



**GRAND
PRAIRIE
FRIENDS**



**2018
ANNUAL
REPORT**



**PRESERVE
RESTORE
PROMOTE**

A NOTE FROM US:



Jamie Ellis, Pres.

What a year 2018 was! We purchased two parcels of land, added new trails and the new Hike App at Warbler Ridge, and built an overlook structure at Loda Prairie so more people can enjoy its beauty. New partnerships helped us begin studying bats and restoring habitat for these ecologically important creatures. I'm very pleased with our new look for 2018—new logo, colors, design. Finally, I am most satisfied with the big step we made to hire an Executive Director. With this move, we are already doing more to conserve and manage our natural areas. Peace and Joy to you this Holiday Season and All the Best in the New Year.



Sarah Livesay, ED

Congratulations to you, Grand Prairie Friends members, for supporting this momentum to preserve and restore east-central Illinois' natural areas. As you know, the last few years have presented Grand Prairie Friends with an abundance of opportunity for growth, which your Board of Directors have strategically and thoughtfully acted on. As staff, it is inspiring to watch this Board engage in long-term planning and decision making, while always keeping the organization's core mission as the focus. Sitting as a Board Member for such an evolving organization is not an easy task, but one of great service for future generations. As you reflect this holiday season on the coming year, consider how your gifts can best serve this organization that you love, then reach out to me at any time.



Jeff Peyton, NAM

As Natural Areas Manager for a group that is growing and evolving as dynamically as Grand Prairie Friends, I am always learning something new, exploring unfamiliar territory, and facing new challenges.

In addition to the prairie and woodland we manage, we are now engaged in wetland reconstruction projects! This is an exciting new area of stewardship for me, and I am eager to see how these sites develop.

I could not ask for a better organization to work for, or a more exciting time in its development as a land trust.



Board Members and Staff

LANDHOLDINGS

Total: **1,061 ACRES**

Largest:

1,000 ACRES

Warbler Ridge Conservation Area

1,000 acres = ~760 football fields!

Smallest:

1.2 ACRES

Ems Tract

Furthest

NORTH:

Bonnie's Prairie
in Watseka

Furthest

SOUTH:

Nance Woods in
Shelby County

130 Miles between them!

4

Cemeteries on
Our Sites

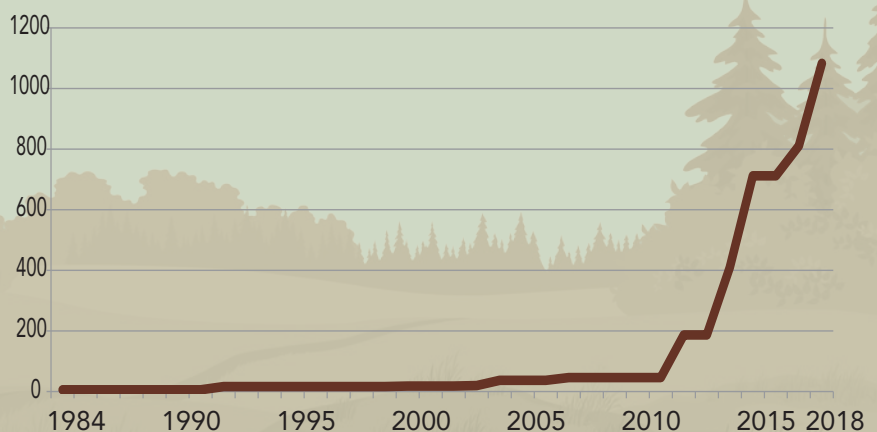


34

Years Preserving
Natural Areas

1984: 6.2 acres

2018: 1,061 acres



AT A GLANCE:



Board Members

100%
Board Giving



Fulltime
Staff



Seasonal
Staff



Bookkeeper



Volunteer
Coordinator

Did You Know?

A Land Trust is a private non-profit organization, not supported as a park or forest preserve through tax funding, dedicated to preserving natural spaces.

This can include owning and maintain and production on forest, prairie, agriculture, wetlands and beyond.

While privately managed, our Board of Directors support a policy to have all of their lands open to the public, every day, dawn to dusk, in an effort to provide experiences in nature and cultivate our next generation of land stewards.



PRESERVE

2

New Land Acquisitions
Totaling 272 Acres



51 Regular Volunteers

345

Volunteer
Hours

15

Work
Days

Did You Know?

