



# FERMILAB NATURAL AREAS (FNA) Annual Report 2023

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## **FNA President's Letter**

*Dear friends,*

*Once again we have had a very successful year. Our volunteer workdays have been well attended and we welcomed a new steward, Jack Wittry, who has taken over Kingnut Woods. Our volunteer plant and animal monitoring activities have resumed after the Covid shutdown. Last year we started monthly lunchtime guided walks for Fermilab employees from May until November, and plan to do the same in 2024. About 30 hearty people braved the cold and rain to join FNA volunteers and members of Fermilab's Ecology staff in collecting a variety of prairie plant seeds at the annual Prairie Seed Harvest in October 2023.*

*We were very pleased to win two awards in 2023, acknowledging all our hard work. The first was from the Department of Energy in the Strategic Partnerships for Sustainability category. You can read more details [here](#). The second was the Pat Miller Community Engagement Award from the DuPage Monarch Project. This award highlighted Mark Donnelly's video [Tour of Fermilab Natural Areas](#).*

*The restoration of the Eola Grasslands and the Sparrow Hedge area to create breeding habitat for grassland and shrubland birds is continuing. One success is the observation of Yellow-breasted Chats for the first time in 13 years!*

*This past year we had three Betz interns. Unfortunately we will only have enough money to support one intern in 2024. We plan to increase our fundraising efforts in order to increase the number of interns again in the future.*

*At our Annual Meeting in May 2023, the speaker was Jim Kleinwachter from the [Conservation Foundation](#). Jim gave a very interesting talk about the foundation's Conservation at Home program.*

*You may take a walk on Fermilab public trails, and also visit the first floor of Wilson Hall which is once again open to the public. FNA is an all-volunteer organization and we are always looking for new volunteers. We love to see new faces at our workdays - no experience is needed.*

*Thanks for your support,  
Penny Kasper, President FNA*





*FNA received the Department of Energy's 2023 Sustainability Award in the Strategic Partnerships for Sustainability category. Liz Copeland, FNA Vice President, accepted the award from Fermilab Director Lia Meringa, in the presence of FNA board members, stewards, monitors, and Fermilab ecologists.*

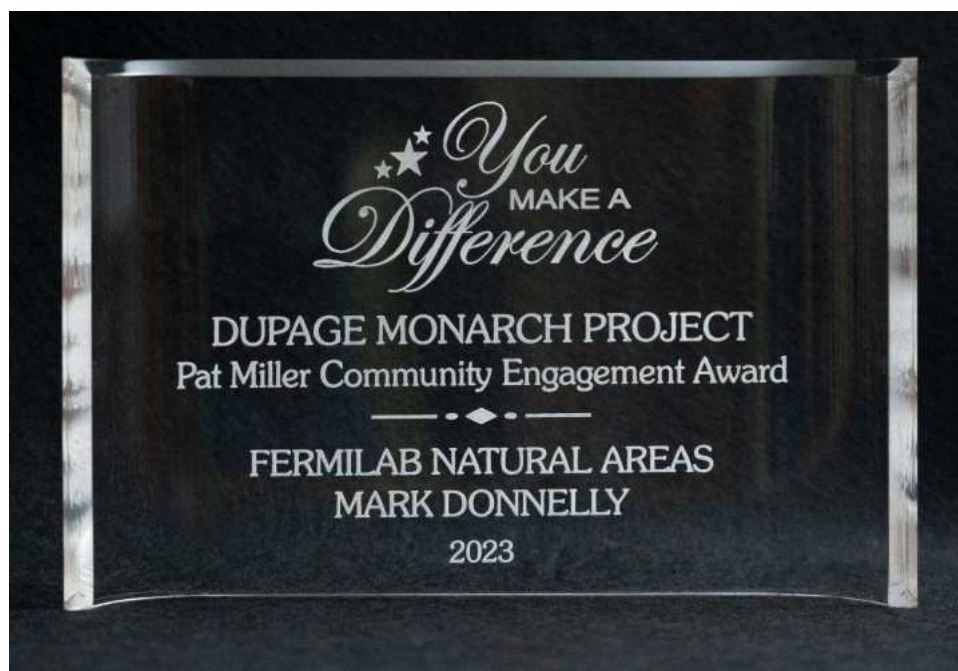


*FNA President Penny Kasper, Sierra Club representative Connie Schmidt, Volunteer Mark Donnelly, and FNA Vice President Liz Copeland Mark accepted the Pat Miller Community Engagement Award from the DuPage Monarch Project. This award highlighted Mark Donnelly's video Tour of Fermilab Natural Areas.*

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## Fermilab Access

Fermilab is open to the public. See the site's new visiting hours and access requirements here: <https://www.fnal.gov/pub/visiting/hours/index.html> . Note that only REAL ID-compliant IDs are accepted.



