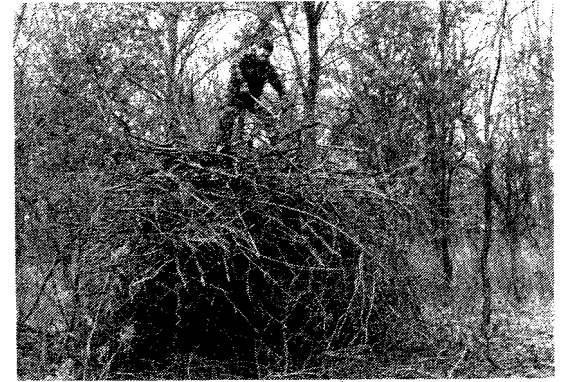


Brush Piles



NBPP's Refrigerator Door Companion

Spring 1995

VSN HONORS NORTH BRANCHERS

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Awards Luncheon given by the Volunteer Service Network of The Nature Conservancy was held on February 19. Our own members were among those honored.

Congratulations and a big thank you to:

Pete Leki

Pete Leki is the co-steward at Sauganash Prairie Grove, a 25-acre prairie/savanna restoration in LaBagh Woods Forest Preserve on Chicago's northwest side. Here is what site steward Larry Hodak has to say about Pete:

"Pete has demonstrated strong initiative from the very beginning and has taken responsibility for work that needs to be done. Whether the task be manual labor at a Sunday workday, leading a workcrew to attack buckthorn brush thickets, organizing a tour for school children, gathering the seed of rare flora, or talking to Forest Preserve staff to get stolen cars removed from the site, Pete embraced the task from beginning to end.

"His 'people skills' are exceptional. Other volunteers are captivated by his obviously sincere goodwill, friendliness, and gentle leadership. Since workdays often involve close cooperation among virtual strangers with widely varying levels of expertise, these attributes are critical to the success of our efforts.

"His botanizing has progressed to an impressive level in the last year. He discovered four new species on the site, including three species of hard-to-key sedges. The research and writing he does for the "Field and Street" column in *The Reader* has impressed me with its depth and reach. His article on purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) presented aspects of the infestation problem that I hadn't even considered in the last dozen years I've struggled to deal with the scourge of this alien weed.

"In short, Pete has done valuable, important work as co-steward, work that would not have been done otherwise, and he has done it in a fashion that has brought joy and delight to those with whom he has been involved. I, personally, have been reinvigorated in my enthusiasm for the volunteer restoration work at Sauganash by my association with Pete Leki and I recommend him for any honors you may see fit to bestow upon him."

Pete is also a volunteer docent, school liaison, and trainer for the Mighty Acorns project; as well as president of the local school council at Waters School.

Bill and Justine Kusner

Two outstanding volunteers who have made important contributions to the work of the North Branch for the past several years are Park Ridge residents Bill and Justine Kusner.

Besides regularly attending workdays, both are ardent supporters of volunteer development, setting up and staffing information tables at various environmental forums. Justine has been an especially forceful advocate for education and youth involvement. Keenly aware of the importance of engaging the next generation's interest in—and support for—natural areas, Justine evidences her strong commitment by serving as liaison for school groups, leading tours and giving slide shows; as a docent in the Mighty Acorns project; and by writing articles to remind us all of the importance of reaching out to the young people who will follow in our footsteps.

Bill has taken on the responsibilities of "Tool Czar" for the North Branch: making sure that all of the equipment is organized and accessible; seeing that damaged or broken tools are repaired; purchasing new ones when needed; and improving sign-out procedures so that the location of tools is known at all times. He put his computer skills to use to produce workday attendance and new volunteer forms. He has also shown commendable initiative in taking the Cook County Forest Preserve's 2-day burn leader training workshop, and is an important participant in the North Branch's burn program.

Bill and Justine also obtained permission to initiate a restoration project at Maine East High School and they work together on its one-acre savanna remnant which caught their eye some years ago. Contacting the principal, putting together a presentation for class, enlisting the participation of science teachers and the biology club, and communicating with groundskeepers were all part of their efforts to preserve and restore one more nature parcel.