Warbler Champion Volunteers

Our Warbler Champion stewards are a specialized team of lead-volunteers for Warbler Ridge Conservation Area. This group of local community members are engaged in stewardship activities, and advocating and promoting Grand Prairie Friends in the Charleston area.

NEW

Warbler Champion
Volunteer Program

FIRST

Prescribed Burn in the
Forest at Warbler Ridge:
68 Acres

RESTORE: PRAIRIE STORIES

NEW

Loda
Prairie
Overlook



FIRE

Prescribed Burns
Conducted at Several
Prairie Sites



RESTORE: WOODLAND WAYS

Burnett Reserve Tree Planting Day

70
Trees
Planted in
One Day



37
Rotary
& GPF
Volunteers



Warbler Ridge Conservation Area Projects

12
Bat Habitat
Structures
Installed



14
NEW Acres
of Pollinator
Habitat



2
NEW Wetlands
Installed



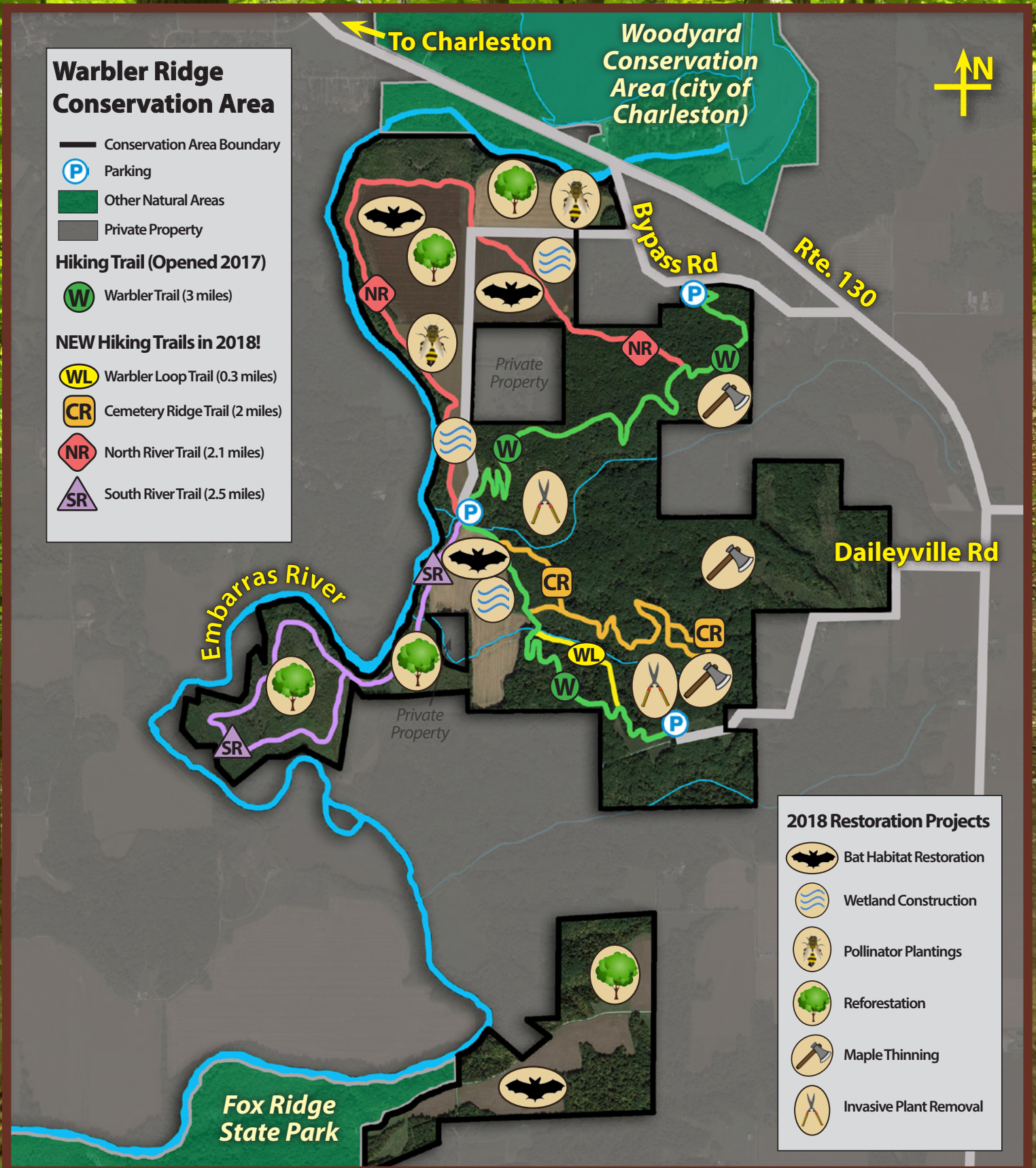
3,372
Trees Planted



- New Gate to Protect Your Investment
- Shack Updates, Barn Removed, Road Improvements



