of our more popular shows.



### Discovery Center's Liquid Nitrogen Show

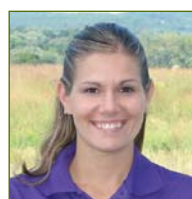
March 8

The Discovery Center staff is bringing their traveling show to us! It might be cold outside, but it will be colder still on stage as we watch matter freeze and change phases under the influence of this super cold substance. A true "WOW" show!

Concerts are held at 3 pm at the Jarrett Prairie Center located at 7993 North River Road, Byron.



Mrs. Crystal



Mrs. Joni



Mrs. Tara

**Get your kids ready** for kindergarten by enrolling them in our structured preschool classes. The Tuesday/Thursday classes are geared toward 3-year-olds and younger 4-year-olds. The Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes are geared toward older 4-year-olds and younger 5-year-olds. Children must be at least 4 years old to attend the three-day class. They must be at least 3 years old to attend the two-day class. Children must be potty trained. Immunization records are required. You may register your child at anytime throughout the year if your child's birthday is later in the year. Please call 815-234-8535 ext. 200 for more information.

|          |                                       |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| Where:   | Keller Education Center               |
| Ages:    | 3-5 years                             |
| When:    | Mon/Wed/Fri or Tues/Thurs             |
| Time:    | 8:45-11:15 am or 12:30-3 pm           |
| Min/Max: | 6/25-M/W/F<br>6/18-TU/TH              |
| Cost:    | \$100/month-M/W/F<br>\$85/month-TU/TH |

Registration is ongoing throughout the year.

### Fall Registration Schedule

February 10-14 - Currently enrolled students & siblings

February 18-21 - Byron residents

February 24 - Open registration

Fees: M-W-F-\$110 & Tu-Th-\$90

This is applied to the last month of preschool.

**Check us out on Facebook and  
our new website at [www.byronpreschool.com](http://www.byronpreschool.com).**

Connect with us!



Register online at [www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com)



# scout badges



## Junior Girl Scout Badge Girl Scout Way

One of the choices to earn the Girl Scout Way badge is to learn about the history of your area. We'll explore the museum for a short time and you'll hear some of the secrets of the Lucius Read House. Then, we'll walk over the Rock River--a very important part of Byron history--and through the grout house and barns at the Forest Preserve's Heritage Farm Museum. We'll have time for lunch and we'll cook some corn-bread over a fire so you can see how it was done in the old days. Please bring a sack lunch and drink.

Where: Meet at the Byron Museum of Natural History and pick up at the Heritage Farm Museum

When: Saturday, April 26

Time: 10 am - 1 pm

Cost: \$5 / scout (inc. patch)

Ages: Jr. Girl Scouts

Min./Max.: 8 / 20

**Register by April 22.**



## Junior Girl Scout Badge Geocaching

We'll learn how to use a GPS unit and then head out to create a scavenger hunt for each other...challenge your friends to find the things you hide! Of course we'll have plenty of time to hike out on the trails to find some real geocaches, and we'll put together a cache of our own to hide and publish on the official website.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center

When: Sunday, April 6

Time: 1 - 4:30 pm

Cost: \$5 / scout (inc. patch)

Ages: Jr. Girl Scouts

Min./Max.: 8 / 20

**Register by April 3.**



## Brownie Badge - Painting

This is one of the legacy badges, and we'll have a lot of fun completing the steps to earn it. You'll have lots of choices in deciding what you would like to paint so bring your imagination! And clothes that can get dirty!