Besides being unfailingly dependable and supportive of the North Branch in so many different ways, long-time volunteers Bill and Justine can always be relied on for good ideas and suggestions about how to improve the way we do things. We are fortunate to have these two outstanding volunteers in our ranks.

NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT SPRING WORKDAYS AND ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

The NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT is working to restore and manage the few remaining prairie and oak savanna remnants along the North Branch of the Chicago River in the Cook County Forest Preserves. These areas, once part of a vast grassland ecosystem, are under tremendous pressure from urban development and non-native species. We are working to restore conditions that will allow these natural

SPRING 1995

March 5	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
March 5	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
March 11	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Oxbow Prairie
March 12	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Bunker Hill Prairie
March 12	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Bunker Hill Prairie
March 12	Sunday	7:00 p.m.	Book Group
March 18	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods Prairie
March 19	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Sauganash Prairie Grove
March 19	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
March 25	Saturday	9:30 a.m.	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
March 26	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside Prairie
April 1	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods Prairie
April 2	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
April 2	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
April 8	Saturday	9:30 a.m.	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
April 9	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
April 9	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Harms Woods
April 15	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Flatwoods
April 16 Easter	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods Prairie
April 19	Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Book Group
April 22	Saturday	9:30 a.m.	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
April 23	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
April 29	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Oxbow Prairie
April 30	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
April 30	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
May 6	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods Prairie
May 7	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
May 7	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
May 13	Saturday	9:30 a.m.	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
May 14	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
May 14	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Harms Woods
May 20	Saturday	9:30 a.m.	Somme Woods
May 21	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet Prairie Grove
May 21	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Sauganash Prairie Grove
May 24	Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Book Group
May 27	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Oxbow Prairie
May 28	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Flatwoods
May 28	Sunday	2:00 p.m.	Chiwaukee Prairie Nature Walk
May 28	Sunday	early evening	Brushmeister Barbeque

wild communities to flourish as a permanent part of the metropolitan area.

In the spring we cut brush and plant seeds. Always dress for the weather and bring some water. Sun protection is important. When it's cold we may go out for lunch. The workday hotline is 312-878-3877.

NORTH BRANCH WORKGROUPS

The North Branch workgroups listed below need volunteers. Contact the chairperson for more information or attend a workgroup meeting.

Ecological Management

Jane and John Balaban, 708/679-4289.

Education/Volunteer Development:

Joanne Softcheck, 312/878-3877

Publications/Publicity:

Karen Holland, 312/929-7658.

Science:

Drew Ullberg, 708/304-6972

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPRING CHIWAUKEE PRAIRIE NATURE WALK & BRUSHMEISTER BARBEQUE

Date: Sunday, May 28, 2:00 p.m.
(after the regular workday)

One of the North Branch's most enjoyable traditions has been an annual pilgrimage to Chiwaukee Prairie on Memorial Day to see a dazzling display of spectacular shooting stars in resplendent bloom. Located along the lake at the Illinois/Wisconsin border, Chiwaukee Prairie is The Nature Conservancy's richest and most biologically diverse prairie in Wisconsin—over 400 native plant species have been inventoried there.

However, in a slight break from tradition, this year's trip will be on **Sunday** afternoon, May 28. We will meet at Chiwaukee Prairie at 2:00 p.m. so everyone can attend the Sunday morning and Monday morning and afternoon workdays listed on the Spring schedule in this issue.

After a few hours exploring the site (a lovely place to wander on a pleasant Spring afternoon), we will head south to the "**Brushmeister's Barbecue**" at volunteer Brian Seinfeld's spread in Gurnee. The "**Brushmeister**" (and now newly christened "**Poster Boy**"*) will supply the grill, coals, and hospitality; you bring food and beverage to share.

Memorial Day

May 29

Monday

9:00 a.m.

