



Lake Bluff Open Lands Association

PRESERVATION, RESTORATION, AND EDUCATION SINCE 1981

www.lbola.org

Winter 2012-13

LBOLA Warmline 847-234-2860

President's Letter

And the drought goes on – If you weren't paying close attention, you'd think it was a pretty normal year in terms of precipitation. In fact, we're in the middle of a three-year drought, currently categorized as "severe". It would be a good thing to pay attention to your trees – especially the young and the old – and see to it that they receive a good watering. Even right now it would help.

What do you like about the Lake Bluff beach? September brought news that an advisory committee to the Lake Bluff Park District was tasked with interpreting the results of a recent beach survey and was considering ideas for improvements at the beach. On the face of it, many of the items made sense. Upgraded bathrooms, recycling bins, improved stairs, bluff restoration, drinking fountains, perhaps even dog showers.

The LBOLA board focused on several issues that we believe should be viewed as an unwelcome departure from the way Lake Bluffers have historically viewed the beach and bluff. Take *lighting* – We believe that the best lighting for the beach is no lighting. Anyone who goes to the beach to enjoy nature or to view the night sky and stars must be offended by any proposal to install 12' lighting poles. The short bollards on the beach road that feature a variety of mismatched colors of light are bad enough! Concrete pads were recommended for everything from dog showers to drinking fountains to recycling cans to shade cabanas. We feel that if you go to the beach, you're probably OK with sand. Shade cabanas on the beach, viewing decks on the bluff, road widening, all, to the LBOLA Board and hopefully to you, are *improvements* in name only. We are advocates for a Lake Bluff beach that is as natural and undeveloped as possible and a restored bluff that is free of debris and weedy invasive species.

We urge you to support a more low-key agenda that embraces the natural aspects of our beach consistent with the precedent established by 80 years of Lake Bluff Park District management and please let the Beach Advisory Committee know! – *Larry McCotter*



Lake Forest High School students seeding newly cleared areas of the Skokie Reserve with Virginia Wild Rye.

Save the Date!

**Please Join Us For Our Annual
Winter Solstice Celebration /
End of the World at the
Skokie River Prairie Reserve!
Friday, December 21st at 4:15 pm**

This time of the year historically triggered fear amongst early peoples as they watched the arc of the sun sink lower and lower in the sky with each passing day. When would this craziness end? Would the sun just one day not appear at all? Why, some are even given to predicting the end of the world during this year's winter solstice. I repeat: when will this craziness end?

Whatever happens - fear or cheer – there could be few better places to counteract the effects of the longest night than at the Skokie River Prairie Reserve, Friday December 21st, just before sundown at 4:15. Parking for the Skokie River Prairie is just east of the Mariani offices and just west of the water plant. Dress for the weather. BYO

For additional information, please call the LBOLA warmline at (847) 234-2860, or go to lbola.org.

**Go Shopping!!!
And Benefit LBOLA at
LBOLA.ORG!**

Shop from West Marine, Bass Pro Shops, Life is Good, Lionel Trains, Joseph A. Bank, Golfsmith, GameStop, Crocs and more.

From our home page at lbola.org, hit the Donate button, then shop online as you are already, no doubt, planning to do. But this way you can benefit LBOLA without even thinking about it! It's a Win-Win!

Coyotes In The Neighborhood

By Sophie Twichell

Heard coyotes howling at night? Seen them in the ravines or trotting around your neighborhood? Coyotes are often misunderstood, as well as underappreciated for the valuable role they play. Coyotes' historical range was restricted to the prairies and desert areas of central North America, but are now found throughout the U.S. and Canada – even in urban areas.

Since 2000, an impressive study on urban coyotes has been taking place in Cook County, led by Ohio State professor Stan Gehrt. His team has caught and marked 661 coyotes, including radio collaring 379. He recently shared fascinating facts about coyotes at the Greenbelt Cultural Center in North Chicago at an event sponsored by Friends of Ryerson Woods and Conserve Lake County.

Here is a sampling of what Gehrt's team has discovered about coyotes in our region:

- Most adults weigh between 25-35 lbs. A few big ones weigh in the 42-43 lbs. range.
- They have individual personalities. Some shy, others aggressive with wide variation.
- Packs are made of family members and are very territorial.
- Howling is a way to bring family members together, as well as to establish territory.
- Coyotes are monogamous for life. Pairs only split upon the death of a mate.
- The average litter size is 4-7 pups, although they can range from 3-15.
- Male coyotes help raise the young just as much as females.
- February is the peak of mating season for coyotes; litters are born in April.
- In captivity, coyotes can live 13 to 15 years, but in the wild, most die before they reach three years of age. Coyotes have only a 60 percent chance of surviving one year.
- Coyotes inhabit virtually every green space of any significant size throughout the Chicago area. If they are removed, new ones will move right in.
- Coyotes generally confine most of their activity to nocturnal hours.
- Coyotes cross city streets, looking both ways before crossing and following green lights!

A study of coyote scat (poop) revealed the most common food items are small rodents, fruit, deer and rabbit. They do not rely on our pets (1%) for their diets, but they can consume up to 3,000 rodents per year! That is free pest control in Chicago, where rats can be a problem. Further, coyotes serve as the primary predators on fawns and goose eggs. Geese and deer are often overabundant and difficult to manage, so coyotes play a key role in naturally controlling rodent, deer and geese populations.

