

Issue date: August 2026

Upcoming Workdays

Sunday, 8/23	Saturday, 8/29	Sunday, 9/6
Saturday, 9/12	Sunday, 9/20	Saturday, 9/26
Sunday, 10/4		

For more information: [PCPS website](#).

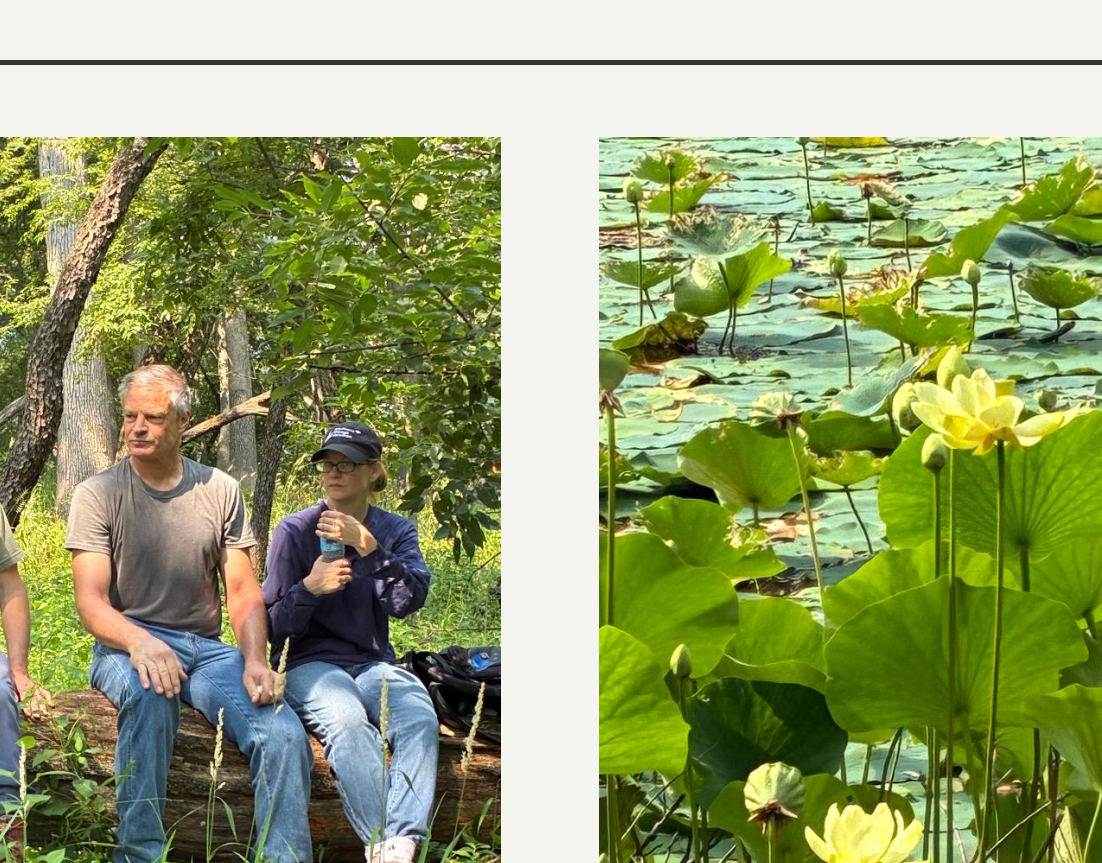
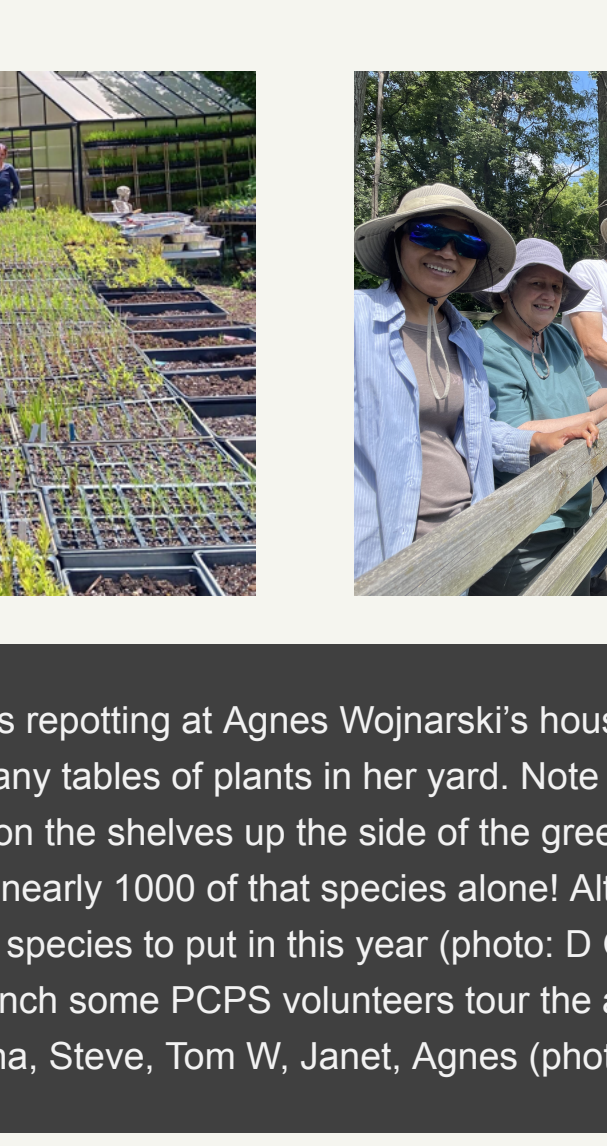
Local and Global Action at FPCC

Nine bluebird families called our Carl Hansen bluebird boxes home this year. Some 28 chicks fledged from 40 eggs – an impressive 70% survival rate – according to FPCC monitoring data. But competition is tough, as we learned from wildlife research supervisor Katie Baughman. Tree swallows fared even better in the boxes, with 50 fledglings from 61 eggs in 12 nests.

