



# Wood Warblers

Wood warblers nest in Illinois but most do not, they are migrants. Traveling from Canada to Central America or some to the southern US, 36 species can be seen on a spring bird count here. Maybe, but that's like the Chicago Cubs own Bote hitting a grand slam in the bottom of the 9th for a Wrigley Field crowd that's stunned in disbelief, 4 to 3. When it comes to birding excitement, seeing one of these uncommon warblers is like that. And if it's in the backyard, whoa, you got to be kidding me. Cubs win, Cubs win!

A Blue-winged warbler, Golden-winged warbler, Blackburnian warbler - all seen by me in the backyard within the last year, uncommon and stunning to look at. But one escapes me most years, the Black-throated Blue warbler. A descriptive name, but accurate. What attracts them you ask? I've been asked that before and usually answer, water in the bird bath or a bush of some kind or even that it's because they know me. Which is no joke. I had a pair of Swainson's thrush this spring that would meet me in the driveway when I drove up. This happened several times, I think they wanted to be fed.



Photos by John Baxter

They liked my PB suet. PB stands for peanut butter, look it up. Warblers eat bugs. Flies, moths, caterpillars, you name it bugs are on the menu. I use beer bait that is stale brew, brown sugar, fruit that's old like bananas but it should smell fermented and fruity. I keep the bait outside in a one gallon pickle jar and pour out some in a dish on hot days for the flies and butterflies. You would be surprised to see that Comma, Question Mark, Buckeye, Red Admiral butterflies like it too. After all, they are flies. Funny to see a warbler with a drunk fly in its

beak. Makes me wonder if warblers ate enough beer slurping flies, then, they might become intoxicated.

Anyway, one more thing warblers like...Gray squirrels. BOSH you say, seriously, Gray squirrels don't like cats and if warblers see them in the yard, they know cats aren't around. Now back to the Black-throated Blue warbler, Steve Bailey, who's an ornithologist with the Illinois, Natural History Survey, told me this warbler migrates on the eastern side of Illinois not over the entire state. And most birders don't see this one during migration. I had one last year singing up a song in the Washington hawthorn tree, "veer, veer, veer, VEEEE". And this fall on September 26, a male catching bugs under the apple tree. Rotten apples brought the bugs in and this warbler stayed for hours catching them as I photographed from the yard swing 15ft away. Several times I got up to go in the house or through the side gate and each time I came back and sat down, the warbler came back to hop/jump/fly and catch bugs off the ground. Not shy at all. Finally after 100 pics, I went in the house to transfer the shots and share them on Flickr.

Want to hit a home run so to speak in the backyard, try for warblers. You might get some.

**John Baxter**

Kankakee River Valley Audubon Society



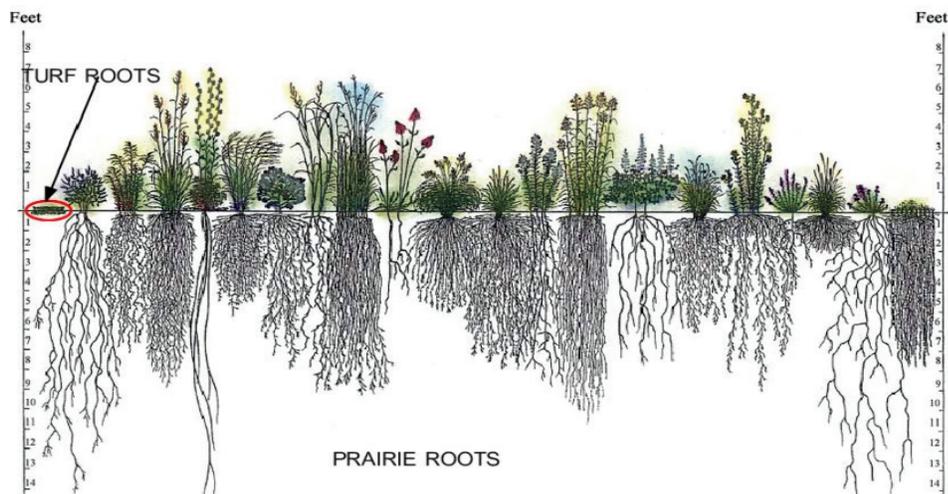
# CONSERVATION AT HOME

*A program of The Conservatory Foundation*

Located in DuPage County, the Conservation Foundation's *Conservation@Home* program is an education and recognition program for homeowners that supports our water conservation and protection efforts. The program goals are to encourage the use of native plants in residential yards and gardens, promote good water resource practices, and provide education for landowners on best practices for conservation.

