

# Bluffviews

a quarterly newsletter by Clifftop

April, 2018

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## Focus on Photos

By Joann Fricke

Clifftop volunteers and board members have been very busy at White Rock Nature Preserve, White Rock Land and Water Reserve and Paul Wightman Subterranean Nature Preserve, resulting in the pages of this issue being filled with more photos than words. This gives greater meaning to the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Following is a synopsis of the activities.

### White Rock:

- March 9—the IRAP Strike Team led 5 volunteers in burning 29 acres at the White Rock Land and Water Reserve.
- March 15—INPC led 11 volunteers in burning Overlook Prairie at the White Rock Nature Preserve.
- April 12—preparations were made to install mile markers at WRNP.
- April 16—10 mile markers were installed at WRNP.
- April 25—a concrete picnic table was delivered, assembled and installed at Madeline's Rest at WRNP.

### Paul Wightman Subterranean Nature Preserve:

- March 28—1,240 plants were delivered to PWSNP and 9 volunteers rallied to unload them.
- March 30—Single vault, concrete toilet was delivered and installed. Several board members observed and offered assistance, as needed.
- April 10—22 volunteers assisted professionals in burning 100+ acres.
- April 13—began planting trees and bushes to increase the diversity of plant species. Twenty one volunteers helped in the planting overall, which was completed on April 21.

While some things are visible immediately (mile markers, picnic table, toilet) others may not be noticed for years (bushes, trees). Even those of us who helped plant the bushes and trees couldn't tell you where each of them are at Wightman. Much is yet to be done, but progress is being made.

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If you haven't yet renewed your Clifftop membership for 2018, please consider doing so at your earliest convenience.

## Getting to Know Jeremy

By Jeremy Volkmar

Former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan once stated, "If our hopes of building a better and safer world are to become more than wishful thinking, we will need the engagement of volunteers more than ever." The protection, preservation, and restoration of our natural areas is just one way that we can help make this statement a reality. Since joining the Clifftop Board of Directors in January, I am getting a better view of how Clifftop volunteers serve in a variety of ways to make the opening statement a reality. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the members of Clifftop.

I grew up in a rural community in Bond County, Illinois. Living in this area afforded me an opportunity to enjoy nature/outdoors from an early age. My maternal grandparents owned an 80-acre farm, which included wooded areas, a pond, and a creek. My siblings, cousins and I spent countless hours exploring the various areas on the farm. One day we might go hiking in the woods pretending to be explorers looking for lost treasure, and another day we may be trying to catch frogs or minnows. My paternal grandparents, as well as uncles, would take my cousins & I to local creeks for walks. We might stop and observe crayfish or small fish in a pool of water, or search a nearby rock formation for fossils. Growing up I also engaged in other outdoor activities including mushroom hunting, fishing, and hunting.



A view of the bluffs from Fort de Chartres.  
Photo courtesy Jeremy Volkmar

I would have never imagined as a young child attending the June Rendezvous at Fort de Chartres that one day I would move to the area. After graduating from college, I applied for a junior high science teacher position at Prairie du Rocher CCSD #134. I taught 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science for one year. I then moved to 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade and taught for 5 years. The past 12 years I have been teaching 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade. As I became acquainted with parents, coworkers, and community members, I became more involved in community organizations and causes.

Outside of school, I am involved in a number of organizations and enjoy several hobbies. Currently, I serve/am involved with: Prairie du Rocher Chamber of Commerce, Prairie du Rocher 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Committee, Prairie du Rocher PTO, Prairie du Rocher La Guianne Society (President), Les Amis du Fort de Chartres (Vice President), Prairie du Rocher Community Library (board member), Mississippi River Disaster Relief Coordinator and Lay Service Ministries Director. My hobbies include: reading, hiking, photography, cycling, & traveling (both for fun & volunteer mission work).

One of the aims of Clifftop is educating the public on what significant natural resources we have in our area. Clifftop already offers great events such as Owl Prowls and Frog Frolics just to name a couple. Colleges and universities in the region conduct a variety of field studies at Clifftop natural areas. It is my hope that moving forward we can begin to offer professional development activities to local teachers as well as develop curriculum that can be utilized on class field trips to these natural areas.



On a mission trip to Liberia. Photo courtesy  
Jeremy Volkmar



## Upcoming events...

**Ecology of the Oak-Hickory Forest Field Trip**, Saturday, May 12, from 1:00 until 3:00 pm, White Rock Nature Preserve, 6438 Bluff Road, Valmeyer, IL. Please join us as Mark Brown, IDNR District Forester, leads us on a hike to learn about the Oak-Hickory forest at White Rock and the trees found there. Meet at the White Rock parking lot where we will begin our hike. Overflow parking will be available on Harris Road, just to the south of the parking lot. This event is free and open to the public. **Attendance is limited to 30 participants.** Call 618-935-2542 or email [cliffmbr@htc.net](mailto:cliffmbr@htc.net) for more information or to make a reservation.