Somme Woods

Directions

BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE (Buffalo Grove)—Turn north on Johnson Drive, which is the first light west of Milwaukee on Lake-Cook Road. Meet in the Cryovac lot, the first driveway on the west side of Johnson Drive. The prairie is under the Commonwealth Edison power lines.

BUNKER HILL/OXBOW (Chicago)—Meet at the Bunker Hill Forest Preserve parking lot on the west side of Caldwell Ave. about 1/4 mile north of Devon Ave.

EMILY OAKS NATURE CENTER (Skokie)—From intersection of Skokie Blvd. and Howard St., go east on Howard to first residential street, Knox. Go north on Knox to Brummel. Turn left on Brummel and go one block to Nature Center parking lot.

GLENBROOK HIGH SCHOOL (Northbrook)—North of Willow Rd. on the west side of Shermer Road. Enter the parking lot at the north driveway and park by the tennis courts.

HARMS WOODS (Glenview)—Meet at Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Rd., just south of Glenview Rd.

MIAMI-INDIGO (Morton Grove-Niles)—Meet at Miami Woods Prairie Forest Preserve parking lot on the east side of Caldwell Ave., two blocks north of Oakton Ave.

PERKINS WOODS (Evanston)—From I94 exit at Old Orchard Rd., east to Crawford St., south on Crawford to Grant St., east on Grant to Ewing St., site is at the corner of Grant and Ewing.

SAUGANASH PRAIRIE (Chicago)—Meet at the edge of the Forest Preserve along the south side of Bryn Mawr Ave. at Kilbourn Ave. (south of Peterson Ave. and east of Cicero Ave.)

SOMME NATURE PRESERVE (Northbrook)—Meet in the Post Office parking lot, Dundee and Western Avenues.

SOMME PRAIRIE GROVE, WOODS, AND SEDGE MEADOW (Northbrook)—Take Dundee Rd. two miles west from the Edens Expressway to Waukegan Rd. Go north a few hundred feet on Waukegan and meet at the unpaved parking area on the west side of the road.

WATERSMEET/SKOKIE SEDGE MEADOWS (Northfield)—Exit the Edens Expressway at Lake Avenue West. Go west to Wagner Rd., turn north then take Wagner to Winnetka Rd. Go east on Winnetka 3/4 mile. Park on the south side of the street.

WAYSIDE/RR PRAIRIE (Morton Grove)—Meet at Wayside Woods Prairie Forest Preserve parking lot on Lehigh Ave. (a few blocks east of Waukegan Rd. and just north of Dempster Ave.

To contribute to *BrushPiles*.

Your photos and cartoons would look great on these pages. Your features, anecdotes, essays, announcements, requests, poems, comments, and letters are also welcome. To discuss your ideas, call Barbara Rose, 312/248-4817 *before* the deadline. Deadline for the Summer 1995 issue is **May 1** (for June, July, August).

If you plan to join the afternoon nature walk and/or early evening barbecue, please call Joanne (312/878-3877). Call a week or more before the trip to allow time to send a map with directions and other essential information. Those who call will also be notified if there is any change in the plans.

Mark your calendar now and call soon.

SEINFELD IS POSTER CHILD

*The North Branch Prairie Project's own Brushmeister Brian is the cover boy for Evanston Hospital's new fund-raising brochure. Always beautiful, Brian Seinfeld will undoubtedly be an inspiration to all as his surgery and recovery represent the state of the art of modern medicine.

READING GROUP

You do not have to be a regular to attend the North Branch Reading Group; just join us when you can. The question comes up, whatever the selection, can [other] species survive despite burgeoning human populations? Here is the schedule for the early spring months:

March 12: *Reindeer Moon* (discussion leader: Nancy Freehafer) and *Animal Minds* by Donald R. Griffin (discussion leader Barbara Rose)

April 19: *The Ecology of Commerce* by Paul Hawken (discussion leader: Gladys Bryer)

May 24: *Beyond Preservation* by Baldwin (discussion leader: Nancy Freehafer)

We meet at 7:30 p.m. Please call Nancy Freehafer at 312/342-6665 or Barbara Rose at 312/248-4817 for the meeting place and directions.

