



THE Heron

2023 Edition 1

ON THE Summer of **FUN FARM**

- **Music on the Farm**
McDonald Farm, Naperville
See back cover for details.
- **Thursday Farmstands**
McDonald Farm, Naperville
Watch our social media channels for start date.
- **Day at the Farm**
Sunday, August 27th
Dickson-Murst Farm, Montgomery
- **Fall Community Market**
Sunday, September 10th
McDonald Farm, Naperville
- **Beer, Bands and Barns**
Saturday, September 23rd
Dickson-Murst Farm, Montgomery

We save land. We save rivers.

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The Conservation Foundation is a 51-year-old private 501(c)3 land and water protection organization working to preserve nature in northeastern Illinois. FEIN #23-7221206



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Our Mission STATEMENT

We improve the health of our communities by preserving and restoring open space and natural lands, protecting rivers and watersheds and promoting stewardship of our environment.

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An Anniversary Harvest of Good



Aricema, an Itasca Bank & Trust Co. employee, volunteering at the Bensenville - Wood Dale Food Pantry

In a time when our conservation work is getting done more and more at the community level, The Conservation Foundation would like to congratulate a strong community bank and our loyal and trusted partner, Itasca Bank & Trust Company, on their 75th Anniversary. And we'd also like to celebrate them for the community-minded way in which they have chosen to commemorate this milestone year!

As part of their year-long initiative to combat food insecurity in Itasca and neighboring communities, Itasca Bank & Trust Co. is partnering with The Conservation Foundation and our Green Earth Harvest program to provide the fresh, organic produce we grow at McDonald Farm to the five local food pantries the Bank has dubbed its Pantry Partners. The Itasca Cares Food Pantry, Roselle UMC Food Pantry, Bensenville-Wood Dale Food Pantry, Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry, and the Wood Dale Food Pantry will receive vegetables from the Green Earth Harvest program for 20 weeks – from June to October – of the 2023 growing season. This fresh, healthy nutrition will help food pantry patrons who are struggling to keep nourishing food on their tables during these difficult economic times.

To fund this effort, Itasca Bank & Trust Co. turned to its business customers, a way of further involving the local community in their fight against food insecurity. Together these community-minded organizations raised \$44,000! These donations will support our Green Earth Harvest farm program and ultimately feed hundreds of families served by all five Pantry Partners.

Itasca Bank & Trust Co. plans to donate an additional \$50,000 in support of food security as part of their 75th Anniversary celebration, as well as provide volunteers to the Pantry Partners by allowing their employees to volunteer on company time. They've set up a schedule to have two volunteers a day visit one of the locations during work hours, with a goal of 600 volunteer hours provided by company employees overall. Bank customers also get to play a part in this community-enriching initiative, as the Bank is donating \$75 to the effort with each new bank account opened.

Jim Mensching, the fifth president in Itasca Bank & Trust Co.'s history, said "My grandfather and great-grandfather said there had to be a bank for community to grow, so they started The Itasca State Bank... Everything has changed, but the bank is still here. What's really important is that our philosophy hasn't changed. We're honest and ethical and we look for win-win relationships that help us and help our customers and often that helps our communities. I think this (initiative) typifies who the Bank is and what we're about."

In April, Itasca Bank & Trust Co. employees and the directors of the Pantry Partners visited McDonald Farm to finalize our Farm to Pantry program plans and walk the land that will be growing the fresh and nutritious food for their patrons. We're so heartened by the idea of the food we lovingly grow nourishing and lifting up families in need.