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center

When: Saturday, February 15

Time: 1 - 4 pm

Cost: \$5 / scout (inc. patch)

Ages: Brownies

Min./Max.: 8 / 20

**Register by February 13.**

## Brownie Badge - Hiking

This is the perfect badge to do at the Forest Preserve. We'll look at trail maps and talk about equipment and safety, then make a snack and head out! The earliest wildflowers should be blooming, and other signs of spring will be here.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center

When: Saturday, April 12

Time: 12 Noon - 2:30 pm

Cost: \$5 / scout (inc. patch)

Ages: Brownies

Min./Max.: 8 / 20

**Register by April 10.**



# scout badges



## Webelo Badge - Naturalist

Learn about our native ecosystem, including dangerous plants and animals and local flyways for birds. We'll also go outside to look for signs of the soil cycle and play a game to learn about the food chain.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Saturday, April 19  
Time: 3 - 6 pm  
Cost: \$5 / webelo  
Ages: Webelos  
Min./Max.: 5 / 20

**Register by April 17.**

## Boy Scout Badge - Astronomy

We'll learn about stars, planets, nebulae and more, and spend some time looking through the telescope at the amazing night sky!

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Friday, February 7  
Time: 6 - 9 pm  
Cost: \$5 / scout  
Ages: Boy Scouts  
Min./Max.: 5 / 20

**Register by February 5.**



## Skiing for Scouts/Boys & Girls

Learning to ski as a winter sport not only fulfills badge requirements, but it's also fun! Great class for beginners to intermediate levels. Scouts and their leaders/parents will be accompanied on the trails and welcomed back with hot cocoa waiting to warm you up! Includes equipment.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Girls.....Saturday, March 1  
Boys.....Saturday, January 25  
Time: 1 - 5 pm  
Cost: \$5 / scout  
Ages: All Scouts Welcome  
Min./Max.: 5 / 14

**Register by 2/26 and 1/22.**

## All Girl Scouts - Byron Forest Preserve Fun Patch

Yes, the Forest Preserve has its own fun patch, and you can earn it by taking a tour of the museum, getting an up close look at our turtles and snake, learning the name of a prairie flower in bloom, and a couple of other fun activities that will be a secret until you get here.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Saturday, April 5  
Time: 1 - 5 pm  
Cost: \$5 / scout (inc. patch)  
Ages: All Ages of Girl Scouts  
Min./Max.: 8 / 20

**Register by April 4.**



## Cadettes - Comic Artist

Part of the legacy series, this badge goes more in-depth with one form of art: comics! You'll have a chance to explore the process in detail, from creating your story to having a finished product. All materials are provided; bring your funny bone.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Saturday, January 18  
Time: Noon - 3 pm  
Cost: \$5 / scout (inc. patch)  
Ages: Cadette Girl Scouts  
Min./Max.: 8 / 20

**Register by January 16.**

## Cadettes - Trees

Tree fun, science, crafts, connections, and helping trees thrive; you'll have your choices of activities to complete the steps for this badge. Dress for the weather and bring your sense of fun and adventure.

Where: Meet at Jarrett Center  
When: Saturday, April 12  
Time: 3 - 6 pm  
Cost: \$5 / scout (inc. patch)  
Ages: Cadette Girl Scouts  
Min./Max.: 8 / 20

**Register by April 10.**

Connect with us!



Register online at [www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com)



## Don't Say Bye-Bye, Butterfly...



By Austin Webb,  
Prairie Restoration Technician



Perhaps the worst part of conservation is the fact that often times, no matter what you do or how hard you try to stop it, things are going to go extinct. The standard annual extinction rate that most experts agree on falls somewhere between 0.01% and 0.1%, meaning that of the 2 million known species on our planet, 200 to 2,000 will go extinct every year. That figure of course is assuming there are only 2 million species, which according to most scientists, is a fairly low estimate. With each species we lose, another piece of our planet's biodiversity vanishes.

It seems inadequate that we should even attempt to preserve anything when facing what seems like such insurmountable odds, but our compassionate spirit is the only thing which stands a chance in overcoming such a dilemma. We find a creature that fascinates us, inspires us, reminds us of our childhood, or simply mystifies. It becomes a banner for the cause and a beacon of hope. One of the best examples we know of is the frail and effervescent Monarch butterfly. Every fall, up to 100 million Monarchs will rendezvous as part of their annual migration to escape the harsh North American winters. Although the size of the Monarch population is substantial, it does not reflect the true fragility of their existence. The Monarch relies on summer sites to carry out its life cycle, and overwintering sites to retreat from cold temperatures. Habitat loss throughout the range of the Monarch leaves the population vulnerable, with isolated patches funneling butterflies into smaller groups that become more susceptible to storms, disease, or otherwise unpredictable population threats.

