



LAKE BLUFF OPEN LANDS ASSOCIATION

SPRING/SUMMER 2001 NEWSLETTER

LBOLA Warmline 735-8137

President's Letter

While the warmer months are the time to enjoy the prairies and wetlands of LBOLA's preserves, winter months are the time when our land managers make it all happen. This past winter, extensive efforts to clear our preserves of non-native brush resulted in a dramatic difference in the area where the Skokie River Preserve's open prairies and wetlands meet the giant oaks of the savanna in the Lake Bluff Forest Preserve.

Our Volunteers removed almost 1/2 mile of fencing while, with the assistance of Frank Mariani and Dan Rodgers, our brush clearing efforts exposed a fabulous grove of ancient oaks that were nearly imperceptible just 2 months ago. Please make an effort to see the trees. I promise you will fall in love with this area!

Spring brings many things to Lake Bluff's natural areas and one of the most exciting, of course, is **Open Lands Day!** May 5, Cinco de Mayo, will bring veritable droves of middle school volunteers and perhaps a handful of loyal newsletter readers to the sunny shores of Lake Michigan as we repeat last year's theme of erosion control. We'll plant hundreds of deep-rooted native wildflowers, grasses and trees on the ailing south bluff to take advantage of this period of low water levels in Lake Michigan to re-vegetate the bluff. Stewards Scott Gulson and Dan Angarola have worked hard to plan this event with the support and encouragement of the Lake Bluff Park District board and Manager Walt Schamber.

The very next week on Saturday May 12th, George Russell will coordinate our portion of the 9th Annual **River Rescue Day** sponsored by the Friends of the Chicago River. Our volunteers will frolic in the outer banks of the mighty Skokie River as it meanders for the better part of a mile through our preserves. Interestingly, the river's path includes some historically significant stream-bank structures built nearly 90 years ago by landscape architect Jens Jenson for the estate now known as Harrison Conference Center. All volunteers are welcome to participate in this noble undertaking. Please dress appropriately including good boots and warm clothes.

Also on May 12, our **Spring Birdwalk** will take place for the first time at the Skokie Preserve instead of Crab Tree Farm. The birds at CTF have gotten wise to our ways so we'll wait till our fall birdwalk, September 15th, to return to the farm. Please remember that parking for all events at the Skokie Preserve is located in the lot to the west of the water plant off Hwy. 176.

Volunteerism is indeed alive and well in Lake Bluff. The success of our Saturday workday program is due to the response of so many of you to the call to 'act locally'. Should you choose to do so yourself, our workday schedule can be found on the back page.

As always, your generous contributions to LBOLA by means of the enclosed remittance envelope allow us to purchase plant materials, cut and chip brush, purchase tools for workdays and controlled burns and keep the phone bill paid! We couldn't do it without you. Thanks so much. - Larry McCotter



The tractor-driven 'Seppi' devours non-native brush

Spring Anyone?

Spring seems a long way off. But all of a sudden it will be here and we'll all be heading out into our yards with great enthusiasm. Many Bluffers have tried to make their property particularly attractive to wildlife, such as birds and butterflies, by enlarging unmowed beds and using native plants. This is a "win-win-win" situation.

- Wildlife wins because native plants provide the food and cover it prefers.
- Homeowners win because native perennials need little water and no fertilizer. They don't need replanting every year, and there will be less grass to mow.
- Neighbors win because your yard will be beautiful to look at.

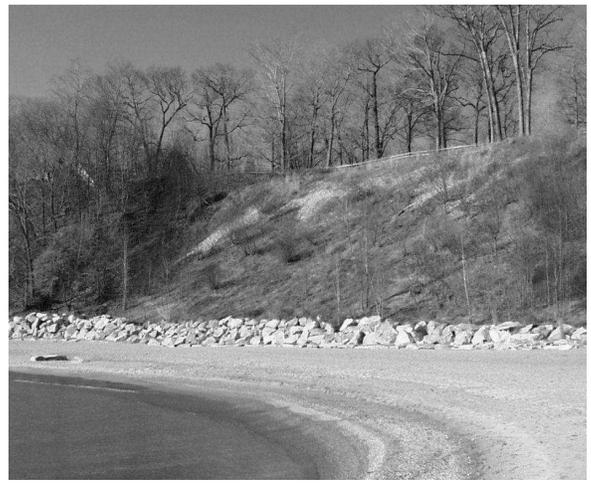
Come Fall these beds can be left with dried stems and grasses in place. They look more interesting, and provide wonderful shelter for wildlife all winter.

Your plant list should include native grasses like little bluestem, prairie dropseed or Indiangrass. Their seed attracts birds. Consider flowers like blazing star, silky aster and prairie coreopsis, stiff goldenrod, pale purple coneflower, smooth blue aster, foxglove beardtounge. and marsh milkweed. Marsh milkweed is the very best food for Monarch butterfly larvae.