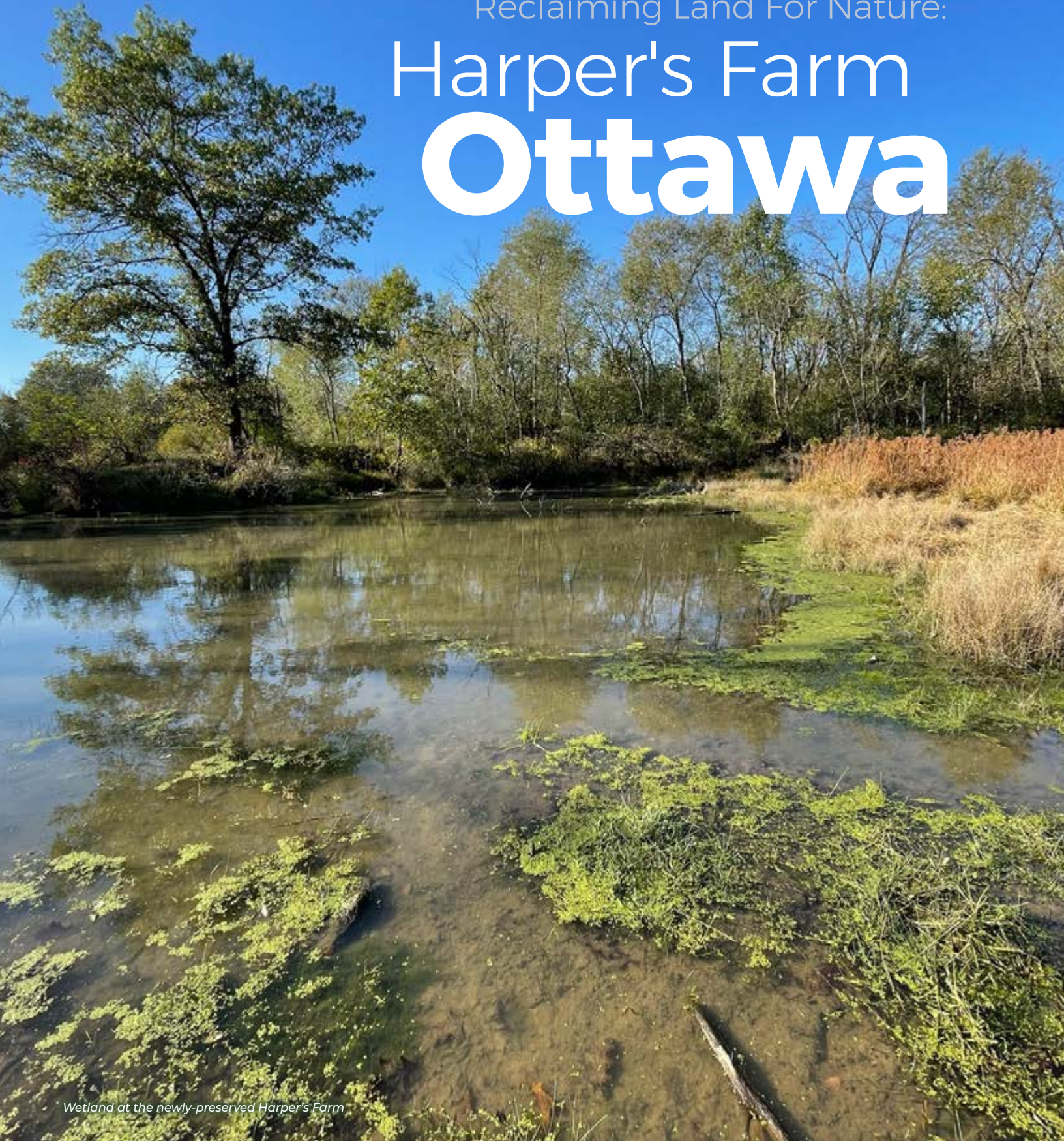
We want to thank Itasca Bank + Trust Co. for commemorating their 75th Anniversary in such a giving, creative, and community-minded way. It is our privilege to grow this food and help the Bank continue to serve their surrounding communities, as they have for three quarters of a century.

*By: Jill Johnson
Communications Manager*



Itasca Bank & Trust Company representatives, Food Pantry partners and our Green Earth Harvest staff collaborating at McDonald Farm

Reclaiming Land For Nature:
Harper's Farm
Ottawa



Wetland at the newly-preserved Harper's Farm

When our Vice President of Land & Water Conservation Programs Dan Lobbes describes our newest land preservation acquisition as “lumpy and bumpy”, he means it both literally and figuratively. The 110-acre property known as Harper’s Farm sits on the Illinois River just a couple of blocks east from downtown Ottawa. Early in the 20th century, it was mined for coal, and still bears the scars.

It’s also the recipient of frequent overflow floodwaters from the nearby Fox River. These floodwaters pick up pollutants as they flow through the residential area sitting between the Fox and Harper’s Farm, and the property’s location makes it an important barrier to keep these pollutants from reaching the Illinois River.

Spoil piles from the former mining operations are what give the terrain its lumps and bumps, and widespread trash heaps and litter abound. By the end of a recent exploratory trip to the property, we could have fully furnished a home, including a home office, with the discarded television set, computer monitor, dresser, toilet and multiple easy chairs we came across in our wanderings. Ecologically speaking, there is plenty of trash as well in the form of invasive species like phragmites, buckthorn, honeysuckle and garlic mustard.

But among all of this trash, there is plenty of treasure. There are charming little pocket wetlands all over the property, and let me tell you, judging from the cacophony of mid-March song, the chorus frogs of Harper’s Farm think they’re in paradise. There are also a handful of larger ponds with abundant sign of beaver activity, and acres of very pleasant woodlands. I saw at least 12 white-tailed deer move through as we were poking around the woodland area, and a pair of red-shouldered hawks seemed to be flirting with us. The constant drilling sounds and large holes we observed in several trees indicate the presence of the pileated woodpecker, and a contractor that was looking over the site to give us some input into its ecological restoration recently sighted the elusive bobcat in the woodland area as well!