Warbler Ridge Conservation Area Projects



PROMOTE

NEW LOOK

Logo, Brochures, Website



GRAND
PRAIRIE
FRIENDS

4

New Trails
Opened

10TH

Trail Mile
Opened

HIKE APP

New Mobile Phone Tour

200

Runners in the
Rattlesnake
Master Run
for the Prairie

5,000+

Plants Sold at
Plant Sale

**FALL
FETE**

October

MASTER NATURALISTS

Bird's eye view of land
management training

NEW

Kiosks and parking
areas at Warbler
Ridge



WHAT'S NEXT?

- **EDUCATE** via new Master Naturalist program in Illinois Extension Unit 19: Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Shelby, and Moultrie Counties; Applications now available
- **INVENTORY** baseline data for all Grand Prairie Friends sites
- **ENHANCE** research opportunities
- **MAINTAIN** 10 miles of trails
- **RECRUIT, TRAIN** and **SUPPORT** volunteer team
- **PLANT** 22,950 tree seedlings and 2,525 container trees as part of 2019 bat habitat restoration project
- **FARM** 104 acres of land at Warbler Ridge
- **FUNDRAISE** to increase staff and resources available for continued stewardship of these amazing lands!
- **PROMOTE** our lands as publicly available natural areas to experience, enjoy, and build the next generation of stewards

Time to Renew Your Membership!

Watch your mailbox - Your Grand Prairie Friends membership renewal is coming soon. As a member-supported 501(c)3 organization, we depend on you for ongoing support!

Don't want to wait for the mail? You can renew your membership at GrandPrairieFriends.org. Click the green button that says "Donate to Grand Prairie Friends."





EVENTS IN 2019

- **Feb-November: 1st Saturday of the Month, 9-11am**
Warbler Ridge Stewardship Days
- **March:** Spring Member Meeting
- **April 27, 9am-Noon**
Volunteer Recruitment Day at Warbler Ridge
- **May:** Plant Sale
- **August 2:** Illinois Extension Unit 19 Master Naturalist
Class Applications Due
- **October:** Fall Member Meeting
- **November:** Rattlesnake Master Run for the Prairie

Stay tuned for more details!




WISHLIST

- Your Time, Your Talent, Your Participation!
- Trail Stewards for Leaf and Mowing Help
- Natural Area Volunteers for Invasive Plant Removal
- Monitoring Projects
- Your Membership & Donations Always Appreciated!
- Log your Urbana Park District volunteer hours to GPF; we get rental credits for your time!
- IOU to GPF: Friends owe you a favor or payback? Have them donate to GPF in your honor!
- Re-Gift Those Unused Gift Cards: Not a fan of that restaurant, store or yoga class? We can use all of your gift cards as volunteer incentives, food at events and more.

BAT HABITAT SUPPORTERS

Total Raised:
\$7,340
Thank you!



Alan Rider
Amy Lynch and Doug Klarup
Ann Bergeron and Kevin Fahey
Ben Lumpkin
Bettina and George Francis
Betty Brennan
Bob & Mattie Clippard
Bruce Craig and Pat Eaton
Carol and Topper Steinman
Carolyn Baxley
Catherine & Douglas Schmidt-Jones
Charlene Anchor
Charles Costa
Charles Delman & Barbara Lawrence
Chris and Wendy Harris
Chris Berti
Cindy Shepherd and Tim Hartin
Cynthia Swanson
David and Chris Main
David and Dianda Easter
David Paddock
Deanna Glosser
Diane and Ed Wilhite
Donald and Elizabeth Greeley
Douglas Jackson
Dwain Berggren and Barb Wysocki
Earl and Lynda Creutzburg
Eric Smith
Frank Kling
Gene and Darlene Hoffmann
George Rose