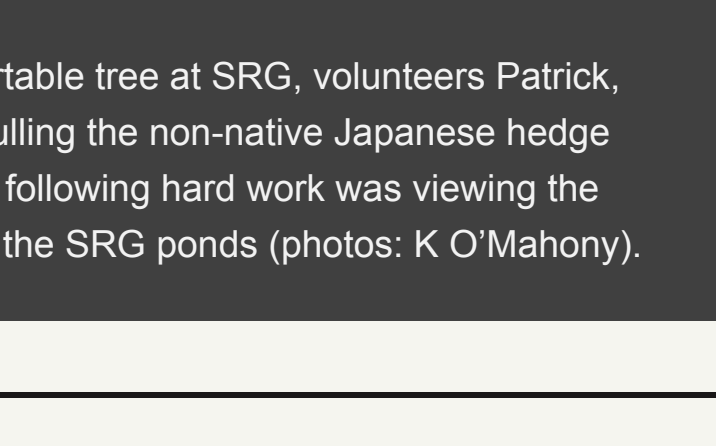
Katie's talk kicked off the August Key Stewards meeting, held at the FPCC wildlife facilities behind our shed on Golf Road in Hoffman Estates, and attended by PCPS's Jenny Flexman, Janet Wukasch and Diana Granitto. Katie noted that since 1988, senior wildlife biologist Chris Anchor and other researchers have been collecting blood and tissue samples from animal species and working with partners nationwide to study the transmission of zoonotic diseases. Now a long-time data contributor to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), FPCC provided key findings during early outbreaks of West Nile Virus and Lyme disease.

One of multiple wildlife programs FPCC's bird banding program tracks migration as well as monitoring health and ecosystem factors. Biologists examine and band an average of 400 birds per year, but reports on banded birds are rare. So they were excited when an osprey chick banded at Sag Quarries in Cook County in 2023 was sighted a year later, 2500 miles south in Colombia.

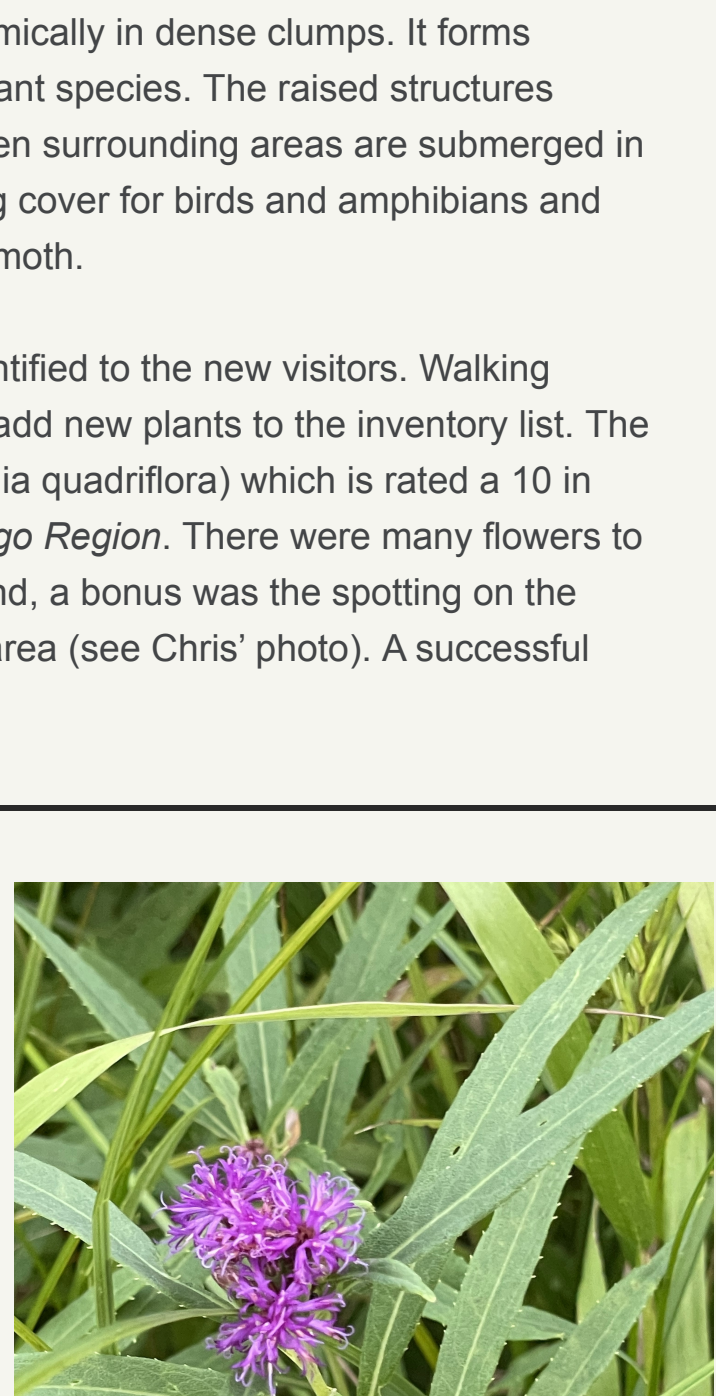
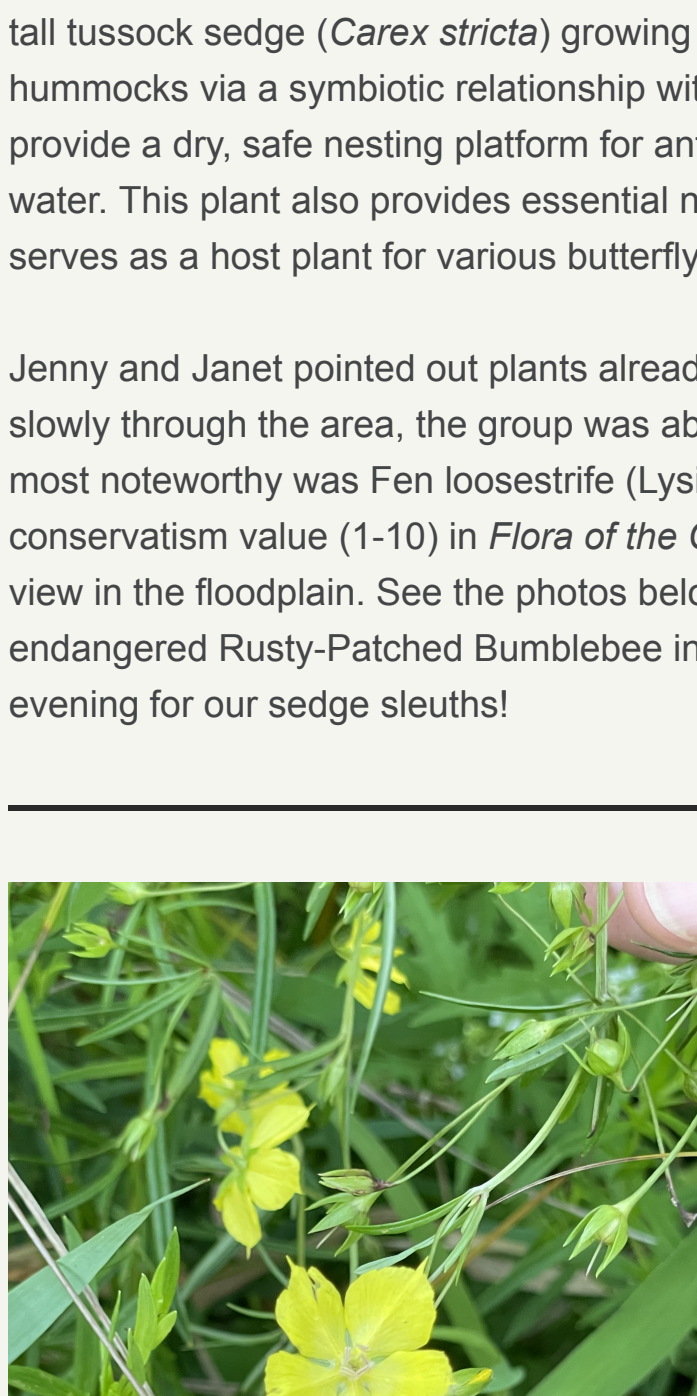
After the presentation, Chris Anchor led a tour of the offices and labs. We handled specialized tracking devices, looked through microscopes and saw stacks of bee specimens being studied by Laura Rericha, wildlife biologist and co-author with Gerould Wilhelm of *Flora of the Chicago Region*, our "bible" of native plants and pollinators. We waved to PCPS volunteer Aneta Brennan at work in her office as we went by. -- Diana Granitto