In the case of the Monarch, valuable habitat loss usually occurs from urban development or timber harvesting. The Monarch's overwintering grounds in California lay directly in the path of wealthy entrepreneurs seeking to replace the butterfly's 25 remaining coastal gathering sites with million dollar mansions and condominiums. In the Transvolcanic Mountains in Mexico, only 11 roosting sites remain for the overwintering of the Eastern Monarch. There, the oyamel trees where the Monarchs cluster together are highly valued by the lumber industry, and protection efforts are strained by economic desires. Elsewhere in the United States, milkweed, an important host plant for the Monarch, has been labeled as a noxious weed, causing the decline of milkweed

populations throughout the Monarch's range. Pesticide usage also endangers the Monarch, either indirectly through herbicide use to control milkweed, or directly through the off-target drift of Insecticides capable of eradicating butterflies.

In our area this year we experienced a precipitous drop in the number of Monarchs compared to the last several. Although there has been a steady population decline over the last 10-15 years, this year's assessment says that as much as 90 percent of the population may have taken a hit. In the Midwest, most of this blame is being placed on the drought we experienced last year, which took a toll on milkweed. Habitat loss is as much to blame, with many of the natural areas which supported milkweed historically now missing altogether. Additionally, an adult Monarch requires nectar for its diet. Prior to settlement, adult butterflies would have had hundreds of flowers blooming in succession throughout the year, providing them with plenty of nourishment to gain strength for their migration. The pristine prairies and woodlands full of these various native flowers are now extremely rare, and subsequently, Monarchs, as well as many other butterflies, are also on the brink.

Aside from the circumstances, what's most important of all is to remind ourselves that if the Monarch is still here, then we still have a chance to do something to help it. With such an extreme amount of habitat loss, anyone with a yard and a garden hose can make a difference. Plant a butterfly garden with your family, friends, and neighbors, keeping in mind that bigger is better, but that every little sliver of habitat helps. Educate yourself on some of the native wildflowers of your area, and then plant native, perennial plants that attract butterflies, establishing a variety of species so as to have at least one flower blooming in your garden throughout the growing season. If you have more space, try to start your own prairie, but no matter what you do, don't give up. As with the Monarch, for any species threatened by extinction to stand a chance it needs our compassion, our willingness to get a little sweat on our brow and some dirt under our fingernails, some ingenuity, and a little bit of luck. Photo: Two Monarchs perched atop Rough Blazing Star at the Jarrett Prairie Center's prairie garden. Photo courtesy of Natural Areas Volunteer Joe Jonakin.



# Winter Work- Killing Buckthorn



By Katie Sullivan  
Asst. Superintendent of Restoration/Maintenance



Fall has come and gone and soon the snow will fall from the sky, but our land restoration work will continue. During the spring, summer and early fall our time is spent killing weeds, mowing trails and collecting seed. During late fall, winter, and early spring our time is spent killing invasive shrubs and trees. The shrub commonly called buckthorn is one of those woody shrub/tree species that we focus a lot of our attention on during the colder months. Buckthorn is a troublesome exotic invasive that aggressively invades our woodlands and prairies. This shrub species poses a huge threat to the health of our area ecosystems and crop production.

The Eurasian buckthorn was introduced to North America in the 1800's. It was brought over by the European settlers to be used as hedge rows around their farmsteads. On this continent, buckthorn has no natural biological controls (insects & diseases). This is what has helped allow buckthorn to aggressively spread and become established in every U.S. state.

