



# The Heron

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**July 26th - Bluegrass Jam**

The Conservation Foundation's  
Dickson-Murst Farm,  
Montgomery

**August 23rd -  
Day at the Farm**

The Conservation Foundation's  
Dickson-Murst Farm,  
Montgomery

**September 13th -  
McDonald Farm  
Fall Festival**

The Conservation Foundation's  
McDonald Farm, Naperville

**November 8th -  
Team Run for Nature**

in Naperville Marathon &  
Half-Marathon, Naperville

*Canoeing*  
Photo by Michael Stout

We save land. We save rivers.

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*The Conservation Foundation is a 43-year-old private 501(c)3 land and water protection organization working to preserve nature in northeastern Illinois. FEIN #23-7221206*



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Social Media!

## Our Mission Statement

*We preserve and restore natural areas and open space, protect rivers and watersheds, and promote stewardship of our environment.*

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# A Year to Be Matched



*President/CEO Brook McDonald discussing the unique geology and ecology of our Dayton Bluffs Preserve with Betsy Bramsen and Nancy Hamill Winter, the daughters of Joan and Corwith Hamill. This Lower Fox River region is an area of special significance to the Hamill family.*

One of the major reasons people tell me they support The Conservation Foundation, or any other non-profit, is that they know their money can accomplish more when it is pooled with the contributions of others and the expertise of the staff and board focused on the mission. To be able to tell them that their contributions can go even farther is unbelievable, but it's what I get to do this year thanks to the legacy of the late Corwith "Corky" Hamill and the generosity of his children.

***I will always remember 2015 as the Year of the Hamill Match, the year I get to tell donors that their gifts will work three times as hard to save nearby nature as in any other year.***

As part of their extraordinary \$1.5 million gift to The Conservation Foundation, The Hamill Family Foundation has presented us with a matching challenge. **If we can raise \$250,000 in new gifts by the end of 2015, they will match those gifts 2 to 1, essentially tripling your gifts this year.**

If you are not a member of The Conservation Foundation, this is the year to join! Your membership gift will have triple the already-vital impact it would have in any other year. If you ARE already a member, any additional contributions over your yearly membership gift will count toward the match and will also be tripled.

We have already raised \$80,000 toward our \$250,000 challenge, and invite you to become a part of this important time of growth by making a contribution by mail or at [www.theconservationfoundation.org](http://www.theconservationfoundation.org).

I love that the Hamill family thought of this match. Instead of just giving us \$500,000, they have challenged us to be creative, to stretch and to grow. By the end of 2015, we will have expanded our base of support to sustain us into the future. It shows me they care deeply about our longterm success, and I continue to be humbled by the faith they have shown in our mission and ability to carry out their family's wish to preserve and properly steward the treasured natural areas of northeastern Illinois.

**By: Brook McDonald**  
President/CEO

Help fill this rain barrel with your tax-deductible contribution to our **\$250,000 Hamill Family Foundation Matching Challenge!**



*Corwith "Corky" Hamill, shown here sporting his TCF polo shirt at one of our gatherings.*



# The Latest Buzz: The Conservation Foundation's Pollinator Meadow Mix

As soon as you drink the conservation "Kool Aid", you start to really notice the vast tracts of turf grass covering our landscape, and feel a bit of despair at how much more those landscapes could be doing for people, wildlife and ecological health. But who wants a head-high prairie in front of their business or school?

There is a middle ground, and it's called The Conservation Foundation's Pollinator Meadow Mix. Bursting with colorful native plants but specifically designed to keep a low profile, this new product will bring beauty and function back to school, church and corporate campuses, roadsides and parks across northeastern Illinois while helping businesses, organizations and municipalities reduce their maintenance costs and fossil fuel consumption.

### What's not to love??

While The Conservation Foundation's Pollinator Meadow Mix is site-specific and will vary depending upon hydrology and growing conditions, it contains a mixture of short-

growing perennial flowers, grasses and sedges that are native to Illinois. It was developed in partnership with The Pizzo Group, Applied Ecological Services, and Cardno. All three companies sell the mix and offer installation and maintenance services. The Conservation Foundation will receive a donation of \$1/ pound of Pollinator Meadow Mix sold. Professional installation and maintenance for the first three years is recommended.