Top: Chris Anchor shows stewards a false map turtle that will be examined, tagged and released back into Spring Creek, where it was found (photo: D Granitto). **Bottom:** Just as PCPS stewards were leaving, they were pleasantly surprised by the arrival of Gerould [Jerry] Wilhelm, friend and mentor from the early days of Poplar Creek and co-author of *Flora of the Chicago Region* – l. to r. – Diana, Jenny, Jerry, Janet (photo: J Flexman).



Left: July 22, volunteers repotting at Agnes Wojnarski's house (and "nursery") stand behind some of the many tables of plants in her yard. Note the greenhouse where the grasses stacked on the shelves up the side of the greenhouse are all PCPS nodding fescue plants, nearly 1000 of that species alone! Altogether we'll have over 1800 transplants of 8 species to put in this year (photo: D Granitto). **Right:** After repotting work and lunch some PCPS volunteers tour the adjacent restoration – Hsui-Mei, Diana, Steve, Tom W, Janet, Agnes (photo: J Flexman).



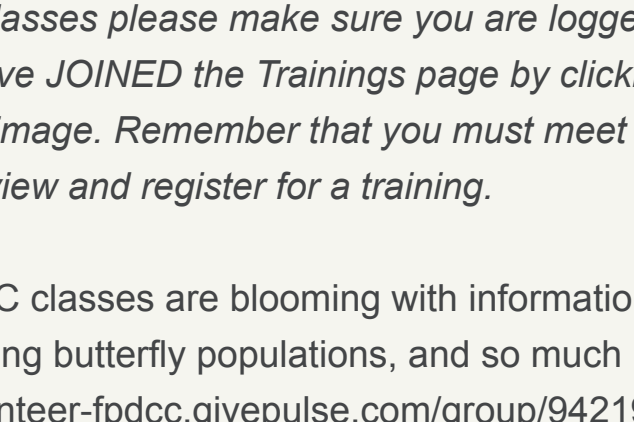
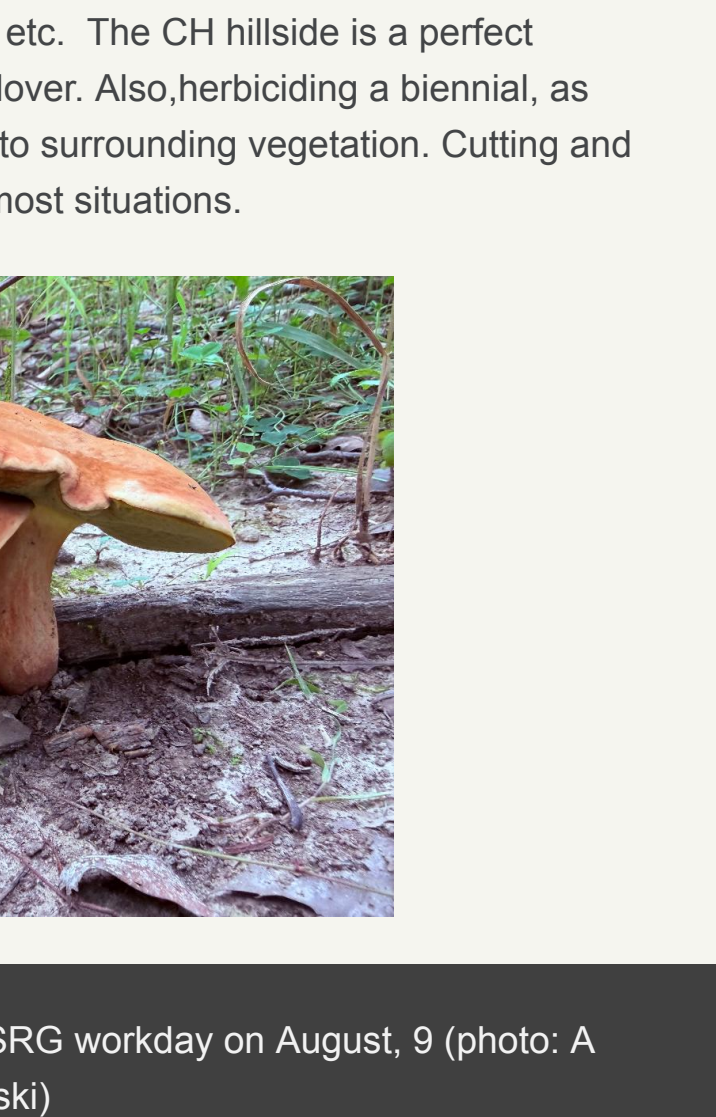
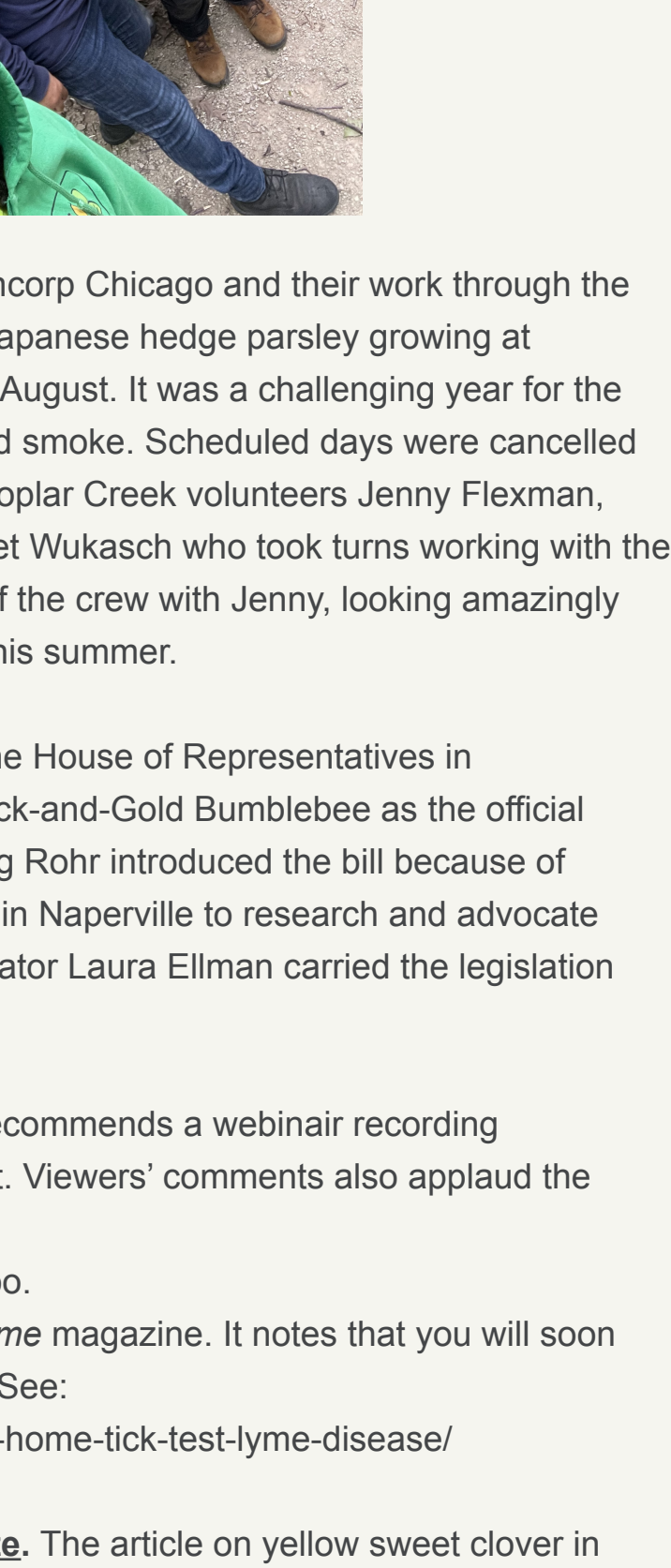
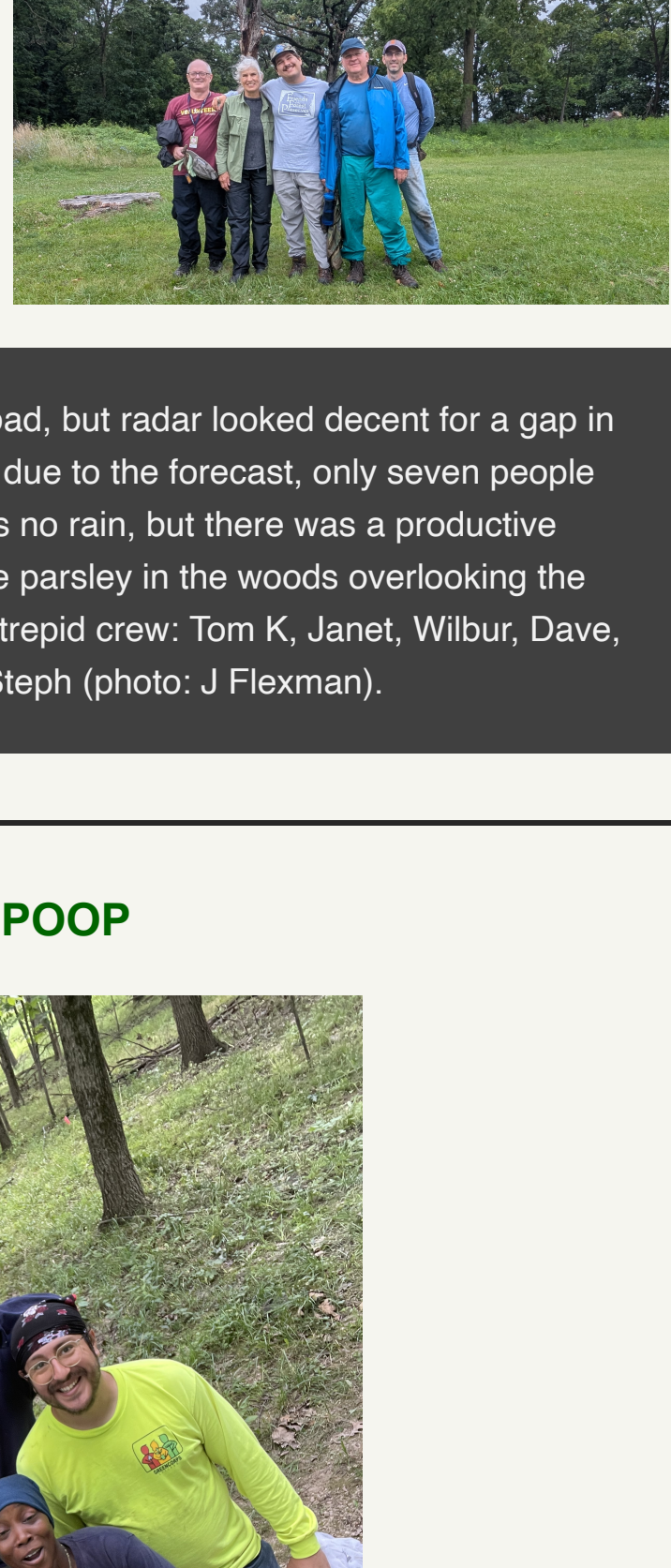
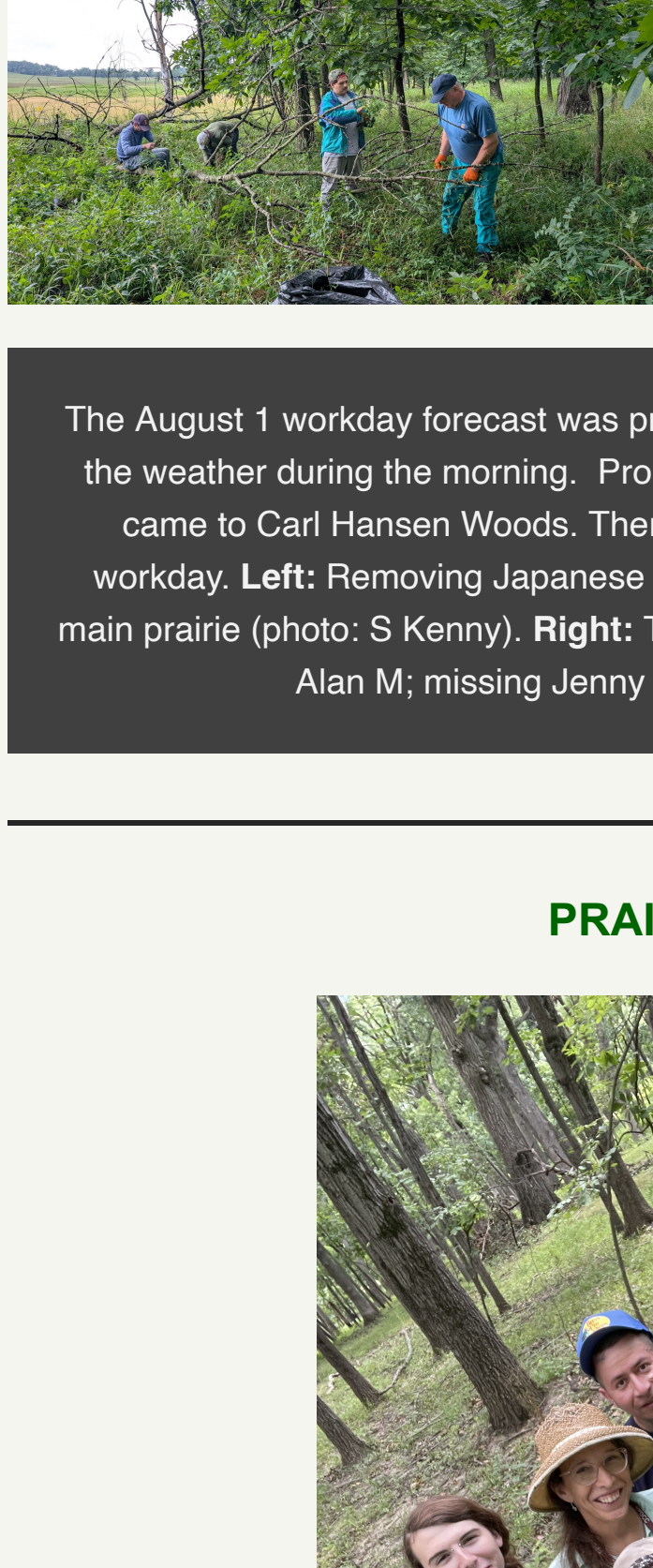
Left: July 27 workday: Sitting on a comfortable tree at SRG, volunteers Patrick, Ernie and Mary take a break time from pulling the non-native Japanese hedge parsley on a hot day. **Right:** The reward following hard work was viewing the beautiful American lotus plants in bloom at the SRG ponds (photos: K O'Mahony).