Buckthorn is one of the first shrubs/trees to leaf out in the spring and is one of the last to lose its leaves in fall. There are both male and female plants – the female

buckthorn plant produces purplish black berries (see photo). This species, if left unmanaged, will form large dense almost impenetrable thickets. It out-competes the native plants and trees for nutrients, light, and moisture. Wildlife habitat is degraded by the presence of buckthorn thickets by decreasing the biodiversity of an area therefore reducing the quality and quantity of food available for the various animals living in that habitat. Buckthorn also helps contribute to an increase in soil erosion by shading out forest floor plants that help keep the soil stabilized. If that is not enough reasons to eradicate buckthorn, then also realize that buckthorn is a host to pests such as the crown rust fungus that damages oat crops and also is habitat for the soybean aphid that damages crop yields.

So how do we kill buckthorn? During the dormant season (cold months) we manage buckthorn by cutting and treating the stumps with herbicide; basal bark herbicide applications are also very effective in controlling this species in the winter. Other methods used against this invasive exotic plant include mowing and spraying herbicides on the foliar re-sprouts.

Connect with us!



Register online at [www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com)



# Prairie Preserve Notes

from the Land Management Center



By Russell Brunner  
Superintendent of Land Management

## Jarrett Prairie Nature Preserve

2013 was another busy year for our staff working hard to control invasive species throughout the Nature Preserve and the adjacent prairie plantings. For several months, staff and volunteers worked to control White Sweet Clover, Yellow Sweet Clover, Wild Parsnip, Bird's Foot Trefoil, Spotted Knapweed, and other exotics from our preserves. These weeds crowd out and steal resources from our native plants. Management was done with spot herbicide applications, hand pulling, spading, and mowing. The Nature Preserve improves in quality every year as we have fewer invasive weeds and more native plants. The native plants provide higher quality habitat for our native birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects. We have also been busy collecting seed from our native prairies and woodlands for use in our restorations and to overseed degraded prairie and woodland areas. Several hundred pounds of seed from around 100 native species were collected. A great site this past summer was the presence of at least one pair of Bobolinks, a rare grassland bird, nesting in the Nature Preserve!

Photo above - Male Bobolink at the Jarrett Prairie Preserve, photo courtesy of Gary Gullett.

## Howard Colman Hall Creek Preserve & Barrick Oaks Homestead Preserve

These recently acquired properties are under development at this time. Restoration is ongoing to remove invasive species from the preserves, restore the oak woodlands, install fencing and signage, and to create hiking trails. The first prairie planting is taking place this December on the preserve, a highly diverse mix of close to 100 species will be seeded to a 15 acre parcel adjacent to an older prairie planting. Intensive Eurasian honeysuckle and European Glossy Buckthorn removal has been taking place over the past year. Prescribed fire is used in these natural areas to help control exotic species and to rejuvenate our native wildflowers. Both of these preserves have archery deer hunting programs in progress. Only archery lottery drawing winners are authorized to hunt these preserves.

## Stephen J. and Deirdre Nardi Equine Prairie Preserve

The last remaining agricultural ground was planted to prairie in the late fall of 2012. This preserve now has over 500 acres of remnant and restored habitats that support a diverse mix of native plants and animals. Many grassland birds are nesting in the prairies, a very positive sign that our restoration efforts are working. Staff were busy with invasive species control over the summer and are now collecting seed from the remnant prairies and some from our plantings as well. This preserve is a great place to visit on horseback or on foot spring through fall to see a wide variety of our native wildflowers in bloom.



# Turf Notes

from the Turf Care Center



Matt Henkel  
Golf Course Superintendent

It is that time of the year again--the end of another golf season. At the end of fall, the grass growth noticeably decreases, the leaves have changed colors and dropped, and golfers are arriving to the course with light jackets and sometimes stocking caps. In my opinion, the fall produces some of the best moments one can experience on the golf course, especially here at PrairieView. Course conditions tend to improve after we get past the summer heat around Labor Day. The putting greens begin to firm up as humidity gets swept away with the cool northerly winds that bring in cooler temperatures. Finally, one of the most enjoyable things with fall golf at PrairieView is the spectacular contrast of colors that the native grass species provide against the manicured bent and bluegrass across the course.