Though The Conservation Foundation's Pollinator Meadow Mix will not be maintenance-free, landowners can see a savings of up to \$7,000 an acre just one year after planting compared with the mowing and maintenance costs of traditional turf grass, and can see a staggering savings of \$85,000 an acre over ten years. Its beautiful appearance will enhance curb appeal and employee and customer experience, and the environmental benefits run circles around traditional turf landscapes, which are basically ecological deserts. The colorful native plants of The Conservation Foundation's Pollinator

Meadow Mix will offer a beautiful and tasty buffet for imperiled bees, butterflies and songbirds. And their deep roots aid in groundwater infiltration, flood control, pollution reduction and improving the health of our local rivers and streams.

Businesses and municipalities that plant The Conservation Foundation's Pollinator Meadow Mix will be eligible for Conservation@Work certification, another program of The Conservation Foundation that recognizes property owners who employ conservation practices in the care of their land.

The Conservation Foundation's Pollinator Meadow Mix is ideal for corporate campuses, parks, churches, and municipal sites of one acre or more.

For more information, contact Jim Kleinwachter at (630) 428-4500, Ext. 115 or email [jkleinwachter@theconservationfoundation.org](mailto:jkleinwachter@theconservationfoundation.org).

**By: Jill Johnson**  
Communications Manager

*The Conservation Foundation's Pollinator Meadow Mix is being developed and distributed by these invaluable partners:*



*The Conservation Foundation's Pollinator Meadow Mix is ideal for common areas in residential neighborhoods, open tracts around parks and forest preserves, and on church, school and corporate campuses. We can put these acres to work for wildlife and water conservation while reducing maintenance costs and beautifying our landscape.*

# Conservation In Our Community

*“The most meaningful and impactful conservation happens when communities come together and work at the local, even neighborhood scale to make our communities cleaner and healthier.”*

**Brook McDonald, President/CEO of The Conservation Foundation**

Making an impact at the local level – that’s what The Conservation Foundation’s newest initiative in DuPage County is all about. Five DuPage County communities are participating in the pilot program, called Conservation In Our Community.

Carol Stream, Downers Grove, Elmhurst, Naperville and Warrenville are all engaging their citizens to become environmentally-conscious through a variety of local projects. These five municipalities were chosen to pilot Conservation In Our Community because their leaders and residents have already demonstrated a conservation mindset through involvement in community-wide rain barrel sales, Conservation@Home and Conservation@Work.

As participants in Conservation In Our Community, these five municipalities choose from a menu of projects that showcase simple things each and every person can do to impact both their community and our environment in a positive way. Everyone wants clean water, clean air and beautiful places to exercise or relax body and mind. The practices highlighted in these projects, like collecting rainwater, planting native plants, and reducing or eliminating chemical use on the landscape all contribute to flood control, wildlife habitat, stormwater infiltration and reduced pollution.

The ultimate goal of Conservation In Our Community is for residents to embrace the idea of conservation as a core community value that not only enhances the environment, but also conserves money spent in maintenance and cleanup. And once they embrace that idea, we want them to feel empowered to bring that mission forward, right where they live. For more information on the program, contact Jan Roehll at (630) 428-4500, Ext. 121.

Conservation In Our Community is being made possible through a \$12,000 grant from the DuPage Foundation with support from DuPage County Stormwater Management. Each municipality has contributed a small portion to help fund this effort and The Conservation Foundation will provide the guidance needed to help implement the projects.

