

THE NEW ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AWARD

BY TERRY BONACE AND KRISTINE FALLON FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION GROUP

The Beverly Shores Environmental Restoration Group (ERG) believes that we have a responsibility to nurture our unique, natural environment in the Indiana Dunes. The Dunes ecology is threatened by expansion of animal species whose natural checks have been eliminated. Many invasive plant species threaten to replace our native plant diversity with plant monocultures. In 2021, the ERG will initiate a recognition program for outstanding work in removing invasive plant species from properties in Beverly Shores. We will be soliciting and accepting self-nominations and nominations of neighbors, friends, and relatives. Details will be posted on our website, www.bsERG.org, in early spring.

Although the official recognition program does not start until 2021, we want to recognize this year a couple who moved to Beverly Shores from Chicago in late 2019. Andre and Maureen Daugavietis have spent the past few decades in the dense, urban environment of Chicago but now have taken up full-time residence in Beverly Shores at 118 Wells Ave. They were drawn to Beverly Shores by its rare dune ecosystem and wanted to preserve the natural dunes environment to which they were attracted.

Wanting to help preserve this dune ecosystem, they started in their own “back yard.” Andre said, “We don’t want the Dunes to become just like ‘everywhere else.’ We want to be good stewards of at least the land that we own.” Being good stewards has involved the removal of hundreds of mature burning bush and thousands of saplings, in addition to oriental bittersweet, multiflora rose, garlic mustard, and other culprits. The damage to the ecosystem by all of these invasive species has been discussed in earlier ERG *Sand Tracks* articles and is documented at <https://bsERG.org/invasives.html>.



Andre and Maureen Daugavietis at Home



Andre with a “Tree Puller” pulling up burning bush

Andre and Maureen sought and received advice on recognition of the invasive plants on their new property from ERG. We had a chance to see their property both before and after a spring and summer of hard work, and the difference is remarkable. Native ferns and shrubs have been planted in what was once a burning bush jungle. Other natives are making a return on their own. Andre and Maureen had a tough year for planting because of the many weeks of dry, hot weather this summer.

Because of the difficulty of finding native replacements and to simply avoid the waste of native plants, Andre imagines a native plant rescue initiative when a new building is permitted in Beverly Shores, allowing the removal and transplanting of native plants otherwise lost during construction. Andre and Maureen moved into town shortly before the pandemic struck and have not met as many neighbors as they would like. They welcome you to stop and visit whenever you see them

working outside or walking or bicycling in town. They are pleased to share their knowledge and enthusiasm about environmental restoration.

Like Andre and Maureen, do not hesitate to contact Terry Bonace at tbonace@gmail.com or Candice Smith at candicepetersonsmith@gmail.com for assistance. Also, please, visit our website at www.bserg.org for further information on invasive plants and native replacements.
