Habitat Hero
1st Quarter 2020

Our 2020 first quarter Habitat Hero is Jeanne Klingler. I have known Jeanne for many years as she works in the media center of MRMS where all 4 of my kids went to her for book recommendations. We became friendly through garden club and discovered our mutual interest for gardening for nature. In fact, we formed a small group with several likeminded friends and took an online class where we read articles, watched videos and discussed wildlife friendly landscaping. I have visited her yard many times and knew all the great things she had going on over there so in times of social distancing I knew without even having to visit she would be the perfect choice for the first Habitat Hero of 2020. In lieu of an in person visit I had an email Q&A to get the best description of her yard and what her plans are for the coming year. She is working with CSC resident Chris Pax, a native landscape designer on converting her front “lawn” to a shady native garden area. Be sure to check out Chris’ website for great newsletters, online classes and design services.
If I remember correctly you have not just 1 but 2 ponds, tell me about those.

Yes, I have two ponds. One of them is about ten years old, the other has been around for four years.

What Native plants are in there?
I have lizard tail in both of them along with the Pickerelweed (that I shared with her from my own pond).

What wildlife have you seen using it?
I had bullfrogs from the get-go, along with green frogs for a while, but the bullfrogs eventually forced them out. I get lots of water striders and dragonflies, too.

**Christmas Fern**
What other wildlife you've seen in the yard and what specific habitat practice do you think attracts them?
I've had deer, fox, many birds, snakes and box turtles. The fox are probably after the squirrels and voles. The birds enjoy my brush piles and I have tossed all my old Christmas trees in the wooded area next to my house. I do have bird feeders, but the birds also go after seeds from lots of Natives I've added over the years. I've had black rat snakes in and around the house for years, probably going after mice, voles and other small rodents that hide in the leaves. I only see the box turtle every other year or so.

**Penstemon - Beardtongue**
Tell me about the native plants you have including any host plants?
I have a lot of shade, so it's challenging to find the right Natives but many of the ones I have do well in shade or part shade. I have Black-eyed Susans, Joe Pye Weed, Red Cardinal flower, white turtlehead, hyssop and a few varieties of Goldenrod. I fell in love with pussytoes several years ago and have gotten them well-established in several places. I love various Packera spp. they are doing well in both sun and part shade. I have milkweed that has supported monarchs and parsley and dill for black swallowtail butterflies.

**Virginia blue bells**
What kind of storm water mitigation do you employ in your landscape?
I have two rain barrels that (until last summer) kept me from ever needing to water with a hose. I had created a small rain garden out back and I ended up putting my pond right up against it. Any overflow from the pond waters rain-loving plants on the downside. Out front, I
noticed an area of runoff going from the road to the side of the house. I planted a swath of native grasses and turtleheads to help control the runoff.

**Zizia - Golden Alexander**

Do you have a compost?

I have a compost bin in which I put all my vegetable scarps, grass that I cut and shredded leaves. I try to turn it into the soil whenever I plant. I don't have a lot of grass anymore, so I only need a rotary mower!

Your latest project is converting your front lawn to a native plant landscape, tell me about your plans.

I have been working to get rid of a lot of lawn area. My backyard is pretty much reduced to only paths of lawn. The front was dominated by grass and pachysandra. As the center area of one large patch started to die off, I began to think of ripping it all out and planting natives. With advice from Chris Pax and some professional help, we ripped out the remaining pachysandra and put down newspaper and a three inch layer of mulch. I have begun replanting some of the natives I had dug up from there and am looking forward to putting in many more! Shortly after I moved into this house, I started expanding planting areas to replace grass. I have two wonderful serviceberry trees, a redbud and a dogwood that I built beds around.

What are some other examples that you make you a Habitat Hero?

I would say that my goal is to create an attractive Native plant garden in the front yard. I consider myself a haphazard gardener, but I feel that if I can use natives and make them look nice, more people will come around to seeing their value and perhaps choose them when making landscaping decisions.

Thanks Jeanne for all you are doing for a wildlife friendly habitat and bay friendly practices. You are truly a Habitat Hero! You can add Habitat Hero to your list of certification- Bay Wide & Certified Wild Habitat.