**By: Sandy Kaczmariski**  
Sandpaper Wordsmiths

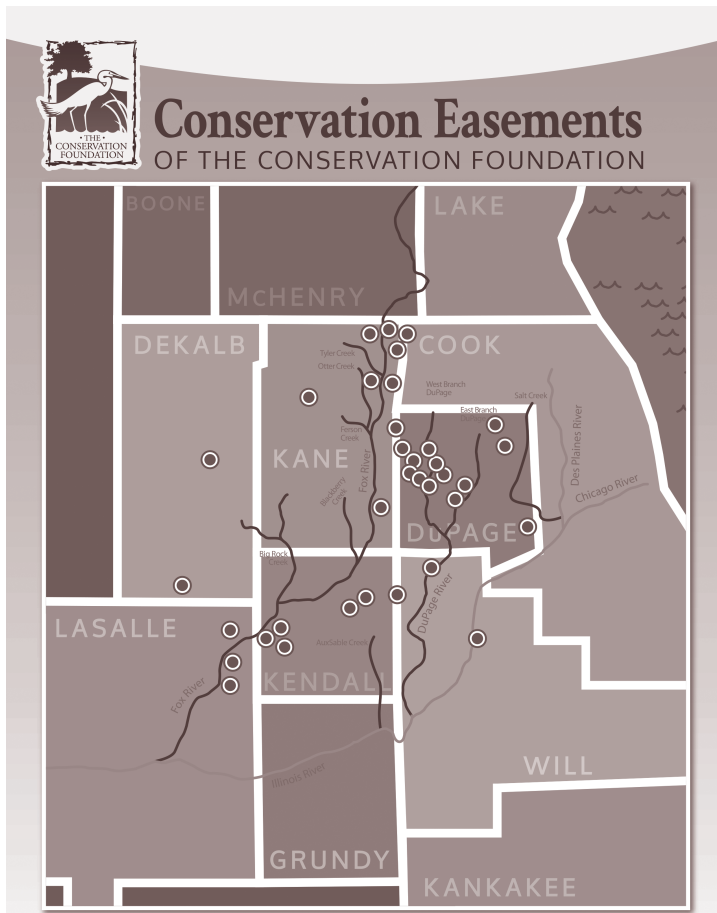
**Jill Johnson**  
Communications Manager



Storm drain stenciling is an ideal activity for scout, youth and school groups, and helps remind residents that anything they put down their storm drains flows directly into our local rivers and streams.



Educating homeowners on the benefits of native plants and certifying yards and properties through our Conservation@Home and Conservation@Work programs is another goal of Conservation In Our Community.



## Easements Everywhere

There are a lot of different ways that The Conservation Foundation helps to preserve land, and sometimes they run in waves. For example, there was a time when it seemed like we were running one or two open space referendum campaigns each year. Then, in the past 5 years or so, we did a number of Buy and Hold projects, where we would buy properties on behalf of public agencies and hold onto them while they applied for grants or gathered their acquisition funds. This year, it seems like conservation easements are suddenly “hot”. A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement that a landowner makes with a public agency or private conservation organization to permanently restrict the type and amount of development that can occur on their property.

In December, we completed a conservation easement on 37 acres of land along the Kishwaukee River in DeKalb County, and are close to completing two more, one in DuPage County and the other on the DuPage/Kane County border. All three are being put in place to make sure that the land will not be developed, and the natural value of the land will be protected for generations to come. The Kishwaukee River is one of northeast Illinois’ highest-quality rivers, and protecting the land on its banks is a high priority. The conservation easement was put on property that is adjacent to the city of Sycamore, and will be part of a new preserve that will be open for the public to enjoy. Though it had been farmed for decades, the land is now being restored to native vegetation, which will increase the health of the land as well as the river beside it.

We’ll have more details on the new conservation easements in the next *Heron*. The Foundation currently monitors and enforces 35 conservation easements throughout our service area, covering more than 1,200 acres of land.

**By: Dan Lobbes**  
 Director of Land Protection, Kane County Program Director



Thirty seven acres along the Kishwaukee River are now protected through a private conservation easement.



The late Eleanor Himmelfarb was able to place her stunning wooded Winfield property under the care of a private conservation easement before her passing, calling our land protection staff members “magicians” for their skill in helping her navigate the process. Eleanor’s easement inspired several others on her road to place easements on their properties as well.

# Preachin' On in the Aux Sable Watershed

The gospel of conservation will continue to be spread in Kendall County's Aux Sable Creek Watershed thanks to a grant from the Morris plant of LyondellBasell, one of the world's largest petrochemical companies, and a generous gift from the Aux Sable Creek Watershed Coalition. This is the second grant awarded to The Conservation Foundation by LyondellBasell.

