

FNA News March/April 2013



Website: www.fermilabnaturalareas.org

Blog: fermilabnaturalareas.blogspot.com



Contact us at fermilabnaturalareas@gmail.com or 630-840-4845

Fermilab Natural Areas (FNA), is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit tax-exempt corporation formed in 2006:

- * to study and restore Fermilab's unique combination of ecological communities
- * to inform and enrich local residents' knowledge of Fermilab (FNAL), and
- * to contribute to the preservation of global biodiversity.

A Message from FNA President Rod Walton fermilabnaturalareas@gmail.com or 630-840-2565

Greetings! This edition of the FNA newsletter gives ample evidence of the difference we can make in caring for the natural areas here at Fermilab. Enjoy articles by board members, volunteers, and stewards reporting on their activities. Accept our invitation for all FNA members and friends to start the year off right by volunteering for activities around Earth Day, Arbor Day and other opportunities. Spring is just around the corner, so plan to come out to Fermilab and join the effort! As usual, if you have any questions or comments for FNA, please [email](mailto:fermilabnaturalareas@gmail.com) or call me at 630-840-2565.

FNA Calendar of Events

Monday habitat workdays: **March 18, & 25, April 1, 8, 15, & 22** (last one for spring! Meet at Bison Savanna, see below.) 1 pm to 3 pm. Meet in the [Lederman Science Center](#) parking lot (except April 22) at 1:00 pm. We will go to a work site from there.

Third Tuesday workdays with the Education Center stewards: **March 19, April 16, May 21** 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm, meet in the [Lederman Science Center](#) parking lot.

Thursday habitat workdays: **Mar 21, & 28, April 4, 11, 18, 25, May 2, etc** - 9:00 am to noon. Join stewards Dave Giese & Jacques Hooymans at the [Lederman Science Center](#) parking lot.

Mar 16 [Habitat restoration work day](#). 9 am to noon. Meet in the [Lederman Center](#) parking lot. Info at: http://www.fnal.gov/pub/about/campus/ecology/prairie/habitat_restoration.html

Mar 21 FNA Board of Directors meeting, Roads & Grounds Site 37, 6:00 pm.

April 4 Fermilab [ELM Committee](#) meeting, Wilson Hall, One East, noon.

April 18 ["Third Thursday" Fermilab Lunchtime Clean-up](#), 11:45 am *sharp* to 1:30 pm. Meet outside Wilson Hall's east side; shuttle bus & all cleaning gear provided, picnic lunch served afterwards.

April 20 [Habitat restoration work day](#). 9 am to noon. Meet in the [Lederman Center](#) parking lot. Info at: http://www.fnal.gov/pub/about/campus/ecology/prairie/habitat_restoration.html

April 22 Bison Savanna shrub planting. Meet at noon. Plant bare-root native hazelnut & plum saplings to start our *new* restoration. Follow signs from Pine St. to Bison Savanna. (Park on Road "C", [west side of buffalo farm](#).)

April 23 Spring nature walk. Learn about wildflowers, birds, & butterflies. Bring your binoculars! Meet at noon in the [Prairie Interpretive Trail](#) parking lot, on westbound Pine Street.

April 24 Prairie seeding. Spread a diverse mixture of native seed into our prairies. Meet in the [center of the Main Ring](#) at noon. Parking, picnic tables, and comfort station available!

April 25 Fermilab ESH&Q Earth Day Fair, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm, Wilson Hall atrium.

May 1 Arbor Day planting, 11:30 am to 1:30 pm (*rain date is May 2*). [Batavia & "B" roads](#). All shrubs, some tools, professional help, & lunch provided. See article on page 2, and <http://www.fnal.gov/pub/about/campus/ecology/prairie/arbor.html>.

May 2 Fermilab [ELM Committee](#) meeting, Wilson Hall, One East, noon.

Please watch your email, [FNA Blog](#), or [Facebook](#) for last-minute changes or additional events.

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T. Peterson

FNA's Earth Week and Arbor Day Festivities at Fermilab *Ryan Campbell, FNA/Fermilab*

Earth Week, starting Monday April 22nd, at Fermilab has become quite a big deal! This year Fermilab Natural Areas is sponsoring some great events. Consider participating in one or more of the following:

April 22rd Bison Savanna shrub planting, be a part of history! We will be planting small, bare-root saplings of hazelnut and American plum to kick-start this habitat restoration project. Follow the signs to the [Bison Savanna \(along Road "C"\)](#) from the Pine Street entrance. Meet at Noon.

April 23rd Spring Nature walk, learn about wildflowers, migrating songbirds, and butterflies. Bring your binoculars. Meet at the [Prairie Interpretive Trail](#) parking lot, westbound Pine Street, at noon.

April 24th Spread a diverse mixture of native seed into our prairies. Meet in the middle of the [Main Ring](#) at Noon. (Same location as prairie harvest.) Parking, picnic tables, and a port-a-potty are available.

This year marks a change to Fermilab's traditional **Arbor Day**: no trees!

