

"Infamous burn"
Muralt Bluff Prairie, 1974

THE PRAIRIE PROMOTER

Grassroots Conservation in Action

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The
Prairie
Enthusiasts



30th Anniversary of The Prairie Enthusiasts

The Formative Years – a Brief History

From the Editor: History, like rivers, meander. There's no one story to tell for the origin of the mighty TPE. One could say TPE had its origins in the 1980s with a local businessman doing a celebratory skip down a lonely Wisconsin road. Or, you could say it began in the '70s with manic twenty-somethings on a mission to save the planet. Or maybe, as is the modern belief, it began with the scientists from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and government agency leaders who led the way to unity. Probably, all are true, and some were left out. Forgive us for any errors or omissions; they are inadvertent and can only be attributed to passing time or failing memory and nothing else.

By Rob Baller

The editor asked me to write the early history of TPE for our 30th anniversary because I've been a member nearly 30 years, and I know many of the players in the drama. I gathered history from newspapers and old newsletters; I interviewed key people (almost everyone returned my call.) I found so many perspectives. Every interview brought illumination, and totally ended my illusion that I might produce a story that would please all. Everyone was active long before they joined the group; everyone has memories that others do not have, and all weigh the events in a different way.

"Everyone was active long before they joined the group; everyone has memories that others do not have; and all weigh the events in a different way."

Here is a sketch of TPE's formative history. The period covers 1987-1993 with flashbacks to the 1970s. A great deal of TPE history and growth has occurred after 1993. But that is for another tale.

Green County Conservation League

I begin where I believe I should, all things considered, with the Green County Conservation League (GCCL). This nonprofit conservation group in southern Wisconsin was a well-established hunting and fishing club in the 1980s, having employed the term "conservation" in the 1960s sportsman sense. Certain devotees had grown a fondness for natural landscapes such as prairie. Many of our earliest Prairie Enthusiasts associated, at least in part, with this local club, and the League may be considered the vital gestation medium for what was to come.

In a now-famous flashback a decade before TPE, Gary Eldred of Albany (Green County), crossed paths with his old Albany classmate John Ochsner. As retold

Continued on page 4

Our Mission

The Prairie Enthusiasts seek to ensure the perpetuation and recovery of prairie, oak savanna, and other associated ecosystems of the Upper Midwest through protection, management, restoration, and education. In doing so, we strive to work openly and cooperatively with private landowners and other private and public conservation groups.

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Glacial Prairie - Alice Mirk
Many Rivers - Deanna Pomije
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Northwest Illinois - Jim Rachuy
Prairie Bluff - Jerry Newman
Southwest Wisconsin - Linda Lynch
St. Croix Valley - Evanne Hunt
Prairie Sands - David Hamel
Director Emeritus - Gary Eldred

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Land Trust Accreditation in TPE's Future

Chris Kirkpatrick, Executive Director

Late this summer, TPE submitted an application with the Land Trust Alliance's Accreditation Commission. By early 2018, we should know if we reach our five-year goal of approval. Here, I'll define what accreditation means to TPE chapters, members, supporters and volunteers.

The basis of accreditation is comparing TPE's policies & procedures with the standards & practices developed by the Land Trust Alliance. These standards define how land conservation non-profits should operate - legally, financially and ethically.

For example, the board adopted financial management procedures last year by approving TPE's Accountant's Manual. The manual assures we manage and track restricted income in a transparent and accountable manner. This enabled TPE to work with partners such as US Fish & Wildlife Service on the Monarch Butterfly Cooperative Agreement. This agreement brought \$80,000 in funds, primarily to chapter projects in Wisconsin, enabling us to manage more remnants and plant more native prairies to assist monarchs.

The systems now in place ensure TPE can handle complex financial management and reporting to grantors, donors, members and supporters.

Another example is how TPE has improved its land protection program. The accreditation process reviews TPE's recent acquisitions, land donations and conservation easements, then checks our current practices against how we have done projects in the past. It's clear the policies and procedures TPE has adopted in the last 10 years have improved our ability to handle complex land deals.

The process also makes sure projects don't put TPE at financial risk, allowing us to manage lands and conservation easements into perpetuity.

I see accreditation as the highest level of endorsement, allowing chapters, members, donors and volunteers to trust they are supporting a solid conservation agency. It also gives clear direction and confidence to central staff, board members, donors and volunteers that TPE policies and procedures have been reviewed and stand up to a third-party accreditation process.

Ultimately, these practices ensure the perpetuation and recovery of the prairies and savannas we all care for together.