The Aux Sable Creek is one of just a few Class A streams in Illinois. The \$5,000 grant we received from LyondellBasell last year was used to kick off an effort to empower citizens to contribute to water conservation and help maintain the pristine state of their home watershed. An exemplary outcome of that effort is the demonstration rain garden site at the Aux Sable Elementary School in Minooka, which was accomplished in partnership with the Aux Sable Creek Watershed Coalition.

This year's \$3,000 grant will allow us to expand on the momentum we have begun by promoting the benefits of rain barrels and native plantings, making them available to area residents, and rewarding those who are putting good conservation practices to work in their home



The Aux Sable Creek is considered one of the highest quality streams in the state of Illinois.

landscapes through our Conservation@Home certification program.

The Aux Sable Creek Watershed Coalition has also donated \$3,000 to the project. Joan Soltwisch, a member of the The Conservation Foundation's Kendall County Advisory Council and leader of the watershed coalition is serving on the planning committee with staff.

**By: John Church**  
Kendall County Program Director

**Jill Johnson**  
Communications Manager

## Savor Summer at the Dickson-Murst Farm

*Thanks to the tireless efforts of our volunteer Dickson-Murst Farm Partners, you can savor the best things about summer over the next few months at The Conservation Foundation's Dickson-Murst Farm in Montgomery.*

### Bluegrass Jam

*Sunday, July 26th - 11am to 4pm*

Nothing says summer like outdoor music, and the Bluegrass Jam at the Dickson-Murst Farm will have your toes tapping the whole afternoon. Stroll from one impromptu band to another as musicians let the spirit of bluegrass define the day. Bring a picnic or grab some tasty vittles from the Country Kitchen and let your cares float away on the notes of the music.

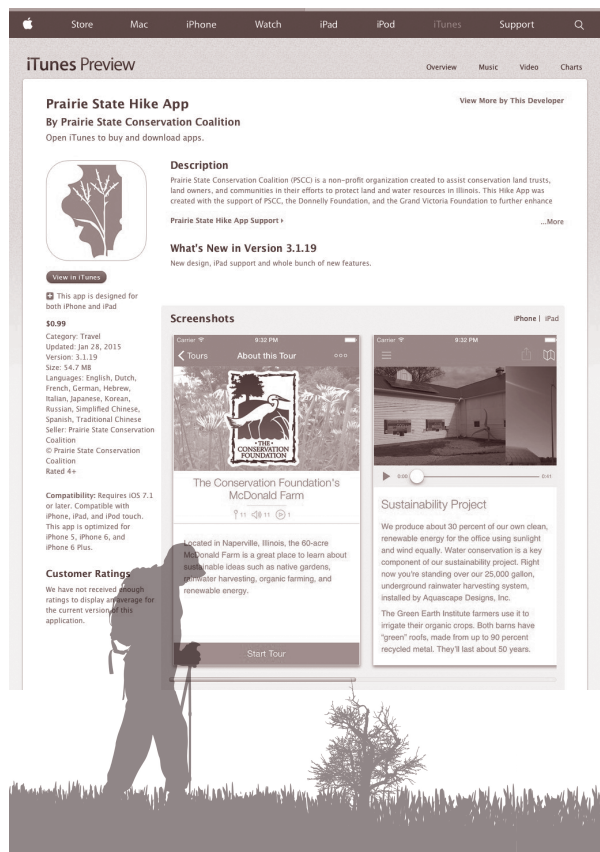
### Day at the Dickson-Murst Farm

*Sunday, August 23rd - 9am to 4pm*

You can't help but smile inside (and out) as you watch families experiencing farm life and time together at Day at the Dickson-Murst Farm. And there will be smiles all around you as well, as youngsters pose atop antique tractors, ride the barrel train, play in the corn box, explore our beautiful historic barns and enjoy pony rides among many other activities. If you don't have a youngster to chase, you can enjoy the breeze and the festivities from one of the farm's signature red rocking chairs. Let's go back to a simpler time, if only for a few hours.



Both events offer free admission and parking. Visit [www.theconservationfoundation.org](http://www.theconservationfoundation.org) for more information and directions! **Hope to see you and yours down on the farm!**



## Come on, Get Appy!

Take a hike in an Illinois park in person, and now from your couch with the Prairie State Conservation Coalition's smartphone hike app. Of course we encourage everyone to get out into nature, but sometimes you just can't – maybe you're sick, have little kids to shuffle around, or you're just too dang tired to put one foot in front of the other! You can still experience some of the best natural areas in the Prairie State, and when you ARE there in person, the hike app provides self-guided tour information and interesting site facts you might not otherwise get.

