



A Newsletter of

Franklin Creek Conservation Association

preserving • engaging • understanding

www.franklincreekgristmill.com

Spring 2018

Grist Mill Open House: A Taste of the Woodlands

We are pleased to present our second annual Grist Mill Open House to kick off the 2018 season. All are welcome on May 17th from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Visit our exhibits, sample the “edibles from trees” hors d’oeuvres, enjoy a beer or a glass of wine, and chat with your friends and neighbors. Familiarizing yourself with our second-floor display may prove very helpful if you plan on attending the “Tree-via” event in June. The evening will also be a good opportunity to get to know our new environmental education coordinator, Katie McBride (see page 2).

Grist Mill Open House

May 17, 2018
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Free Admission

Bring a Guest

Do you have friends or family that have never been to the mill or Franklin Creek State Natural Area? This is the perfect opportunity to bring them out and give them a taste of what Franklin Creek has to offer. No reservations are needed – just show up and enjoy.



*A woodland diorama constructed by
Ed Committee member Chris Smith.*

June Evening at the Mill: “Tree-via Night”

Quick, can you name a bug that gets its name from a tree?

At the June Evening at the Mill we will be trying something brand new – a trivia night. In keeping with the theme of our second floor display, we’re calling it “Tree-via Night.”

Trivia nights are fun events in which teams compete against one another at answering trivia questions. On June 9th the third floor will be transformed into Tree-via Central as you will have an opportunity to win fun prizes by showing off your knowledge of trees and woodlands (or perhaps by riding the coattails of a very knowledgeable teammate). Rather than require you to come with a team assembled, we will be

forming teams of six that evening, giving you a chance to enjoy both time with your old friends and make some new friends too. As is always the case with evenings at the mill, a delicious meal will be served.

Reserve your spot today at our “Tree-via Night” today by scanning the QR code below, going to the website or Facebook page and following the link, or calling the mill. Cost of the evening is \$25 for adults and \$15 for students.

*By the way, possible answers for the trivia question that opened this article would be the **boxelder** bug or the **emerald ash** borer.*

Look inside for:

- More upcoming events and mill hours (p. 5-6)
- An introduction to our new coordinator (p. 2)
- A welcome from our board chair (p. 5)
- Nature Notes by the late Cliff Knapp (p. 3)
- And much more!

Tree-via Night

June 9, 2018
6:00 p.m.

\$25/adult • \$15/student

Reserve by scanning:



texting TREEVIA to
41444 or calling
815.456.2718

Franklin Creek Conservation Association

A Happy Hello from a New Friend...



Hello,

My name is Katie McBride, Franklin Creek's new Environmental Education Coordinator. I look forward to meeting lots of new people this year as well as learning the history of the Grist Mill and the surrounding area. So far, it's shaping up to be a great summer at the mill.

A little bit about myself: I grew up in Machesney Park, just north of Rockford, where I went to Rock Valley Community College and got an associate degree. I then transferred to Northern Illinois University where I pursued my love of nature by getting a bachelor's degree in

Environmental Studies with an emphasis in policy. While pursuing my bachelor's I joined the university's Committee for the Preservation of Wildlife. One of the group's undertakings is being co-stewards for a section of land at Nachusa Grasslands. It was shortly after seeing the tall grass and constantly changing wildflowers that I fell in love with the prairie.

I started my career at Byron Forest Preserve District as a Restoration Technician, learning as much as I could about the prairie ecosystem. I gained a good base knowledge while there. The following fall I completed an internship at Lorado Taft Field Campus in Oregon, Illinois. The next year I was promoted to an Outdoor Education Specialist. I have had a variety of jobs since then, but my passion is still the outdoors and teaching about/in it, which is why I'm so excited to be working here at Franklin Creek! It's a beautiful place with so much history.

The Mill will be open Saturdays & Sundays April and May from noon to 4 p.m. Starting in June we will be here on Fridays as well (noon to 4 p.m.). I hope to see all of your smiling faces soon!

Katie McBride
FCCA Environmental Education Coordinator
Katie.mcbride@franklincreekconservation.org

And a Sad Farewell to an Old Friend...

