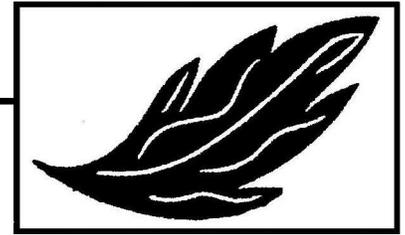


West Street Greenspace Preservation Coalition

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Newsletter – August 23rd, 2004

Local Gardening Showcase- Aug. 28th

Coalition alters meeting schedule

At the June WSGSPC meeting, the board of directors opted to alter our yearly meeting schedule. The change is procedural rather than organizational, and is designed to generate a less time consuming method for generating board member input. As such, our regular bi-monthly meetings will become quarterly meetings. Noting that the membership year runs from May 1st through April 30th, it was decided to retain an April meeting, a decision that produces meetings scheduled for July, October, January, and of course April. Meetings will continue to be held at the Naperville Township building on the second Wednesday of the respected months. Newsletters will continue to be distributed bi-monthly, but this subject is on the agenda in October.

Although we will meet less frequently, the board believes that we will still be able to swing into action quickly in the event of adverse developments. Please remember that all meetings are always open to all members, and comments and suggestions for better accomplishing our mission are appreciated.

Special Request for You from Fred Turek

Every organization is dependent on mixture of degrees of participation, from joining and being a member through its persons who work the hardest to make it succeed.

Not only do we have to ready to go to the big inevitable battles in the upcoming decade, we also affect the course of events on an ongoing basis by our mere existence, displayed willingness to do so, and activities on the smaller ones.

For our long term health and success, I would like to ask you to take one very tiny baby step forward in this regard. If you are a member who has never been to one of our fun events, work events or meetings, this requested one tiny step forward is to attend one of these items in the next year. Attending our 7:30 PM Oct 13th meeting would be a good time to do this. It's conveniently located at the Township hall which is in the Riverwalk just (across the street) north of City Hall.

On Saturday, Aug. 28th, the Naperville Community Gardeners will sponsor a flower and garden show from 1:30 until 3P.M. The location is the Alfred Rubin Riverwalk Recreation Center located at the corner of Jackson and Eagle. Membership is not necessary to participate, and all gardeners are asked to bring items to the Center from 7 to 10 A.M. on the day of the show. The best examples of vegetables, fruits, and flowers will be awarded ribbons, with a special category set aside for young gardeners. For category listings and more information visit the Club's website, www.napervillegardeners.homestead.com, or call 355-2626. The show is open to the public, and no fee is required for participation or viewing.

Next Coalition Meeting- Oct.13th, 7:30 P.M.

In light of the revised meeting schedule, the previously scheduled August meeting has been canceled, and the next meeting scheduled for October 13th. The location will be Naperville Township's administration building located at 135 Water St., in the heart of downtown.

Rare Prairie on Naperville's Southwest Side

On the westernmost edge of Naperville, tucked into a 1-acre plot off Normantown Rd. next to where freight trains rumble past, is a piece of very rare prairie known as the Vermont Cemetery. As volunteers for the Will County Forest Preserve District, Don and Espie Nelson are co-stewards of the nature preserve. They have given hundreds of hours to the chore of evicting non-native plant species from the site. Their primary nemesis within the fence that encloses the vintage graveyard is the hardy white sweet clover, planted many years ago by well-intentioned farmers hoping to assist their cattle. The plant species drains important nutrients from the soil making it difficult for native species to prosper.

Espie also is focusing much of her energy on bringing a little posthumous peace to the departed souls who were entombed under the rich black soil during the last half of the 19th century. She is trying to document each grave accurately, but it's a tall order. "There's no way of knowing exactly how many people are buried there or who is buried there, because the records have all been destroyed," said Espie. The cemetery was started by

inhabitants of the area know as Vermont Settlement. They were some of Wheatland Townships earliest white residents, and hailed from Vermont. About 45 markers or fragments remain, but a third of them have illegible markings. If it can be done she would like to connect every burial plot with a family.

The Vermont Prairie may be the most biologically diverse acre of land in Naperville, containing at least 80 plant species native to Illinois. According to Don Espie, the prairie ranks as a grade A dry mesic site, one of only 10 acres in the state known to merit this designation. There is Culver's root, a candelabra-like flower thought to have taken its name from the physician who found medicinal value in its subterranean portion. There is the cheery sunflower-like compass plant, a towering flower that orients its blooms and foliage north and south to take advantage of the sun in the cooler periods of daylight. There's flowering spurge, a relative of the poinsettia, which has circles of white leaves the uninitiated might mistake for flower petals. There's prairie dock, a stubby plant that remains curiously cool even on the hottest day because it draws moisture from below ground and respirates it through its broad leaves. And there's big blue stem; a tall grass that sends up a clawlike flower head that explains its nickname, turkey foot.

It can be difficult to grasp preservationists' claims that a single 18-inch patch of land in the site typically supports about 20 different plant species-until you see it. It's a symbiotic sort of high-density population that has nothing to do with land-use planning or human developers. It works as a sort of independent plant planet.

The Will County Forest Preserve District, which has owned the cemetery for years, has acquired 24 acres adjacent to the graveyard to function as a buffer between the prairie and Naperville's new 627-acre Ashwood development. A portion of those acres will be developed as the DuPage River Trail. The latest addition brings a depth of history and prairie purity that had not been part of the inventory before. Once the Nelson's have spent a bit more time restoring the prairie to what it once was, they have plans to offer limited public access, perhaps in formal programs or perhaps in open visits. "It's a valuable site and people should see it."

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

Board of Directors

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Nan Kroll	Chris Wilkinson
Wendy Mouche	Warren Gill
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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.*