One of the hikes featured on the app is of The Conservation Foundation's very own McDonald Farm in Naperville. The audio tour features a spoken description of the stops along the way as well as a few photos to scroll through while learning about the Farm. Visitors will hear a little of the Farm's history, and learn about its on-the-ground sustainable features, such as native plant gardens, rainwater harvesting, organic farming, and renewable energy.

The Prairie State Conservation Coalition, of which The Conservation Foundation is a member, developed the app. It costs 99 cents and can be used to download other tours of parks and forest preserves in Illinois. The Prairie State Hike App can be downloaded from iTunes at <http://bit.ly/1hJZArx> and the Android version at Google Play at <http://bit.ly/1hJZsbA>. Technology doesn't have to be the antithesis of nature. Get appy and download the Prairie State Hike App today!

**By: Sandy Kaczmarek**  
Sandpaper Wordsmiths

**Jill Johnson**  
Communications Manager

## Landscape the Knowable Mystery on Display at McDonald Farm

The walls of our Clow Education Center at McDonald Farm are now adorned with original paintings from a unique and extraordinary art exhibit, *Landscape the Knowable Mystery*. Wheaton College art professor Joel Sheesley spent a year in near daily communion with the changing landscapes of the Lincoln Marsh, a beautiful and diverse preserved wetland complex in Wheaton. The 60+ paintings he created over the year have been compiled into a book entitled *Landscape the Knowable Mystery* and are being displayed through the end of June at various locations throughout the region.

The Conservation Foundation has been involved in efforts to acquire land and preserve the Lincoln Marsh since the 1970s and we continue those efforts today, so this project is near and dear to us. All paintings are for sale, and visitors are welcome to come view them in the Clow Education Center during business hours, 9am to 4pm Monday through Friday, until June 22nd.

The foreword of the book *Landscape the Knowable Mystery* was written by our President/CEO Brook McDonald, whose career in Illinois conservation started as the resident naturalist at the Lincoln Marsh.

An excerpt from his foreword reads, "Today, the Lincoln Marsh Natural Area is the natural gem of Wheaton. Gone are the old cars. Gone are the appliances and piles of beer cans. Today, you'll see restored prairies and oak woodlands, a wetland teeming with wildlife, and kids running all around chasing frogs and butterflies. This is the kind of place we all dreamed of exploring when we were young."

Come glimpse the Lincoln Marsh in all of its moods, mysteries and seasons through Professor Sheesley's original paintings. Visit [www.lincolnmarsh.org/knowablemystery.html](http://www.lincolnmarsh.org/knowablemystery.html) to learn more.

**By: Jill Johnson**  
Communications Manager



Original paintings of the Lincoln Marsh by Professor Joel Sheesley are on exhibit in our Clow Education Center at McDonald Farm through June 22nd.



# A Taste of the Good Life in Starved Rock Country



More than 100 people gathered at the edge of Dayton Bluffs' woodlands for Morel University before a guided morel hunt and hike through the 250+ acre preserve in Ottawa.

The hunt was on in early May at the Dayton Bluffs Preserve in Ottawa, no camo or weapons required. More than 100 people joined the quest for a sometimes-elusive delicacy of the woods, the morel mushroom. Local morel expert Sarah Mustered kicked off the day with a crash course in morels, what they look like, and the best places to find them. She and our President/CEO Brook McDonald then led the eager hunters through the preserve. Due to the cool spring evenings, morel season wasn't quite at its peak and only three morels were found, but no one seemed to mind; the sights and sounds of Dayton

Bluffs were enough to fill their senses and spirits, if not their bellies.

