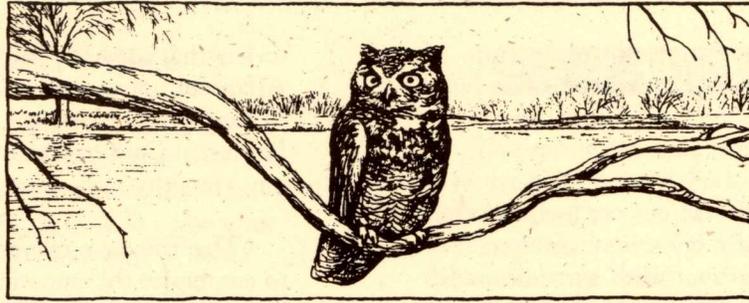


STILLMAN NEWSLETTER



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ACCESSIBILITY TRAIL: *The Work Continues*

--Mark Spreyer

What is an accessibility trail? As the name suggests, it is a trail designed to be accessible to all visitors whether they walk, ride in a stroller, roll in a wheelchair, or are guided by a caregiver.

Last year, we completed the first phase of the trail. This year's portions of the trail (see diagram) will be close to completion by the time you read this. As you can see, two separate pieces were built this year.

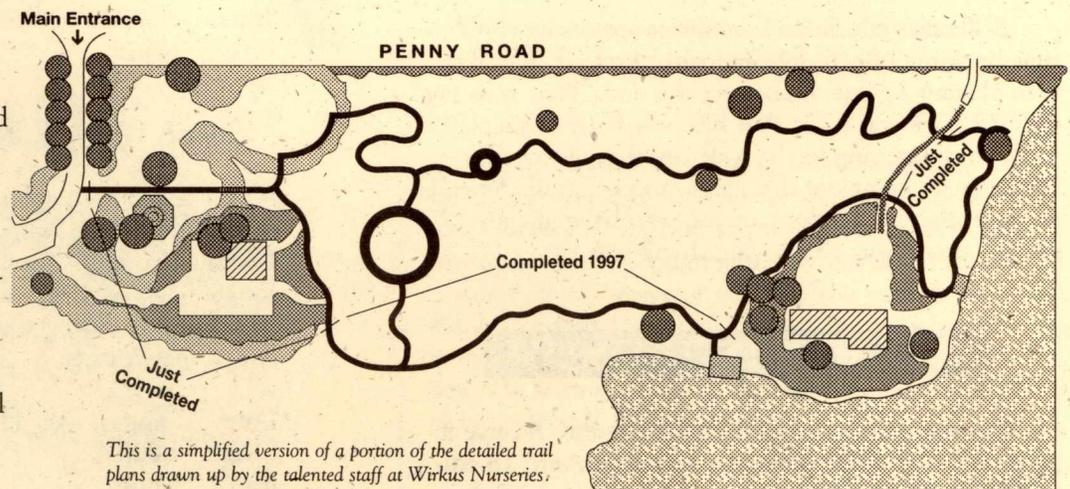
If you haven't seen it yet, the trail is composed of compacted rustic granite. We chose this material because it was felt that a paved surface would be inappropriate in our natural setting. Also, although crushed limestone would be cheaper, it readily leaches into the soil and would change the soil's pH or acidity. This change could, in turn, harm the wildflowers that visitors are on the trail to see.

Much work needed to be done before we laid the new length of degenerated granite. Last year, in preparation for the new trail, we demolished the old gardener's cottage that was in close proximity to the trail's beginning. Also, earlier this year, we repaired the brick wall which parallels the public driveway. As part of the repairs, we created an opening in the wall to accommodate the trail. This opening is where the access trail first enters Stillman's natural area and is the west end of this

year's construction efforts. This section of the trail is possible thanks to donations from individuals plus the **Little and Green Thumbs Garden Clubs**.

As you can see, the east portion of this year's construction leads to a second dock. (You might say, Stillman has a "pairadocks." On the other hand, you might not.) These docks aren't for boats or fishing. We find they make useful pondside observation platforms for classes and other visitors. Half of this second dock, built this summer, was paid for by a grant from the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**. In order to qualify for that money, we had to indicate that the other half was available for the Service to "match." Thanks to a generous donation from **The Garden Club of Barrington**, we were able to do just that.

