



Citizens for Conservation

Barrington, Illinois

*Saving Living Space for Living Things*

# Our Beginning

## Saving Open Space

A group of area residents met in 1970 to discuss the damage suburban growth was causing to Barrington's unique environment. This creeping development represented a threat to our lakes, streams, savannas, wetlands and prairies. Sprawl was destroying native habitats as well as many rare species of plants and animals dependent on those habitats.

Even though Illinois is known as the Prairie State, only 1/100th of 1% of the original prairie remains. To assure that plants and wildlife had an ongoing home in the Barrington area, it was vital to preserve and protect their habitats. Thus, Citizens for Conservation (CFC) was incorporated in 1971 as Barrington's own non-profit conservation organization.

***Below:** View of Flint Creek Savanna from the gravel hill prairie*

***Right:** Bur oak at Flint Creek Savanna*



# Our Mission

*Saving Living Space for Living Things –*

*through protection, restoration and stewardship of land,*

*conservation of natural resources and education.*



*Thank you to our photographers  
Diane Bodkin, cover: fringed gentian  
John Schweizer, Community Education  
Patsy Mortimer, all other photos*

# Carrying Out Our Mission



Citizens for Conservation has led the initiative to protect over 2500 acres of public land in the Barrington area. Years of planning, urging and negotiating resulted in the creation of four new forest preserves: Ela Marsh, Fox River, Grassy Lake/Flint Creek and Baker's Lake Younghusband Prairie. CFC itself owns ten preserves encompassing 361 acres.

CFC also holds a five-acre conservation easement on private property and welcomes discussions with residents who wish to protect their own properties. Conservation easements allow homeowners to protect the environmental value of their land while they continue to own it.

CFC plays an active role in the Flint Creek Watershed Partnership which was formed to address water quality and quantity. A watershed plan finished in 2007 provides a blueprint for land in need of protection and outlines future stream and natural area restoration projects within the Flint Creek watershed.

We provide natural area stewardship at Baker's Lake Savanna for the Village of Barrington, assist Cook and Lake County Forest Preserve Districts at Spring Creek, Baker's Lake Heron Rookery, Ela Prairie and Cuba Marsh Forest Preserves. We also assist the Barrington Park District and School District 220 with various projects.

CFC is an active member of Chicago Wilderness, Chicago Region Land Conservation Coalition, Flint Creek Watershed Partnership, IL Environmental Council and Land Trust Alliance. CFC meets LTA standards and practices which are ethical and technical guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust.

We work with our local villages and plan commissions to protect Barrington's countryside atmosphere. Protected open space restored to its native condition provides real benefits to Barrington residents. These include a healthy natural environment, a more stimulating yet tranquil human environment, and measurably higher real estate values.



CFC's prairie restoration successes have been the subject of articles in two British publications, and its floating islands installations and grassland bird restoration efforts have been featured in two nationally broadcast TV programs. Up to 300 CFC volunteers work on restoration and stewardship projects each year.



CFC spearheaded the successful restoration of the Baker's Lake Heron Rookery after the natural island eroded and the trees fell. Every year volunteers install pruned, recycled Christmas trees to the man-made structure creating bird habitat. When the season ends, volunteers clear the island and the cycle repeats. Amazingly, this tiny island hosts a population of 1,700 birds including great

egrets, great blue herons, double-crested cormorants, and state endangered black-crowned night herons.

CFC monitors streams, animals and birds including bluebirds, wood ducks and frogs. All are important indicators of healthy ecosystems. Our preserves are open to members for hiking, bird watching and nature walks. We regularly schedule tours for neighbors and for school and community groups.

*Top: Baker's Lake Heron Rookery*  
*Below: Volunteers installing CFC's floating islands*



# Our Preserves

CFC owns ten preserves totalling 361 acres. Much of this land has been generously donated, but CFC has purchased 110 acres through fundraising campaigns.

At **Grigsby Prairie** in Barrington Hills, we've seen amazing results since restoration of an Illinois tallgrass prairie began here in 1987. Nesting birds at this 42-acre preserve include meadowlarks, bobolinks, grasshopper sparrows, sedge wrens, king birds, savannah sparrows, red-headed woodpeckers and bluebirds. Grigsby provides habitat for 175 species of native plants in wet, mesic and dry prairie, wetlands and a savanna.