In general, coyotes avoid humans and we should be sure to avoid disrupting their wild behavior patterns. It is important not to feed them by leaving pet food or garbage out at night or by having large bird feeders. If you encounter coyotes on a trail, do not run away. It is part of canid instinct to chase something that flees. That is how they chase down prey. Instead, you should make a lot of noise, as well as throw something at them.

“Coyotes in the Chicago area are successful in spite of us, not because of us,” Gehrt contends. “They eat their own food, not ours. They hunt as if we weren't even here. They do their best to avoid us.”

To learn more about the Cook County Coyote Project, visit www.urbancoyotereseach.com.

Land Management Report – 2012

Our crew of interns this summer were a familiar bunch. Anne Gilbert returned for her fourth year of LBOLA work, supervising the work of Beep Trefts and Kevin McCotter. It was a bit of a hot summer, but they all survived and made great strides during the course of the season. We made an impact at the Prairie Preserve, Ravine Park and the Carolyn Goetz Wetlands Preserve, but our main focus was tackling buckthorn at the Skokie River Prairie. Between the work of the summer interns and the Red Hat crew, the Skokie is becoming a knock-out as soon as you enter! Enjoy it during a visit and please – join us for one of the upcoming workdays!



Coyotes

Photo: truewildlife.com

Birder Needed

Do you have a passion for birds and birding? Have you been struggling to find a way to help out LBOLA without having to get poked by nasty thorns in the heat of summer and frozen winter? LBOLA needs a bird-walk coordinator to plan our annual spring birdwalk event at Crab Tree Farm. If you're interested and able, please let us know at 847-234-2860.



Eastern Bluebird

Photo: Isidor Jeklin

Treasurer's Report

Al Trefts

LBOLA ended October 2012 in a stronger financial position than at the end of 2011, thanks to a combination of generous donations and constant cost awareness throughout the year. Year-to-date donations have been slightly higher than in the same period last year, primarily because of the donation of one lot of land in the middle of the Skokie River Prairie Reserve, by David Ebert of Chicago. This means that now only about five lots within the Preserve are still in private hands. Our year-to-date expenses have been slightly higher than last year, as our summer interns worked over 1,200 hours in the Preserves this summer, up from 982 hours last year. In addition, we have purchased a computer and updated financial software to better keep track of our finances. Volunteer hours, including Lake Forest High School science students as well as adults have to date contributed more than 1,100 hours - also higher than last year! If you haven't walked through the Skokie River Prairie Reserve lately, please do, and look at how much more open it now feels as a result of all of these efforts.

As always, especially in this difficult economy, our fundraising remains a high priority. So if anyone has ideas or suggestions for fundraising activities or for improving our communications efforts, or would like to assist in these activities, please do not hesitate to contact Larry McCotter or me at treasurer@lbola.org.

Eagle Scout Projects

This has been a banner year for Eagle Scout projects in LBOLA managed preserves.

In October, Thor Maan de Kok researched which native shade-loving plants could tolerate living near black walnut trees (a tough job for many plants), ordered plants, organized fellow scouts, then conducted two marathon days of planting 800 native transplants at the "back door" to the Skokie Reserve on MacLaren Ave. Next spring we expect this area to be healthier and more diverse than ever – Thank You, Thor!

Wood Ducks will enjoy lots of new habitat next spring following Duncan Michaelis' efforts to ring the Carolyn Goetz Wetlands Preserve with new wood duck houses. It's a perfect plan, well conceived by Duncan!

LBOLA appreciates and supports the efforts of our local Eagle Scouts who learn valuable life lessons planning, funding, organizing and executing major community projects like these. Thanks!

The LBOLA Board...

includes the following volunteers: Nan Wick, Larry McCotter, Scott Gulson, Bo Harper, Janet Murphy Ryan, Christabel Frederick, Liz Leutwiler, Al Trefts, Bill Nordeen, George Russell, Cyn Sansing Mycoskie, Janna Nugent and Karen Crotty.



A stand of native indian grass in the Skokie River Prairie Reserve

Photo by Cynimage photography

Support the Efforts of Lake Bluff Open Lands!

Please use the enclosed remittance envelope to make your tax-deductible contribution today!

LBOLA WINTER 2012-13 VOLUNTEER WORKDAY SCHEDULE

Volunteer workdays are Saturdays or Sundays from 9:00 AM -12:00 Noon. Skokie Reserve & Lake Bluff Forest Preserve (LCFPD) dates begin at our parking lot on Hwy. 176, west of the water plant and east of Mariani. For details call the LBOLA warmline 847-234-2860 or visit LBOLA.org for preserve locations

DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
Sunday, November 25	brush clearing	Skokie River Prairie
Sunday, December 9	brush clearing	Skokie River Prairie
Saturday, December 15	brush clearing	Lake Bluff Forest Preserve
Friday, December 21 at 4:00 pm	Solstice at the Skokie	Skokie River Prairie
Sunday, December 30	brush clearing	Skokie River Prairie / LB Golf Course
Sunday, January 13	brush clearing	Skokie River Prairie
Saturday, January 19	brush clearing	Lake Bluff Forest Preserve
Sunday, January 27	brush clearing	Goetz Wetlands Preserve
Sunday, February 10	brush clearing	Skokie River Prairie
Saturday, February 16	brush clearing	Lake Bluff Forest Preserve
Sunday, March 10th	brush clearing	North Train Station Parking Lot
Saturday, March 16	trail maintenance	Lake Bluff Forest Preserve
Sunday, April 14	brush clearing	Rockland Wetlands
Sunday, April 21	Earth Day Planting	TBD