It’s always exciting to preserve lands still in a pristine natural state like Belrose Farm, but equally exciting is the opportunity to reclaim abused land for nature, like we were able to do last year in Minooka thanks to your support, and like we have the opportunity to do now at Harper’s Farm. Harper’s Farm has certainly felt the impact of the vibrant city bustling around it, but through preservation and restoration, it could become a true natural amenity and important stormwater management



Our Land Stewardship Manager Renae Frigo traverses a sea of invasive phragmites at Harper’s Farm.

site for the Ottawa community. We at The Conservation Foundation already own Mitchell Woods, an adjacent forested natural area, and the City of Ottawa owns some contiguous open space as well.

Several generous partners and donors are making it possible for us to pursue our vision of taking Harper’s Farm out of the rough and turning it into a diamond. The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, The Wetlands Initiative, Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd, local businessmen Tom and Jeff Heimsoth and the City of Ottawa have and will continue to be indispensable community partners on this project. The personal financial contributions of Robin LaBancz of Bartlett and another anonymous donor were the key to final victory in securing our purchase of the property, and we would like to give them special recognition for their generosity and foresight in seeing the need present and the future that is possible here.

We have a blank canvas with Harper’s Farm! For all that humans have taken from this property in the last 100 years, nature is working hard to take it back. Thanks to the above-mentioned partners and donors and our members, we can aid in those efforts and heal this land.

We are incredibly excited about the opportunity to link Harper’s Farm together with other open lands along the Illinois Riverfront, restore wetlands for wildlife habitat and refuge for waterfowl, and create trails for people to enjoy the scenic Illinois River.

*By: Jill Johnson
Communications Manager*



Harper’s Farm isn’t all ecological and physical trash. We found this Prickly Pear Cactus growing wild on a recent staff exploration of the property!



There are abundant signs of diverse wildlife throughout the property, including these pileated woodpecker holes and trees gnawed by beavers.

In Memory of Nancy Hopp

“Nancy just seemed bigger than life and that she would live forever,” said our President/CEO Brook McDonald of Nancy Hopp, lifelong Aurora resident and Vice Chair of The Conservation Foundation’s Board of Trustees. We are all grieving and frankly still in shock at the news of her unexpected passing last month. I can’t quite accept that I won’t be checking her in at the registration table of our next event, won’t see her name in my email inbox anymore, won’t look out the office window this summer to a view of her sitting under a tree reading to our Summer Campers at McDonald Farm. Nancy poured so much passion and care into her Board service with The Conservation Foundation, and I know she bestowed that same thoughtful involvement in many other local organizations.

When I say Nancy was a lifelong resident of Aurora, I don’t just mean the town. She lived in the same home she was born in her entire 79 years of life! She grew up in the West Aurora school system, and stayed in her hometown for higher education as well, earning a BA in Social Sciences and her MS in Business Management from Aurora University. Her professional career focused mostly on marketing and communications in health care, but Nancy became an accomplished author as well, publishing *Warm Light*, *Cool Shadows* about renowned artist Ruth Van Sickle Ford, also an Aurora native. She was an avid fan and promoter of local illustrator Wendell Minor, and introduced many people, including me, to incredibly talented Aurora artists such as Cheryl Holz.

Nancy’s greatest love was of course her family: her late husband Jim, their son Tom and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. But



Nancy with her Silent Auction winnings at an Earth Day Benefit Dinner. She was incredibly generous with her time and rarely missed an event or meeting.

Nancy also held a deep love for the arts, for music, writing, painting and nature, and had a knack for recognizing sometimes unlikely or less than obvious connections between all of these passions and the people involved in them. Her ability to see those relationships and bring them to light resulted in some powerful collaborations and outcomes, such as our Art of the Fox program to bring awareness and love to the Fox River through the art of Joel Sheesley.



Nancy reading to Summer Campers at McDonald Farm

A classy lady of incredible energy, conviction and creativity, Nancy also had a playful and adventurous streak. She loved water skiing, road trips, and my girls still talk about swimming with her at a Board and Staff gathering, even though she was the only adult in the pool. When I think of Nancy, I think of a person who truly and deeply LIVED. She created, listened, savored, appreciated, let herself be moved by nature, history, the arts. I was always astounded by how she could be involved in so many different things at once, and also be so completely invested, tuned in and in the moment of whatever she was doing at any given time.

I consider Nancy my wordsmithing mentor (and I can wordsmith with the best of them). I’ll admit to a slight sinking feeling if I saw an email come through from Nancy after I’d just sent an eblast or released an issue of our Heron magazine, knowing if I’d misused a word or missed a typo, she’d catch it. More often than not, the message was to compliment and encourage me in my work, but even critiques were delivered graciously, and out of a sincere desire to help. Nancy knew taking the time to send those messages would make me a better writer and communicator, and therefore better illuminate the work of The Conservation Foundation, which she cared about so deeply. This is how she approached everything. Take the time, send the message, show up to the meeting, say the hard things (but always respectfully). That’s how you make a community, organization, relationship better, and that’s what Nancy did, time and again throughout her life.