Native plants are available at the Garden Club's Sale May 11th and 12th, or check out the **Native Plant Sale** at the Old School Forest Preserve in Libertyville on Saturday May 12. You can preorder by April 25 to be certain to get everything you want. Order via the web at www.co.lake.il.us/forest/nps.htm or call (847) 968-3333 for more information. Many native plants are also available at Pasquesi's in Lake Forest.



Our South Bluff in April 1952. (Photo courtesy of the Vliet Center. Thanks to Jan Nelson for her research)



The south bluff 49 years later after extensive erosion and repair.

SAVE THE BLUFFS!

By Dan Angarola

Our South Bluff has literally become Lake Bluff “Open” Land. If you have not yet noticed, one section of the bluff has collapsed revealing bare earth and destroying the much needed vegetation which helps to secure the soil. A closer examination reveals that this area is constantly wet, no matter how hot or sunny the day.

It is thought that the water source is an underground river of water and sediment that flows eastward from Artesian Park (formerly Artesian Lake) and possibly from as far away as Green Bay Road. Whatever the source, there can be no doubt that a large volume of this water is making its way to the bluff and that this water, coupled with the forces of gravity is definitely eroding the bluff.

Over the years the bluffs have been subjected to the ravaging effects of nature. Causes ranged from rising lake levels and erosion which decimated the trees, to the numerous landslides caused by excessive water flowing underground towards the lake.

The Park District has responded to these challenges by installing what are known as “rock groins” (no laughing) just off shore. These rock piles reduce the wave erosion and also trap sand between the groins and prevent it from drifting southward. These rock groins have reduced wave erosion at the bottom of our bluffs, but with lake levels near an all time low, they have not yet been properly put to the test of time.

Steps were then taken by the Park District to halt erosion on the upper sections of the bluff. Drainage pipes were installed to quickly collect water before it could do any damage. Rocks were also added to allow the water to percolate through them without disturbing the soil. These measures have certainly helped, but more action is now necessary.

With the participation of the Park District, LBOLA’s long term goal is to have the damaged area repaired by filling it with quarried limestone and then adding a layer of soil, followed by planting deep-rooted native prairie grasses and forbs (wildflowers). These native species will beautify the bluff without requiring maintenance and will help to reduce erosion.

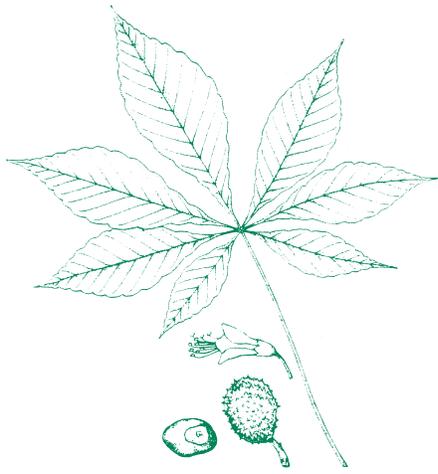
Our short term goals begin May 5th, when LBOLA sponsors our annual OPEN LANDS DAY. This year the focus of our attention, appropriately enough, is the South Bluff. We hope to plant hundreds of native plugs, north of the damaged area, that will help to insure the integrity of the bluffs for years to come.

I consider these bluffs to be hallowed ground. At least once per day, I walk to Sunrise Park overlooking the bluffs and the magnificence that is Lake Michigan - and consider myself truly blessed.

Please join us on May 5th at Sunrise Park at 9:00 in the morning and stay for refreshments afterward. Let’s make every effort to save our namesake bluffs. We cannot do it without your active support.



LBOLA volunteers unearth and remove a steel tank during winter workday at Lake Bluff Forest Preserve



Ohio Buckeye Sighted in Illinois

by David Szaflarski

One day while walking in my favorite preserve, the Lake Bluff Forest Preserve, two trees standing side by side that I hadn't recognized before, seemed out of place and caught my eye.

What brought the trees to my attention were the leaves; 5-7 fanlike leaflets that were arranged like the spokes of a wheel. At first I thought it might be a hickory but then I noticed some red-brown nuts that were enclosed in spiny cases lying beneath the tree. Then I thought that perhaps it might be the rarest of rare - American Chestnut! As I tried to identify the tree and after looking in several reference books, I narrowed it down to either a native Ohio Buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*) or an escapee from cultivation, the Horse Chestnut tree (*A. hippocastanum*) which originates from southern Europe. I then concluded from several tree ID books, what I was looking at was indeed an Ohio Buckeye native, as it's buds are not gummy as they are on Horse Chestnuts and the Buckeye's twigs emitted a foul odor when broken.