Welcome New Members

Paul & Robin Anderson, Prairie du Sac, WI
Kinstone, Fountain City, WI
Kent & Linda Bergemann, Mequon, WI
Two Bridges, Madison, WI
Jim Ellis, Adell, WI
Matt Emslie, Viroqua, WI
Kathleen Hoelscher, Monticello, WI
Mary Hogan, Mankato, MN
Jeffrey Kirst, Eden Prairie, MN
Tim Kohl, Beaver Dam, WI
Heidi Krattiger, Viroqua, WI
Paul & Lori Lackner, Blue Mounds, WI
Carolyn & Richard Larkin, Pewaukee, WI
Peter S. Marshall, Madison, WI
Mike Mossman & Lisa Hartman, North Freedom, WI

Donald Mowry & Martha Munger, Mondovi, WI
Patricia Mullins & James Smith, Cross Plains, WI
Rich & Jeni Pearce, Elizabeth, IL
Quam Bloedorn Family, Winona, MN
Justin Shrader, Prairie du Sac, WI
Gift from David Cordray & Debra Noell
Patty Trnka, Rochester, MN
Christopher Walchuk, Elysian, MN
Gift from Charles Roessler
Steve Warble & Kimberley Haag, Elburn, IL
Craig & LeAnn Watson, McGregor, IA
Kay Weibel, Galena, IL

(Front page photo by John Ochsner)



President's Message

Scott Fulton, President

Work on the strategic initiatives I have outlined in the last couple of issues of the Promoter has continued at a brisk pace over the summer months. As part of this effort, our treasurer (Alice Mirk) and I had the opportunity in August to spend a day with TPE's hardworking professional staff at the organization's offices in Viroqua, Wis. One goal was to better understand and document in detail exactly what Chris Kirkpatrick (Executive Director), Joe Rising (Communications Coordinator) and Jerry Pedretti (bookkeeper) currently do for TPE every day. The other goal of this visit was to learn from the staff what challenges they face in their routine work, and to get their ideas for how we could make what they do for all of us more efficient and effective.

Following the session, we compiled a detailed report on staff responsibilities and processes, which was shared with the TPE Board of Directors and discussed at our annual September retreat in Viroqua. Specific areas for improvement were identified in financial management and reporting, management of memberships and member information, and fundraising. These topics have now been assigned to the respective Board committees (Finance; Communications, Outreach and Education; and Fundraising) for further discussion and action.

After this work, all of us involved have been impressed by how much our staff is able to accomplish with surprisingly

few resources. However, we also have realized that there are many opportunities for improvement, not only in how efficiently we do our work, but also in how effectively services are provided to both chapter leadership and members of TPE. The goal of all these efforts is to serve you better at the local chapter level in carrying out TPE's mission. The next step in making improvements is to hear feedback and ideas from you.

Very shortly, we will be sending a revision of the staff responsibilities report (including a description of the challenges we are now focused on addressing) to the chapter leadership for review. Chris Kirkpatrick and I are also beginning to schedule meetings over the next several months with all eleven of TPE's chapters to discuss the report, get your feedback and ideas directly, and review the other initiatives we have underway in burn training and landowner services. Our goal is to bring your inputs back to the respective committees and Board for our next planning meeting. Then, after the annual conference in February, we can launch a major, focused effort to implement and refine these service improvements as a primary focus for our organization in 2018.

Although much of our direct discussion will be with chapter leadership, we are very interested to learn more of what all of you think about the services provided by the staff and larger organization to support your chapter's goals and activities. We are happy to send you a copy of the staff responsibilities report if you are interested. Please contact me with your ideas and concerns at president@theprairieenthusiasts.org



Editor's Notes

Debra Noell

Members have stories to tell; I have pages to fill, and readers want to know more about the power of prairies.

To spark your creativity, here are the general areas where we ask our Editorial Volunteers to seek both short news reports and more in-depth feature stories:

Member profiles – identify and/or write member "prairie stories." Profiles should include the reason they participate in TPE, their personal interests, hobbies, motivations, opinions.

Chapter News – gather pictures and short reports on activities in the chapter such as work parties, social events, fundraisers, additions on properties of items such as signs, bridges, trails or unique species.

Citizen Science – scientific perspective or informal studies associated with prairie life, restoration or trends. This could be reviews of scientific papers, editorial opinion about a scientific idea, book reviews or formal observations. Photos are always helpful.

Practice Wisdom – these are stories & photos sharing insight into successful, or not-so-successful, techniques used

to protect, promote or restore prairies. These aren't scientific studies but rather personal insights into failures and successes in members' own prairie life & work. These pieces keep others from making the same mistakes or share successes others may not have considered.

Promoters Remembered – identify members who have died by writing a tribute to them, delegating someone to profile them, or providing an obituary & photo to share with all.

Reflections – these stories are personal & can be on any topic associated with prairies, their flora & fauna, trends, opinions, observations, feelings. This section can be flexible and nearly limitless.