Nancy's story is still being lived out; Nancy WILL live forever in the work of the countless organizations and people she influenced and made better, including The Conservation Foundation. And including me.

*By: Jill Johnson
Communications Manager*

Living Tribute to Local Milestones

The suburban Chicago landscape is 75 trees richer, thanks to an initiative by Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd. in honor of The Conservation Foundation's 50th Anniversary and The Morton Arboretum's 100th Anniversary. These 75 trees were planted in 45 municipalities across suburban Chicago in the last few months of 2022.

Christopher Burke, who sits on the Board of Trustees of The Morton Arboretum and is The Conservation Foundation's Board Chair, is CEO of Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd., a full-service consulting, engineering and surveying firm specializing in civil, transportation, and environmental engineering. Chris is an avid outdoor enthusiast, and has infused his love of nature and concern for the environment into the company's culture. This 75 trees initiative is a perfect example of his company's commitment to community service and improvement.

"I have always admired the work of The Conservation Foundation and how they work quietly behind the scenes to get things done," Chris said when he joined our Board of Trustees. "I am very excited about helping to increase The Conservation Foundation's capacity to preserve more land and clean up our rivers." And two decades later, he has brought a perspective of land use and stormwater management to our decision making, helped us strengthen relationships within the municipal and development communities, and brought his expertise to numerous water-related restoration projects of The Conservation Foundation.

We would like to sincerely thank *Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd.* for recognizing our 50th anniversary in this way, and also congratulate our friends and partners at The Morton Arboretum on their 100th anniversary milestone!

By: *Jill Johnson*
Communications Manager



Tree planting in Bloomingdale, our Jim Kleinwachter on far right



Commemorative post installed with each tree planting



Our Will County Program Director Tara Neff, far right, at a tree planting in New Lenox

To view more pictures from the tree planting ceremonies around the region, visit *Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd.*'s LinkedIn.

Nature is the New Apple



“We save land. We save rivers.” When you first read that tag line, you might think it’s all about the bugs and bunnies, the land, the waters. And it IS about all of those things, but at its heart and at its best, our mission is about healthy communities, and that includes not only the plants and animals but also people. These past few years of “unprecedented times” have brought to light just how much we need nature, and how our physical and mental health are directly tied to nature. The Conservation Foundation began to focus on outdoor health and wellness activities through our Nature Rx initiative in 2018 and we’ve seen increasing interest around how we and our partners can provide outdoor activities focused on improving our physical and mental wellbeing. Through the The Conservation Foundation-led Kane and DuPage Nature Rx Coalitions, the need for more in-depth training, exposure to types of Nature Rx practices and building these programs in an accessible and equitable way has come to the forefront of organizations working to connect people and nature. Thanks to a grant provided by Kane County’s Grand Victoria Riverboat Fund and the DuPage Foundation, The Conservation Foundation was able to develop and facilitate a 3-part workshop for forest preserve, park district, and other partner organization staff committed to Nature Rx on how to build partnerships that lead to impactful, equitable outdoor wellness programming.

Over three sessions, 30 participants learned about and experienced existing types of programming available such as forest bathing/therapy, sound baths, and mindful nature walks. They experienced the benefits of being outdoors through these activities first-hand along with how to build equitable and accessible nature programming, and how to connect with others on this type of programming. Tools like The Field

Museum’s Wellness Outdoor Guide and the Park Rx America website were introduced as resources to help the coalitions identify where the greatest needs for outdoor health and wellness programming exist and how to include programming like nature and forest therapy walks provided by certified guides, sound journeys, the Forest Preserve District of Kane County’s Nurtured by Nature program, Edward Elmhurst Health’s Take a Hike program, and other outdoor active or mindfulness practices to help fill those needs.

With this foundation, our Nature Rx coalition partners are now ready to identify needs and further develop programs in collaboration with other community partners to tackle health concerns in our communities, all while drawing us closer to nature in the process. If you know of partners within your community that would be interested in outdoor health, wellness, and mindfulness programming, please contact Alison Paul at apaul@theconservationfoundation.org to connect them with The Conservation Foundation’s Kane and DuPage County Nature Rx Coalitions. And while the past few years have made it evermore evident that we need nature for our overall health and wellbeing, it’s also worth noting that nature also needs us. In order for our natural areas and green spaces to be protected and cared for, people need to be connected to them. We’re excited to have nature, health, and wellness activities as another avenue to engage more people in the awesome benefits of nearby nature.