In the grant application, we specified that this dock would be wheelchair accessible. As our funds are



STILLMAN NATURE CENTER

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limited, we could not connect this trail to its granite counterpart to the west. However, we were able to build it as far as our service drive which, of course, provides access.

The trail aside, this dock will be very useful in the spring when we have sixty or more school children using the center at the same time. With an additional dock, we can divide large classes into smaller groups and conduct simultaneous pondside activities.

What's Next?

As mentioned earlier, we removed a decaying building located near the trail's beginning. Now, when you walk through the wall and look to your left, you see the inside of the wall that runs along Penny Road and our public entrance, the remains of the foundation, and not much else. This corner, we thought, would provide an ideal location for a small demonstration plot that would have shrubs and perennials that are attractive to birds and other types of desirable wildlife. This "bird-scaping" area is next on our list.

The other feature that is near the top of the list is a new larger, parking lot. The current lot only fits four cars. Also, the severe hook in the drive has caused some bus drivers to let the kids out on Penny Road rather than try to navigate the turn. The design for our trail, donated by the creative staff at **Wirkus Nurseries**, does include plans for a larger lot (not visible on the diagram) that will accommodate buses. Whether we are able to build this parking lot all at once, or a piece at a time, will depend on our funding.

Help Us Connect the Dots

Stillman's education committee spends much of its time deciding how to proceed with the trail. We liken it to playing a game of connect the dots. That is to say, the first dock was a dot that has now been connected to the new opening in the wall, another of the dots. How fast we complete this game, and our trail, depends on your support. To those of you who have already given-- thank you, thank you, thank you.

STILLMAN IN THE NEWS

Our nature center has been fortunate to receive a good deal of positive press this year. The April 18 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* included a picture of the

owlets that used our laundry basket nest. One of the Arboriculture students from **Harper College** (see "Thank You" below) got his picture in the April 30 *Barrington Courier-Review*. On June 8, the *Daily Herald* ran a lengthy story on owls, Stillman and yours truly.

The *Tribune* returned to use our pond study program to emphasize the importance of wetlands. This story appeared on July 20. Pond study, by the way, is our most popular school group activity. Three days later, the *Barrington Courier-Review* ran a picture of Stillman volunteer Daria Sapp receiving the Daughter of the American Revolution's Conservation Medal for her work here at Stillman. Most recently, on August 2, the *Chicago Tribune* ran a generous story about Stillman and our bird banding demonstrations (see below).

Some of these clippings could be seen in the Stillman display at the **Barrington Area Library**. The exhibit, which was up during August, filled five of the small display cases that are positioned along the library's main staircase. Kudos to Board President **Susan Allman** for her help in designing and putting up our display.

PROGRAMS

BIRD BANDING

Watch Mark Spreyer (a licensed bird bander) measure, weigh, tag and record data about our resident and migratory birds. Banding birds is not always predictable, so come prepared to hike the trails. If it is raining, the demonstration will be cancelled.

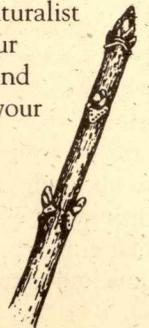
Date: Sundays, Sept. 6 & Oct. 4
Time: 9:00AM to Noon
Fee: None



TREE I.D. OR THIS BUD'S FOR YOU!

As the leaves turn color, join Stillman's naturalist as he shows you how to identify some of our Midwestern trees. Easy to remember tips and simple hand-outs will inspire you to open your own "branch office." Come prepared to be out in the weather.

Date: Sunday, Oct. 11
Time: 2:00PM
Fee: None



TWILIGHT WILDLIFE HIKE

If you have ever wanted to investigate and interpret wildlife signs, take a night hike or sharpen your senses to the sights, sounds and smells of the outdoors, then this evening is for you! The activities you will do come from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's "Watching Wildlife" program and we are delighted to have Cyndi Duda, from the Barrington Fish & Wildlife office, on hand to lead us from daylight into darkness.

