

# Bluffviews

a quarterly newsletter by Clifftop

July, 2014

Vol. 4, no. 3

## Money Doesn't Grow on Trees, BUT: It CAN Sprout from the Dead Roots of Bush Honeysuckle!

By Joann Fricke

Shortly after I was elected Clifftop Membership Chair, I participated in an on-line seminar from which I hoped to gain insights into how to grow our membership. It was interesting to hear the ideas offered by the moderators and other participants but one thing that sticks in my mind from that seminar was the advice to solicit contributions from members four times a year. I'm sure I am not the only one who receives frequent requests for charitable donations, as I also am sure I am not alone in finding them to be a bit of a nuisance. My thoughts on this were in agreement with those of the entire Clifftop Board of Directors: that I didn't want to be signing my name to solicitations on behalf of Clifftop multiple times a year. On the other hand...

The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) has awarded Clifftop an eighteen-month Community Stewardship Challenge Grant. You may recall that ICECF contributed significant grant monies to purchase the White Rock Nature Preserve and White Rock Land & Water Reserve near Valmeyer and, most recently, the Wightman Subterranean Nature Preserve near Renault. ICECF also provided much of the funding to permanently preserve and protect Salt Lick Point Land & Water Reserve. The Community Stewardship Challenge Grant is a pilot program and, if the results are successful, ICECF may continue to award stewardship funds to organizations like Clifftop. The grant consists of three components:

1. **Cash Donations:** \$3 for every \$1 of actual cash contributed toward a stewardship fund for use at the White Rock Nature Preserve, up to \$21,000.
2. **Equipment:** 80% of the amount paid for individual stewardship equipment to be used to improve natural habitat at White Rock NP, up to a maximum of \$5,000.
3. **Volunteer Labor:** An outright gift of \$4,000 for a minimum of 400 hours of volunteer work completed at White Rock NP.

The board of directors was initially hesitant to ask for additional contributions from our supportive and generous members. But, as the board quickly realized that ICECF was offering to triple donations and also was offering "free money" for the hard work our volunteers do, we decided this was an opportunity we couldn't pass up. All we have to do is amass \$7,000 in the next 18 months to receive an additional \$21,000; if we can raise another \$1,000, we can purchase \$5,000 in new equipment (more prescribed burn gear, perhaps). And, our volunteers already contribute so many stewarding hours to White Rock that it should be a snap to log 400 hours for yet another \$4,000. What a deal!

Clifftop applied for this challenge grant so we can complete initial restoration – primarily control of bush honeysuckle – on the 307 acre White Rock Nature Preserve. With the support of Natural Resources Conservation Service cost-share programs, we’ve been able to hire contractors for bush honeysuckle control, brush clearing on prairies and glades and tree thinning to bring sunlight, and wildflowers, back to the forest floor on the 168-acre White Rock Land & Water Reserve and on a large part of the Nature Preserve. Volunteers greatly enhanced these efforts by working with us on last year’s prescribed burn, stacking and burning cedar trees, brush clearing at the prairies, and helping collect and distribute native grass and flower seeds. Because of changes in federally-funded programs we have not been able to finish the important work of controlling bush honeysuckle on a portion of the Nature Preserve.



With the implementation of the Community Stewardship Challenge Grant Program, the good folks at Clean Energy have stood up to help us with this vitally important stewardship work. Our success in meeting – maybe even exceeding – their challenge to Clifftop will mean we can finish bush honeysuckle control work at White Rock Nature Preserve.



If you would like to support this effort, please complete the form found on page 10. Please note on the memo line of your check that this is a donation for the stewardship challenge grant. For those of you who have indicated your willingness to volunteer with us, please watch your email inboxes for opportunities to contribute toward the 400 hours of stewardship needed to gain that additional \$4,000. We are grateful for all you have done in the past and hope we can count on your continued support of our mission long into the future.

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Please watch our website at <http://www.clifftopalliance.org/upcoming-events/> for more information on these upcoming events:



Geology of the Bluff Lands Seminar  
Saturday, August 2, 1 – 3 p.m.