Harrelson Plumbing
James Ellis and Melinda Watts-Ellis
Janis Sober and Meg Miner
Jarrod and Jessica Scheunemann
Jason Willand
Jenny Hunt
Jill Baty and Ian Pearse
Jim and Karen Livesay
Jim Nardi
John Gilpin
John Taft and Mary Kay Solecki
Judith Chase
Julie Nieset and George Hardebeck
Kathleen Weibel
Keith Kohanzo
Laura Jacob
Linda Foster
Lisa Brems Brayton
Lisa Helgesen
Marissa and Gabe Grant
Mark and Mitsuko Williams
Matt Sherer
Melissa Pokorny
Michael Jeffords and Susan Post
Michael Walker and Kristina Gunsalus
Nancy Coutant
Paul Nance and Glenna Spitze
Paula Pogue
Peggy Patten and Todd Kinney
Peter and Betsy Kuchinke
Richard Raspet and Wendy Garrison
Richard Schicht
Robert and Diane Szafoni
Robert Themer
Robert Yasinski and Trish Quintenz
Ron & Sue LeGrand
Sandy and Joe Finnerty
Sarah and Jeff Livesay
Summer and Stephen Hennessy
Teresa and Jerry DeWitt
Timothy Staber
Anonymous Donor

Did You Know?

Illinois is home to 13 types of bats; 9 of these live at the Warbler Ridge Conservation Area, including the endangered Indiana bat and the threatened Northern long-eared bat!

PRESERVE

RESTORE

PROMOTE

DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT:

Why I Support Grand Prairie Friends



"It was critical to our husband and father, Barrie Hunt, to keep his plot of land preserved from development and logging. After his death it was still extremely important that this was to be preserved for people to enjoy. Grand Prairie Friends was interested in saving a number of parcels in the area so they were the logical group to continue to oversee the land. We now choose to continue to donate to Grand Prairie Friends to maintain these pristine properties for the ongoing benefit of those who use the land and for the native life that exists there."

Shirley and Jenny Hunt, Donors & Volunteers



"There is a desperate need to reconnect people to the land. This reconnection creates appreciation for the land and what is on it. Grand Prairie Friends is providing that reconnection."

Roger Jansen, Natural Heritage Regional Administrator



"It's an honor to be part of such a positive, energetic group doing such big things! Years from now, we'll all be able to say 'I was there when.'"

Pam Leiter, Board of Directors



"I enjoy recognizing worthwhile stuff needing to be done and do it."

Terry Smith, Champion Steward



"Grand Prairie Friends has shown their commitment to protecting natural areas and communities, preserving them for future generations to enjoy and observe so that they will know what these areas looked like prior to human development. Protecting these areas will also help protect rare, uncommon and declining species of wildlife such as birds, reptiles and amphibians. All this is critical as Illinois is one of the most heavily developed landscapes in the U.S."

John Griesbaum, IL Nature Preserve Commission

THANKS TO OUR 2018 GRANTING PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT!



THE
CONSERVATION FUND



Support Us While Shopping

When you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to Grand Prairie Friends!

Go to smile.amazon.com, designate Grand Prairie Friends as your charity, and start shopping!



2018 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Where Our Money Came From

\$46,215
Our Donors'
Generosity!

Donations from Members and Friends	\$ 46,215
Technical Services	30,025
Farm and CRP	53,873
Plant Sale and Rattlesnake Master Run	16,216
Restricted Land and Project Grants	<u>1,462,720</u>
TOTAL	\$ 1,609,049



How We Spent It

Stewardship, Restoration & Maintenance	\$ 190,896
Purchased 241 acres of Land	1,335,409
Warbler Ridge Trails and Loda Overlook	20,002
Administration	<u>67,949</u>
TOTAL	\$ 1,614,256

\$1,335,409
Preserving Land
in Perpetuity!

PRESERVE RESTORE PROMOTE



GRAND PRAIRIE FRIENDS

GrandPrairieFriends.org

Mission

Our mission is to preserve and restore natural communities in east-central Illinois and to promote an understanding and appreciation of natural resources.

Board

President: Jamie Ellis
Vice President: Dave Easter
Secretary: Craig Milling
Treasurer: Ed Wilhite
Board Members:
Fred Delcomyn, Marissa Grant,
Pam Leiter, Valerie Sivicek

What is the Grand Prairie?

The Grand Prairie was a unique natural ecosystem in east-central Illinois. It consisted of thousands of square miles of tallgrass prairie and extensive marshes, interspersed with forested rivers and oak savannas.