That evening, our friends at Heritage Harbor Resort in Ottawa were kind enough to host a bay-side reception just for members of The Conservation Foundation at the Red Dog Grill. Heritage Harbor is a waterfront resort community on the Illinois River in Ottawa. We definitely felt like we were living the good life as we relaxed on the patio of the Red Dog Grill, savoring the taste of Starved Rock Country with morel-inspired hors d'oeuvres and watching the sunset as a mild spring breeze caressed our shoulders. Sailboats bobbed gently on the water, and a great blue heron finished its graceful flight right in front of us, alighting on a dock nearby and putting a poetic punctuation mark on our time together. It was like spending the evening in a painting, and we want to thank Heritage Harbor and Red Dog Grill for their hospitality and for giving us the opportunity to spoil our loyal members a bit.



Successful hunter Pat Armstrong with her delectable catch.

The way the entire Ottawa community has welcomed us and embraced the Dayton Bluffs Preserve with true enthusiasm and pride is so encouraging. And when you chat with someone who has visited Dayton Bluffs, you can see they've been touched by its magic. Restoration work will continue throughout the summer with work days on the 2nd Saturday of every month, 8am to Noon. If you'd like to join the effort to move the natural communities of Dayton Bluffs back toward a balance, please contact Jennifer Hammer at 630-428-4500, Ext. 114. In the end you will likely find it is you who has been restored.

**By: Jill Johnson**  
Communications Manager

## Getting Heavy Duty at Dayton Bluffs

Our staff are hearty and adventurous souls, but with more than 250 acres of ravines and rugged terrain, the going was getting a little tough at Dayton Bluffs. We've been able to add a rather large and powerful tool to our restoration toolbox, thanks to some generous private donations that were matched two to one by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. This Polaris Ranger 6 x 6 utility vehicle will definitely up our restoration game at Dayton Bluffs and we sincerely thank everyone who donated to make its purchase possible. You can see the giddy relief all over our Director of Land Protection Dan Lobbes' face in this photo!

**By: Jill Johnson**  
Communications Manager



## In Fond Remembrance

*In the last several months we have lost three individuals who will always mean a great deal to The Conservation Foundation, and to me personally.*

As a not-for-profit expert, **Bruce Schurman** was a great mentor to me while he served on The Conservation Foundation's Board of Trustees. He was very supportive of strategic planning as a road map for success. And he had such a great sense of humor, which is often vital to keeping everyone on an even keel during serious board discussions. We will sincerely miss his presence and his ear to ear smile at our board meetings and events.

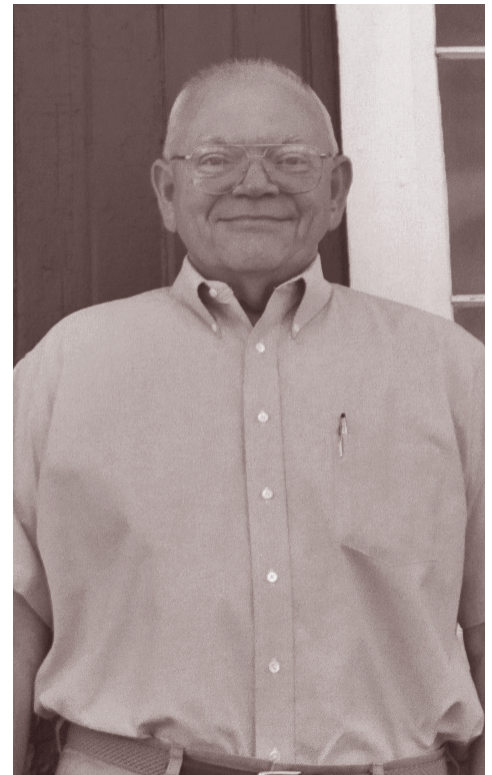
**Kay Stephens** was one of the most thoughtful persons I have ever met. She was all about helping others and she certainly helped The Conservation Foundation greatly with her generosity and her 10-acre land donation near Plainfield. We will see to it

that one day that land will be a park where kids will learn how to fish, just as Kay wished.

Many people will remember **Virginia "Dinny" Kneupfer** as former county board chairman Jack Knuepfer's wife, but she certainly made a meaningful impact on DuPage County on her own. She was hugely influential with local officials and political types, which was important in helping to pass the 1997 and 2006 DuPage Forest Preserve referenda.

As I reflect back over my 20+ years of conservation work in Illinois, I have met some simply incredible people, and these were three of my favorites. I want their families to know that their loved ones will live on in the work of The Conservation Foundation.