Hunting for Conservation Seminar  
Saturday, September 13, 1-3 p.m.



## Re-discovering the Bluffs

By Lori Brutton

Growing up in the bluffs, I never truly appreciated the beauty until my family came across the trails at Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve. My husband and I, along with our two daughters, have been walking the trails for two years and have gained a new love for the rarity of living on prairie bluffs. We walk all three trails on a regular basis and have had many fun family hours on our hikes. We all agree that there is something unique to each of the trails and we discover something new each time we walk together.

My favorite time to go with the girls is early mornings. We love walking Johnson Trail with the shadows and mist. We have one area that we say is the fairy forest, where the sunbeams shine from behind the bluffs in the early morning making the bluffs and foliage look as if it is mystical. We even got excited when we started seeing the tiny opaque mushrooms growing in the area, assuring us that it truly was the home of fairies. Our older daughter says that the area along Johnson with the large rocks that have fallen from the bluffs is where she imagines dinosaurs walking along. We love to imagine being underwater knowing this is where the Mississippi once flowed.



Photo courtesy Dennis Knobloch

Our younger daughter loves the Reserve so much, she insisted that we have her senior pictures taken there. There is so much history to the old quarry structures that still stand near the parking area that it is intriguing to look around and think about people working busily there in the past. *(Editor's note: The photo at left shows some of the men that worked at the Columbia Quarry in the 1940's. The workers pictured had just completed a Red Cross safety class. The large building on the right in the background is the one still standing near the reserve today.)*

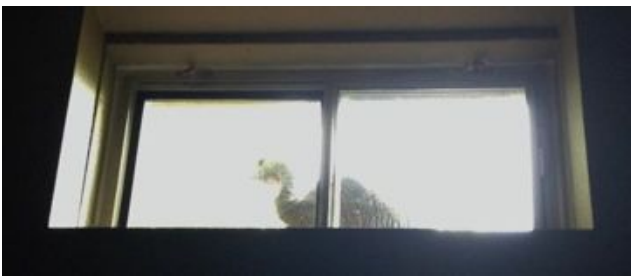


Each trail holds a special memory for our family. My husband and I participated in the trail run just this past October. Actually, I use the word run loosely for myself since I came in last place! (See photo at right.) However, there is something to be said for the work we both did to prepare for those killer hills and slippery slopes. We have walked the trails many times and in all different types of weather. We love to take others with us who have never experienced the beauty of the bottoms from the lookout points. Our family will continue to tout the trails to everyone we can and will continue to make memories as a family in our own quiet place in the bluffs.

# The Turkey Saga Continues

By Joann Fricke

In the April issue of Bluffviews, I wrote about the rafter of turkeys that visited our house every day and how the large number in the group would soon diminish as nests were built, eggs laid and poults hatched. Not long after publication, that is exactly what happened. Yet, each day we continue to see a pair of hens who like to clean up the seeds on the ground under our bird feeders and scrounge for bugs in the grass. About three weeks ago, we caught our first glimpse of a poult, barely visible at its mother's feet in the photo at right. (No, they are not caged. I had to snap the picture through the balusters on our porch.) Recently, we observed the duo again in the back yard—the youngster happily flapping wings and jumping around his mother. Alas, just two days later, the hen was pacing back and forth in our side yard, looking desperately into the woods, as if to say, "Where are you, little one?" We feared the worst, but I am delighted to say that mother and child, who is growing rapidly, have been sighted several times since and are doing well.



On more than one occasion, as I sit pecking on the computer in our basement office, one of the hens comes pecking at the window directly above the monitor, as seen at left. I suppose she sees her reflection and is defending her territory, but I like to think she is just checking up on me. As if she knew I was writing about her, my turkey friend has just arrived as I type this, lightly pecking a greeting to me.

