



NATURAL LAND INSTITUTE'S

# Volunteer Vision

Photo by Mark Blasberg

November 2000–  
August 2011  
**34,217**  
volunteer hours  
donated to hands-on  
restoration of the  
**Nygren Wetland Preserve**

### Volunteers Help Make Conservation Camp 2011 a Success

“Kids never stop learning when they’re outside,” says **Garrett Ingham**, a seventeen year-old volunteer for this year’s Conservation Camp. Last July, volunteers helped local youth learn about native ecosystems and the ethics of land conservation at Nygren Wetland Preserve. This was the second year NLI hosted a camp dedicated to educating our youth about the importance of protecting land.

### NLI at the Rockford City Market

The Natural Land Institute is hosting an activities booth at the **Rockford City Market on Friday, September 30th from 3 to 7 p.m.** Staff and volunteers will be teaching the parts and life cycles of native trees, doing arts and crafts with children, and distributing brochures to the market patrons. Please stop by our booth and help us promote the work of the Natural Land Institute!

### Wish List

For restoration activities of the Natural Land Institute

- Gas Station Gift Cards
- Home Improvement Store Gift Cards

## Fall Harvest Day at Nygren Wetland Preserve

Fall Harvest Workday will be held on **Saturday, October 8th, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** at the Nygren Wetland Preserve. Local experts will be helping volunteers identify and collect the seeds of native grasses and wildflowers like Indian grass, big bluestem, and yellow coneflower.

The seeds collected at Nygren Wetland Preserve are used to restore damaged or altered land back to its natural state. Seeds collected by volunteers will be counted, stored and planted next spring in NLI’s preserves. The reintroduction of

native plant species can attract native birds and animals and improve water quality by absorbing runoff and filtering out pollutants.

Volunteers won’t be the only ones preparing for the cold months ahead. While you’re there, keep your eyes peeled for animals like raccoons, frogs, and turtles that are diligently preparing for their winter hibernations. Migrating cranes may even pause at the wetlands as they make their way to their winter feeding grounds.

## NLI Volunteer Opportunities and Events

Sturdy shoes, long sleeves, pants and gloves are recommended for all outdoor work. Please bring a snack and a bottle of water.

### Weekly Workdays

*Tuesdays 9:00 a.m. – noon.*

Location: various preserves

Call 815/964-6666 for locations and directions.

*Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. – 4 p.m.*

Nygren Wetland Preserve - 3190 W. Rockton Rd., Rockton, IL

Meet at the red shed. No need to call ahead. For information, call 815/964-6666.

*Some Fridays 9:00 a.m. – noon.*

Location: various preserves

**Please call ahead!** Call 815/964-6666 for directions and information.

## Save the Dates!

### Volunteer Recognition Picnic

*Thursday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.*

Nygren Wetland Preserve - 3190 W. Rockton Rd., Rockton, IL

Volunteers, board members, committee members, and their families are invited to this event. Volunteers will be recognized for their contributions to land conservation and stewardship. Burgers, hot dogs, corn, and drinks are provided. Please bring a dish to pass and your own table service. *Free*

### Fall Harvest Day

*Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.*

Nygren Wetland Preserve - 3190 W. Rockton Rd., Rockton, IL

Experts will be helping volunteers collect and clean seeds of native grasses and wildflowers to be used to restore NLI’s preserves to their natural states.

“To show appreciation of the earth is the most honorable act of humankind” - Carl H. Nygren



## Volunteer Recognition Picnic

After all you've given to NLI, it's time for NLI to give back to you. Volunteers, board members, committee members, and their families are invited to a recognition picnic at Nygren Wetland Preserve on Thursday, September 8th from 6:00 p.m. to 8 p.m. The Natural Land Institute will be providing burgers, hot dogs, corn on the cob, and beverages. Guests are encouraged to bring a side dish or a dessert to share.



Above: **Conservation Camp** takes a break from wetland studies to get in touch with their wild sides.