**By: Brook McDonald**  
President/CEO



*Bruce Schurman headed up Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital and served on our Board of Trustees for nearly two decades.*

## Seize the Future President Joins Our Board



*Dave Hulseberg, our newest trustee.*

*The newest member of The Conservation Foundation's Board of Trustees shares our passion for the outdoors and preserving nature for future generations to enjoy.*

**David Hulseberg** recently joined our Board and is the President/CEO of Seize the Future Development Foundation, whose mission is aimed at the economic development and revitalization of the City of Aurora. When asked why he decided to become a trustee of The Conservation Foundation, Dave said, "I look forward to helping educate others about the outdoors and our environment and why it's so important to protect it."

Previously, Dave was Village Manager of the Village of Lombard, and held various positions with the Village of Mount Prospect, Village of Arlington Heights, and the town of Millbury, Massachusetts.

Dave resides in Wheaton and served in the United States Army. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Westfield State University, Massachusetts, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Northern Illinois University. He holds credentials as a certified city manager from the International City/County Management Association and American Institute of Certified Planners certification from the American Planning Association.

*We welcome him warmly and look forward to enjoying his talents and enthusiasm as a Board Member.*

**By: Sandy Kaczmariski**  
Sandpaper Wordsmiths



# How to Win the Race Against Time

Let's face it – We all want to make a difference. And as uncomfortable as it might be to think about, the time we have to make that difference is finite. You have already begun creating your legacy through your support of The Conservation Foundation, and planned giving can be another effective way of expanding that legacy.

Planned giving can take a number of forms, and what is best depends on your personal financial situation and plan for the future. A simple gift in your will or as a contingent remainder gift may fit with your plans. Charitable lead and charitable remainder trusts are another way to provide for your family's immediate needs while building a legacy of a healthier environment for their future.

More sophisticated vehicles are also available that offer tax advantages. For example, you can gift appreciated assets to The

Conservation Foundation and avoid capital gains taxes while obtaining the benefit of the full value as a tax deduction. The Conservation Foundation can be named as beneficiary on tax affected investments like IRA and 401K accounts so that the funds pass without taxation; you can substitute other tax free assets, like life insurance, for your heirs. You can also make The Conservation Foundation the beneficiary of a bank account, brokerage account or life insurance policy or donate a policy to The Conservation Foundation rather than cancelling it when those funds are no longer required to secure the financial security of your family.

If you would like more information on planned giving, contact Scott LaMorte at 630-428-4500, Ext. 142.

**By: Patricia A. Tauchert**  
Attorney, Plumert, MacDonald & Hargrove, Ltd. And Member of The Conservation Foundation's Planned Giving Committee.

## A Marvelous Legacy



Marvel Davis

Marvel Davis has lived in the Big Rock area her entire life. Her late husband, Harley, lived in Big Rock his entire life. One of Harley's ancestors, John Pierce, settled the family's Big Rock farm back in 1836. The huge oak trees on their property grew along with the family, and the pristine Big Rock Creek runs right through the farm.

Marvel has always been aware of what a treasure her pastoral acres are, and her desire to keep the land in its natural state was a powerful factor in her decision to forego the greater fortune being offered to her by developers and sell 155 acres of her land to the Forest Preserve District of Kane County in 2006.

At the suggestion of her attorney, Marvel created a charitable remainder trust. Charitable remainder trusts are irrevocable structures established by a donor to provide an income stream to the income beneficiary, while the public charity or private foundation receives the remainder value when the trust terminates. The trust allowed her to avoid a large tax bill on the sale of the land, and invest the cash for growth.

Marvel could not be happier that everyone can enjoy the beauty and history of her property. In fact, the Big Rock Historical Society will celebrate its 20th year of existence with a party in Marvel's barn on October 8. The legacy of the Davis family in Big Rock will carry on as these preserved acres nurture families and help organizations like The Conservation Foundation to carry out our mission for generations to come.

**By: Scott LaMorte**  
Major Gifts Officer

With a very simple gift...

...you can help us do what we do today  
**even better tomorrow.**



Visit [www.theconservationfoundation.org](http://www.theconservationfoundation.org)  
for more information on gift and estate planning.



## THE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

We save land. We save rivers.

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