With all that being said, it is our continued goal to increase the native plantings throughout the course and reduce the amount of acreage that remains as un-maintained cool season turf. There are also a few areas that we have maintained for several years that are simply out of play areas with no clear purpose to them. All these areas have accomplished for us is to suck maintenance dollars out of the budget while providing little to no added value to the golfers enjoyment of the golf course.

Connect with us!



Late this summer, we prioritized a little more than five acres of these areas to convert to native warm season grasses starting this fall and completing them with seeding next spring. These areas were sprayed with a generic roundup herbicide to kill the existing bluegrass turf stand. A repeat application will take out any residual grass that returns. In the spring, we will seed in switchgrass, Bluestem, and Indiangrass. Seed oats will be added to provide an initial cover crop for the grass to establish in. These areas will look good next fall at this time, but it will be 2-3 years before the natives really start to take hold. The best way to keep up on all the improvements being made to the course and to see the projects up close is to come out and play the course. If you can't make it out, be sure follow along on twitter. Follow @PrairieViewTCC to see pictures and tweets of all that happens out on the grounds of PrairieView.

Photos above:

On left: This picture is taken from the practice center and looking over #18 green and up the fairway. A good example of an area where native grass plantings can add tremendous value to the golf course. The areas we are in the process of converting will look very much like this when they mature.

On right: A generic roundup herbicide has been applied to bluegrass in preparation for conversion to native warm season grasses. The new native stand of grass will provide an aesthetic improvement, additional wildlife habitat, and add separation and definition between golf holes.

Register online at [www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com)

# prairieview golf club

## Golf Outing Dates Available!!

Book your 2014 golf outing now. There are plenty of great dates available. We welcome groups of all sizes, any day of the week, and we specialize in customizing your outing. No group is too large or too small! Let us help you plan your next golf event. For more information, please call our outing experts at **815-234-4653**.

## Parties, Weddings, and Banquets

Golf outings are not the only events held at PrairieView Golf Club. Weddings, business meetings, and birthday parties are just a few examples of other events that we can accommodate. Our spacious banquet hall (pictured) overlooking the 10th hole with seating up to 170 people or our cozy bar overlooking the 18th green with seating up to 45 people are a great fit for many occasions. Give us a call at **815-234-4653**. We would love to host your next event!



## 2014 Season Golf Passes

Now on sale at PrairieView Golf Club! Buy before Christmas and save \$\$!

| Single Pass      | Before<br>12/23/13 | After<br>12/23/13 | Couple Pass                                | Before<br>12/23/13 | After<br>12/23/13 |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| Resident Adult   | \$600              | \$665             | (A couple and up to two children under 12) |                    |                   |
| Non-Res. Adult   | \$645              | \$715             | Resident                                   | \$1020             | \$1130            |
| Senior (60+)     | \$495              | \$550             | Non-Resident                               | \$1110             | \$1230            |
| College Student  | \$315              | \$350             | Senior                                     | \$810              | \$900             |
| Jr. (18 & under) | \$235              | \$260             |  |                    |                   |

Visit us online at [www.prairieviewgolf.com](http://www.prairieviewgolf.com)!

### Customer Appreciation Week

Come on out for FREE GOLF on April 21 25, 2014

Carts are only \$16 per person

Tee times go fast so call now! 815-234-4653

## Great Gift Ideas!!

Instead of or in addition to a season golf pass, PrairieView's VIP program is an outstanding offer. Vouchers can be purchased in two increments—\$300 or \$600. With a VIP Voucher, golfers receive discounts off regular priced green, cart, and range fees. Vouchers can also be used on merchandise, food, and beverages. The following chart lists the discounts received with your voucher.

| Voucher Amount     | \$300 | \$600 |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Green Fee Discount | 10%   | 20%   |
| Cart Fee Discount  | 20%   | 30%   |
| Range Fee Discount | 50%   | 50%   |

Gift cards are also available year round and make a wonderful holiday gift. Gift cards can be purchased in any increment. If you have any questions regarding VIP Vouchers or gift cards, please call the PrairieView pro shop at 815-234-4653.

