

# West Street Greenspace Preservation Coalition

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## Newsletter

### 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Earth Day Event, Saturday April 24th (9AM-Noon)- Garden Plots

To those of us who have been members from the start, and that is a majority of members, it may seem impossible that we are now entering our 5<sup>th</sup> year as a Coalition. In fact, it was shortly after our big city Hall victory that the West St. Greenspace Preservation Coalition created a display for Naperville's large Earth Day event in April of 2000. Since that was a one time only effort made by the city in honor of Earth Day's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, our annual event has moved to the garden plots. Our activities have expanded to include our springtime Adopt-a-Highway cleanup of the garden plots and the West St. parkway with the cooperation of the Naperville Department of Public Works. Light refreshments, as always, will be served, and the community is invited. There is always good conversation to be had, and almost always, excellent weather. With the mild spring conditions and lack of rain, the garden plots are opening this year April 19<sup>th</sup>, so the extra activity on site will be an advantage. Stop by for a few minutes or a few hours, and enjoy a pleasant morning with friends, neighbors, and fellow members.

### Time to Renew Your Membership!

Our Membership Year runs from May 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>. Please renew today. Dues are \$10 or a different amount (lower or higher) of your choosing. Please sent it (along with any changes in your information) to WSGSPC , PO Box 84, Naperville, IL 60566-0084. We have included an "invoice" for those who find that format helpful.

The newsletter is going out to current and previous members, so if this is the first you have seen in a while, we would love to welcome you back. We write 6 regular newsletters a year, and if events require, we inform members of action items through special mailings or other contact. Your dues and your renewals allow us to perform these activities

and much more, as well as acting as a deterrent to development along West St.

### Why We Respect Earth Day

Any graduate of the Naperville Public Schools will tell you that Earth Day was begun to foster greater environmental stewardship. At the same time, if you graduated much more than a decade ago, it is quite possible that Earth Day was viewed as a fringe celebration, one that was poorly understood and equally poorly defined; something that happened between Easter and Mothers Day, but without the day off.

The WSGSPC first begin to celebrate Earth Day because our mission of protecting the West St. properties from development coincides nicely with the founding principles of Earth Day. Just exactly what were those founding principles? To answer that question here is a slightly edited essay written by former Senator Gaylord Nelson, who is widely credited with being the founder of Earth Day.

"In 1993 the American Heritage magazine called the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970, "one of the most remarkable happenings in the history of democracy...". Actually the idea for Earth Day evolved over a period of seven years starting in 1962. For several years, it had been troubling me that the state of our environment was simply a non-issue in the politics of the country. Finally, in November 1962, an idea occurred to me that was, I thought, a virtual cinch to put the environment into the political limelight once and for all. The idea was to persuade President Kennedy to give visibility to this issue by going on a national conservation tour. All across the country, evidence of environmental degradation was appearing everywhere, and everyone noticed except the political establishment. The environmental issue simply was not to be found on the nation's political agenda. Six years would pass before the idea that became Earth Day occurred to me while on a conservation speaking

tour out West in the summer of 1969. Suddenly, the idea occurred to me-why not organize a huge grassroots protest over what was happening to our environment?

I was satisfied that if we could tap into the environmental concerns of the general public we could generate a demonstration that would force the issue onto the political agenda. It was a big gamble, but worth a try.

At a conference in Seattle in September 1969, I announced that in the spring of 1970, there would be a nationwide grassroots demonstration on behalf of the environment and I invited people to participate. The wire services carried the story from coast to coast. The response was electric. It took off like gangbusters. Telegrams, letters, and telephone inquiries poured in from all across the country. The American people finally had a forum to express its concern about what was happening to the land, rivers, lakes, and air-and they did so with spectacular exuberance. For the next four months, two of my staff members managed Earth Day affairs out of my Senate office.

It was obvious that we were headed for a spectacular success on Earth Day. It was also obvious that grassroots activities had ballooned beyond the capacity of my US Senate office staff to keep up with the telephone calls, paper work, inquires, etc. In mid-January, three months before Earth Day, John Gardner, founder of Common Cause, provided temporary space for a Washington D.C. headquarters. I staffed the office with college students and selected Denis Hayes as coordinator of activities.

Earth Day worked because of the spontaneous response at the grassroots level. We had neither the time nor resources to organize 20 million demonstrators and the thousands of schools and communities that participated. That was the remarkable thing about Earth Day. It organized itself.--written by Senator Gaylord Nelson, edited by George Bennett

### **WSGSPC Conducts April Meeting**

As scheduled in the February newsletter, the Coalition conducted its BI-monthly meeting on April 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM in the boardroom of the Naperville Township Building. It was agreed that although there are no imminent threats to our mission, the situation at the park District involving a possible

change of leadership must be closely monitored. The Coalition's Treasurer reported that if membership renewals are solid, we would be on tack financially for 2004-05. Plans were then made for the Earth Day event April 24<sup>th</sup>. The next meeting is scheduled for June 9<sup>th</sup>, time and location are the same.

### **WSGSPC Rents Garden Plots**

Once again the Coalition will not only sponsor the "Plant a Row for the Hungry" program, but will donate vegetables grown on location to the cause of eliminating hunger in the greater Naperville area. Loaves and Fishes pantry is the primary recipient of the donations, but additional produce is given to area senior citizens. Located on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Loaves and Fishes is a food bank sponsored by Naperville Cares, which is supported by a broad coalition of Naperville churches. Donations from the public are always welcome during posted collection times, available by giving them a simple phone call.