Their website contains in-depth information on invasive species, backyard wetland and rain gardens, information on mulch and composting, creating and maintaining ponds, and wildlife habitat improvements.

The Conservation@Home program is a source of information and resources about managing your home property for the health of our water resources, and for our bird, insect and wildlife populations. When you are ready, Conservation@Home will certify your yard as an environmentally-friendly property. All property owners who are Conservation@Home certified will receive a sign to post in your yard.



Contact Jim Kleinwachter with questions, and to schedule your site visit:  
Phone: 630-428-4500, Ext. 115 • [jkleinwachter@theconservationfoundation.org](mailto:jkleinwachter@theconservationfoundation.org)

#### Resources:

[www.theconservationfoundation.org/](http://www.theconservationfoundation.org/)  
[www.facebook.com/TheConservationFoundation/](https://www.facebook.com/TheConservationFoundation/)  
[www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/ecologists-have-simple-request-homeownersplant-native-180970655/](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/ecologists-have-simple-request-homeownersplant-native-180970655/)

## Simple Things You Can Do to Help Amphibians in Your Yard

Amphibian populations are in a rapid decline worldwide. Here are suggestions on how to help restore and protect amphibian populations in your yard. Amphibians need both aquatic and terrestrial habitat, and are especially vulnerable to toxins in the environment. The backyard garden is a great place to develop habitat for frogs, toads and other amphibians. Habitat needs include food, shelter, migration corridors, breeding and nesting sites, as well as sites for dormancy during arid and high temperature periods.

### **Install a Garden Pond (with no fish):**

#### **Create Your Own Pond or Backyard Marsh:**

[www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Water/Backyard-Ponds](http://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/Water/Backyard-Ponds)

**Leave Some Areas Wild:** Plant native trees and shrubs, let leaf litter stay on the ground for winter protection, provide logs, rocks and brush piles of branches and twigs for shelter.



**Provide Native Plants:** native plants are preferred by insect species that amphibians feed on. This also applies to providing superior nutrition for pollinating insects that depend on native plants. Many insects need specific native plants to feed on, and are not found in areas where these plants are absent.

**Install Cover Boards:** amphibians generally need moist conditions, even in their terrestrial stage. Use untreated hardwood boards, a quarter inch thick or more and at least a 2x4 foot area. Place the board in an area that stays damp. Lay the board directly on the ground, and allow a month or so for animals to locate and settle in.

Be careful to avoid treated wood, or wood that has glues, including particle board and plywood, which contains toxins that are easily absorbed through the skin and are deadly for the vulnerable amphibians.

*(continued on page 4)*

**CONSERVATION AT HOME...** (continued from page 3)

**Avoid Using Chemicals:** including pesticides, herbicides or synthetic fertilizers. Amphibians breathe through their skin, easily absorbing toxins in the environment. Leave leaf litter in place in the garden; the natural mulch will provide the best nutrition needed in your garden.

**Help Preserve Native Wetland:** every effort to preserve even the smallest wetland or wet woodland remnants provide valuable habitat for native amphibians.

Download this PDF from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission: Inviting Reptiles & Amphibians to Your Backyard:

[www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Conserving/documents/InvitingReptilestoYourBackyard.pdf](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Conserving/documents/InvitingReptilestoYourBackyard.pdf)

**Resources:**

[www.ecosystemgardening.com/5-ways-to-help-amphibians-in-your-conservation-garden.html](http://www.ecosystemgardening.com/5-ways-to-help-amphibians-in-your-conservation-garden.html)

[www.amphibians.org/news/constructing-an-amphibian-paradise-in-your-garden/](http://www.amphibians.org/news/constructing-an-amphibian-paradise-in-your-garden/)  
*Bringing Nature Home* – by Doug Tallamy

*The Encyclopedia of Reptiles and Amphibians* – edited by Dr. Tim Halliday & Dr. Kraig Adler

*Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Illinois* – by Christopher A. Phillips, Ronald A. Brandon & Edward O. Moll

[www.content.yardmap.org/learn/installing-coverboards-for-amphibians/](http://www.content.yardmap.org/learn/installing-coverboards-for-amphibians/)