**Clifftop Members Day**, Saturday, June 16, from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm, Paul Wightman Subterranean Nature Preserve, 3325 G Road, Fuels, IL. Come see the beautiful wildflowers in bloom, check out the progress we've made on infrastructure and have a bite to eat. To make a reservation, please call 618-935-2542 or email [cliffmbr@htc.net](mailto:cliffmbr@htc.net)



## Exciting news...

We are extremely pleased to announce that the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) has awarded Clifftop a Community Stewardship Challenge Grant for work at the Paul Wightman Subterranean Nature Preserve (PWSNP).



This grant consists of 3 components:

**Cash Donations:** ICECF will contribute \$3 in matching funds for every \$1 Clifftop raises for stewardship at PWSNP, up to \$21,000.

**Equipment:** ICECF will contribute 80% of the amount paid for equipment to be used to improve natural habitat at PWSNP, up to \$5,000.

**Volunteer Labor:** ICECF will donate \$4,000 for a minimum of 400 documented stewardship hours at PWSNP and \$2,000 for a minimum of 100 documented hours publicizing events and volunteer workdays at PWSNP via social media.

If you'd like to contribute a cash donation or volunteer labor, please print and fill in the form on the next page and mail it to Clifftop at the address on the form.

We thank you in advance for monetary donations or donations of your time, which is increasingly more valuable in this hectic world.



Photo courtesy Paul Feldker



Illinois Clean Energy  
community foundation

Yes, I want to help Clifftop with the  
Community Stewardship Challenge Grant Project!

Enclosed, please find my donation in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_\*. I understand that for every **one dollar** that Clifftop raises for stewardship at Paul Wightman Subterranean Nature Preserve, the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation will contribute **three dollars** in matching funds, up to **\$21,000**. In addition, for a minimum of **400 hours** of stewardship documented at PWSNP, ICECF will donate **\$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.



# Photo gallery...



At our January 20<sup>th</sup> Owl Prowl, we observed mama Great Horned Owl, incubating eggs. At the time, we had no idea how many eggs she was sitting on. In the March 17<sup>th</sup> photo, left, it was evident that there were two owlets. In the March 30<sup>th</sup> photo, right, the owlets had grown considerably. Just a few weeks later, they had fledged and the nest was empty. All photos on this page courtesy Joann Fricke.



A prescribed burn was conducted on the glade unit of the **White Rock Land and Water Reserve** on March 9. The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) Strike Team (the three in the middle of the photo, upper left) led the effort with assistance from Clifftop volunteers. IRAP Coordinator, Eric Wright, deems the test fire good in the photo above, right. At left, fire burns along the riparian buffer. A new sign and brochure holder were donated and installed by the gate at **White Rock**, photo at right.







Photos above and below courtesy Joann Fricke



Photos above and below courtesy Mark Kaempfe



After several days of preparation, Overlook Prairie at **White Rock Nature Preserve** was successfully burned on March 15. One crew was specifically assigned to watch from below for any spotovers onto the talus slope. The burn crew can be seen at top left, and the progression of the fire from above, at lower left. You don't really get the height perspective until you see Mark's photos from Harris Road. In the bottom right photo, the burn crew patrolling the edge can barely be detected.



On March 28, 1,240 trees and shrubs were delivered to **PWSNP**. These were purchased with contributions from the 2016 Stewardship Challenge Grant from ICECF. With the help of volunteers, they were offloaded onto the parking lot in short order, much to the delight of the delivery truck driver. He normally has to assist with this task. On the following page you will see photos of the planting of these shrubs and trees.





Volunteers from Godfrey, Grafton, Lebanon, Freeburg, Red Bud, Waterloo, Valmeyer, Fults and St. Louis came to **PWSNP** to help plant over the course of 7 working days from April 13<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup>. The weather was alternately cold, rainy, snowy, hot and beautiful—typical Midwest weather. But the best day was when there were no more plants on the trailer to go in the ground! All photos on this page courtesy Joann Fricke.



To aid in locating someone with a medical emergency, mile markers were installed along the trails at **White Rock Nature Preserve**. On the shorter trails you will find them at each .1 mile. On Ridgetop Trail, South, they were placed each .2 mile. A concrete picnic table was delivered to and assembled at Madeline's Rest on April 25. The mile markers and picnic table were purchased through a generous amenities grant from ICECF.





On March 30 a single vault concrete toilet was installed at **PWSNP**. Although no volunteer help was needed, several board members were present to witness the process. A crane came from Marion, IL to lift the 18,000 pound vault and 22,000 pound building into place. Photos courtesy Joann Fricke.



A 100+ acre prescribed burn was conducted on April 10 at **PWSNP**. The results were excellent. We look forward to the abundance of grasses and forbs in the burned areas later this year. Photo at left courtesy Joann Fricke, bottom left courtesy Mike Fricke and bottom right courtesy Mark Kaempfe.