### **Garden Plots for Rent**

The Park District will continue to offer Garden Plot Rental through the end of May. Good locations are still available, and the cost of each spacious plot is a most reasonable \$22 for residents of the district. Renting is easy; call the Park District at 848-5000, visit their Web Site at [www.napervilleparks.org](http://www.napervilleparks.org), or go directly to the administration building located at 320 West Jackson in downtown Naperville.

Volunteer Sought, Donations Welcome

George Bennett is once again the Coalition's designated "green thumb", and he has agreed to take primary responsibility for the success of gardening activities this summer. However, gardening is hard work, most especially in June and July, and the labor increases with drought conditions. Being outside under the sun, and accomplishing something worthwhile is the reward for this effort. A volunteer to assist with the Coalition's gardening would be welcome. The project would also work well for a family. If anyone is interested in assisting please contact George Bennett at 357-0289 or [bennettgeorge@hotmail.com](mailto:bennettgeorge@hotmail.com).

Also, if anyone has grown vegetable seedlings, or would like to donate plants purchased from a nursery, the WSGSPC would be most thankful. Once again, please contact George Bennett

## **DuPage River Group Celebrates 15 Years of Conservation**

One hundred fifty tons of garbage hauled out of the DuPage River by nearly 5000 volunteers. That's one of the concrete items the DuPage River Coalition can point to when members talk about the group's accomplishments over the past 15 years. The organization includes representatives from government and business, as well as private citizens. The group works to improve river and watershed health, promote recreational opportunities, and conserve natural areas along the river. Brook McDonald, president and chief executive officer of the Conservation Foundation, said that when the river group was first formed, the DuPage River was in much worse condition than it is today, reaching a low point in the early 1980's. "There were cars in the river and debris, and we had a couple of sewage treatment plants that were old and still discharging raw sewage into the river." The group worked on a variety of projects, including restoration work along the river, the annual river cleanup, and a watershed plan that outlines environmental goals for the surrounding land that drains into it.

McDonald also spoke about the group's educational outreach programs by saying, "Students raised smallmouth bass by feeding them goldfish and then releasing them into the river. We had to stop because we were too successful and in danger of overstocking the river." Plans for the group include a resident survey on conservation issues to better plan its educational programs.

The annual DuPage River Coalition's "River Sweep" will take place June 5<sup>th</sup>, and volunteers are always needed. ---written by Meg Dedolph, "The Naperville Sun".

### **United Way Fund Raiser Brings Back Naperville's Farming Heritage**

Farm animals including sheep, baby lamb, piglets, and a reclining colt with calf will once again find a friendly home in Naperville this summer. No, Sullivan's and Rosebud won't be plowed over to make way for an animal farm, but the Naperville United Way has decided that the theme for this year's annual fundraiser will not be giraffes, carousel horses, or bears. Those exotic creatures give way this year to animals that once did make Naperville their home. So this July and August, when the crow of a rooster awakens you at the crack of dawn, there is no need to worry about

being caught in a time warp. It is simply the United Way trying to raise \$125,000 for a good cause.

## **Endangered and Threatened Species in the Collar Counties**

Although many of the high profile species protected by the federal endangered species act such as grizzly bears or Atlantic Salmon live far from DuPage County, there are at least 8 plant and animal species listed as endangered or threatened which are native to DuPage. To the untrained eye, some endangered species look ordinary. They are found largely on protected lands, such as forest preserves or state parks, so there have been few conflicts in the Chicago area with private landowners.

Karl Kramer, Assistant Field Supervisor for the US Fish and Wildlife Service said, "All of the plants are facing threats due to loss of habitat...and invasive [non-native] species are taking over their areas. Some plants that almost always are non-native are just more adapted to disturbed conditions. They can tolerate additional nutrients or additional road salt that native species can not".

Some of the endangered species in Illinois include the Mead's milkweed, which is a particular type of milkweed that once was widespread in the tall grass prairies of Illinois. Since most tall grass prairies have given way to corn and soybean fields (if not houses), the Mead's milkweed continues to survive only in native prairies mowed for hay. Because it is a perennial, it takes a long time for the plant to get large enough and flower, and by that time it often has already been cut down.

Other threatened or endangered species in the collar counties include the prairie bush clover, the Eastern Prairie fringed orchid, the leafy prairie clover, and the Hines Emerald Dragonfly.---Credit, "The Naperville Sun", Jan.26<sup>th</sup>, '04.

### ***Greenspace Coalition Information***

***Mission Statement*** *The West Street Green Space Preservation Coalition resolves to defend the existing green space west of and adjoining West Street against incompatible development and encourage and promote programs and amenities that foster conservation, honor historical tradition, and preserve the area for passive use.*

**More on Our Mission** Our focus is to not lose any greenspace the 4 properties on west side of West Street. (Garden Plots, Sportsman's Park, Von-Oven Scout Camp, Soccer Fields/Forest on Oswego.) Support current uses that keep it green, and advocate no more construction, lights, pavement or new high intensity uses. No reduction in trees, and additional uses should utilize the green or natural values of the properties.

### **Contact Information**

See info in letterhead  
Our web site is: [www.greenspace.koolhost.com](http://www.greenspace.koolhost.com)

### **Board of Directors**

Dan Bennett	George Bennett 357-0289
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**President:** George Bennett

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**Newsletter Content:** George Bennett, Fred Turek, Wendy Mouche & Others

**Newsletter Editor:** Fred Turek

**Public Relations:** Dan Bennett

**Special Consultant:** Teresa Ryan

**Webmaster:** Elaine Fisher

### **Membership**

Membership is open to all individuals, families and organizations who would like to support our mission (see mission statement). Dues are \$10 or your choice of a different amount (lower or higher) A membership application is available to facilitate joining. *The WSGSC is always careful to note that its viewpoints on individual topics do not necessarily reflect those of individual members and member organizations.*