Clifford E. Knapp – 1939-2018

The world of outdoor education has lost a true friend. Cliff Knapp was a life-long learner who was happy to share, question and reflect upon what he knew – and didn't know – about the natural world and the interrelationships among its varied inhabitants.

Cliff was a member of the Franklin Creek Conservation Association Board of Directors and its Education Committee, where he was an active participant in furthering our mission.

The FCCA is fortunate to be able to create a library of many unique and informative books that were donated by Cliff's family. We will miss Cliff's presence but remember what he gave to so many.

A series of columns, like the one below, written by Cliff about the great outdoors will appear in our newsletter from time to time. Enjoy them and remember his passion for nature.



Franklin Creek Conservation Association

Nature Notes: Spring Is Around The Corner

Dr. Clifford E. Knapp

After months of snow and cold, are you ready for spring? I know I am. I'm starting to imagine those comforting southern breezes, sprouting buds, buzzing insects, and returning birds. Unfortunately, using my imagination doesn't bring on spring any faster.

To prepare for writing this article about spring, I explored some of my best nature books. I started with Aldo Leopold's classic, *A Sand County Almanac* (Oxford Press, 1949). The first section describes some of Leopold's thoughts and feelings about nature and human nature in southern Wisconsin in the 1930s and 40s. He was a sharp observer, and as a scientist and naturalist, he recorded much of what he saw in journals. In a short essay about the upland plover, also called an upland sandpiper, he labeled this bird as the final proof of spring. He also mentions flowering dandelions, meadowlarks, and redwing blackbirds as other proofs of spring. What are your proofs that spring has finally arrived?

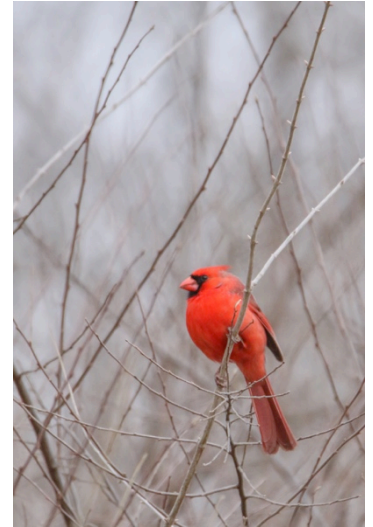
How can we be sure that spring is here? One way is to check your March calendar. If you do, you'll find that spring begins on Friday, March 20th. How did they arrive at that date? Well, it has to do with the position of the sun's rays as they strike the earth where you live (due to the tilt of the earth's axis of 23 ½ degrees). The positioning of the sun in the southern sky gives us the shortest day on December

21st (the first day of winter) and the longest day on June 21st, when summer begins. The start of spring is marked by the sun's midpoint position between the shortest and longest days of the year. However, using the sun to identify the arrival of spring could get us in trouble because it may be snowy and cold then.

I'd rather count the yellow blooms of my forsythia bush as a sign that spring is arriving. I also watch my Star of Bethlehems in the garden as a harbinger of spring. Of course, robins are sometimes indicators that spring has arrived, but I know that some robins stay around all winter. Last year in February, a flock of robins came to feed on the hackberry seeds in my driveway while snow was still on the ground. In Ohio, I saw a flock of bluebirds in late January. Is that what they mean by "early birds"?

If you observe what happens outside, you will get a better idea of what spring means. A few years ago, on January 28th in Oregon, Illinois I heard male northern cardinals sing. They have different calls, but they seemed to be saying, "Wet Year, Wet Year, Wet Year" or "Woit, Woit, Woit". Of course, you have to be outside to hear the calls of this bird. That's one of the problems with today's modern world – we spend so little time outdoors and when we do, we may not know much about what is happening there. I've got a partial solution to this problem and I want to offer it to anybody who wants to learn more about the natural world. Put this newsletter down and go outside – NOW.

The late Dr. Knapp was a faculty member at Northern Illinois University's Lorado Taft Field Campus for 21 years. He taught courses in outdoor and environmental education.



Franklin Creek Conservation Association

What Has Been Happening at Franklin Creek...