**Resources to Create Your Backyard Habitat****Forest Stewardship Program**

[www.web.extension.illinois.edu/forestry/forest\\_mgmt/land\\_assistance.cfm](http://www.web.extension.illinois.edu/forestry/forest_mgmt/land_assistance.cfm)

**Audubon**

A wonderful resource for the backyard conservationist; simply put in your zip code and you will find your local native plant species and identifies many of the native birds that each plant supports: [www.audubon.org/native-plants/](http://www.audubon.org/native-plants/)

**Wild Ones; Native Plants, Natural Landscapes**

Dedicated to promoting sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities

[www.wildones.org/](http://www.wildones.org/)

[www.facebook.com/wildonesnative/](https://www.facebook.com/wildonesnative/)

**Spotted Salamander****Photo Credit National Wildlife Federation****Wild Ones Handbook**

Download a PDF copy of their handbook on landscaping with native plants: [www.archive.epa.gov/greenacres/web/pdf/wo\\_2004b.pdf](http://www.archive.epa.gov/greenacres/web/pdf/wo_2004b.pdf)

**Websites for local conservation organizations:****Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area**

[www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/Kankakee/index.html](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/planning/Kankakee/index.html)

[www.friendsofthekankakee.org/](http://www.friendsofthekankakee.org/)

[www.facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Kankakee-227402757311931/](https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Kankakee-227402757311931/)

**Field Museum**

The Kankakee River Awareness Program

[www.gokankakeeriver.org/](http://www.gokankakeeriver.org/)

**Chicago Wilderness**

Regional alliance leading strategies to preserve, improve, and expand nature and quality of life in the greater Chicago area.

[www.chicagowilderness.org/](http://www.chicagowilderness.org/)

[www.facebook.com/ChicagoWilderness/](https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoWilderness/)

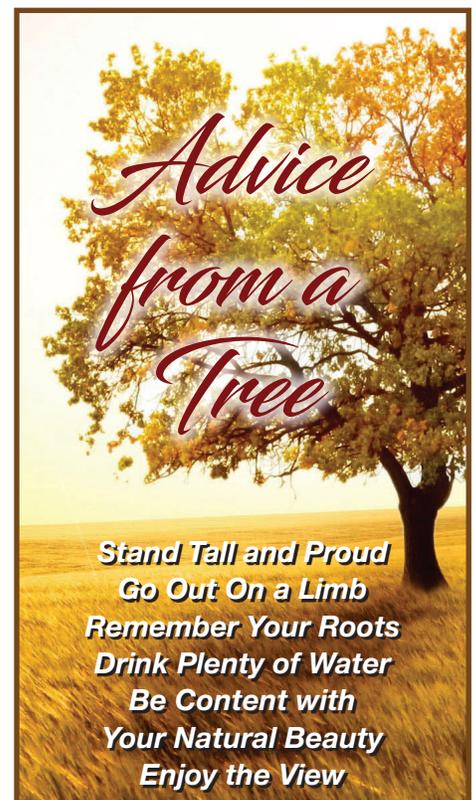
**The Conservation Foundation**

[www.theconservationfoundation.org](http://www.theconservationfoundation.org)

[www.facebook.com/TheConservationFoundation/](https://www.facebook.com/TheConservationFoundation/)



Black oak savanna. Credit: USFWS



# Eyes on the Sky

National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Jet Propulsion Laboratory  
[www.jpl.nasa.gov/](http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/)

NASA Hubble Telescope Images  
[www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/hubble/multimedia/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/hubble/multimedia/index.html)

## OUTDOORS SKILLS PROGRAMS

University of Illinois Extension, Kankakee County Master Naturalists:  
[web.extension.illinois.edu/gkw/kankakeemn/](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/gkw/kankakeemn/)

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (Bow) – giving women introductory experiences and instruction in various outdoor activities. Three-day workshop activities include recreational activities, shooting sports, and outdoor crafts and hobbies:  
[www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/BOW/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/BOW/Pages/default.aspx)

REI Classes and Events near Chicago, Illinois  
[www.rei.com/events/p/us-il-chicago](http://www.rei.com/events/p/us-il-chicago)

Nature, Animal Tracking, Medicinal Plants, Youth Programs, Teen Camps, Wilderness Survival Skills, Leadership - Located in Bloomington, Indiana  
[www.wildnatureproject.com/index.html](http://www.wildnatureproject.com/index.html)



Have you  
visited our  
website  
lately?

