

## Maureen Marsh

Volunteering has always been part of Maureen's life. She began volunteering for the schools, became a scout leader, and managed soccer teams while raising her two children in Florida. At this time Maureen became very interested in birds and joined the local Audubon organization. She monitored bluebirds for NABA (North American Bluebird Association), installed two bluebird boxes at her home and planted gardens for birds and butterflies.

When Maureen and her family moved back to Illinois in 2010, she began working with the Lake-Cook Audubon Society eventually becoming a board member. She leads bird walks and helps with the establishment of purple martin nesting systems and chimney swift towers in several forest preserves. In 2017 Maureen completed the University of Illinois Master Naturalist program and volunteered with educational programs for children and the installation of native plant gardens.

As Maureen says, "One of the wonderful surprises of moving to Lake Forest was discovering LFOLA and all the wonderful preserves!"

She began volunteering for LFOLA in 2012 by monitoring 37 bluebird boxes. Maureen trains new bluebird box monitors and assists with LFOLA educational programs, including *The Mitten*, a Great Horned Owl presentation and leads bird walks for all ages.

Maureen's newest volunteering adventure is in the arena of restoration. Lake-Cook Audubon Society and LFOLA are collaborating on the restoration of a property on Westleigh Road, with a view to establishing native habitat for birds and other wildlife. On behalf of her chapter, Illinois Audubon Society recently received a matching grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation to help with this improvement. She is working with a crew of volunteers from both of our organizations and the community.

For Maureen, this project summarizes what is best about volunteering, especially here at LFOLA. These grassroots efforts bring people together to learn about their local environment and discover what is right here around them, but more importantly, how to appreciate and cherish it! An old Girl Scout mantra is to leave something better than you found it. It is also fulfilling for Maureen to share her knowledge and to learn from others when working with the LFOLA restoration and education teams. It develops a sense of community and belonging.

One of Maureen's favorite sayings, is...*if you build it, they will come*. That means bringing together people, plants, and animals. What a wonderful world we live in. She is very thankful for this and we are thankful for Maureen!