Sedge Meadow Sleuths

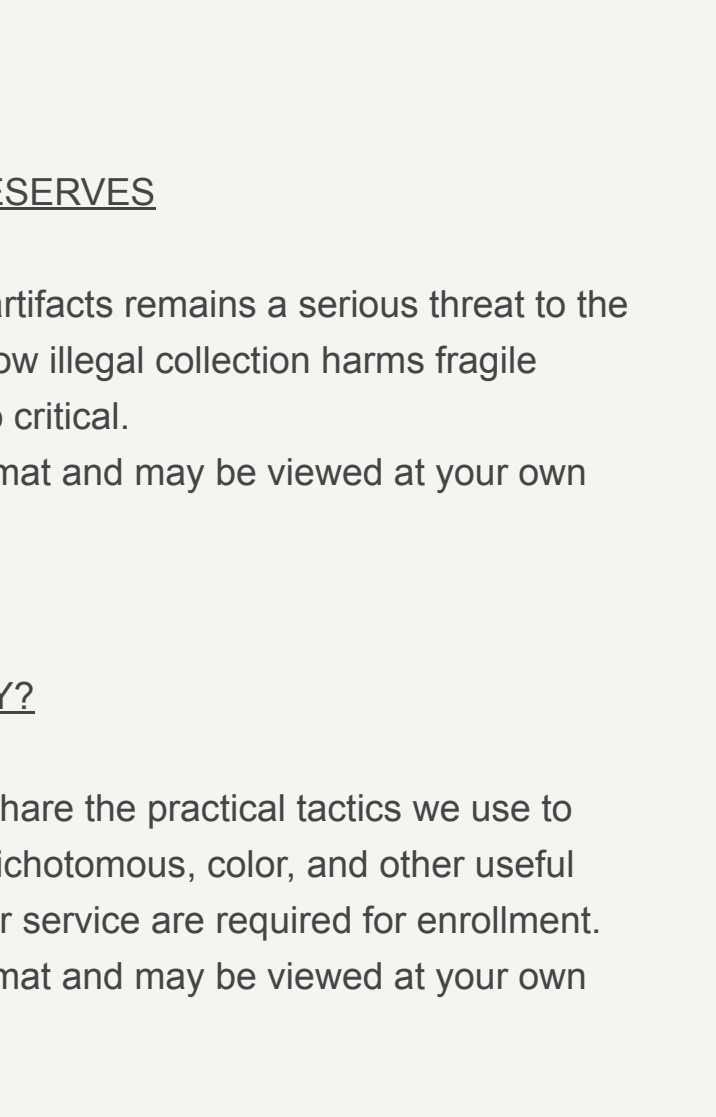
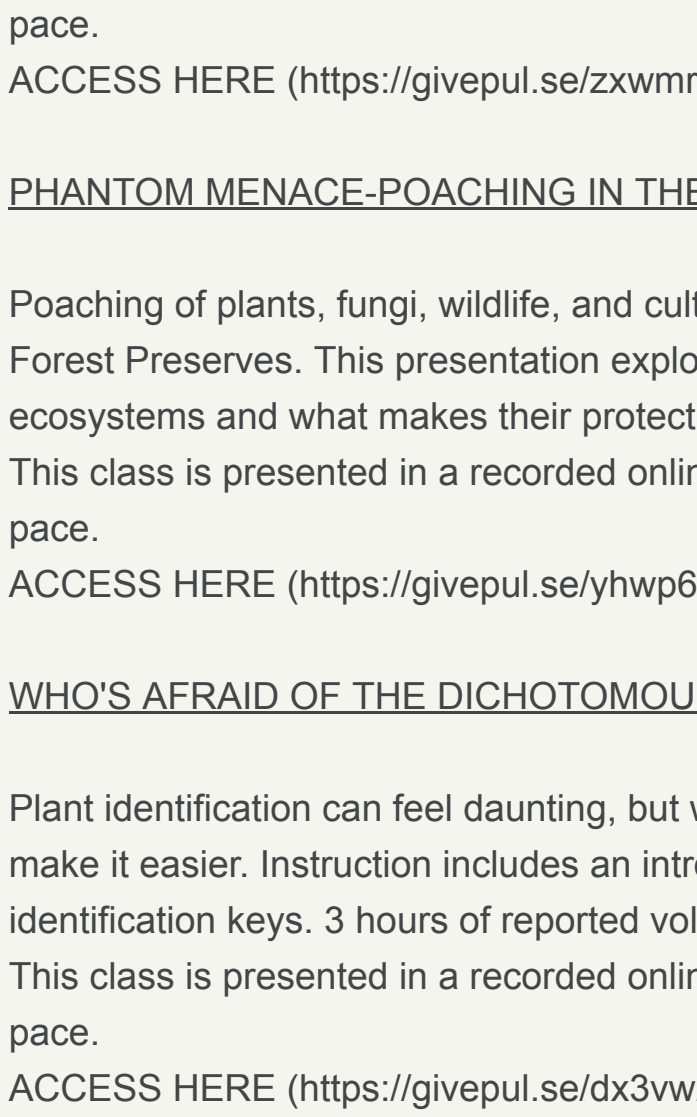
On August 12 Jenny and Janet lead an early evening adventure at SRG accompanied by Jamie, Megan, Chris and Alan M. They hiked northwest through the Western Woods down to the Poplar Creek floodplain to see one of the largest sedge meadows there. After rain earlier in the day, the weather behaved (no downpours)...if you ignore the ongoing humidity that has been unrelenting of late. Jenny and Janet already visited the area previously, identifying plants in this remnant sedge meadow, while beginning to build an inventory of species found there.

Emerging out of the woodland into the meadow, an interesting plant easily spotted is the tall tussock sedge (*Carex stricta*) growing rhizomically in dense clumps. It forms hummocks via a symbiotic relationship with an ant species. The raised structures provide a dry, safe nesting platform for ants when surrounding areas are submerged in water. This plant also provides essential nesting cover for birds and amphibians and serves as a host plant for various butterfly and moth.

Jenny and Janet pointed out plants already identified to the new visitors. Walking slowly through the area, the group was able to add new plants to the inventory list. The most noteworthy was Fen loosestrife (*Lysimachia quadriflora*) which is rated a 10 in conservatism value (1-10) in *Flora of the Chicago Region*. There were many flowers to view in the floodplain. See the photos below. And, a bonus was the spotting on the endangered Rusty-Patched Bumblebee in the area (see Chris' photo). A successful evening for our sedge sleuths!