## 2013 Golf Fees

| 18 holes       | Weekday / Weekend |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Resident       | \$23 / \$28       |
| Non-Resident   | \$27 / \$33       |
| Senior/Junior* | \$20 / \$16       |

| 9 holes                                |             |
|--|-------------|
| Resident                               | \$14 / \$17 |
| Non-Resident                           | \$17 / \$20 |
| Senior/Junior*                         | \$13 / \$17 |
| *sr. & jr. rates only apply after 1 pm |             |

| Twilight     |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| Resident     | \$14 / \$17 |
| Non-Resident | \$17 / \$20 |

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 36 holes w/cart | \$68 / \$78 |
|-----------------|-------------|

### Cart Fees (per person)

|          |      |
|----------|------|
| 18 holes | \$16 |
| 9 holes  | \$10 |



# good stuff

## Birthday Parties

Choose the Forest Preserve to organize your child's next birthday party by calling Richie at 815-234-8535 ext. 217. Themes include: Tea Party, Native Americans, Sky's the Limit, Goodness Snakes, Insects of Our World, and Where Do Butterflies Go When It Rains?

Deluxe Party ~ \$75 / Tea Party ~ \$100  
12 children (additional \$30 for more than 12 children)  
(cake, ice cream, tableware, birthday banner, program)

Standard Party ~ \$45 / Tea Party ~ \$60  
12 children (\$5/additional child)  
(program only)

## ~FREE~ Field Trips

to the Natural History Museum,

Weiskopf Observatory, & Heritage Farm Museum

Scouts, schools, and senior groups are welcome to the Forest Preserve for an educational and fun guided tour of our great museums. Staff welcome and give FREE tours. We offer many sessions to choose from such as prairie ecology, astronomy, and museum tour. Call 815-234-8535 ext. 217 to schedule your next outing with us.

## Let Us Come To You For FREE!

We offer FREE educational programs for any group including retirement homes and nursing facilities. Using our nature staff and nature stuff, we can come to you and deliver exciting and educational programs. Call 815-234-8535 to schedule a program for your group. You can choose from the following topics: Birds of a Feather, Indian Life (with traditional dress), Animal Encounter (with live animals). Call today to book your next on-site program!

## New Recycling Station

The Byron Forest Preserve, in conjunction with the Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department, has established a multi-bin recycling station at the Forest Preserve.

One station accepts glass, aluminum, plastic #1-#5, & #7, tin, steel, mixed paper, cardboard, and newspaper. The station is open during daylight hours seven days per week. **You no longer need to separate the items.**

We are also offering a USAgain recycling bin for clean, used clothing and shoes. This station helps keep textiles out of the landfills.

We now have a new electronics recycling bin that accepts televisions, monitors, printers, computers, laptops, notebooks, tablets, keyboards, fax machines, VCRs, DVRs, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, and cable & satellite receivers. This bin does not accept items like refrigerators, dishwashers, and water heaters. This station's hours are Monday-Friday, 6:30 am - 3 pm and it is open the first weekend of each month, 6:30 am - 3 pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Please recycle responsibly by leaving the area cleaner than when you arrived. The bins are located at the Forest Preserve's Land Management Center at 6845 German Church Road in Byron across from PrairieView Golf Club.

Connect with us!



Register online at [www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com)

# good stuff

## Christmas Tree Recycling Equals Free Mulch!

Byron residents can set their Christmas trees at the curb by 8 am on January 11, 2014, and the Byron FFA will pick them up to be turned into mulch. The mulch will then be free to the public through the spring at the Forest Preserve's Land Management Center parking lot located at 6845 German Church Road, Byron, across from PrairieView Golf Club. For more information, visit [www.oglecountysolid-waste.org/Christmas\\_Tree\\_Recycling.htm](http://www.oglecountysolid-waste.org/Christmas_Tree_Recycling.htm).