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## Many Ways to Volunteer With FNA!

FNA is fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers, some *field work* and some *non-field work*. *There are always opportunities for more volunteers in both areas!* Field work includes the weekly public workdays; the annual Prairie Seed Harvest in the fall; work done by stewards for woodlands or prairies; wildlife monitoring; plants of concern (POC) monitoring; and plant pollinating. Some volunteers have more than one field responsibility, and some people also volunteer on the FNA board!

In 2023, FNA recorded a total of 4,133 volunteer hours, (not including paid intern hours):

Monday Workdays – 998 Hours

Wednesday Workdays – 577 Hours

Seed Harvest – 76 Hours

Stewarding – 935 hours

Wildlife Monitoring – 781 hours

Rare Plant Monitoring – 92 hours

Education and Outreach – 344 hours

Board – 330 Hours



### Weekly Public Workdays and Annual Fall Prairie Seed Harvest

No experience is needed! All help is greatly appreciated!

See FNA's schedule here: <https://www.fermilabnaturalareas.com/calendar.shtml>.

### Stewards

With the help of Fermilab ecologists, **woodland and prairie stewards** learn to identify each species. The stewards monitor and remove invasive species; spread native seeds; and survey their areas looking for new species. These volunteers work year round on their own schedule. The type of work depends on the season.

### Wildlife monitors

Wildlife monitoring helps Fermilab staff better understand the presence and abundance of wildlife, including many secretive and rare species. FNA volunteers monitor different types of wildlife such as birds, frogs, butterflies, and dragonflies.

### Plant Pollinators

Since 2016, volunteer **plant pollinators** have been cross pollinating rare plants found on site. These plants grow in many small populations spread across the Fermilab site, too far apart for their pollinators to visit more than one group. The low numbers of plants



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and their distance from one another reduces their genetic diversity, making them less able to respond to changes in the environment, such as drought or higher average temperatures. By cross-pollinating, we are increasing the resilience of some of our rarer plants on site.

### **Plant Monitors**

The **Plants of Concern (POC)** is a project through the Chicago Botanic Garden to help prevent rare plants in natural areas from extinction. At Fermilab, **POC monitors** collect data including numbers of plants, their reproduction, invasive and native plants in the area, and soil conditions. This information is shared with land managers, researchers, and state databases to help develop the best conservation practices to protect these rare plants.

### **FNA Board Members**

FNA volunteers also do a great deal of non-field work. The **FNA board** consists of nine volunteer directors who are elected by FNA members at each annual meeting. The directors serve two year terms. The board selects from their membership the following officers: president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. It generally meets once a month, and organizes an annual meeting of all FNA members. In addition to the FNA officers duties, FNA directors have various responsibilities, including fundraising, communication and outreach activities, maintaining Facebook, Instagram, and the website. Many of our volunteers are also excellent photographers.

### ***A very special thanks to these FNA volunteers:***

Stephen Baginski – Wildlife Monitor (General Wildlife Route)

Sarah Caballero – Steward (Big Woods)

Evalyn Campbell – POC Monitor, Wildlife Monitor (Frogs)

Gail Chastain – Wildlife Monitor (General Wildlife Route)

Sue Styer – Steward (Giese Woods), POC Monitor/rare plant pollinator/FNA Board Member

Liz Copeland – Steward (Girl Scout Woods)/FNA Board Vice President

Rita Dolan – FNA Board Member

Mark Donnelly – Wildlife Monitor (dragonflies)

Terry Miesle – Wildlife Monitor (bees)

Dave Giese – Steward (Big Woods South), Wildlife Monitor (bird houses)

Jacques Hooymans – Steward (Big Woods South/Prairie 15)

Maureen Huey – Steward (Lederman Woods), Wildlife Monitor (butterfly)/FNA Board Member