Beekeeping Class

On March 24th, the Franklin Creek Education committee held its first class on beekeeping. Participants learned about:

- What equipment is needed
- How to work with bees
- Bee life cycles
- Swarms and swarm behavior
- Hive maintenance
- Honey products and lip balm
- Building Hive Components

The class was met with great enthusiasm as the 30 spots were filled over a week in advance! Dan Fitzpatrick, FCCA board member, and Jeff Ludwig, president of the Stateline Beekeepers Association, taught the class.

Students were also invited to return on April 11th to install the package bees bought for the



new FCCA property on Old Mill Road. The two hives that were installed contain 10,000 bees and a queen.

For more info on beekeeping and bees check out Dan's website fitzpatrickfarm.com/resources. You can also find info there on Jeff Ludwig's monthly beekeeping classes. Make sure to keep up to date our upcoming events to find out about our pollinators workshop planned for this fall.



Earth Day Bioblitz

As this newsletter was going to press, FCCA board member Kaleb Baker coordinated a "bioblitz" at Franklin Creek State Natural Area. Held on April 21st – the closest Saturday to Earth Day – this will be the start of cataloging the variety of species present in the natural area. Look for pictures and a report of this event in the next newsletter.

New Property Purchased

Franklin Creek Conservation Association has acquired a 4.5-acre piece of property on the northeast side of Sunday Bridge. Included in this property are a house (in very poor condition) and a garage (in good condition).

The plan is to restore a 3.5-acre segment of the property to its natural state in order to sell it to the DNR for incorporation into the State Natural Area. This segment would include creek-front land.

The remaining one acre parcel includes the house and the garage. The garage would be utilized immediately to store FCCA stewardship equipment and other property. The hope is to renovate the house to include a multiuse room on the ground floor and living areas for staff and interns on the second floor and loft.

Please keep an eye on future newsletters for information on how you can help with this new property through volunteering and/or donations.

...continued from page 5.

freezing nights and above-freezing days.

At our upcoming Open House, Dan will have maple syrup, black walnut syrup, maple cream, and maple sugar all available for tasting. There is only one ingredient in all of these foods: tree sap!! All of the sweetness and sugar is made by the trees. Boiling removes the water while sugar is left behind.



If you are interested in maple sugaring you can go to Dan's website for a maple sugaring walk <https://tinyurl.com/springsyrup>. Also if you have any questions or would like advice on starting up for next spring, send Dan an email at fitzpatrickfarm@gmail.com. Pictures included are maple syrup, maple sugar, and maple cream.



Franklin Creek Conservation Association

What Will Be Happening at Franklin Creek...

Maple sugaring

Nothing beats maple sugaring in the spring! As complex as it may seem, it's actually only a two-step process. First you make a hole in a maple, boxelder, river birch, black walnut, or hickory tree and collect the sap. (Maple trees produce the most sap.) Then you boil it down until it's syrup. You can use any pan you want over a fire or on the stove. It really is that simple.



Here are a few suggestions:
The sap flows in the spring due to large amount of starches within the tree turning to sugar just before leaves form. This pulls lots of water into the wood through osmosis. The best days for collecting sap with the most flow are those with below-

continued on page 4...

Wildflower Photo Hike

Join FCCA board member Jeff Schlesinger and Franklin Creek friend Dee Hudson as they share their photography skills on June 2nd. They will lead you on a hunt for wildflowers and then help you create images of them.

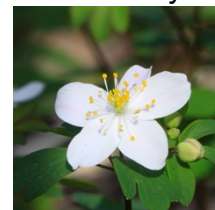


Photo Hike

June 2, 2018
9am – 12pm

Free
Sign up
preferred

Photographers of all skill levels and with all varieties of cameras are welcome to attend. Jeff and Dee hope to help you better use your equipment as you explore the world of close-up photography. Please wear good hiking shoes and be prepared to get muddy if necessary. Email jeff.schlesinger@franklincreek-conservation.org or call 815-456-2718 to sign up.