*A dose of nature a day keeps the doctor away!
Nothing against the apple, or the doctor.*

By: **Alison Paul**
Vice President of
Community Conservation

Jill Johnson
Communications Manager



Salt Smart Collaborative

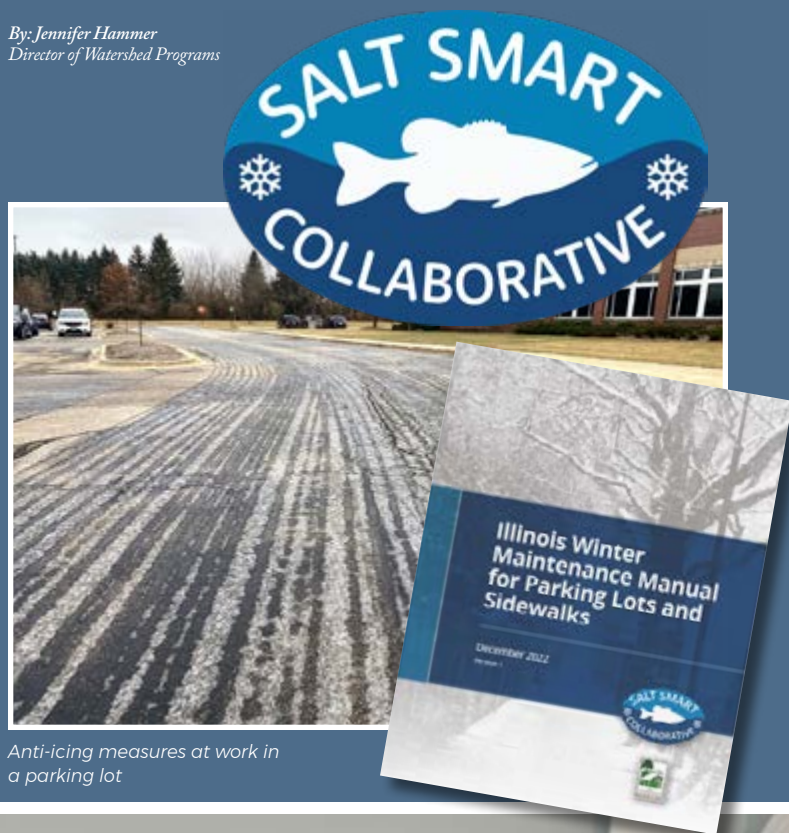
Although winter is now behind us, staff at The Conservation Foundation are still focused on reducing the impacts from winter chloride use. Over the last 18 months, staff members Hanna Miller and Jennifer Hammer have been researching, gathering input and writing the first Illinois-based Winter Maintenance Manual for Parking Lots & Sidewalks and an accompanying training and certification program for Winter Maintenance Professionals. This new manual is now available, in both English and Spanish, on the Salt Smart Collaborative website at www.saltsmart.org/certified.

The new manual and training program will be the basis for the Salt Smart Certified program geared towards snow and ice contractors, as well as supporting public agencies that maintain parking lots and sidewalks like park districts and school districts. This program provides background on the damage to both our built and natural environment caused by winter salting, information on Salt Smart Practices, like how incorporating the use of liquid salt brine into operations can provide safe surfaces while using less salt and how these practices make good business sense. Salt Smart Parking Lots & Sidewalks training will kick off this summer – dates and locations will be posted at www.saltsmart.org/workshops.

The Salt Smart Collaborative brings together individuals and organizations working towards reducing the impact of chlorides on our infrastructure and natural spaces. By showcasing the good work underway across our region, we can more effectively raise awareness and effect change. We can do both – keep surfaces safe for people and protect the environment. The Collaborative is coordinated by The Conservation Foundation with technical support from the Salt Smart Collaborative Steering Committee.

The Salt Smart Parking Lots & Sidewalks Manual and Training was developed through the support of a Section 319 Grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Northwest Water Planning Alliance, the Chicago Area Waterways Chloride Workgroup and the Lower Des Plaines Watershed Group.

By: Jennifer Hammer
Director of Watershed Programs



Anti-icing measures at work in a parking lot



Nature Rx workshop participants learned the benefits and how-tos of nature-based wellness techniques like forest therapy, sound baths and mindfulness in nature, as well as how to create impactful, equitable outdoor programming.

The Givers and Doers: 2023 Conservation Award Winners

A slushy February brought with it a refreshing sense of normalcy as members and friends of The Conservation Foundation gathered for our annual Membership & Awards Luncheon, the first in three years! We had the pleasure of recognizing four individuals and organizations who are doing extraordinary conservation work in their communities, the givers and doers who keep our mission moving forward.

Paul Butler Memorial Award Winner: **Kim Haag**



Kim Haag volunteering at Johnson's Mound Forest Preserve, where she is a co-steward

Kim Haag of Elburn has earned this year's Paul Butler Memorial Award for her tireless and outstanding volunteerism in local conservation.

Kim's extensive volunteer efforts began after she was part of Kane County's first Certified Naturalist Program, a program which completely changed her life, introducing her to a whole new world of natural areas stewardship and environmental involvement. Now you can find her planting native plants, collecting seeds and wielding saws and herbicide to combat invasive species as a volunteer with the Forest Preserve District of Kane County and Wild Ones as well as The Conservation Foundation. She is a co-steward of the 1,000-acre Johnson's Mound Forest Preserve in Elburn and this past year, Kim and several other volunteers formed the Kane County Natural Areas Volunteer Program.