**Barrington Bog** (45 acres), **Farm Trails North** (18 acres) and **Wagner Fen** (42 acres) are located in Lake Barrington and are all dedicated as Illinois Nature Preserves. Bogs and fens are specific types of wetlands that were once abundant in Illinois but now survive only in scattered remnants. Each wetland preserve supports unique plant communities and provides habitat for both common and rare wildlife. The Baltimore checkerspot butterfly, which depends on the turtlehead plant, is one species that thrives only in fens.

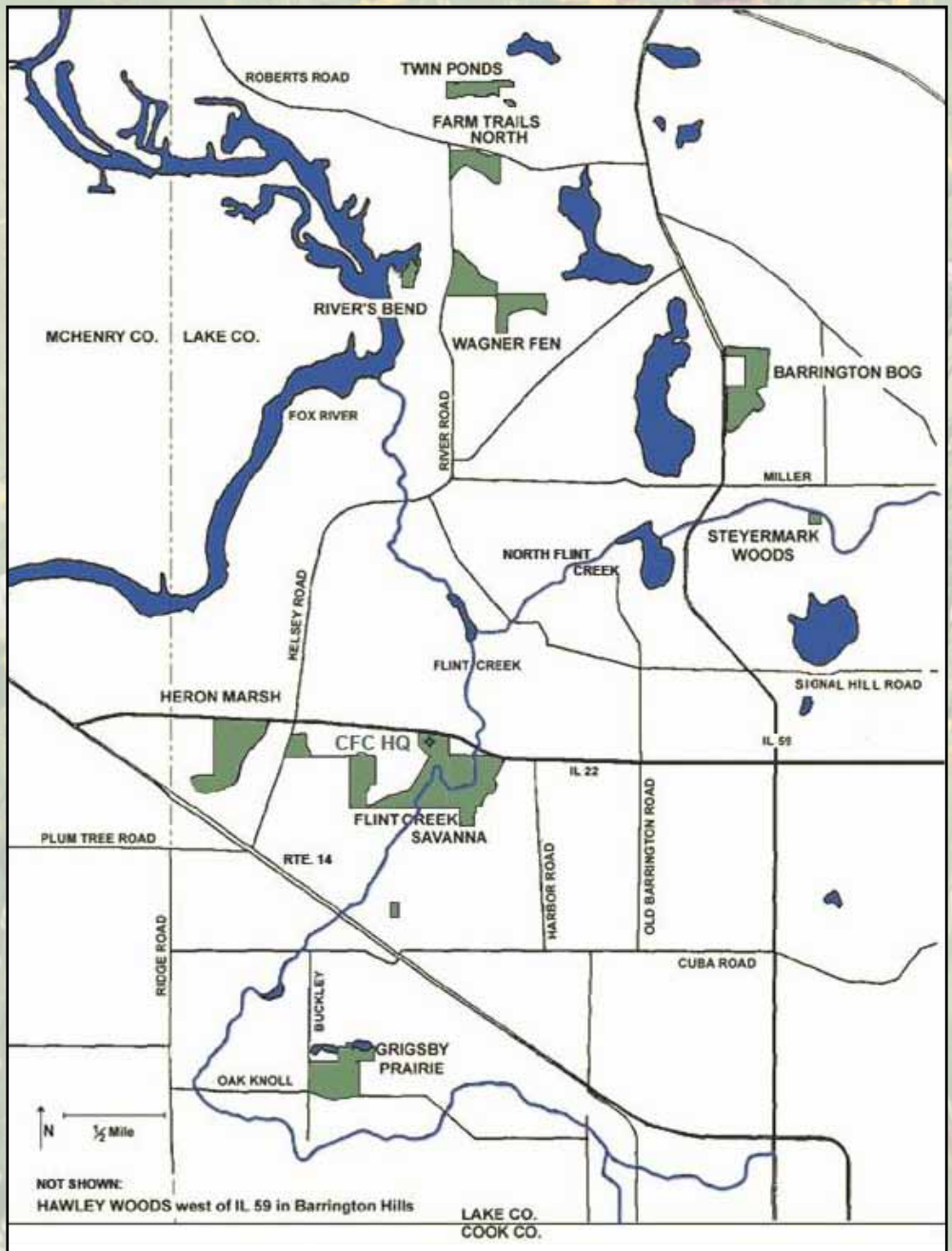
**Flint Creek Savanna** in Lake Barrington is CFC's largest and most diverse preserve with 115 acres that includes our farmhouse office. The preserve embraces nearly a mile of creek course, four oak and hickory groves, and acres of restored wetlands and prairie.