Contact me anytime at promoter@theprairieenthusiasts.org, or your chapter editorial liaison.

Correction: In the August 2017 edition of *The Prairie Promoter*, there were two errors in "A Population Study of the Lesser Purple Fringed Orchid" article. Two Latin names were incorrectly presented. The Latin name for Bergamot is *Monarda fistulosa*, and the Lesser Purple Fringed Orchid is *Platanthera psycodes*. The errors are the responsibility of the editorial staff, and we apologize for any confusion.

by Ochsner, the two graduated from Albany High School together but didn't cross paths again until 1975 while driving down nearby Tin Can Road.

Both were interested in a prairie remnant on a nearby cow pasture bluff owned by the Muralt family. Eldred had hunted on the bluff for many years and was entranced by the beauty of rough blazing star and Indian grass; Ochsner hauled milk from the Muralts for his family-run cheese factory. Eldred, Ochsner and others from the GCCL would participate in a movement to have the Green County government buy and conserve the prairie bluff.

On Sunday, April 13, 1975, ten people, including fellow League members and future Prairie Enthusiasts Reynold Zeller (WDNR), southern Wisconsin wildlife artist Jonathan Wilde, Ochsner and Eldred, set fire to a small patch of the Muralt pasture. The fire escaped, but eventually died mostly on its own, with a little help from shovels and swatting shirts. The subsequent August infestation of rough blazing star impressed the Green County Parks Committee members, who recommended the site be saved. The first 64.2-acre parcel was purchased by Green County in 1976. Additions would be acquired in the future. The bluff has become admired today as the Muralt Bluff Prairie State Natural Area.

Muralt was transferred to TPE on Sept. 13, 2013.

Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts

Steven Apfelbaum was a Chicago-area native who moved to Green County in the 1980s. He bought a ramshackle farm near Juda that would serve as his home and headquarters for his firm, Applied Ecological Services (AES). By the late 1980s, the company was conducting burns, collecting seed, restoring savannas (chain sawing) and planting seed. It employed a handful of upcoming Prairie Enthusiasts, including Marie Brown, Fred Faessler, Ochsner, Chuck Sams and myself.

Apfelbaum admired the volunteer stewardship of the Chicago branch of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), under the guidance of his friend, Stephen Packard. At the GCCL, he undoubtedly befriended advocates like the Muralt Bluff romancers mentioned earlier. Apfelbaum wondered if a unique prairie group might form in Green County with local volunteers working on a large, rural scale.

According to him, a small cadre of friends met sometime in 1986 at Turner Hall in Monroe, Wis., in the basement known as the Ratskeller ("Swiss drinking place.") Amid the traditional Swiss architecture and Swiss food, they schemed how to form a land restoration and advocacy group. The next morning, while strolling the gravel lane of Mill Road past his farmhouse, Apfelbaum found himself happily shouting: "Whoopie!" This exclamation inspired the acronym of the new group just formed - Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts or WPE.

The WPE initial newsletter reports that on Jan. 22, 1987, WPE held its first official meeting, with representatives from several counties, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) in Monroe. A week later the Monroe Evening Times, Jan. 30, 1987 reported:

"The organization of local efforts to preserve native landscape through education and restoration was formalized recently with the selection of a governing board of the Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts.

Growing out of an informal organization of natural prairie and wetland supporters, steps to include public awareness and participation began last year when the WPE formed to inventory natural prairie plants in the area and to reseed acreage near the Monroe ag building ...

"Directors named at the recent meeting include Gary Felder, John Ochsner, Steve Apfelbaum, Bob Hahlen, Betsy Keller, Jonathan Wilde, Marie Brown, Judie Olsen, Chuck Sams, Dr. and Mrs. [Kay] George Barry, and Merrit Milks. Acting as organization or county liaisons [sic] to the board are Reynold Zeller, DNR advisor; Jim Johnson, SCS advisor; Gary Eldred, Grant County; Dick Newsome, Rock County; Larry Lindgren, Conservation League; Keith Blackmore, Stephenson County and Kelly Kearns, Dane County."

"Lindgren, representing the Conservation League, said the two groups will work together on the May Sport, Travel and Gun Show. The WPE has constructed and supplied a cedar-redwood canoe which will top the list of prizes to be given away at the sport show....Profits from the sport show will assist the WPE and Conservation League in the purchase of land [Butenhof Prairie, identified by Gary Eldred and eventually acquired by the League in 1988] for restoration projects."

The reporter interviewed people outside Green County, too, including on the next page:

"...Rich Henderson, Dane County, said in his area a small group has been active for 10-15 years locating and managing both private and public prairie remnants."