After last year in the Fermilab Village (to replace ash trees lost to Emerald Ash Borer) we return on **May 1st** to the "northwest" [Arbor Day site](#) to expand the native shrub layer with hazelnut, nannyberry viburnum, and American plum.

We couldn't do it without you, so please join us on **Wednesday, May 1st** any time between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. (Rain date is May 2nd.) Bring gloves and a shovel, and wear boots. Volunteers should carpool if possible and park along Batavia Road near the intersection of [B Road and Batavia Road](#). We will be set up nearby with picnic tables and grills. Come to the head table, sign in, and get started! Helpers and some tools will be available. A hot dog lunch will be provided for participants, sponsored by Fermi Research Alliance. See you there!

Why are we (and you) planting shrubs and not trees? Native shrublands were once a significant component to Illinois ecosystems. Fermilab and FNA are doing their part to help create the native shrublands so important to wildlife, especially birds of conservation concern (see: <http://habitatproject.org/birds/shrublandblitz.html>). If you have enjoyed hiking the 1.25 mile Savanna Loop, which is a new northward extension to the Margaret Pearson Interpretive Trail, then you know this year's Arbor Day area. This site is essentially a grassland with young trees planted throughout. Some of the trees are now, however, getting to be a good size, especially in the first areas planted by volunteers in the 1990's. Two years ago FNA volunteers and Fermilab employees finished filling in the Arbor Day site with transplanted native trees (oaks, hickories, and walnuts). With your help, this year's Arbor Day is the perfect opportunity to enhance the native shrub layer around those trees.

Butterfly Monitoring Training Workshops

This spring, Tom Peterson will host two local Saturday morning butterfly monitoring classes:

Saturday, March 30, 10:00 a.m. to noon at Fermilab's [Lederman Science Center](#). This is a beginners' butterfly monitoring and identification class that spends about 45 minutes covering when, where, how, and why we monitor butterflies in the Chicago region. The rest of the class is devoted to viewing photographs of the 20, or so, most common local butterflies, discussing their habits, and how to identify them.

Saturday, April 13, 10:00 a.m. to noon in Fermilab's [Wilson Hall](#), room 1 North. Beginner & intermediate-level refresher class. This class follows a similar pattern of the beginners class, with more time spent reviewing butterfly identifications with emphasis on some of the more difficult butterflies to identify.

Although these classes are intended for people who may be interested in becoming, or already are, members of the [Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network](#) (IBMN), pre-registered visitors are also welcome! For registration details, and directions to Fermilab, please visit the IBMN workshop website: http://www.bfly.org/training_workshops.html.

The FNA Annual Meeting *Jolie Macier, FNA/Fermilab*

More than twenty-five members turned out for our Fermilab Natural Areas' general membership meeting on the snowy evening of February 7th. At FNA's 6th annual meeting, Rod Walton provided an overview of 2012 activities, Ryan Campbell highlighted the essential contribution of steward and volunteer activities and Jolie Macier summarized the fiscal standing of the organization. FNA ended 2012 with more than \$10,000 of donations, with about half coming from employees of Fermilab or the Department of Energy, and half from members of the community. The final portion of the business meeting included election for the Board of Directors and Officers, with Dave Shemanske and Ryan Campbell being newly-elected and Rod Walton, Evalyn Campbell and Marlene Rosecrans being re-elected.

Following the business meeting, Dr. Doug Taron, of the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, presented the Keynote Address, "The Wonders of [Bluff Spring Fen](#)." Taron highlighted seasonal as well as management transitions at the Fen, a unique area in southeast Elgin where Taron has worked as a volunteer for more than twenty-five years.

Our Time at the Science Open House *Betsy Zinser, FNA*

FNA had a great Sunday at the Fermilab Family Science Open House on February 10th. [Fermilab Friends of Science Education](#) estimate that more than 3000 visitors attended. Families from all over the area came to our table learning about "smelly" prairie seeds, and our organization. Paula Lambertz, Rod Walton (*photo at right*) and I spoke with kids of all ages about the many beautiful places to visit within Fermilab. Many visitors were unaware that these treasures are available daily to the public, or that they could participate in events such as seed collection days. We helped spread the word about all FNA has to offer, and hope that you will also spread the FNA word whenever you can!



Volunteers & Fermilab Staff Provide Nesting Facilities for Local Breeding Birds *Dave Spleha, FNA*

When one initially thinks of artificial housing for birds, bluebird houses typically come to mind. Throughout Chicagoland, I would guess this is the most common type of birdhouse in use, and we certainly have our share at Fermilab. In this article, I will discuss housing for some of the larger of Fermilab's breeding birdlife. More specifically, how local volunteers, working with various members of Fermilab's staff, have helped to provide many of these structures, and how some of these nesting facilities are already reaping benefits for their target species.