Left: Guests at **Wildflower Weekend** examine a patch of black-eyed Susans and milkweed.

## Intern Reflects on a Summer at Nygren Wetland Preserve

*By Briana Berkowitz*

No two days are the same at the Nygren Wetland. Before I started, I didn't know what to expect in the slightest, but I found my time there to be a wonderful hodgepodge of projects and opportunities for learning that gave me a very good overview of conservation work. I'm grateful that I learned so much in such a short amount of time. **Greg Keilback**, my supervisor, is a veritable fountain of knowledge who taught me everything and anything about conservation.

Perhaps most importantly, this internship has made me think a lot about my future. Conservation is a field that I could definitely pursue. It's a field in which two days are never the same, and you are constantly learning new things. Having a piece of land to care for is a very special thing. I wouldn't have the passion and drive for conservationism if it were not for my time spent with the Natural Land Institute.

## Around the Preserve

*By Greg Keilback, Land Stewardship Director*

Can you feel it? The heat is finally letting up and the Indian grass is starting to bloom. I even saw the first silky aster peeking out of the Meyer prairie garden! Yes, fall is just around the corner and here at the Nygren Preserve the seed collecting frenzy has begun.

Our volunteers are busy gathering all the seeds they can before our window of opportunity closes to ensure a successful harvest. Bergamot, gray headed coneflower, purple prairie clover and side oat grama grass are just a few of the species that are being collected now. After the seeds are hauled off the prairie, they are carefully laid out on racks to dry and labeled so we can remember when and where they were gathered. When they have dried out completely, the seeds will be cleaned, weighed and stored until next spring when our volunteers will once again have a chance to add to the beauty of Nygren Wetland Preserve.

If you have a chance this fall, please come out and lend a hand in the harvest by joining a volunteer crew on Tuesdays and Wednesdays or participate in our **Fall Harvest Work Day** on October 8th. The more hands the better!

## Thank You Volunteers!

*June and July 2011*

Vivian Anderson, Jim & Marion Applegate, Jack & Joyce Armstrong, Dave & Madeleine Arnold, Judy Barnard, Rick & Bonnie Barton, Jackie Batista, Shelley Becknell, Beef-a-Roo, Richard Benning, Laura Benson-Hadley, Briana Berkowitz, Keith Blackmore, Chuck & Karen Blomgren, Boone County Conservation District, Katherine Brubaker, Mike Bugler, Mary Caskey, Victoria Ciceri, Jane Dobbs, Ellwyn & Gayle Englof, Bill Fruin, Nancy Gates, Becky Genoways, Kate Genoways, Dave Grass, Dennis & Terrie Hall, Jenna Happach, Nate Hill, Jan Herbert, Don & Marilyn Henneghan, Brian Heynen, Ellen Hinde, Will Hoff, Hoo Haven Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center, Garrett Ingham, Anita Johnson, Lee & Lynda Johnson, Greg & Emily Keilback, Stephanie Keilback, Scott Kruger, Dennis Leaf, Judy LeTourneau, Scott Lewandowski, Robert Lindvall, Patrick Luetkenhaus, Kathy Martinez, Jim McFarlane, Don Miller, Richard & Mary Mohaupt, Rich Muniz, Trevor Nicholson, Sara Pfannkuche, Pheasants Forever, Tom Ptacin, Rockford Litho, Loren Schafer, The Schmidt Family, Severson Dells Nature Center, Jim Shotliff, Silver Creek Photography, Amanda Sisney, Charlie Smith, Guy Smith, Judy Smith, Tyler Smith, Scott Steurer, Rick & Susan Strader, Charlie Sturm, Sunrise Kennels, Trip Thienemann, Toni's of Winnebago, Tyler's Landscaping Service, Jessica Vandebloom, Bill Walz, Ann Whitney, Dan & Barbara Williams, Kate Wilson, Winnebago County Forest Preserve District, Sara Winter, Lute Wyttenbach, Richard & Bridget Zemlo

**Thank you to all who so generously give their time and expertise to land conservation.**