



Newsletter No. 36

Summer 2016

French Creek Cleanup 2016

We are looking for volunteers to make up our team for the 24th French Creek Cleanup Saturday, September 10, 2016. We will be meeting at the Refuge Headquarters Building at 9 AM. Call to register for our group, Friends of the Erie Wildlife Refuge, at 814-789-3585.

The Cleanup is sponsored by the French Creek Valley Conservancy. The Weigh-In will be held at the Cochranon Community Fairgrounds. Trash collected must be weighed in by 4pm to be considered for prizes. Cash prizes will be awarded for different groups for the most trash brought in. Prizes will also be awarded for the most unusual trash collected, most trash brought in by size of team, and the Traveling Hellbender Trophy will once again go to the corporate team that brings in the most trash.

Also held at the Fairgrounds will be a free picnic starting at noon with food provided by Malady's Meat Market in Meadville, music by Salmon Frank, games, door prizes and a Chinese Auction.

2017 Nature Photo Calendar

The Friends of Erie National Wildlife Refuge has a new 2017 Calendar available for sale. The calendar is 8 1/2 - 11 inches and features nature photos taken by local amateur photographers. The calendar pages have plenty of space to record all your special events on them.

This beautiful calendar is selling for only \$10.00 each and proceeds benefit our group. Contact a Friends of ENWR board member, call 814-789-3585 or visit our web site to order yours. Mail order is available.

See Your Pollinator Garden Grow

One of the best ways you can help monarch butterflies and other pollinators is to plant a pollinator garden – in your yard, behind your school or church, on your business property or even in a pot for your front steps. A simple, native flower garden helps pollinators stay healthy – and it's pretty.

In addition to nectar from flowers, monarch butterflies need milkweed to survive. So if your milkweed leaves have been chomped, don't worry. The monarchs have been around!

Get Started

Research what varieties of milkweed and wildflowers are native to your area. Here's a great website to launch your research: <http://www.wildflower.org/>

What you'll need

- A yard, raised bed or some flower pots
- Garden tools to break the soil or build a raised bed
- Extra dirt and mulch
- Native milkweed and nectar plants

Seven easy steps

1. **Choose your location:** Gardens should be planted in sunny spots and protected from the wind.
2. **Look at your soil:** Break ground to see the consistency of the soil in your yard. Soil may influence the kinds of plants you can grow or may require special considerations. If your soil type doesn't match the plants you'd like to plant, consider building a raised bed or using flower pots.
3. **Prep your soil:** If you're planting in your yard, remove the lawn and current plant cover and rake the soil. Additional dirt can help and is necessary for raised beds and flower pots.
4. **Choose your plants:** Buy native and local plants and milkweed. Native plants are ideal because they require less maintenance and tend to be heartier.
 - o Choose plants that have not been treated with pesticides, insecticides or neonicotinoids.
 - o Plant perennials to ensure your plants come back each year and don't require a lot of maintenance.
 - o Choose a diversity of plants that bloom throughout the seasons to ensure pollinators benefit in the spring, summer and fall. This will also ensure that your garden is bright and colorful for months!
5. **Choosing seeds or small plants:** Small plants that have already started growing in a nursery are simple to plant and handle in a small space. If you'd like to use seeds, plan to plant in spring or fall, giving the seeds time to germinate. Seeds can also be best if you are planting a very large garden because they are less costly. Water your seeds even before you see plants.
6. **Plant your flowers and milkweed:** For small plants, dig holes just big enough for the root system. Cover the roots with dirt and reinforce with dirt or straw mulch to reduce weed growth. For seeding, spread seeds across the freshly prepared garden and cover them with dirt. Consider adding some flat rocks so butterflies can bask in the sun,
7. **Wait, watch, water and weed:** It may take some time, but you will eventually see butterflies and other pollinators enjoying your garden. Weed and water your garden to keep it healthy.

Help track monarch movements, milkweed [growth.org/monarch/](http://www.growth.org/monarch/). For more information, go online to the Monarch Joint Venture: <http://www.monarchjointventure.org/get-involved/create-habitat-for-monarchs/>

Louisiana Black Bear Is Removed From Endangered and Threatened List

Interior Secretary Sally Jewell announced that, after 24 years of recovery work by an array of partners, the Louisiana black bear has been removed from the threatened and endangered species list.

Jewell made the announcement at Louisiana's Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, which has a substantial population of Louisiana black bear and played a major role in the species' recovery. Bayou Teche Refuge, Bayou Cocodrie Refuge, Lake Ophelia Refuge and other refuges in Louisiana also were vital to the recovery.

The bear became part of American culture after a hunting trip to Mississippi in 1902, where President Theodore Roosevelt refused to shoot a bear that was trapped and tied to a tree by members of his hunting party. The episode was featured in a cartoon in *The Washington Post*, sparking the idea for a Brooklyn candy store owner to create the Teddy bear. "President Theodore Roosevelt would have really enjoyed why we are gathered here today,"

Jewell said at a March announcement at Tensas River Refuge. "Working together across private and public lands with so many partners embodies the conservation ethic he stood for when he established the National Wildlife Refuge System as part of the solution to address troubling trends for the nation's wildlife. As I said last spring [2015] when the delisting proposal was announced, the Louisiana black bear is another success story for the Endangered Species Act."

The delisting follows a comprehensive scientific review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the bear's status. The Service released a post-delisting monitoring plan that will help ensure the bear's future remains secure.

The majority of Louisiana black bear habitat falls on private lands, where the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries worked with farmers to restore more than 485,000 acres of bottomland hardwood forests in priority areas for conservation. One key tool was the use of conservation easements in these targeted areas, through which USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service worked with farmers to restore habitat on difficult-to-farm lands.

When the Louisiana black bear was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1992 – because of habitat loss, reduced quality of habitat and human-related mortality – the three known breeding subpopulations were confined to the bottomland hardwood forests of Louisiana in the Tensas and Upper and Lower Atchafalaya River basins. Today, those subpopulations have increased in numbers and have stabilized to increasing growth rates. Additional breeding subpopulations are forming in Louisiana and Mississippi, providing a healthy long-term outlook for the species.

In 1992, there were as few as 150 bears in Louisiana habitat. Today, the Service estimates that 500 to 750 bears live across the species' current range where successful recovery efforts are enabling breeding populations to expand.

The 565th National Wildlife Refuge

Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area was formally established on May 25 with acceptance of a 66-acre donation from the nonprofit Friends of the Kankakee. The refuge is in the Kankakee River basin of Iroquois County, IL,

The Kankakee River Basin has the biological foundation necessary for a highly significant contribution to the conservation of fish and wildlife resources. National wildlife refuges not only sustain and enhance natural resources, but they can also add to communities' economic vitality and quality of life.

The acquisition of the 66-acre tract in Iroquois County was funded, in part, by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, which works to improve energy efficiency, advance the development and use of renewable energy resources, and protect natural areas and wildlife habitat in communities across Illinois.

As part of the foundation's commitment to working closely with the community, it has joined nine other organizations to begin creating a sustainability plan in the Hopkins Park/Pembroke Township area in Kankakee County. This plan allows local residents and organizations to collaborate and shape the future of conservation.

Learn more about Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge: <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/kankakee/>

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