Our first example is the premier nesting species within the Lab for the last four years: the Ospreys (a State Endangered Species) which have nested on an unused power pole in the Main Injector Ring. This pair started as a young, apparently inexperienced, couple of birds that have continually worked to improve the nest on the platform, and have produced eight young in this four-year period. With this success as a motive, a new platform was installed last summer in another location, on the east side of the site [in Nepese Marsh](#). It was constructed and installed by Lab employees Tom Eggleston and Dave Shemanske. To our surprise, a second pair of Osprey were found on this new platform a few months later. We hope that they return for this coming breeding season!

Fermilab has had a number of American Kestrel boxes throughout the Lab for many years, with varying success. Recently Tim Wiley, a local Eagle Scout applicant, inquired about producing some nest boxes for use in the Lab as his Eagle Scout Project. Among the extensive requirements for becoming a Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America, the applicant must perform a service project to benefit his community. I was pleased to work with Tim in planning designs and suggesting locations for the boxes he fabricated. Tim went well above the bar in producing four each of Wood Duck and Kestrel boxes, and three Barn Owl boxes. These boxes were installed in various locations around the Lab. Recently we spotted an American Kestrel perched atop one of the boxes near the buffalo feeders. We're hoping that this coming breeding season will find more of these boxes occupied.



Finally, some information about the owl nest platforms. Great Horned Owls do not make their own nests. Typically they utilize old stick nests and cavities in trees, seldom if ever, improving on the structure. Other nest sites that the owls sometimes select are manmade structures, from old baskets to flat platforms with several sticks on the surface. Last winter, volunteer Bob Mathieu constructed several owl platforms for the Lab. These were installed by Roads & Grounds employees Martin Valenzuela and Bob Lootens (retired), with FNA Steward Dave Giese (as were most of the other nest boxes mentioned). Great Horned Owls are one of the earliest nesting species in North America. One of these new platforms, inside the Main Ring Savanna, is now occupied by one of these early nesters (*photo at left*).

It's exciting to follow these artificial nesting facilities from concept to construction, and installation to utilization. It is especially exciting when the occupants range from common species like the Great Horned Owl, to the uncommon American Kestrel and the state endangered Osprey. Even more importantly is the cooperation that has taken place between volunteers and Fermilab staff that has made these structures become a reality.

D. Spleha

Stewardship at Owl's Nest Woods *Brian McQuaid, FNA*

Owl's Nest Woods is a small woodland located a short distance southwest of the Batavia Road entrance to Fermilab. The plant community consists primarily of common native species like White Trout Lily and Virginia Waterleaf growing under a canopy of mature Bur Oak and Shagbark Hickory trees. Invasive species such as Common Buckthorn and Bush Honeysuckle are abundant in the woodland, while Reed Canary Grass and Crown Vetch dominate adjacent areas.

A prescribed burn conducted in Spring of 2012 signaled a renewed commitment to management of this area. A subsequent inventory of plant species revealed 57 native species inhabiting the site. Control of invasive plant species involving mowing and herbicide applications was performed throughout the growing season, both within and adjacent to the woodland. Seed of 30 native species not currently found on the site was introduced this year.

In addition to ongoing monitoring and weed control, future objectives for Owl's Nest Woods include creating a native buffer around the perimeter, planting native shrubs in and around the woodland, and encouraging the establishment of young oaks and hickories in adjacent areas.

"Plants of Concern" Workshops

Plants of Concern is a rare plant monitoring program coordinated through the Chicago Botanical Garden. POC will hold monitoring skills workshops in April, at various locations. Please see their website at www.plantsofconcern.org.

For Sale by FNA Call 630-840-4845, or go online to see all our items and order:
<http://www.fermilabnaturalareas.org/shop.html>



It's Spring! Time for **rain barrels** and our **Spring Sale!** Assembled by us, these recycled food-grade plastic barrels have an overflow connection on top, a spigot with hose bib on the bottom, and metal mesh covering the big hole in the removable lid. Barrels usually come in black, brown, or terra-cotta, but other colors may be available (please call). We'll also include 3 concrete blocks to use as a stand.

Special Spring Sale price of \$65.

Tan baseball-style caps with our embroidered logo, made in the USA of sturdy cotton twill material, with adjustable Velcro strap. Only \$12 for FNA members, \$15 for non-members.



FNA long-sleeved or short-sleeved t-shirts are natural organic, with our logo printed in front, web address across the back. Short-sleeved tees are \$15, long-sleeved are \$18. Sizes from Small to XXL.

Membership/Donations

<http://www.fermilabnaturalareas.org/membership.html> by U.S. Mail or online

Help us enhance Fermilab's ecology. Members receive the FNA Newsletter via email, are invited to special events, and get a discount on FNA merchandise. FNA is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization. All donations to FNA are tax deductible, and can be made in memory or honor of a friend or loved one.

Fermilab employees can donate online via the [Employee Self Service website](#).

Benefactor	\$2,500 and up	Sponsor	\$100
Patron	\$1,000	Contributor	\$50
Supporter	\$500	Member	\$25
Donor	\$250	Student/Youth	\$15

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Thank you!  **Fermilab
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