Welcome to the 2018 Season at Franklin Creek!

by FCCA Board Chair Donna Ducharme

The Franklin Creek Grist Mill opened last Saturday. When you visit you will notice a few changes. If it's not one of our able volunteers, then our new Education Coordinator, Katie McBride, will be there to greet you (along with the bison mother and calf who reside on the 1st floor). Katie will be coordinating a series of nature walks this summer from 9 to 11 a.m. on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from May through October. Her experience with youth, along with the expertise of our volunteers, will also allow us to expand our youth offerings this summer. Watch our website and Facebook page for details.

The woodland exhibit on the second floor is a must see. We've added a new interactive diorama that's great for kids and adults who want to recreate Franklin Creek as they imagine it through the ages—from the Native American villages, to the early European settlers, to park visitors today.

Franklin Creek Conservation Association (FCCA) was fortunate to receive over 200 books about nature from the estate of board member Cliff Knapp, who passed away last fall. Many of these books are gems. We have set up a library on the 3rd floor where you can read them in comfort. If you have books about nature or the history of this area that you no longer need, please consider donating them to our library.

We were also saddened this fall at the deaths of Ivan Hullah and Al Moine, early and long-time supporters of FCCA. Ivan served as the first chair of this organization and played a big role in building the support and resources needed for the development of the State Natural Area and the Grist Mill. Al was an integral part of the team that constructed the Grist Mill. He used his skills as an engineer to make sure the mill was built to last, and spent countless hours scraping posts, beams and joists and refurbishing the rusty turbine from the original mill. After

continued on page 7...

Franklin Creek Conservation Association

So Much to do at Franklin Creek...

Ongoing Events

Guided Hikes

Enjoy a walk through the woods, or prairie, or creek with one of our staff or volunteers. Join us on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from May through October.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
May 12 th	9:00 a.m.	Wildflowers
May 26 th	7:30 a.m.	Birds
May 26 th	9:00 a.m.	Nature Writing
June 9 th	9:00 a.m.	TBD
June 23 rd	7:30 a.m.	Birds
July 14 th	9:00 a.m.	TBD
July 28 th	9:00 a.m.	TBD
August 11 th	9:00 a.m.	TBD
August 25 th	9:00 a.m.	TBD
Sept 8 th	9:00 a.m.	Prairie
Sept 22 nd	9:00 a.m.	TBD
Oct 13 th	9:00 a.m.	TBD
Oct 20 th	9:00 a.m.	Trees

For more information on any of the above hikes or to volunteer to lead one, contact

Katie McBride at

katie.mcbride@franklincreekconservation.org.

Stewardship Days

Help us improve the Franklin Creek Area to a pristine state. Meet each 1st and 3rd Saturday from **9 a.m. to noon**. No experience needed, just a desire to help, ability to work, and willingness to get your hands dirty.

May 5 th	August 4 th
May 19 th	August 18 th
June 2 nd	September 1 st
June 16 th	September 15 th
July 7 th	October 6 th
July 14 th	October 20 th

For more information on the stewardship days contact Kaleb Baker at

kaleb.baker@franklincreek.org.

Meet at the Grist Mill parking lot at the assigned starting time for both the guided walks and the stewardship days.

Special Events

3RD ANNUAL MILL OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, May 17, 2018

5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

No reservations needed – Bring a friend

Spring Evening at the Mill

TREE-VIA NIGHT

June 9, 2018

6:00 p.m.

\$25/adult • \$15/student

Reserve by scanning:



texting **TREEVIA** to **41444**

or calling 815.456.2718

FALL FUNDRAISING DINNER

Thursday, September 20, 2018

5:30 p.m.

Holloway Center – Dixon

SINGING BIRD CHAUTAUQUA

FALL FESTIVAL

Sunday, October 15, 2018

Noon to 6:00 p.m.

&

EVENING AT THE MILL W/CHRIS VALILLO

6:00 p.m.

\$25/adult • \$15/student

Donate Today

Your donations to help the mission of Franklin Creek Conservation Association are much appreciated. Three ways to donate:

Scan:



Text:

CREEK
to
41444

Mail:

1893 Twist Rd
Franklin Grove, IL
61031

Checks written to:
FCCA

Franklin Creek Conservation Association

...continued from page 5. retiring from the board, both Ivan and Al continued to participate in and support the organization. The FCCA board extends our gratitude to the Ivan and Maxine Hullah Memorial Fund for the generous gift of \$50,000 that helped purchase the Headwaters (2009) and the Kelly Property (2015). A picnic table has been installed on the Hurd property in their honor.