"Why do I volunteer for conservation causes? Just as my mission for my 35 years of working was to support

students in special education, my mission now is to preserve and protect as much of this world around me for as long as I am able," Kim said. As you yourself said, Kim, we "nature people" know we have a lot of work left to do, and your generosity and passion are an inspiration to all of us to keep at it!

Conservation Partner Of The Year: **Campton Township Open Space Program**



Restored Wetlands at Gray Willows Farm, Campton Township. Photo courtesy of Campton Township Open Space Program

Campton Township Open Space Program and The Conservation Foundation have enjoyed a wonderful partnership since 2000, when Campton Township residents became interested in preserving open space and asked us to help develop an Open Space Plan for the Township and to help pass a referendum to purchase land. That referendum and an additional one a few years later were successful, and with those funds, the Open Space Program has purchased almost 1,500 acres of land for public enjoyment.

"Campton Township leaders have done a great job stewarding the funds entrusted to them by township voters (\$47 million!) for open space," says The Conservation Foundation's Vice President of Land & Watershed Programs, Dan Lobbes. "They doggedly find ways to stretch those funds, successfully pursuing public and private grants. The Township has preserved more than 1,000 acres of land as a way of maintaining its natural resources and semi-rural character."

And our partnership with Campton Township is not limited to land protection. They are an enthusiastic supporter of The Conservation Foundation's Nature Rx program in Kane County, a fellow partner in the Fox Valley Monarch Corridor Project, and their staff ecologist, Josh Nelson, is a member of our Next Gen Advisory Council.

Most recently, our two organizations collaborated to preserve the Goldenstein property, 130 acres of rich farmland, woodlands, ponds and wetland areas. We are so pleased to have enjoyed more than two decades of partnership with the Campton Township Open Space Program, and admire the way they have worked aggressively to achieve their mission to protect farmland, historic landmarks, scenic roadways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife and geologically significant features in Campton Township for the education, pleasure and recreation of the public.

2023 Salt Smart Community Award Winner: Village of Carol Stream Public Works



Village of Carol Stream plow and deicing truck, image courtesy of ilsoy.org

Carol Stream Public Works recognizes that reduction of chlorides must be a significant consideration in developing and executing snow and ice operations. “Carol Stream has become a recognized national leader in efficient winter deicing operations,” said our Director of Watershed Protection Stephen McCracken. “Their rigorous staff training, attention to equipment calibration, and adoption of liquid deicers as well as their moves to set up a program of real time weather sensors throughout the Village is exemplary.”

Their efforts especially over the past year have underscored their understanding that snow and ice removal is a year-round concern, especially with regards to reducing use of salt. Here are a few highlights of their award-winning work:

- **Training, Training, Training:** Public Works operators in the Village of Carol Stream are trained to not only understand how to operate their equipment, but also to understand why certain strategies are chosen for anti-icing, salt spread rate and how and when to use liquids.
- **Calibration:** The department has gone through an extensive and exhaustive process to make sure that when spreader controls are set to deliver a certain spread rate, that’s what is coming out the spreader.
- **All-Liquid Application:** Little by little, Carol Stream’s Public Works staff have been inching toward the use of all-liquid application under certain conditions and certain plow routes.
- **RWIS Station:** This fall the Village installed a roadway weather information system (RWIS) to provide additional data that aids in decisions regarding timing of deployment and equipment and material strategies.

“We understand that “salt conservation” does not mean just cutting the amount of salt we use,” said Jason Pauling, Street Supervisor. “Instead, we are committed to reducing salt usage while testing and employing smart strategies to reduce dependence on salt and to keep our roadways safe.”

We commend the Village of Carol Stream and their Public Works department for expanding their understanding of safety to include our environment and congratulate them on being our 2023 Salt Smart community!

Conservation@Home Award Winner: Jan Smith



Jan Smith accepts Conservation@Home certification at the Windsor Park retirement community in Carol Stream

Jan Smith of Carol Stream is this year’s clear choice for our Conservation@Home Award winner. As an enthusiastic participant in our Conservation@Home program, Jan has not one but THREE different properties that have been led to Conservation@Home certification by her hard work and dedication to environmentally friendly landscaping. Jan’s previous home, the Windsor Park retirement community where she resides now, and Jan Smith Park in Carol Stream (named after her) have all received certification thanks to Jan’s efforts.

Jan’s residential yard in Carol Stream was well known for its striking native plantings and the organic vegetables she has been a proponent of since long before organic gardening was the “in” thing. And now in her apartment, she grows native plants and has them all over her patio. “Besides being very sweet, Jan is very dedicated,” says Jim Kleinwachter, our Conservation@Home Program Manager. “She has taken it upon herself to put in native plants all over the Windsor Park community, including her own prairie, and she has brought a group of fellow residents to the farm and had me come in and speak with them to share her passion and pique their interest in nature.”

