

## The big 2-5

FOSV marks a quarter-century of protecting the Sangamon Valley



It has been 25 years since a small group of visionaries saw the need for an organization to protect natural areas of the Sangamon River watershed. They understood the power of people joining forces to save forests, prairies, and wetlands. They knew that, working together, we could shield a few spots from the plow or the bulldozer.

We have some big plans to celebrate this anniversary during the rest of 2023 and to get the next 25 years off to a powerful start. We hope you'll join us as we celebrate past accomplishments and plan new ones.

We have an anniversary open house at our new headquarters on July 15. We have continuing work days, new partnerships in the works with other conservation organizations, and plans to modernize and strengthen FOSV operations.

A major piece of this initiative is the group's new executive director, Angela Funk. She replaces the retired Vern LeGessee and brings years of experience to the position. Keep reading to learn more about Angela and her vision for the future.

Thank you for supporting us for the first 25 years. We look forward to your help as we launch the next 25.

## Introducing ... Angela Funk



*We asked the FOSV's new director to tell us about herself*

**Where do you live?**

Rural Armington just north of Lincoln. My husband and I call our place Funky Hollow. We have worked hard to increase native biodiversity and have numerous buffer projects, pollinator plantings, and an impressive bird feeding station.

**Where did you grow up?**

Park Forest, Ill.

**Any family?**

My parents live in Fish Creek, Wisconsin. My sister and family live in the south suburbs. Kids live in San Leandro, Calif, Bend, Ore., and Indianola, Iowa. We have five grandkids that call me Grangela! *(continued)*



# Events

July  
15

Open House

COME ON IN

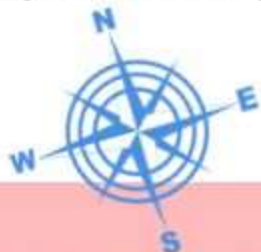
OPEN  
HOUSE



We are excited to share the progress at the Gudmundson Wildlife Sanctuary and introduce you to our new executive director! Stop by to visit with board members, tour the property, and mingle with members.

Sip, snack, and socialize with others who share your passion for protecting and stewarding natural areas in the Sangamon River Watershed!

We'll be there from 2-5 p.m. Hope you can join us! You can even update your membership while you're there.



The Gudmundson Wildlife Sanctuary is located at 4506 Chiquipin Road, Springfield, just north of the Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport. From Route 29, turn West on Camp Sangamo Road. Take the first right onto Chiquipin Road and proceed a half mile to just before the curve. Look for the flag at the end of our lane on your right.

Aug.  
26

River Clean Up



This is a great way to experience some wild river locations right in your own back yard. The best part is that the river is basically CLEAN! All we have to do is pack a lunch and some sun screen and float along to check out the wildlife.

In the last few years most of what we remove consists of foam cups, cans and plastic bottles. The days of digging out dishwashers and sunken boats is over (we hope).

For those who prefer to be on land, we have several crews that pick up around parks and bridges, and we need folks to shuttle cars and people.

To sign up, call George Sinclair at 217-553-2243, or email him at [georgeid2@yahoo.com](mailto:georgeid2@yahoo.com).





## Mark Your Calendars



Friends of the Sangamon Valley protects some wonderful land near Petersburg. Join us **Sept. 16** to learn more about the Wolf Property and to enjoy a lovely evening with friends!

We'll gather for fun amid the beauty and cool temperatures of fall during a special autumn celebration on **Oct. 28**.

Watch future newsletters and our Facebook page for details on these events and ones we're planning for November and December!

Volunteers, community leaders, early-career professionals, and stipend staff stewarding natural areas, preserves, parks, and community gardens are eligible to take courses for **free** through The Morton Arboretum.

### Subjects include

- **Invasive Species**   - **Woodland Ecology**
- **Tree ID**   - **Diversifying Conservation**
- **Plant ID**   - **Botanical Names Demystified**

Click **HERE** for info!

## Meet Angela Funk (continued)

### Education?

Studied Environmental Biology and Botany at Eastern Illinois University.

### Profession?

My 30+ year career has included land acquisition, protection, and stewardship; Nature Center development and administration; Environmental Education; Fund development; volunteer recruitment and training; and more!

### Where have you worked?

I worked at Douglas-Hart Nature Center in Mattoon for 12 years ago and then Sugar Grove Nature Center in Funks Grove for 19 years.

### Could you share a favorite memory of the outdoors?

Ever since I was a little girl, I loved nature. I would beg to go to "the deep woods." I loved fishing with my dad. And, my favorite adult memories include exploring, hiking, camping and canoeing with my husband and dog, Sawyer.