We have lots of work to do this summer. Long overdue, the outside of the Grist Mill is being stained. We are grateful to the IDNR for the funding they provided to hire a contractor. The Ace Hardware Stores in Oregon and Dixon and Blain's Farm & Fleet in Sterling are providing the stain at a discount and Crest Foods kicked in to pay the rest.

Five grants from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) are currently supporting our land preservation work. A new trail on the Kelley property serves as a connector between the IDNR's new Husar Memorial trail and trails in the Lovers Leap area. A picnic table and bench are being installed at the Headwaters along with identification and directional signage. A Community Stewardship grant funds continued environmental restoration work at the Headwaters and Kelley properties owned by FCCA. FCCA still needs to raise \$1,850 in matching funds and receive 200 volunteer stewardship hours to access all of this grant. Your support for this work will leverage \$3 in grant money for every \$1 you give. Stewardship days are being held the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon beginning in May. We will gather at the Grist Mill at 9:00 a.m. for each day's instructions.

In December, we purchased the property at 1480 Old Mill Road. Located in the middle of the park, the property was an eyesore - in foreclosure and full of garbage - and a high priority for us. ICECF provided the funding to purchase and restore the 3.5 acres of conservation land on the property, and FCCA board member Tim O'Neil provided a loan for the 1-acre developed portion of the property, which includes a house and garage. We are removing the trash from the property. Great headway was made when eight FFA volunteers and three FCCA board members packed two large dumpsters full of trash on a March workday. We plan to use the first floor of the house for youth programs, community activities and a commercial kitchen. The upper floors will be used as a residence for staff and interns. The garage will be used to store stewardship equipment. Many workdays are being scheduled to rehab the house. Check Facebook or our website to volunteer. Your skilled or unskilled labor is greatly appreciated as are donations of building materials, furnishings and money.

Many fun-filled events will take place throughout the season. Some of the highlights are:

- **Open House at the Grist Mill, Thursday May 17th** – see page 1.
- **Evening at the Mill, Saturday June 9th** - see page 1.
- **Fall Fundraising Dinner, Thursday, September 20th 5 to 7:30 p.m.** at the Holloway Center of St. Patrick's Church in Dixon. Details about the event and invitations will come out later in the year., but mark your calendars now so you don't miss it.
- **Singing Bird Chautauqua Festival, Sunday, October 15th** at the Mill from noon to 6 p.m. **Celebrate the Forest, the Trees and the Autumn Leaves** with live hawks, Teddy Roosevelt's reminiscences, Grist Mill tours by the miller himself and many other activities. The day concludes with an Evening at the Mill dinner and songs of rural Illinois by Chris Vallillo, former host of the award-winning NPR performance series *Rural Route 3*.

There's lots you can do to stay in touch and support our work. First **visit** Franklin Creek! Second, **check in regularly** at Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/franklincreekconservation/> or our new website (after its launch in late May) <https://www.franklincreekconservation.org/>. Next, **check out volunteer opportunities** by emailing katie.mcbride@franklincreekconservation.org. Last, but not least, make a donation by texting **CREEK** to **41444** or mailing a check to: FCCA, 1893 Twist Road, Franklin Grove, IL 61031.

We look forward to seeing you in the next few months!

Franklin Creek Conservation Association
1893 Twist Road
Franklin Grove, IL 61031-9315

Return Service Requested

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 440
Sterling, IL
61081



Look inside for the many opportunities at Franklin Creek State Natural Area!

Open House
at the Mill

Photo Hike

"Tree-via"
Night

Guided Hikes

Nature Notes

Beekeeping

And So Much More!



Franklin Creek Conservation Association exists for the care of the natural areas of Franklin Creek for current and future generations by striving to preserve, restore and maintain the natural areas of Franklin Creek; involve individuals and organizations in our common purpose and activity; and build knowledge and appreciation of the natural area and our cultural heritage.