NATURE READING AND JOURNAL WRITING

Read, write, and reflect on the natural world in a one-day workshop to be held at the Chicago Botanic Gardens. This popular class, taught by Carol LaChappelle, is scheduled on April 29 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The cost is \$54 for members and \$69 for non-members. To register, call the Gardens at 708/835-5440.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

PRAIRIE PROJECTIONS is expanding to include other Great Lakes Basin restoration groups. A *coordinator* who will manage its distribution by communicating with each group and with the publisher twice each year is wanted. This person will be welcomed as a valued member of the Publication Committee. This is a way to participate in restoration work even if you cannot get to workdays. Contact Barbara Rose at 312/248-4817 if you are interested.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR MIGHTY ACORN TRIPS

Help lead small groups of children or with stewardship activities at our sites. Skilled volunteers needed to teach and monitor brush-cutting techniques. Especially needed is help with brush pile building. Children are not allowed on brush piles but need instruction in proper construction, and help in getting the brush up on the pile a la Brushmeister Brian! Call Justine Kusner, 708/825-3835, or Diane Reckless at The Nature Conservancy, 312/346-8166 for time and dates.

Brush Piles Crew

Editing: Leslie Borns, Karen Holland, Barbara Rose, Joanne Softcheck, Chris Urban
Contributors: Jane Balaban, Wiley Buck, Nancy Freehafer, Carol Nelson, Joanne Softcheck
Layout: Kathy and Chuck Lapinsky

CLASSES

VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP NETWORK **The Nature Conservancy** **8 S. Michigan, Suite 900, Chicago, Illinois 60603**

Requirements: These courses are open to active stewards, co-stewards, and monitors in the Volunteer Stewardship Network. Preregistration is required for all classes. To do so, follow the instructions within each course description. Only when no other instructions are given call 312/346-8166 to register.

Butterfly Monitoring Workshop. Since 1987, trained volunteers have been monitoring butterfly populations at natural areas in northern and central Illinois. The data they have collected is proving to be extremely valuable in helping to evaluate the progress of the recovery of restoration sites. The presence or absence of some invertebrate species can be an important indicator of health. Currently nearly fifty sites are being monitored, but more monitors are needed. This workshop is the first step in being trained to participate in this program. To apply write a letter describing your interest to Douglas Taron, Butterfly Monitoring Network coordinator, at The Nature Conservancy. First priority will go to those in the Butterfly Monitoring program. Instructors: Taron and Panzer. Sa Mar. 4, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM. Location: TBA.

Bioengineering Techniques for Stewards. Bioengineering is a newly evolving discipline in which a variety of native plant materials and geotextile products are used to naturally stabilize eroding streambanks, shorelines, and slopes. Randy Stowe of BioTechnical Erosion Control Ltd. will provide background on a variety of techniques that could be implemented by stewards at conservation sites. Includes classroom instruction and field demonstrations. Sa Apr. 8, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM. Leroy Oakes Forest Preserve in St. Charles, IL. Limit: 25. To register: Betty Gathings 312/346-8166.

Wetland Hydrology. Join Ed Collins, restoration ecologist for McHenry County Conservation District, and Jim Anderson, natural resource manager for Lake County Forest Preserve, to learn how hydrology functions within our wetland ecosystems. Learn how hydrology moves through wetlands and how disturbed hydrology impacts natural areas. The trip will include visits to a couple of different wetland areas to illustrate various aspects of hydrology. Bring a lunch and appropriate clothes and footwear to muck around in wetlands. Sa May 20, 9:00 AM. Bates Fen, McHenry County. To register: Betty Gathings 312/346-8166.

Landscape Genealogy. This day long session will focus on one of the most critical, yet often overlooked, elements of successful natural areas management: researching and interpreting land-use history. Participants will be introduced to many resources rich in practical information for managers, including sequential air photos, drainage district information, federal land survey notes, interior section notes, diaries, agricultural census records, tract indexing, early plat books, travelers' journals, soil maps, and settlement gazetteers. After lunch, participants will try their hands at interpreting 150 years of human/land interaction on specific sites. Lists of sources for land use history in the six county area will be distributed to all participants. Instructor: Collins. March 18, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM. Camp Sagawau. Limit: 25. To register: Betty Gathings 312/346-8166.