[www.krvfpd.org](http://www.krvfpd.org)

## On Trail At The Forest Preserve

Check out our website for dates for our  
2018 program schedule  
[www.krvfpd.org](http://www.krvfpd.org)

### Programs at the Forest Preserve office at Shannon Bayou, 3301 Waldron Road, Aroma Park, Illinois.

These programs are co-sponsored by the Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve District and the University of Illinois Extension, Kankakee County.

*University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact the Kankakee County Office at least two weeks prior to the event.*

### Maple Tree Tapping:

**February 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**

Join us for an educational, family fun event to learn the history and observe the process of making maple syrup. Learn how to use the maple trees in your yard to make that delicious pancake topping.

Maple Tree Tapping will be held on February 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. The program will begin with a presentation at the Shannon Bayou, 3301 Waldron Rd., Aroma Park, IL. The class will be

followed by a tree tapping at Aroma Land and Water Preserve, 1578 S Heiland Rd., St Anne, IL.

Due to weather uncertainty, mandatory pre-registration is required by January 22, 2019. Please call the University of Illinois Extension Office at 815-933-8337 to register. There is no fee for this event.

This workshop will be held both indoors and outside. Please come dressed for the weather.

### Certify Your Backyard as a Wildlife Habitat:

**April 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**

Learn what it takes to have your backyard certified as a wildlife habitat of Kankakee. Your backyard oasis plays a critical role in helping wildlife survive the pressures of development. The people who create them also get engaged with wildlife in new ways and forge a deeper connection with the natural world.

Getting your backyard certified is relatively easy. You simply need to demonstrate that your yard or garden

provides food, water, and cover and places to raise young, and that you also employ some sustainable gardening practices. Many people find that their yards and gardens already satisfy most of the requirements, and they simply need to add a few additional elements such as native plants, bird feeders, a small water feature and nesting boxes.

Bring pictures of your backyard. The Master Naturalists of Kankakee County will review all the specifications. If all requirements are met, you will have the distinct pleasure of being one of the few Certified Wildlife Habitats of Kankakee.

*Certify as a Wildlife Habitat* will be held on April 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. The program will be presented at the Shannon Bayou, 3301 Waldron Rd., Aroma Park, Illinois.

Mandatory pre-registration is required by March 25, 2019. Please call the University of Illinois Extension Office at 815-933-8337 to register. There is no fee for this event. Space is limited to 20 attendees for this presentation.

*(continued on page 6)*

**ON TRAIL...** (continued from page 5)

**Storybook Trail**

**April 6, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**

The Storybook Trail combines reading with physical fitness. The trail is a walking path around the perimeter of the Shannon Bayou.

Pages from a picture book are framed and posted along the path. To read the whole story, the reader must walk (or run) from one sign to the other. The project was made possible by the George See Memorial, University of Illinois Kankakee County; and the Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve. An activity is planned to accompany the book.

*Storybook Trail* will be held on April 6, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. The program will be presented at the Shannon Bayou, 3301 Waldron Rd., Aroma Park, Illinois. There is no fee for this event.

**Native Pollinators**

**May 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**

Native Pollinators: When it comes to pollination, honey bees get a majority of the attention. However, many insects play a role in pollination. Holly Froning, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Coordinator, will discuss different native pollinators and how to make your landscape attractive to them.

*Native Pollinators* will be held on May 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. The program will be presented at the Shannon Bayou, 3301 Waldron Rd., Aroma Park, Illinois.

Mandatory pre-registration is required by April 24, 2019. Please call the University of Illinois Extension Office at 815-933-8337 to register. There is no fee for this event. Space is limited to 20 attendees for this presentation.

**How to Kill a Tree**

**July 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**

Sometimes a homeowner is a tree's biggest pest. Holly Froning, Master Gardener Coordinator for the University of Illinois Extension, Kankakee County, will discuss all the common mistakes homeowners make when planting and maintaining their most valuable landscaping investment, their trees.

*How to Kill a Tree* will be held on July 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. The program will be presented at the Shannon Bayou, 3301 Waldron Rd., Aroma Park, Illinois.

Mandatory pre-registration is required by June 24, 2019. Please call the University of Illinois Extension Office at

815-933-8337 to register. There is no fee for this event. Space is limited to 20 attendees for this presentation.