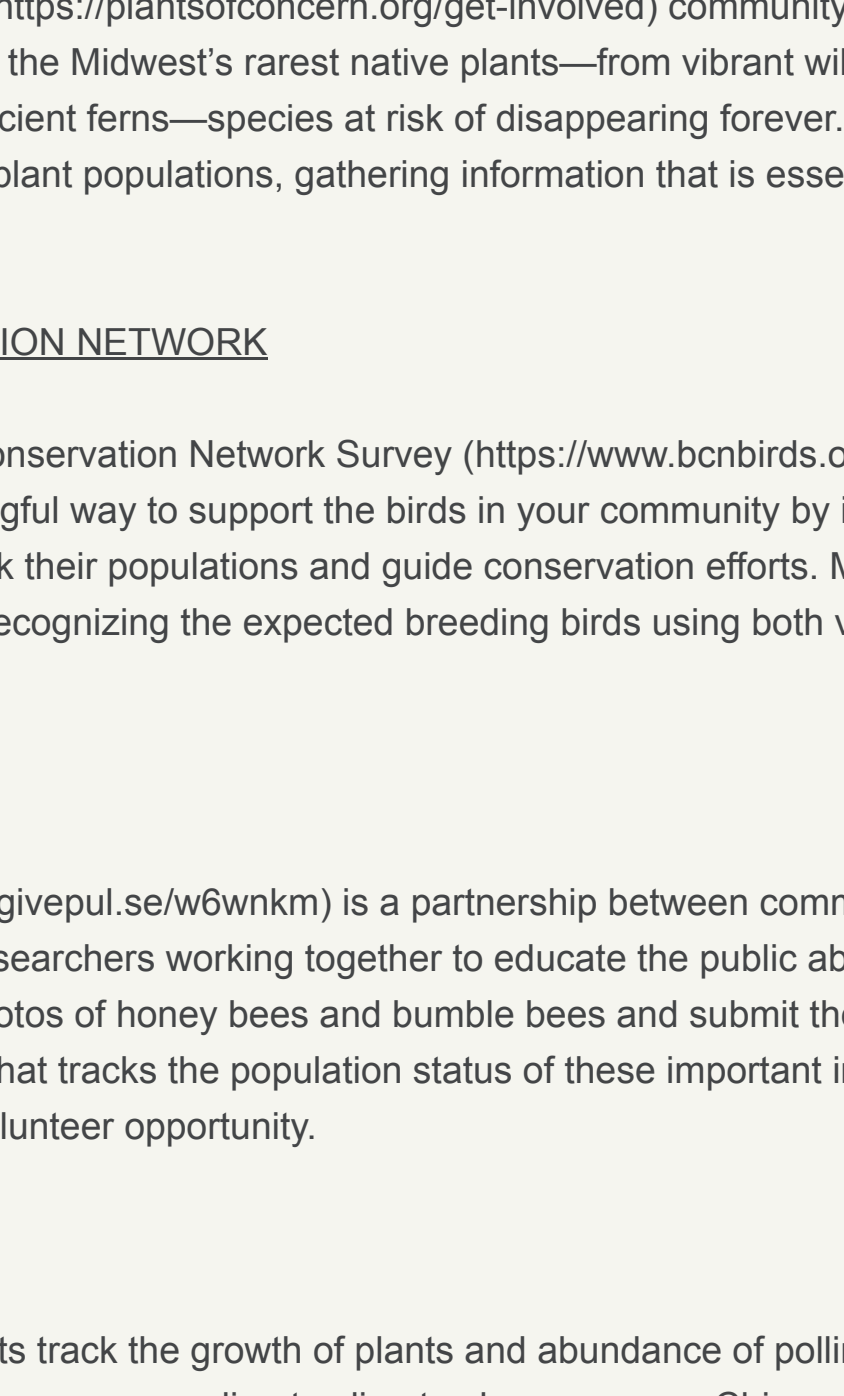


Upper left: Fen loosestrife (*Lysimachia quadriflora*). **Upper right:** Smooth ironweed (*Veronica fasciculata*). **Center left:** Marsh skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata* fka s. *epilobiifolia*). **Center right:** Marsh hedge nettle (*Stachys hispida*). **Lower left:** Great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*). **Lower right:** Wild mint (*Mentha canadensis*) (photos: J Flexman). **Bottom:** Rusty-Patched bumblebee (photo: C Chereck).



The August 1 workday forecast was pretty bad, but radar looked decent for a gap in the weather during the morning. Probably due to the forecast, only seven people came to Carl Hansen Woods. There was no rain, but there was a productive workday. **Left:** Removing Japanese hedge parsley in the woods overlooking the main prairie (photo: S Kenny). **Right:** The intrepid crew: Tom K, Janet, Wilbur, Dave, Alan M; missing Jenny and Steph (photo: J Flexman).

PRAIRIE POOP



Helping with Invasives. A big thanks to Greencorp Chicago and their work through the Forest Preserve District helping to reduce the Japanese hedge parsley growing at Schaumburg Road Grassland in July and early August. It was a challenging year for the crew due to the extreme heat, humidity, and rain and smoke. Scheduled days were cancelled and then rescheduled. A special thanks go to Poplar Creek volunteers Jenny Flexman, Dave Webb, Alan Gard, Natalia Taseff and Janet Wukasch who took turns working with the Greencorp Chicago crews. Above is a picture of the crew with Jenny, looking amazingly happy, considering their task and the weather this summer.

Official State Bee. The Illinois Senate joined the House of Representatives in unanimously passing a bill to designate the Black-and-Gold Bumblebee as the official State Bee of Illinois. Representative Janet Yang Rohr introduced the bill because of work by students at Lincoln Junior High School in Naperville to research and advocate for the importance of pollinators, and State Senator Laura Ellman carried the legislation in the Illinois Senate.