Plant Families Field Identification. Participants will learn characteristics of several plant families by examining representative species in the field. With the help of written materials, specific characteristics of some of the more common plant families will be identified. This class is designed to be helpful for beginners and for those who are interested in a formal approach to identifying plants. Bring a hand lens, your favorite reference, mosquito repellent, and a sack lunch. Instructor: Anderson. Limit: 30. Sa Jun. 10, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM. Lake Co. Forest Preserve headquarters, 2000 N. Milwaukee Ave., Libertyville (NE corner of Route 21 and Route 137). To register: Betty Gathings 312/346-8166.

Rare Plant Monitoring. Volunteers are monitoring populations of endangered plants in northeastern Illinois. The methods used by plant monitors vary, depending on the size of the population at a site, the growth habit of the particular species, and the experience of the monitor. For small populations, every individual plant is usually counted. For larger populations, transects are often established so the exact same area is studied each year. This will allow comparison of the numbers over a period of time to identify any trends, thereby providing insight into the health of the population. The primary requirements to get started as a plant monitor are simple—a genuine concern for our native populations of rare plants and a willingness to spend some time in the field. If anyone is interested in the plant monitoring program, call Duane Heaton at 708/358-5856, evenings or weekends.

WHAT'S A TREE WORTH?

A lot more than we thought! According to Doug McClaren, a University of Kentucky forestry specialist, a fifty-year-old tree produces nearly \$200,000 in value not counting fruit, nuts, or wood. At today's values:

Oxygen	\$31,250
Air-pollution control	\$62,000
Erosion control and soil development	\$31,250
Water recycling	\$37,500
Animal habitat	\$31,250

Source: *The Furrow: Corn Belt Edition*, November-December 1994

DEAR MR. FULLER

When steward-in-training Kent Fuller found that the beautiful cardinal flower growing in Harms Woods had been picked, he wrote a letter to the editor of his local paper. The editor, recognizing the implications of someone picking a rare prairie plant, ran the letter as an editorial. An alert teacher, recognizing its

educational value, invited Kent to speak to her Glenview fifth graders. The students, appreciating the loveliness of the cardinal flower and the other prairie and savanna plants, thanked Fuller profusely. We think you will appreciate their thanks.

11/3/94

Dear Uncle Kent,
 Thank you so much for taking the time to come and talk to our class. I really liked the slides you showed of flowers. I learned lots of names for flowers like the cardinal plant, brown and black eyed susan, and the rattlesnake master. Thanks again for spending your time to talk to us.



rattlesnake master

Sincerely,
 Amanda Barry

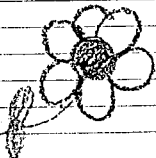
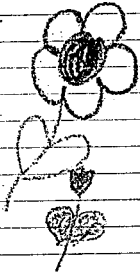
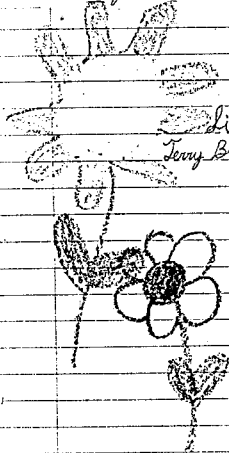


cornflower



Dear Mr. Fuller,
 Thank you for coming to my classroom. I really had a ball or you can say a blast. My favorite part was when you told us about the Red Cardinal flower. It's really mean for someone to take a beautiful flower like that one. It really takes guts to come to a classroom and talk about flowers or something like that. Double thanks!

Sincerely,
 Tony Braband



11/3/94

Dear Mrs. Fuller,
 Thank you for coming to our classroom and telling us about the rare cardinal plant. My favorite part was when you were showing us the different slides of flowers because they captured my attention. Thanks again for showing us the importance of saving rare and native plants.