While nature and particularly gardening always appealed to Jan, her environmental activism was sparked by reading Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*. Since reading that book decades ago, Jan has gone on to found the DuPage Organic Gardening Club, been an active and energetic member of Wild Ones, headed up a Cool Cities coalition, and been an advocate for the environment with friends, family, community members and elected officials in a quiet yet incredibly effective way.

Our world needs more Jan Smiths!!! Always polite and respectful yet persistent, Jan has made visible change in her community and beyond, and inspired countless others to care for their landscapes in concert with the environment and speak out on behalf of the natural world. Congratulations to Jan on this very well-earned Conservation@Home award!

By: Jill Johnson
Communications Manager



Jan Smith Park in Carol Stream receives Conservation@Home certification

Expanded spotlights on our award winners can be found on our website.



Spotlight on Our Volunteers

No matter the weather, our dedicated, passionate volunteers are out there spreading our mission to improve the health of communities all across our region!!

- Snowflakes were falling, but that didn't stop volunteers from our Roving Stewards, Dickson-Murst Farm Partners and Friends of Dayton Bluffs Preserve from diving in to the first-ever work day at the newly preserved Belrose Farm near Serena.
- We enjoyed a sunny, crisp morning along the Fox River Trail on "Green Friday" with some energetic volunteers from Oswego High School and participants of all ages (our youngest volunteer that day was 3 years old!). We're thankful to be getting youth involved in stewarding our natural resources, and for our partnership with the Fox Valley Park District.
- A group of amazing volunteers felt the pull of Spring as they descended on a litter hotspot near Audrey Avenue and Route 59 in Naperville. Longtime member Carolyn Finzer alerted us to the need for a cleanup on this site, and 45 volunteers from Home Depot – Naperville, Naperville Cub Scout Pack 887 and others cleared the property of the trash and debris that had built up from neighboring commercial developments over the years.
- Midwestern University's Food as Medicine Club helped us wake up the Childrens' Gardens at McDonald Farm at an action-packed Spring work day. They prepared our raised garden beds, planted some early veggies, weeded and woodchipped in preparation for Summer Camps and youth programming.
- We celebrated Earth Day at O'Hara Woods in Romeoville with over 50 energetic volunteers from the local community, Home Depot-Naperville, Amazon, Benedictine University, local high schools and scout troops. We cleaned up litter while enjoying Spring bird songs, wildflowers and sunshine. Mother Nature had to add a little drama to the day with some hail and sleet too.
- The sun was shining for the Spring tidy-up work day at our Dickson-Murst Farm in Montgomery. Volunteers got their hands dirty in the farm's native gardens and cleaned up a tree that was downed in a storm in preparation for Spring at the Farm and the rest of the summer's happenings at this important community gathering space.

*By: Cass Hatzfeld
Volunteer Coordinator*



Warm **Welcomes...** We're so pleased to introduce our newest Trustees and Staff Members!!



Mimi Cowan, PhD, Trustee



Jayson Shaffer, Green Earth Harvest Farm Crew



Russell Cerocke, Green Earth Harvest Farm Manager



Amanda Caloras, Green Earth Harvest Farm Crew



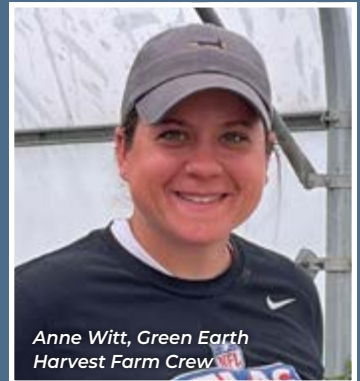
Alvin Gates, Trustee



Luis Barrera, Green Earth Harvest Farm Crew



Jordan Wilson, Youth Programs Manager



Anne Witt, Green Earth Harvest Farm Crew

...and **Fond Farewells**

Our heartfelt thanks for the dedication and service of Staff and Trustees who are off to new adventures!



Susan Jayne, Trustee



Annalise Chelsen, Intern



Jessica Valette, Intern



Dennis Wisnosky, Trustee



Jason Halm, Green Earth Harvest Farm Manager



Jeff Wehrli, Trustee



A Tapestry of Nearby Nature: Earth Day Benefit 2023

On the last Thursday in April, 550 conservation minded citizens and partners gathered with us to celebrate the powerful interconnectedness of nature and the impact of more than 50 years of conservation work connecting together at the 2023 Earth Day Benefit Dinner. We enjoyed a sumptuous meal created and served by our friends at Bobak's Signature Events, music by Patrick Moynihan, the renowned nature-inspired Silent Auction, our Tapestry of Nearby Nature video, and the company of others who love nature. Thanks to the passion and generosity of everyone who supported our Earth Day Benefit through sponsorships, Silent Auction donations and purchases, tickets to attend and donations to our Earth Month appeal, just shy of \$200,000 was raised to grow the tapestry of preserved local lands and waters and people who love them.