Nanette Kalscheur – Wildlife Monitor (butterfly)

Denis Kania – Steward (Sparrow Hedge), Wildlife Monitor (birds)

Penny Kasper – Steward (Girl Scout Woods), Wildlife Monitor (Frogs)/FNA Board President

Peter Kasper – Wildlife Monitor (birds)

Paula Lambertz – FNA Board Member

Bob Mathieu – Wildlife Monitor (bird houses)

Jackie McCauley – Steward (Site 12 Woods)

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Tom Mozer – FNA Board Member  
Mary Jo Murphy – POC Monitor  
Glenn Perricone – Wildlife Monitor (birds)  
Marlene Rosecrans – POC Monitor, Wildlife Monitor (frogs)  
Sue Sheehan – Steward (Ed Center Woods)/FNA Board Member  
Tina Smith – Wildlife Monitor/ FNA Board Member  
Sue Styer – Plant Monitor/ FNA Board Member  
Dave Spleha – Wildlife Monitor (birds)  
Jack Wittry – Steward (Kingnut Woods)

*If you are interested in joining our group of volunteers, please talk to a board member at one of the volunteer work days, or contact us at [fermilabnaturalareas@gmail.com](mailto:fermilabnaturalareas@gmail.com).*



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## Robert F. Betz Internships

Teaching young people to be stewards of the land is vital. FNA is fortunate to be able to offer an experience for students who are majoring in biology or environmental biology. The Robert F. Betz Internship is funded by donations that have allowed FNA to offer summer and autumn internships when funds are available. FNA interns assist the Fermilab Ecologists in managing the 2,600 natural areas of Fermilab, which is crucial for sustaining all the native habitats. In 2023, the interns presented the following reports:

- Kelsey Lehmann presented a report on her project which involved a study of freshwater mussels
- Nari Coleman's topic was Soil Health
- Caroline Smith's topic was Ecological Management for Little Brown Bats and Northern Long-eared Bats.



*2023 fall interns Nari Coleman and Caroline Smith*



*2023 Summer intern Kelsey  
Lehmann*

*FNA is thankful to all who have donated to sustain  
and support our internships.*



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## Project Updates

We provided detailed descriptions of our major ongoing projects (Eola Grassland and Sparrow Hedge Restoration) in the previous 2022 Annual Report. Work has continued on both projects.

### Eola Road Grassland

As we noted in the 2022 Annual Report, the goal of the Eola Road Grassland Project is to return these grasslands to a state suitable as a habitat for rare grassland bird species. The recovered grasslands would have a mix of vegetation heights and a variety of thatch levels necessary to support the full complement of grassland bird species. In 2023, Fermilab staff continued periodic mowing and burning of grasslands; selective herbicide treatment to remove invasive species and woody plants from grasslands; and monitoring of bird populations and vegetation to measure effectiveness of development programs and modify as needed.

### Sparrow Hedge Restoration

The Sparrow Hedge area at Fermilab is 47.2 acres of shrubland which is critically important habitat for shrubland bird species. A group is made up of FNA bird monitors and board members, a DuPage Forest Preserve shrubland steward, and Fermilab Roads/Grounds and Ecology created a restoration plan, and work is ongoing. It appears to be working because *Yellow-breasted Chats were observed in the area for the first time in 13 years!*

The following photo and caption is from the Audubon website (<https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/yellow-breasted-chat>):



*“A bizarre series of hoots, whistles, and clucks, coming from the briar tangles, announces the presence of the Yellow-breasted Chat. The bird is often hard to see, but sometimes it launches into the air to sing its odd song as it flies, with floppy wingbeats and dangling legs, above the thickets. This is our largest warbler, and surely the strangest as well, seeming to suggest a cross between a warbler and a mockingbird.”*

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## **Outreach/Presentations/Wildflower and Prairie Walks**

In 2023, FNA participated in some of our long-time favorite outreach activities and offered an original activity for Fermilab employees. We staffed information tables at Fermilab’s Earth Day, Warrenville’s Arbor Day, and Fermilab’s Family Outdoor Fair, which returned after a three-year hiatus. From May through September, we offered monthly lunchtime activities for Fermilab employees. These included tours of woodlands and prairies, harvesting native prairie plant seeds, and a tour of the facility used to dry, process, and store harvested seed. We closed the year with the annual prairie seed harvest in October. The day was wet and rainy, but the attendees were undaunted.