I ❤️
 THE PRAIRIE!
 My favorite plant was:

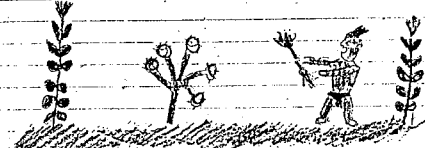
Sincerely,
 Fathya Eldermann

The Cardinal Plant

11/3/94

Dear Mr. Fuller,
 Thank you for coming to our classroom and explaining stuff about all different kinds of flowers. My favorite part about the presentation is when you showed us the pictures about the cardinal plant. I thought it was really interesting about the height and how the plant's seed pods pop up to 6 ft. I also thought the rattlesnake plant was interesting. I especially liked that you got the Indians to save near the rattlesnake plant because they thought it was the master of the rattlesnake. Thanks again for coming to Mrs. Little and Mrs. Barber's classroom.

Sincerely,
 Justin Dejeu



COYOTE PROJECT GOES REGIONAL

The Coyote Project is becoming a regional project. New volunteers stepped forward at the December 10th Stewards' Conference and elsewhere. Each one has agreed to collect coyote scat at their adopted site to contribute to a year-long regional diet study.

The new sites in Cook County are:

1. Wayside Woods/Railroad Prairie, adopted by Bob Bluestone
2. Poplar Creek
3. McNaughry Spring in Palos
4. Green Lake Savannah
5. Dam No. 2 Woods
6. Sundrop Prairie

Sites in other counties:

1. Lake in The Hills Fen, McHenry County (pending approval)
2. Fourth Lake Fen and Sun Lake Preserve, Lake County
3. Churchill Prairie, DuPage County
4. Brightway Prairie, Will County

Veteran members Rose Golembieski, Tim McAllister, Chuck Schulz, and Bill and Justine Kusner are continuing work at Somme.

Scat analysis does not reveal whether an animal was dead or alive when the coyote(s) got to it. We would like to know this information, especially when it comes to deer. Anyone finding a dead deer, adult or fawn, can help tremendously by photographing the animal, especially the neck area. A neck with hemorrhaging is strong evidence that something bit the deer while it was still alive.

Permit Holder:
The Nature Conservancy
8 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60603

North Branch Prairie Project
P.O. Box 74
Northbrook, IL 60065

**ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED**

*The North Branch
Prairie Project is
a cooperative effort
involving The Nature
Conservancy, the
Chicago Audubon
Society, and the Sierra
Club, Chicago Group.*

*We manage these sites
as volunteers for the
Forest Preserve District
of Cook County and
the Volunteer
Stewardship Network.*

Late winter to spring is a critical time for the reproductive success of coyotes. Coyotes have formed mating pairs and are searching for den sites to have ready when the pups will be born—around April 15th. If a den site is disturbed in late winter, the coyotes may not use it; if disturbed when they have pups, coyotes are likely to abandon the den and possibly the pups, too.

New volunteers are wanted. We especially need help with editing a newsletter, organizing meetings, and taking phone calls. If interested, contact Wiley Buck at 612/624-3785 or 612/225-1422.

A BOTTLE OF WINE, A LOAF OF BREAD AND—US!

The abundance of food, the warmth and hospitality of hosts Kathy and Chuck Lapinsky, and the delight of guests with each other's company added up to a fine celebration at the 1995 Annual Potluck Dinner.

North Branchers acknowledged the outstanding contributions of four members with a gift. Receiving the beautiful new addition of *Kane County Wild Plants & Natural Areas*, by Dick Young were:

Rinda West for organizing Oakton Community College students to conduct coyote studies at Somme.

Wiley Buck (in absentia) for his leadership of the Coyote Project.

Kathy Lapinsky for bringing to life the spectacular *Sixteenth Year Report*.

Barbara Rose for editing the extraordinary publication, *Brush Piles*, and for being our treasurer, too.

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 6632
Chicago, Illinois