## ***Prescribed Fire Season***

Forest Preserve land management staff will be conducting prescribed burns at several of our preserves in the early spring of 2014. Prescribed fire is an essential and efficient management practice for the health of our native ecosystems, including prairies, savannas, and woodlands. Fire helps return nutrients to the soil, helps control undesirable exotic weeds and shrubs, increases blooming and seed production among our native plants, and stimulates the growth of our native prairie and woodland plant species. District staff manage the burns to minimize smoke on highways and neighboring properties.

## Helping Each Other... Making the Community Better.

The Forest Preserve has several Intergovernmental Agreements with other local government agencies like the School District, Township, City of Byron, etc. These agreements allow the agencies to save tax dollars by sharing equipment and labor so that every agency doesn't have to hire contractors or buy equipment for projects.

In 2013, Forest Preserve staff assisted the School District with an earthmoving project near the Middle School for the Horticulture classes to use for growing landscaping plants, and helped the Byron Township with weed control around signs and culverts, and on a right-of-way brush project. Staff also helped the Byron Park District with the installation of basketball hoops and the frame for a canopy shelter by the ball fields. Excavation and dirt removal was also completed to help prep the areas at Blackhawk Meadows Park where outdoor exercise stations and Bag Game sets were later installed.



Basketball hoops installed by Byron ball fields.



Forest Preserve staff assisted the Bag Game installation by excavating the project area and removing the soil.



Excavated the area, poured the concrete footings, and installed the frame for the shade canopy.



# directory



## General Contacts

### Jarrett Prairie Center

(Headquarters)

The headquarters office is open Monday through Friday, 8am-4:30pm. The office is closed Saturday, Sunday, and select holidays.

#### Street Address

7993 North River Road  
Byron IL 61010

#### Mailing Address

P O Box 1075  
Byron IL 61010

#### Website

[byronforestpreserve.com](http://byronforestpreserve.com)

#### Email

[raul@byronforestpreserve.com](mailto:raul@byronforestpreserve.com)

#### Main Phone Number

815-234-8535 x200

#### Main Fax Number

815-234-8635



## Golf Club

### PrairieView Golf Club

6734 German Church Road  
Byron IL 61010  
815-234-4653 (GOLF)

## Education Centers

### Jarrett Prairie Center Museum

7993 North River Road  
Byron IL 61010  
815-234-8535 x200  
The museum hours are:  
Mon., Wed., Fri.-8am-4:30pm  
Tues., Thurs.-8am-8pm  
Saturday-9am-4pm & Sunday-1-4pm.  
Closed select holidays.

### Keller Education Center

7993 North River Road  
Byron IL 61010  
815-234-8535 x200  
The Forest Preserve's Preschool program utilizes this building for classes.

### Weiskopf Observatory

7993 North River Road  
Byron IL 61010  
815-234-8535 x200  
Open for free public viewing every Saturday night from dark until three hours after dark.

### Heritage Farm Museum

8059 North River Road  
Byron IL 61010  
815-234-8535 x200  
Open daily April-October. Open upon request November-March. Self-guided tours are free.



## Trails

### Jarrett Prairie Preserve

7993 North River Road  
Byron IL 61010  
815-234-8535 x200  
Open from dawn to dusk for walking, jogging, and nature exploration.

### Nardi Equine Prairie Preserve

6651 North River Road  
Byron IL 61010  
815-234-8535 x200  
Open for horseback riding, walking, jogging, and nature exploration.

### Howard Colman

#### Hall Creek Preserve

12749 North Weldon Road  
Rockford IL  
815-234-8535 x200  
Open for walking, jogging, and nature exploration.

### Ripplinger/Gouker/Etnyre Preserve

1753 East Townline Road  
Byron IL 61010  
815-234-8535 x200  
Open for walking, jogging, and nature exploration.

NOTE: Some of these addresses are new so they may not show correctly on GPS devices. Please call 815-234-8535 to confirm directions.

The Barrick Oaks Homestead Preserve is not yet open to the public but will be opening very soon.

Connect with us!



Register online at [www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com)

Byron Bank Ad  
& Mailer