When we moved to our bluff home, I was warned of deer eating daylilies and hostas, and although I have observed them nibbling daylily foliage and flower buds occasionally, they have not decimated my flower beds. But have you ever seen a turkey nip off the end of a daylily bud? Sometimes she eats it, other times she spits it to the ground. The flower still blooms, but it sure looks funny. The trio on the right waddled through our yard one recent morning then decided to preen on the fence. A day without a turkey or deer sighting is disappointing. We enjoy our wildlife "pets." And we don't have to worry about who will take care of them if we take a vacation!



*Editor's note: Just before this newsletter was published, mama and baby wandered close enough to the house to be photographed again. You can see how Jr. has grown.*

# Science at the Farm Update

Numerous scientific research studies are underway or are planned at the new property.

Drs. Ed Heske and Joe Merritt of the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) at the University of Illinois-Urbana have completed bat surveys in the cave. The survey was funded by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) State Wildlife Grant.

With funding from a National Great Rivers Research and Education Center grant, Dr. Steve Taylor, INHS, Sam Panno, Illinois State Geologic Survey (ISGS), and Dr. Walt Kelly of the Illinois State Water Survey and additional collaborators, including Bob Weck, Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC), and Clifftop, have completed the initial baseline groundwater quality study of the cave's recharge basin. A full report is in development; the results are captivating as is the research methodology, which included testing for bacteria and for a range of pharmaceutical and personal care products. Clifftop plans to host a public seminar on this study in 2015.

Dr. Chris Phillips and Andy Kuhn, both from INHS, have completed surveys of amphibians, insects, and some surface water quality testing at seven sinkhole ponds on the farm. The project is funded by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and their report of initial findings is forthcoming.



Photo courtesy Chad McCain

Aaron Addison, Director of Geospatial Information Systems at Washington University and a highly-credited, internationally-recognized cave surveyor and mapper, is leading a multi-year effort to remap Fogelpole Cave using up-to-date laser technology. Experienced cave mappers from caving clubs (called "grottos") in Missouri and Illinois and some Clifftop volunteers are assisting. The survey began on June 14th and outings will be conducted one weekend a month or so for several years. In the photo at left, Aaron Addison does some preliminary sketching, while Clifftop volunteer Kari Sabrie watches. Team member Ray Shaw is on a ladder below them.

Sam Panno, ISGS, is continuing a study of speleothems in the cave to determine major earthquakes of the New Madrid Seismic Zone. The study is quite fascinating, and, when you think about it, quite ingenious. Stalagmites form on the floors of caves, like upside down icicles, from mineral-laden water droplets coming off the ceiling. A major earthquake rattles rocks around and changes the trajectory of the dripping water drops and thus the form and shape of the stalagmite. Thin sections of the stalagmite then are tested with calibrated uranium-thorium methodology and so yield accurate date ranges of when an earthquake occurred. For those of you who have been around the county awhile it will come as no surprise to you that we've had major earthquakes in 1917, 1811-12 (the big one), 1450, 900, 300, 1620 BC, 2244 BC and so on.

Dr. Jerry Lewis, in contract with US Fish and Wildlife Service, is conducting an Illinois Cave Amphipod survey in the cave system. The amphipod is a federally-listed species and is found exclusively in the Fogelpole Cave system. In the photo on the next page, you can see Illinois Cave Amphipods mating.



Photo courtesy Dr. Jerry Lewis

Several additional research studies on the property are about to begin with the University of Illinois and the INHS in the lead. These include: grasshoppers and crickets (Dr. Sam Heads); butterflies and moths (Dr. Michael Jeffords and Sue Post, both formerly of INHS); in-cave insects (Dr. Steve Taylor); a paleontological in-cave survey (Chris Wigda - Illinois State Museum); ants and beetles (Dr. Steve Taylor and Andy Suarez, U of I); and a bee - pollinator study (Dr. Alexandra Harmon-Threatt, U of I).

Finally, Clifftop members are doing their part, with volunteers conducting plant inventories and, soon, bird surveys on the property. Additional Clifftop volunteers may be welcomed to participate as citizen scientists in

several of these projects, so, please let us know if you'd like to learn how to survey for butterflies, grasshoppers, birds...or, even, a project of your own design that would fit within the overall efforts to discover the wonders of the site as restoration to native land cover proceeds. As final research study reports become available, we will post the results on our website, and, where possible, arrange with the researchers to give special presentations at future Clifftop public seminars.