*We look forward to seeing you at an event soon!*



*2023 Prairie Seed Harvest Volunteers*



*Young Professionals group on a tour of the Margaret Pearson Interpretive Trail, guided by FNA Board Members Susan Styer (third from right) and Maureen Huey*



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## Acknowledgments

FNA is an independent organization: it is not part of Fermilab and does not receive funding from Fermilab. FNA depends on your support (membership dues, individual donations, corporate sponsorship, in-kind contributions and grants) to accomplish its work. We thank you - the following donors - for your generous support in 2022-2023.

### Patrons (\$1,000+)

Sue Styer

### Supporters (\$500+)

Priscilla Heidebrecht

Steven Dixon

Paula A. Lambertz

### Donors (\$250+)

Mark Donnelly

Penelope Kasper

Jacques L. Hooymans

Thomas Peterson

### Sponsors (\$100+)

Elizabeth Copeland

Ronald Hirsch

Maureen Huey

Wild One Natural Landscapes

Veta Bonnewell

William Call

James & Germaine Campbell

Cynthia Conger

Rita & Rick Dolan

Jacqueline G. McCauley

Thomas Mozer & Janet

Stoneking

Gerald & Mary Jo Murphy

Kurt Riesselmann

Kathy Thompson

Richard Webb

### Contributors (\$50+)

David & Alexa Spleha

Gail A. Chastain

Roger Hull

Nancy Lanning

Fechin Lynch

John & Jean Mozzocco

Kathy Sue Sheehan

### Members (\$25+)

James Duis

Paul Francuch

Ariana Stelter



## FNA Financial Summary

### FNA Financial Summary

	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Donations	\$19,415.74	\$6,977.74	\$7,837.58	\$6,399.03
Grants	\$707.39	\$31,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00
Merchandise and Calendar Sales	\$1,483.25	\$56.00	\$473.25	\$1,683.50
Interest on Investments	\$296.81	\$48.12	\$93.33	\$113.75
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$21,903.19</b>	<b>\$38,081.86</b>	<b>\$14,404.16</b>	<b>\$8,196.28</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
<b>Program Expenses</b>				
Internships	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$17,674.17	\$22,685.01
Grasslands Project	\$11,280.00	\$0.00	\$34,920.00	
Special Projects	\$1,057.39	\$0.00	\$4,252.61	\$153.36
Cost of Calendars	\$625.70	\$17.74	\$0.00	\$696.18
General Operating Expenses	\$3,804.42	\$2,963.99	\$3,662.60	\$4,736.86
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$16,767.51</b>	<b>\$2,981.73</b>	<b>\$60,509.38</b>	<b>\$28,271.41</b>
<b>Funds at End of Year</b>	<b>\$44,571.06</b>	<b>\$77,676.19</b>	<b>\$31,570.97</b>	<b>\$11,501.84</b>



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## How to Donate to FNA

On behalf of the Board, we remain grateful for your continued support of our mission!

Donations to FNA can be made in the following ways:

- Online at <http://fermilabnaturalareas.com/ways-to-help.html>
- Send your name, address, and check made to Fermilab Natural Areas to us at the address below. Please note if you are a student.
- You may buy T-shirts, hoodies, and hats with our bison logo from our online store:  
<https://fermilabnaturalareas.itemorder.com/shop/sale/>



## Contact Us

Fermilab Natural Areas  
P.O. Box 717  
Warrenville, IL 60555-8777

Email:  
[fermilabnaturalareas@gmail.com](mailto:fermilabnaturalareas@gmail.com)

Website:  
<http://fermilabnaturalareas.com/>

Follow us on Facebook and  
Instagram!



## FNA Board of Directors and Fermilab Liaison 2022-2023

Penny Kasper (FNA Board President)  
Liz Copeland (FNA Board Vice President)  
Sue Styer (FNA Board Secretary)  
Tom Mozer (FNA Board Treasurer)  
Paula Lambertz (FNA Board Member)  
Sue Sheehan (FNA Board Member)  
Maureen Huey (FNA Board Member)  
Rita Dolan (FNA Board Member)  
Tina Smith (FNA Board Member)  
Wally Levernier (Fermilab Liaison to FNA Board)