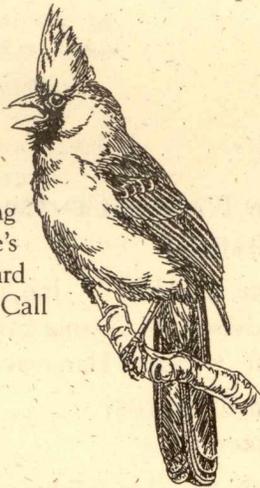


Casual clothes and good hiking shoes or boots are required. If you have to leave early, that's O.K. Call 428-OWLS to make reservations.

Date: Saturday, Oct. 24
Time: 5:00 to 7:00PM
Age: 6 years and up
Fee: None

BACKYARD BIRD FEEDERS

Stillman volunteers Roy Schodtler and Jim Kaltsas invite you to try your hand at making bird feeders out of common materials. There's no better way to add color to your winter yard than by attracting birds to your own feeder. Call 428-OWLS to make reservations.



Date: Sunday, Nov. 1
Time: 2:00PM
Fee: None

WINTER HOURS BEGIN IN NOVEMBER

In September and October, Stillman will be open Sundays from 9 AM to 4 PM. Starting in November, Stillman will be open Sundays from 1 PM to 4 PM.

Please note that the Stillman Nature Center is also available, by reservation, during the week to school classes. For a brochure that describes the programs and fees, just call or email (stillnc@flash.net) us and we'll be happy to send you one.

THANK YOU

This spring, we were pleased to, for the third year, have the help of the Arboriculture class from Harper College. They came equipped with chain saws, dump truck, tree chipper and climbing gear which enabled them to remove branches that were hung up in trees or dangling over trails. Under the supervision of "Doc" Metcalf, the students took care of many tasks we could not have done without their help. Thank you Harper students, we look forward to working with you in the future.

Once the Harper students dropped storm-damaged trees and branches, there was plenty of work for other students to do. Thanks to Stillman Board Member Jim Kaltsas, a teacher at Hersey High School, a group of hard-working AP biology students spent three Saturday mornings cutting and burning the brush, pulling garlic mustard, and spreading chips on trails.

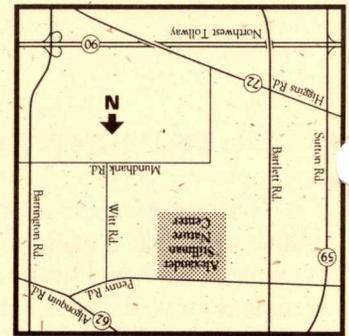
In addition, volunteers Roy Schodtler and Sue Anderson, also high school teachers, brought Ecology Club members from Palatine High School. Club members stopped by in the spring to, among other things, clean out bluebird boxes, put up a new Kestrel box, and trim back branches that were closing in on trails. We thank all of the students for taking on these necessary although not particularly glamorous duties.

Then, there are the 'regulars.' Roger Laegeler, Daria Sapp, Jill Kohler, and Barbara Christie who have spent many a Thursday cutting brush and collecting seeds from prairie plants. Thanks to the volunteers' efforts, an area that was once dominated by non-natives has been transformed into a diverse meadow where 50+ species of native prairie plants can be found.

We can always use help with these activities. If you'd like to volunteer, please call 428-OWLS.

We may understand the theory of electromagnetic waves... but our appreciation of color still extends only from red through purple to blue. As far as we are concerned, the real environment is that which we can perceive by our senses or which affects our bodies. The only world that is real for us is the primary phenomenal world in which the sun moves from east to west, the stars are hung in the skies, the reference of measurement is the human body.

-- René Dubos



Email: stillnc@flash.net
 (847) 428-OWLS
 South Barrington, IL 60010
 33 West Penny Road

STILLMAN
 nature center



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If you aren't already a member, please consider joining us.

- Yes, I'd like to become a member of the Stillman Nature Center. I enclose my tax deductible contribution of \$_____.
- I'd like to help as a volunteer with programs or land management at the Stillman Nature Center, please call me.
- Please send a gift membership from _____ to the name and address listed below.

Name _____
 Address _____
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Student	\$10.00
Member	25.00
Supporting Member	50.00
Contributing Member	100.00
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