Several questions began to swirl in my head about the newly found Buckeyes. How did they get to be part of the Lake Bluff landscape as it looked like they had been planted. Who brought it? Was it a man or beast who brought the nuts? Then I wondered why this tree, which is a member of the Horse Chestnut family hadn't succumbed to the fungal disease that wiped out the beautiful American Chestnut earlier last millennium.

The American Chestnut not so long ago was a dominant tree on the American landscape, immensely valued for its lumber as it was among other things, used for paneling, musical instruments and furniture. Soon after 1900, a fungal bark disease (believed to be of Asian origin) became an epidemic and completely eliminated the tree as a dominant American forest tree.

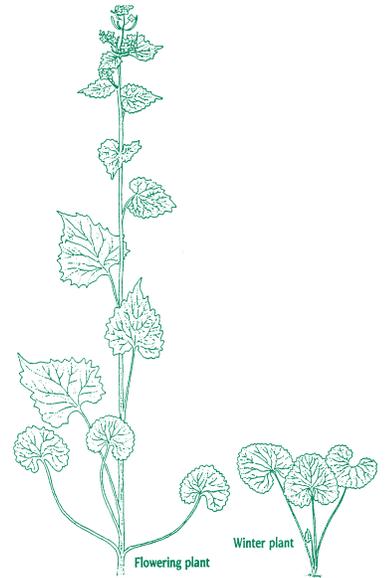
Now before one goes off to roast some chestnuts on an open fire it is important to note that a Horse Chestnut and Buckeye aren't Chestnuts at all. Well, sort of anyway. Let me explain. The American Chestnut, the original chestnut roasted on the open fire is a member of the Beech family (as are Oaks). So you see the American Chestnut being roasted is actually a beech nut. While Buckeyes and Horse Chestnuts are members of the Horse Chestnut family. But the Buckeye's nuts are not the chest-

nuts that used to be roasted on the open fire as they are not related to the American Chestnut. They are actually inedible and are to be avoided. Are we clear on this tough nut to crack?

Since my original sighting I have noticed another location of Buckeyes in the Lake Bluff Forest Preserve and my questions continue.

Lake Bluff's Least Wanted: Garlic Mustard

This is the perfect time of year to become acquainted with the scourge of the forest (no offense to buckthorn). Garlic Mustard, an alien member of the mustard family, has swept through Illinois woodlands in recent years and can be seen blanketing our woods and ravines in early spring. It completely overwhelms and crowds-out native woodland wildflowers (any that the deer happen to miss) until it all but disappears. It grows 1' - 3' tall with large round leaves and small white flowers in many long branching groups at the top of the plant. Pick a garlic mustard to discover the origin of its name. Then pick as many more as possible to help control this infestation.



Garlic mustard is a biennial, with first year plants small and inconspicuous. Second year plants flower in spring, set seeds, then die. It is important to pull the plant (before it sets seed) for several successive years to achieve control and to deplete the seed bank. First year plants are evergreen and should be pulled year round. Hopefully, recognition of the extent of the problem throughout Lake Bluff can result in some progress against this pernicious weed. Only you can prevent garlic mustard!

Attention Eagle Scouts

We have two items for this year's Eagle Scout projects.

- 1) a sign board for the southeast entrance to the Skokie Preserve, similar to Isaac Baruffi's project near JAWA.
- 2) replace the aging wood deck on our observation platform at the Carolyn Goetz Wetlands Preserve. For details contact the LBOLA warmline @ 735 - 8137.

LBOLA 2001 SPRING/SUMMER LAND MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Saturdays 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. Skokie & Lake County Forest Preserve workdays meet at the water plant, (JAWA) parking lot. Call the LBOLA warmline @ 735 - 8137 for additional information.

DATE	LOCATION	ACTIVITY
May 5	South Beach Bluff	OPEN LANDS DAY
May 12 - 7:30 am	Skokie River Preserve (JAWA)	SPRING BIRDWALK
May 12	Skokie River Preserve (JAWA)	RIVER RESCUE DAY
May 19	Lake County Forest Preserve	fence demolition
May 26	Carolyn Goetz Wetlands Preserve	planting/clearing
June 2	Prairie Preserve	planting/clearing
June 16	Lake County Forest Preserve	pull garlic mustard
June 30	Beach Prairie	weeding/erosion repair
July 4	Lake Bluff	JULY 4th PARADE
July 7	Gurney Avenue Ravine	remove logjams/clearing
July 21	Skokie Pres. / Lk. Co. Forest Pres.	oak liberation/clearing
August 4	Crab Tree Farm Cons. Easements	clearing
August 18	County Forest Preserve	oak liberation/clearing
September 1	East/West Bike Path	general workday
September 15	Crab Tree Farm	FALL BIRDWALK
September 15	Lake County Forest Preserve	oak liberation/clearing
September 29	Prairie Preserve	seed collecting
October 6	Skokie Preserve	seed collecting

cut and save




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