We would like to sincerely thank all Sponsors and Silent Auction Donors* of the 2023 Earth Day Benefit Dinner!

By: *Jill Johnson*
Communications Manager

Oak (\$7,500)

Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd.	Itasca Bank & Trust Co.	Stephen & Liz Van Arsdell
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Maple (\$5,000)

CITGO Limestone Production Group	Signature Production Group	Stout Graphics, Inc. Wheaton Bank & Trust
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Birch (\$2,500)

EARTHWERKS Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Forest Preserve District of Kane County	Gary R. Weber Associates Inland Real Estate Group Paul & Eileen LeFort	MainStreet Organization of REALTORS Stantec
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Redbud (\$1,500)

Accurate Repro Bartlett Tree Experts Bedrock Earthscapes Campton Township Cantigny Park Pete & Kathie Connolly Jeff & Jennifer Duncan ENCAP Engineering Resource Associates	Forest Preserve District of Will County Fox Valley Park District Gee-Schussler Insurance Ben & Lois Heaton Hey & Associates Ice Miller ILM Environments Kendall County Forest Preserve District Carole Koch	Dan & Julie Long Tom & Marge Schneider V3 Companies Ed & Colleen Vendel Waste Management What WE Make Wheaton Park District Wight & Company Nancy C.H. Winter
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Buttonbush (\$1,000)

Berwyn Development Corporation	Gerald Subaru of Naperville
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*A listing of Silent Auction Donors can be found on our website at www.theconservationfoundation.org/benefit

Perennial Circle: Upcoming Estate Planning Seminar



Making your estate plan can be a daunting, overwhelming process. With that in mind, we are pleased to offer a free educational Planned Giving session in partnership with the Law Firm of Kuczek & Associates on June 21st, 2023, 6pm to 8pm at our McDonald Farm headquarters in Naperville.

Join us to learn:

- Which option is best for you between wills, trusts and many other Planned Giving tools
- The importance of planning now and how a Planned Gift can help ensure your legacy
- Professional advice at no cost to help you navigate your estate planning strategy
- How a living trust can avoid the pitfalls of guardianship and probate
- The dangers of having an old trust
- How to protect your family from the confusion, complications and legal fees of an incomplete estate plan.

You can RSVP by contacting Abby Beck at 630-428-4500, Ext. 135 or abeck@theconservationfoundation.org

In Memory of Trish Beckjord



Our hearts are heavy with the news of the recent passing of Trish Beckjord, who retired from The Conservation Foundation in 2020. Trish had a passion for nature and a love of native plants that could not be contained. She positively radiated joy, and not only could she find beauty everywhere, she had the gift of helping others see it too. Trish's professional life actually began in the medical technology field, but in her mid-40s she reinvented herself and followed her love of plants to the University of Michigan, where she received a Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture. She quickly became well-known and respected in the local landscaping industry, especially through her work at Midwest Groundcovers and The Natural Garden before joining the staff of The Conservation Foundation. If you want to feel Trish's warmth and beautiful spirit, peruse the archives of the Natural Garden Natives blog at www.naturalgardennatives.com/in-the-news/

Here at The Conservation Foundation, Trish led our Fox River Initiative and efforts to create pollinator habitat and native gardens in communities throughout Kane and Kendall County in particular. Her crowning achievement in her time with us, however, was the Art of the Fox program. Trish coordinated this two-year effort to bring awareness and love to the Fox River through the exquisite art of Joel Sheesley. While Joel painted the Fox River in all of its moods and meanders, Trish's tireless work organizing art shows and coordinating printing of the inspiring *A Fox River Testimony* coffee table book brought Joel's art into the light and brought many new eyes to appreciate both it and the Fox River. Trish moved back to Pennsylvania to be near family in 2020, and not surprisingly became involved in church and local natural resource protection organizations almost immediately. Even through her fight with pancreatic cancer, she displayed her characteristic



positivity and found delight and comfort in books, singing, animals (especially cats) and her family and friends, as she did throughout her life. Like her beautiful eyes, Trish sparkled, and we are so grateful to have known her and learned from her.

By: Jill Johnson
Communications Manager



THE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
We save land. We save rivers.

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MUSIC ON THE FARM

Outdoor music is one of the true delights of the summer season! Spend a few summer evenings with us at our Music on the Farm Summer Music series, featuring local live musical acts and a food truck in the setting of the beautiful 60-acre McDonald Farm headquarters in Naperville. Music on the Farm is family-friendly and FREE! Grab a lawn chair, pack a few drinks, and sit back to take in the music and the pastoral views of McDonald Farm.

Each event begins at 4pm.

JUNE 11
DOWNTOWN CHARLIE BROWN
+ ROGUE CURBSIDE KITCHEN

JULY 9
PATRICK MOYNIHAN &
MARCO SAVORITO +
FERNANDO'S STREET KITCHEN

AUGUST 13
BREE GORDON BAND +
WILD FRIES