### What is a hobby you enjoy?

Gardening -- it calms the mind and feeds my soul.

### Why are you involved with the FOSV?

I am impressed with the accomplishments of the organization over the past 25 years and look forward to sharing my experience and enthusiasm to help ensure a vibrant future of protecting, restoring, and stewarding properties within the Sangamon River watershed.

### What are some of your favorite plants, trees and animals?

Culver's root, bur oak, chickadees, bats!



**Culver's root**



# Updates



## New Faces

Earlier this year, two new people were elected to the FOSV Board of Directors and, as mentioned, earlier, a new executive director was hired.

You can read about Executive Director Angela Funk (center) elsewhere in the newsletter. The other new faces are William Bruse (left) and Becky Croteau (right).

The full board consists of (rear) George Sinclair, Jim Struebing, Dick Poynter, Bruse, Mike Kennedy, Croteau, Funk, Mary Lou Lael, Peggy Goetsch, Dan Brill, and John Justice, and (kneeling) Chris Wills and Steve Warmowski.



## Thank you!

We are so grateful to Stella Coffee & Tea and the shop's wonderful customers. They held a Plants and Books Sale to raise money for Friends of the Sangamon Valley. Their generosity produced a \$250 donation for our work protecting and preserving nature in the region.

If you're not familiar with Stella, check it out at 1135 W. Governor Street in Springfield!







**Congratulations!** The winners of our annual rubber ducky race fundraiser were Gina Schnook, Mike Johnson and Addie Nielsen. Thanks to them and to everyone who bought tickets. We are also grateful to the volunteers of all ages who helped make the event a success!



With help from the Adams Wildlife Sanctuary, we offered a class on chainsaw techniques and safety. It was led by Mike Kennedy and Kaleb Baker.



# Fighting the Invaders

## Garlic Mustard at Gudmundson

On May 6th, four volunteers (Becky Croteau, Bob Croteau, Joe Coffee, & Nate Janesweski) collected seven full 33-gallon bags of garlic mustard from along the creek at Gudmundson Wildlife Sanctuary, the new FOSV headquarters.



They also found multiple patches of Jack in the Pulpit, Wild Ginger, Dutchman's Breeches, magnificent patches of ferns and other wildflowers. We have quite a gem here! There is Japanese Honeysuckle in the area, too. Most of it is small enough to remove by hand. Since April, Davina Fouke and the Tuesday work crew have also been working at Gudmundson. In addition to a lot of tree pruning and vegetation management around the yard, several cleanup projects around the house and out buildings have kept the crew busy. Most of the Tuesday workdays throughout the summer will be at the Gudmundson property.

## Deer and Honeysuckle at Robinson

Allen Andrews has spent considerable time and effort removing invasive plants in Robinson Woods, where he is the FOSV's volunteer steward. The hard work is paying off. Fouke and the Tuesday volunteer work crew spent several workdays in March helping at Robinson Woods. In addition to removing invasive plants like bush honeysuckle, they thinned catalpa trees to reduce competition with oak and hickory trees. Located in the heart of Springfield, just a little north of Washington Park, Robinson Woods is impacted by heavy deer usage, so protector tubes were placed on oak and hickory saplings to shield them from antler rubbing damage. Two dozen small oak trees were planted, along with some Kentucky coffee and persimmon trees. If you are interested in volunteering on Tuesday (10 a.m to noon) or the occasional Saturday, **contact Davina Fouke at 217-415-2591** for info about upcoming workdays and locations.

### What is garlic mustard?

The Nature Conservancy says garlic mustard, originally from Europe and Asia, was introduced to North America in the mid 1800s for its herbal and medicinal qualities and as erosion control.

It gains a foothold in fields and forests by emerging earlier in spring than many native plants. By the time native species are ready to grow, garlic mustard has blocked their sunlight and outcompeted them for moisture and vital nutrients.

