

# EMBARRAS VOLUNTEER STEWARDS CONSERVATION DAYS FOR SPRING 2019

## SEE OUR SPRING SCHEDULE BELOW

Florence Williams, *The Nature Fix. Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier and More Creative.* W.W. Norton, 2017

The idea that being outdoors in the wild “makes us happier, healthier and more creative” may resonate with nature lovers. Now, scientific research is proving why and how nature benefits the body and brain. Scientists are finding relationships between human health and time spent in nature and delving into why and how nature benefits the body and brain. Packed with ideas for navigating our rapidly urbanizing world, *The Nature Fix* is an informative and highly entertaining read.

Debby Tolle

I echo Debby’s praise for Florence Williams’ reporting of many studies in several countries of how nature affects people’s attitudes. They find that blood pressure, heart rate and cortisol levels all decrease when we are in nature, where we can think better because there is less information, thus fewer choices to block our sensory experience. Our “visual fluency” improves because we are seeing natural patterns instead of human-built patterns. Clearly we are better off being “biophilic” rather than “biophobic.”

Larry Thorsen

Michael R. Jeffords and Susan L. Post, *Curious Encounters with the Natural World*. University of Illinois Press, 2017

Jeffords and Post have wide experience researching and writing about the natural world. This book offers 104 one-page stories, each with great photographs, about animals, birds, insects and plants in many parts of the world. From alligators and penguins to waterfalls and swamps, to trilobites and tiger beetles, we are treated to marvelously detailed photographs of scenes and behavior that most of us will never see in the wild. Oxpeckers forage for ticks in a giraffe's fur. Male turkeys do their dominance "dance." Baby stinkbugs emerge from eggs on a leaf. The reader wants to go back again and again to marvel, and to think: "I wish I could be there." The collection invites our amazement at the intricacy of biological diversity, a diversity that human intervention is unfortunately destroying.

Michael Jeffords and Susan Post, *Exploring Nature in Illinois*. University of Illinois Press, 2014

It surprises many people that even though Illinois ranks 49<sup>th</sup> among the states in land that remains in fairly natural condition, we have many truly lovely areas that remain something close to what they looked like before European settlement of north America. Jeffords and Post offer short descriptions of 49 of those locations, accompanied by photographs of land forms, insects, forests, animals, and plants, as well as travel directions. There are natural areas worth visiting in nearly every corner of the state, and readers surely will discover several that they didn't know about.

Larry Thorsen

## SPRING CONSERVATION DAYS

Our conservation work days are on Saturdays from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome and no prior experience is necessary. We do not have formal membership or dues. Just come as often as you like and help us do our small part to maintain the health of woodlands, prairie remnants, and prairie restorations. Visit this page from time to time to get updates. To receive email notifications of updates and cancellations send your email address to Larry at [thorsenhutton@gmail.com](mailto:thorsenhutton@gmail.com) with a request to be added to the list.

We advise sturdy footwear and gloves at work days. Tools are provided but personal tools are welcome.

NOTE: APRIL AND MAY WORKDAYS ARE BELOW. JUNE AND JULY WORKDAYS WILL BE ANNOUNCED LATER.

April 6 - Volunteers may want to help at either the EIU volunteer day at Douglas-Hart Nature Center (10:00 to 12:00) (corner of DeWitt Avenue and Lerna Road in Mattoon), or the Grand Prairie Friends workday at Warbler Ridges (one mile off Route 130 on Daileyville Road -CR 470N).

April 13 - Bush honeysuckle removal at Lafferty Nature Center. Park behind Carl Sandberg School on Reynolds Drive in Charleston.

April 20 - We will help the City of Charleston clean up invasives on the "island" near the spillway at Lake Charleston. Enter the main entrance to Lake Charleston and park near the spillway.

April 27 - Garlic mustard removal at Burgner Acres. Take CR 1000N to CR 1150E, turn south and go about 0.2 mile to the end of the road.

May 4 - Volunteers who are not participating in the annual Illinois Spring Bird Count may want to help at Warbler Ridges. Drive one mile off Route 130 on Daileyville Road (CR 470N) and park near the red shack.

May 11 - Annual wildflower and warbler walk at Rocky Branch Nature Preserve. Meet at the café at the top of the hill in Clarksville for car pooling.

May 18 - More combat with bush honeysuckle, autumn olive, winged wahoo, multiflora rose and privet at Woodyard Conservation Area, 1.8 miles south of Route 16 on Route 130.