CFC is extremely proud of the numerous restoration projects at this preserve. There are over 200 species of grasses, sedges and wildflowers. A prairie pothole near the east entrance is considered one of the best wetland restorations in the Chicago area; a series of ponds and filter marshes slow and cleanse stormwater before it flows into Flint Creek from the west. Two gravel hill prairies by the office parking lot conceal concrete debris from the old barn.

Three birds from Illinois' list of "species in greatest need of conservation" nest here: savannah sparrows, sedge wrens and, every year since 1998, a pair of sandhill cranes. We are thrilled with the interest and educational opportunities this wildlife generates for our members and the community.

**Hawley Lake Marsh** (17 acres in Barrington Hills), **Heron Marsh** (49 acres in Cuba Township), **River's Bend** (9 acres in Lake Barrington), **Steyermark Woods** (1 acre in North Barrington), and **Twin Ponds** (23 acres in Lake Barrington) are preserves maintained in their current natural state.

# Citizens For Conservation Preserves



Map design by Rob Neff

# Education

## For the Community

Citizens for Conservation offers free adult education programs to the public on a variety of subjects such as gardening with native plants, control of garlic mustard and other invasive species, as well as coyotes and rain gardens. Hundreds of people have attended the presentations, and new programs are featured every year, usually during the winter “indoor” season.

In addition, CFC participates in Conservation@Home, a project in which our representatives assess homeowners’ properties and recommend changes to make them more environmentally friendly. Such suggestions include using native plants and rain barrels, conserving water, providing bird and wildlife habitat, and decreasing the use of lawn with its obligatory fertilizer and pesticides. Visit our website to find extensive information on gardening with native plants by clicking C@H on the Home page.



*CFC reaches out into the community to foster  
the growth of good environmental ethics and practices.*





*Our classes support the national forum “Leave No Child Inside.”  
We work with Chicago Wilderness and other conservation organizations on this program.*

## Youth Education

Throughout its history Citizens for Conservation has offered educational opportunities to children and their caregivers in the greater Barrington communities. Our Adventures in Nature programs allow youth to explore their knowledge and test their own theories on how parts of nature work. Through these and other nature-related experiences, participants learn to understand, appreciate, and respect the importance of the natural world. CFC offers year-round programs at various outdoor locations, including some right under CFC’s own big walnut tree! Children have searched for frogs, caught and released toads, picked wildflower seeds, and collected walnuts. CFC’s goal is for children and their caregivers to be involved in nature so that they develop interest in and passion for their outdoor environment. What better way is there for all ages to feel nature’s magic and become environmental stewards for the future.





# What You Can Do

**Become a Member or Donor.** Help us protect our environment for future generations. Go to [www.citizensforconservation.org](http://www.citizensforconservation.org).

**Become a Volunteer.** We offer a wide range of volunteer opportunities from office to field work. Devote as little or as much time as your schedule allows. Being knowledgeable about the environment isn't necessary; you'll learn by working with us. Go to [www.citizensforconservation.org](http://www.citizensforconservation.org).

**Attend our Classes.** Attend our adult education programs, and bring your children to our Adventures in Nature. Then spread the word to neighbors and friends.

**Donate Land.** There are many tax advantages to donating land. Land can be given in three ways: direct tax-deductible donation, a tax-deductible donation with the owner continuing to reside on the site, or a conservation easement which allows acreage to be used for preservation while the landowner retains lawful ownership. Call us to discuss present or future possibilities.

**Go Native.** Increase wildlife habitat by landscaping your property with native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers. Shop at our Native Plant Sale held the first Saturday in May.

*Top left: Controlled burn at Baker's Lake Savanna  
Bottom left: Father and son picking seeds at Grigsby Prairie  
Below: Touring Barrington Bog*



# Restoration Workday Schedule in Barrington Area Nature Preserves

**Spring:** Starting in April, Thursdays and Saturdays, 9-11 a.m.  
Wildflower rescue, plug planting and weeding.

**Summer:** Thursdays and Saturdays, 9-11 a.m.  
Plug planting and weeding

**Fall:** Thursdays and Saturdays, 9-11 a.m.; Sundays, 3:30-5 p.m.  
Seed collecting: a fun and easy activity for all generations.

**Winter:** Saturdays, 9-11 a.m.  
Brush cutting: teens and adults

As weather permits, we also conduct controlled burns from late fall through early spring. If you are interested in helping, we will add your name to a list of volunteers we call the day of the prescribed burn.

**Meet for workdays at Citizens for Conservation's office.**



**CITIZENS FOR CONSERVATION**

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