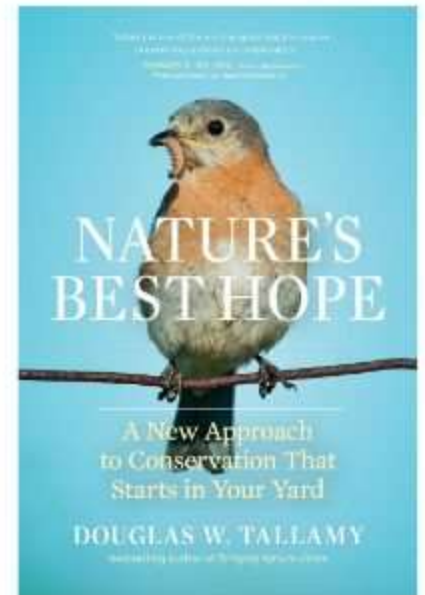




# A Not-So-Divine Vine

By Mike Kennedy, FOSV Board of Directors

The FOSV volunteer stewards work hard at removing invasive plants in order to maintain our native plant communities. Why is maintaining native plant communities important? Because native plants support native insect communities. Why is maintaining native insect communities important? Because native insects support native wildlife, especially birds -- and who doesn't love birds? Professor Douglas Tallamy has written three great books (for laymen) focusing on the relationships between plants, insects, and birds. If you get a chance, check out [Nature's Best Hope](#), [Bringing Nature Home](#), or [The Nature of Oaks](#).



While there are many problematic invasive plants, one particularly troubling plant is taking hold in many of the wooded areas around Lake Springfield. Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) aka Round Leaf Bittersweet, is a relative of the native American Bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*) and was introduced here as a landscape plant. Although not native to North America, this plant has "naturalized", meaning it produces fruit which then grow on their own without cultivation, or you could just say it spreads like crazy. This vine is a dual threat to trees. First it is an aggressive climber that coils around the tree as it climbs, and this can girdle the tree, choking off the movement of water and nutrients, eventually killing the tree.



Oriental bittersweet



The vine in autumn

While doing restoration work in the CWLP woodlands around Lake Springfield, our volunteers have cut and treated with herbicide vines up to six inches in diameter. Oriental bittersweet loves sunlight, so when it climbs, it spreads out and covers the canopy of the tree and can shade it out enough that the tree eventually dies. If you would like to see how bad infestations of this vine can get, just drive along West Lake Shore Drive between University Drive and Long Bay Lane. If you are interested in learning more, including identification and control techniques, a great resource is the [Illinois Nature Preserves Vegetation Management Manual](#).



Girdling a tree



# A Walk in the Woods

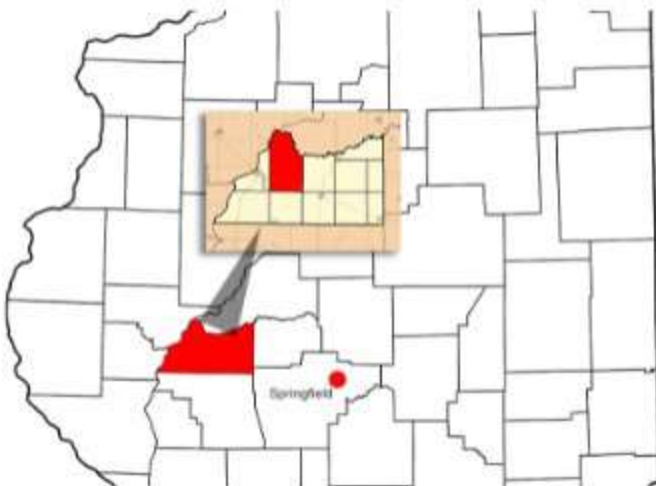
## FOSV's lovely Boyle Woods

The Friends of the Sangamon Valley acquired this 50-acre tract of old growth timber in Cass County about 15 years ago. Very little logging had been done on the property in the past century, and some truly impressive trees remained, including white and red oaks with diameters of over 3 feet. A white oak with a diameter of 37 inches had an estimated age of 292 years old.

Ten to 12 acres of the property are covered in sandy soils. The remainder has silt-loam soils. The sand forest is dominated by black oak, large white oak, black hickory and sassafras. The understory of the property's ravines is dominated by ferns -- at least eight different species. Other plants include Michigan lily, dolls eyes, goldenseal and ginseng. Shrubs include hazelnut, spicebush and black haw viburnum. A species of woodland orchid, the Puttyroot Orchid, has also been spotted. **Photos by Chris Young.**



A stand of hazelnut



The property is in northwest Cass County



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in one or more of the following ways:**

1. Become a member of Friends or make a tax-deductible cash donation.
2. Volunteer your time.
3. Donate property or other goods or tools.

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Make a tax-deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donate my time. I am interested in:

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**Friends of the  
Sangamon Valley**

is a charitable membership organization dedicated to the preservation of our natural heritage by acquiring, restoring, and protecting ecologically significant lands in the Sangamon River Watershed.

Friends of the Sangamon Valley