Helpful Resources. Volunteer Natalia Taseff recommends a webinar recording entitled Smartphone Photography for iNaturalist. Viewers' comments also applauded the program and the handy tips provided. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jL2FDe6cgoo>.

Another item she highlights is an article from *Time* magazine. It notes that you will soon be able to test ticks for Lyme disease at home! See: <https://time.com/article/2026/08/07/lymealert-at-home-tick-test-lyme-disease/>

Yellow Sweet Clover Management At Our Site. The article on yellow sweet clover in last month's *Prairie Pulse*, noted that burns and herbiciding can sometimes be used to control spreading clover. However, Jenny wants all to know that in reality burns and herbiciding are not viable options in most cases, and definitely not for Poplar Creek. Prescribed burns of yellow sweet clover apparently require perfect timing: April one year and late May the next. Not only is perfect timing never possible, but FPCC never burns that late in the year due to nesting birds, herps, etc. The CH hillside is a perfect example of how frequent burns do not control clover. Also, herbiciding a biennial, as opposed to a perennial, is WAY too destructive to surrounding vegetation. Cutting and pulling options are the best for us and also for most situations.

There was a "fungus amon-gus" at the SRG workday on August, 9 (photo: A Legowski)

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

To view and register for classes please make sure you are logged into your FPCC volunteer account and have JOINED the Trainings page by clicking on the JOIN button to the right in the banner image. Remember that you must meet the minimum requirements in order to view and register for a training.

Spring into learning! FPCC classes are blooming with information on plant ID, managing invasive species, monitoring butterfly populations, and so much more. Check out our training page (<https://volunteer-fpcc.givepulse.com/group/942193-trainings>) to find a class that inspires you! You must meet the minimum requirements in order to view and register for a training.

Invasive Plant Monitors Needed! Want to make an even bigger impact at your stewardship site? By completing the Managing Invasives training you can earn your Invasive Plant Monitor certification. It's a great way to sharpen your plant ID skills and help us spot invasive species early—before they spread and cause harm to native ecosystems.

PRACTICAL HERBICIDE

Gain practical skills for safe, effective herbicide use in natural areas. Open to new and experienced licensed volunteers. Optional: complete the training and review to earn the Illinois Department of Agriculture Alternative License. El manual está disponible en español. 15 hours of reported stewardship volunteer service are required for enrollment. This class is presented in a recorded online format and may be viewed at your own pace. ACCESS HERE (<https://givepul.se/zxwmrv>)

PHANTOM MENACE-POACHING IN THE PRESERVES

Poaching of plants, fungi, wildlife, and cultural artifacts remains a serious threat to the Forest Preserves. This presentation explores how illegal collection harms fragile ecosystems and what makes their protection so critical. This class is presented in a recorded online format and may be viewed at your own pace. ACCESS HERE (<https://givepul.se/yhw6d8>)

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE DICHOTOMOUS KEY?

Plant identification can feel daunting, but we'll share the practical tactics we use to make it easier. Instruction includes an intro to dichotomous, color, and other useful identification keys. 3 hours of reported volunteer service are required for enrollment. This class is presented in a recorded online format and may be viewed at your own pace. ACCESS HERE (<https://givepul.se/dx3vw2>)

COMMUNITY SCIENCE is an invaluable tool that provides critical information for research projects while helping people connect with nature. Anyone can be a community scientist—all you need is curiosity and a sense of wonder. Join one of our monitoring programs to discover how you can contribute to scientific research and deepen your knowledge of the plants and animals of the Forest Preserves.

ILLINOIS ODONATE SURVEY

The Illinois Odonate Survey (<https://illinoisodes.org/>) works to better understand the distribution and abundance of dragonflies and damselflies in the Chicago Wilderness Region.

ILLINOIS BUTTERFLY MONITORING NETWORK

Volunteers with the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network (<https://ibmn.org/>) survey butterflies across Illinois, providing data that helps researchers and land managers track how restoration impacts butterfly populations.

PLANTS OF CONCERN

Plants of Concern (<https://plantsofconcern.org/get-involved>) community scientists keep watch over some of the Midwest's rarest native plants—from vibrant wildflowers and majestic trees to ancient ferns—species at risk of disappearing forever. Volunteers monitor vulnerable plant populations, gathering information that is essential to their protection.

BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK

Becoming a Bird Conservation Network Survey (<https://www.bcnbirds.org/monitoring/>) monitor is a meaningful way to support the birds in your community by identifying species to help track their populations and guide conservation efforts. Monitors should be experienced in recognizing the expected breeding birds using both visual and auditory cues.

BEE SPOTTER

BeeSpotter (<https://givepul.se/w6wnkm>) is a partnership between community scientists and professional researchers working together to educate the public about pollinators. Volunteers snap photos of honey bees and bumble bees and submit their sightings to a nationwide project that tracks the population status of these important insects. Family and teen friendly volunteer opportunity.

BUDBURST

Community scientists track the growth of plants and abundance of pollinators to understand how they are responding to climate change across Chicagoland. Through Budburst (<https://givepul.se/2enqac>), volunteers submit local observations, helping build a clearer picture of local plant life and contributing valuable data for conservation planning. Family and teen friendly volunteer opportunity.

On-Demand Class Library

Delve into our library of on-demand training and enrichment classes. Visit the "Resources"; tab at the On-Training Page to access. Requirements vary by class. Current classes include:

- New Invaders
- Group Leadership
- Keeping the Wolves Away
- Management Schedules Demystified*
- Managing Invasives* #
- Mentoring Stewardship Leaders*
- Native Seed Training
- Practical Herbicide* #
- Soils & Restoration*
- IDOA Herbicide License Study Materials
- Who's Afraid of the Dichotomous Key?*

* a transcript of the presentation is included in the class material
el manual está disponible en español

ACCESS ON-DEMAND CLASS LIBRARY HERE (<https://volunteer-fpcc.givepulse.com/group/resources/942193>)

FPCC Volunteer Resources Team

773-631-1790

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