**Landscaping on the Wild Side; Attracting Wildlife to Your Yard**

**August 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**

Whether they fly, flutter, scoot or scurry, wildlife adds an extra element of excitement to our landscape, especially in winter. Wildlife-friendly landscapes can be beautiful, but with an added dimension of interest. Your landscape becomes a fulfilling leisure activity to share with family and friends as you learn to identify the many different creatures that call your landscape home.

University of Illinois, Kankakee County Master Gardener Coordinator, Holly Froning, will share uncomplicated and undemanding ways to develop an attractive landscape that birds, butterflies, and other wildlife will appreciate.

*Landscaping on the Wild Side* will be held on August 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. The program will be presented at the Shannon Bayou, 3301 Waldron Rd., Aroma Park, Illinois.

Mandatory pre-registration is required by July 25, 2019. Please call the University of Illinois Extension Office at 815-933-8337 to register. There is no fee for this event. Space is limited to 20 attendees for this presentation.

**Living With Wildlife**

**October 2, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**

Living with Wildlife is always a challenge. Raccoons and other wildlife don't necessarily make the best neighbors. For instance, woodchucks can wreak havoc in a garden and raccoons can literally move into your house. Come learn the laws to relocating these unwanted visitors. This workshop

will be presented by Holly Froning, Master Gardener Coordinator for University of Illinois Extension, Kankakee County. Holly will give suggestions on how to critter proof your home, lawn and garden.

*Living With Wildlife* will be held on October 2, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. The program will be presented at the Shannon Bayou, 3301 Waldron Rd., Aroma Park, Illinois.

Mandatory pre-registration is required by September 25, 2019. Please call the University of Illinois Extension Office at 815-933-8337 to register. There is no fee for this event. Space is limited to 20 attendees for this presentation.



**This Program is Held at the University of Illinois Extension, Kankakee County, 1650 Commerce Drive, Bourbonnais.**

**Soil Your Undies Challenge**

**May 1, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.**

Want to bring to your classroom a new way to talk about soil health? Come join the Soil your Undies Challenge. You will bury a pair of cotton undies somewhere on your schools grounds in May to be dug up in the fall. If you have good soil health, that means you have the critters and bugs in the soils and things will break down meaning the cotton underwear will break down too. In the fall you will dig up the undies and see what has been feeding on them. The \$10.00 fee covers classroom instruction and a pair of 100% pure cotton undies.

Plan to attend *Soil Your Undies Challenge* at University of Illinois Extension, Kankakee County, 1650 Commerce Drive, Bourbonnais. For further information or to pre-register, please contact the Extension office at 815-933-8337. Pre-registration is required by April 24, 2019. There is a \$10.00 fee for this presentation.

**Registration Form – Soil Your Undies Challenge**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*Return to:*  
**University of Illinois Extension Kankakee County**  
 1650 Commerce Drive • Bourbonnais, IL 60914

# FOREST PRESERVE SITES

## Shannon Bayou Environmental Education Center and Administrative Office

This 46-acre preserve is located at 3301 Waldron Road in Aroma Park, along the Kankakee River. The Center provides space for programs about natural history, ecology and preservation of open space in the Kankakee River Valley. The walking trail area features plantings of many native trees and plants, including native tallgrass prairie species, a butterfly garden of native plants. The site includes ¾ mile asphalt and fine gravel walking trail, a picnic shelter, and picnic tables.

3301 Waldron Road  
Aroma Park, IL 60910  
41°04'47.61N  
87°48'44.31"W

## Aroma Land and Water Reserve

One of the best sites in the area for woodland wildflowers, this 140 acre site is located on Hieland Road, 1.4 miles south of Highway 17 East. A 1.2 mile walking trail winds through several different types of natural areas, including high quality forest, prairie, and wetland ecosystems. It also has nearly ¼ mile of Kankakee River frontage, and the associated floodplain forest.

The Forest Preserve mows a loop trail that branches off the existing 1 ¼ mile trail that meanders through the main body of the Aroma LWR. In the summer of 2011, 49.5 acres of mixed pine and hardwood forest was added.

Approximately 40 percent of the Aroma Preserve is a wetland and lies within the flood plain of the Kankakee River. In the spring, the wet oak forest gives a spectacular wildflower display while the wetland and sand prairie are the most colorful in the summer. There is ample parking in the parking lot on Hieland Road, and a playground, maintained by the Kankakee River Valley Park District, for children.