## Photo Gallery



### INPC Meeting

Through the joint efforts of Dr. Steve Taylor, Illinois Natural History Survey, left, Dr. Carl DauBach, Clifftop Executive Director, above, and Debbie Newman, Natural Areas Preservation Specialist with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, right, the Wightman Subterranean Nature Preserve received provisional approval by the Commissioners of the INPC, below, on May 6, 2014.



To view a photo album of this meeting, please visit our Facebook page at:

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=523926604379294&id=162533970518561](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=523926604379294&id=162533970518561)





## SEMO Conservation Camps

For two weeks in late May, students from Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO), majoring in various fields of biology, descended on the bluffs in Monroe County to learn what conservation "field work" is all about. At White Rock Nature Preserve, the first contingent of students was joined by Clifftop volunteers to continue clearing work on a glade, above photo. In addition, the students did some bush honeysuckle removal at both White Rock and Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve and prairie restoration at White Rock. Week two featured a smaller group, but no less enthusiasm was noted. In the photo below, left, the students worked in Newman Prairie at SLP and installed a new boot brush station at White Rock, right.

To view a photo album of these camps, please visit our Facebook page at:

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=529966460441975&id=162533970518561](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=529966460441975&id=162533970518561)



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Frog  
Frolic  
5/31/14



To view a photo album of this event, please visit our Facebook page at:

[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=533615203410434&id=162533970518561](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=533615203410434&id=162533970518561)

Hawks &



Falcons



of the  
Bluff  
Lands  
6/14/14



To view a photo album of this presentation, please visit our Facebook page at:  
[https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=541563259282295&id=162533970518561](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=541563259282295&id=162533970518561)  
To view a video recording of this presentation, please visit our YouTube page at:  
<http://www.youtube.com/user/clifftopnfp>



Tina McElhattan was recently named Clifftop co-volunteer of the year. She has given countless hours to stewardship projects like prescribed burning, honeysuckle workdays, video recording seminars and developing a Clifftop YouTube site. In the photo, Clifftop Executive Director, Carl DauBach, presents Tina with a personalized fire helmet for her efforts.





## Butterflies Flutter By July 12, 2014



For a photo album of this field trip/seminar, please visit our Facebook page at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.553076894797598.1073741842.162533970518561&type=1>



### **BUTTERFLIES OF ILLINOIS: A FIELD GUIDE**

contains descriptions, field photos, and life-size specimen photos of all Illinois' butterfly species. It also includes easy-to-use identification quick guides; background information and photos on butterfly life cycles, habitats, and ecology; Illinois range maps and adult flight periods; and key features relevant to field identification.

**AVAILABLE IN AUGUST 2014**

For more information:

<https://shop.inrs.illinois.edu/>

217.244.2414

All photographs in this issue are courtesy Joann Fricke unless otherwise noted.



**Illinois Clean Energy**  
*community foundation*

**Yes, I want to help Clifftop with the  
Community Stewardship Challenge Grant Project!**  
(See article on pages 1 and 2 for more information.)

Enclosed, please find my donation in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_\*. I understand that for every one dollar that Clifftop raises for stewardship at White Rock Nature Preserve in the next 18 months, the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation will contribute three dollars in matching funds, up to \$21,000. Should Clifftop collect an additional \$1,000, the organization can purchase \$5,000 worth of equipment, with ICECF contributing the additional \$4,000.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Sorry, I can't help financially, but I am willing to volunteer for stewardship work. Please contact me.

Send your check payable to Clifftop to:  
P. O. Box 131  
Maestown, IL 62256

Please note in the memo line of your check that this is a donation for the stewardship challenge grant. **THANK YOU!!!**

\* Clifftop is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization, incorporated in Illinois. Donations in support of Clifftop's activities are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