1578 South Hieland Road  
St. Anne, IL 60964  
41°06'02.90"N  
87°45'24.08"W

## Gar Creek Trail and Prairie Restoration

Approximately 85 acres, this site is located about one-half mile east of Route 45 on River Road adjacent to Kankakee Community College. The 16-acre restored tall grass prairie was planted in 1992. A 2.5 mile trail, suitable for hiking, bicycling, and cross country skiing, is a cooperative project with the Kankakee Valley Park District. The trail begins at the prairie, winds along Gar Creek, through oak woodland, and down to the banks of the Kankakee River.

At river's edge, the trail connects with the Kankakee Riverfront Trail Project, which starts at the Aqua Illinois property at Hawkins and Water Streets, goes through Shapiro Developmental Center, Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve, Kankakee Community College, and connects with River Road Park and Splash Valley, of the Kankakee Valley Park District.

501 River Road  
Kankakee, IL 60901  
41°05'30.84"N  
87°51'32.78"W

## Waldron Arboretum

Located 1.1 miles south of I-57, this site was once a landscape nursery. On this 90 acre site there is a fine gravel hiking trail suitable for bicycling and cross country skiing. The trail winds through 30 acres of woods, including a small prairie restoration area.

In the winter of 2008, the District acquired an additional 60 acre parcel which had been primarily in agriculture. Future development plans are pending based on the districts needs and funds available through federal and state grants.

2755 Waldron Road  
Aroma Park, IL 60910  
41°05'36.28"N  
87°49'26.51"W

## Hieland Lakes Nature Preserve

The Forest Preserve has a new site located about three miles east of Kankakee on Route 17. The new site is 64 acres, including two connected lakes. An aquatic survey will be conducted to determine the fish population; mean-

while, limited fishing is allowed. Bluegill may be kept by anglers - all other fish are catch-and-release.

Plans for the site include planting native wildflowers, prairie restoration and creation of a walking path. At this time, there is a mowed walking path, a parking lot, fencing, and a bridge at the point where the two lakes connect.

The site is a former sand gravel quarry, and while at this time, before restoration gets underway, there is not much in the way of native ecosystem remaining, the site offers a sparse population of native plant life, the area is abundant with wildlife such as deer, fox, coyote, and waterfowl including wood ducks, great blue heron and egret.

6692 Route 17 East  
St. Anne, IL 60964  
41°7'02.23"N  
87°44'24.82"W

## Strasma Grove

Nestled in a neighborhood in Kankakee, this site is 2 acres of mature native trees.

Duane Boulevard  
Kankakee, Illinois 60901  
41°06'28.33"N  
87°50'43.56"W

## Limestone Reforestation Site

This site is a 30 acre preserve and reforestation site, with mixed trees and grasses.

County Road 3750 West  
Kankakee, Illinois 60901  
41°08'38.96"N  
87°56'51.08"W

## Zeedyk Meadows

Four acres of trees and grasses.

Warren Street  
St. Anne, Illinois 60964  
41° 06' 24.92" N  
87° 44' 35.77" W

## Snake Creek Preserve

5800 Darline Dr  
St Anne, IL 60964  
41.109752, 87.756308



**Kankakee River Valley Forest  
Preserve District**

3301 Waldron Road • P.O. Box 13  
Aroma Park, Illinois 60910  
815-935-5630

Web address: [www.krvfpd.org](http://www.krvfpd.org)  
E-mail: [forest@krvfpd.org](mailto:forest@krvfpd.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/KRVFPD/](http://www.facebook.com/KRVFPD/)

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Kankakee, IL

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Doug Short .....Site Development Director  
Jean Hurre .....Editor

But when I consider that the nobler animals have been exterminated here - the cougar, panther, lynx, wolverine, wolf, bear, moose, deer, the beaver, the turkey, etc., etc. - I cannot but feel as if I live in a tamed, and as it were, emasculated country... I listen to a concert in which so many parts are wanting... for instance, thinking that I have here the entire poem, and then, to my chagrin, I hear that it is but an imperfect copy that I possess and have read, that my ancestors have torn out many of the first leaves and grandest passages.

*- Henry David Thoreau, Journal,*

**If you would like to subscribe to this  
free Newsletter, or to send an article,  
contact the Forest Preserve Office  
at 815-935-5630**