The first WPE Newsletter (March 1987) also contained this announcement:

"The Southwestern Chapter of WPE is having their meeting April 5 at 1:40 pm at the Boscobel Hotel. They will discuss projects, ways to raise money, and natural areas in Crawford and Grant counties. They will also have a slide show and discussions on selling seed they have collected. For more information contact Alice Mirk, Rural Route, Mount Hope, WI."

Southwest Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts

Gary Eldred was originally from Albany and alternated seasonally between there and Boscobel. He was often on the road meeting people or prowling for prairie and native flora. According to Eldred, he began forming another prairie group in Grant County as he returned to work at the WDNR Wilson State Nursery near Boscobel in 1987. At first he considered it an informal subset of WPE.

In early 1987, Eldred met David MacGregor, an attorney who owned land in Grant County. He wanted the group to incorporate so it could purchase and preserve land. Eldred enlisted fellow nursery employees on the first board of directors: Gail and Gary Adams, Ruthie Bierwirth, Mary Bremer and Kate Eckert. MacGregor finalized the incorporation after an initial effort by Alice Mirk. The new group became the South-

west Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts, Inc. (SWWPE) on July 14, 1987.

Early SWWPE plans were made around the kitchen table after hours of collecting seed or brushing the prairies. Some early members, though not Eldred, recall the group in those first years as having the nickname 'Gang of Seven,' composed of Gail and Gary Adams, George and Suzanne Brown, Eldred and the Mirks.

SWWPE purchased its first prairie parcel in summer 1988 - the 13.66-acre Thomas Wet Prairie on County Road G, south of Muscoda, in Grant County. Cost was \$295/acre. At the dedication June 14, 1989, about 40 people from at least five counties were treated to an invigorating speech by former Wis. Gov. Tony Earl, followed by endless plates of potluck food. According to Eldred, the governor came alone with his daughter, and drove the car himself. The prairie was funded by a generous donation from SWWPE volunteer MacGregor.

Meanwhile in Green County, WPE incorporated on Dec. 30, 1987. Membership collected seed, presented educational programs, and coordinated the first burn school. The initial WPE burn school was at the appropriately-named Olympic Flame Restaurant in Monroe, on April 11 & 12, 1987. Eighteen pyros received expert instruction from UW-Stevens Point forestry professor and burn boss Andrea Koonce.

Newsletters, Banquets & Potlucks

Newsletters were utilized from the start, disseminating prairie news and soliciting members.

The WPE newsletter was prepared by AES office manager Brown. AES remained the corporate sponsor of WPE and Brown drafted the newsletters on company time. She typed and proofread articles submitted by a few contributors from both prairie groups. In those years, we assembled, addressed and folded newsletters while sitting on the upstairs floor of Apfelbaum's creaking farmhouse, usually in the dim, tired light after work. The format was a relatively simple one of folded white paper, with cut and paste drawings and articles by anyone who would write them.

SWWPE's first newsletter came out August 1987. By early 1988, their news was carried on yellow, heavy weight, folded ledger stock with green and black ink. It had become titled The Prairie Promoter. The first issue with the Promoter title included 11 drawings that were part of a logo contest. The next issue (Summer 1988, Vol 2, No 2) displayed the new SWWPE logo as voted by the readers - Eldred's meadowlark-on-a-fence-row scene. For the next several years, The (SWWPE) Prairie Promotor flourished under the efforts of long-term editor Walter Mirk, and included conservation stories, reports on voluminous seed collecting, Eldred's impressive plant portraits, prairie crossword puzzles by Andrew Williams, and

regular columns like "Notes from the Field by Walter Mirk" and "Eat Your Local Alien" by consummate chef and SWWPE veteran Alice Mirk.

The first WPE banquet was on March 4, 1989, at the Monticello (Wis.) House. Keynote speaker was the charismatic and opinionated UW-Madison botany professor Hugh H. Iltis. His address was titled "The Prairies and Forests of Siberia," and the room was filled with about 60 TPE and SWWPE supporters. Many had joined both clubs.

The next year launched the first combined WPE and SWWPE prairie banquet. On March 24, 1990, at the Dodge Point Country Club, 107 people admired Wilde's original paintings on display, and some lucky people had their books signed by the featured speaker: Dean Roosa, Iowa DNR State Ecologist and author of the recently published colorful guide: *Wildflowers of the Tallgrass Prairie*. For the first time, this banquet included a fund raising auction by the SWWPE. Admission was \$10.

Informally gluing the two clubs together during the off-season was the "Jordan Prairie Potluck," named by Ochsner after the former 5,000-acre Jordan Prairie in Green County. Ochsner orchestrated these homey social events at his 1883



Gary Eldred 1974



Prairie Enthusiasts Banquet Raffle Alice Mirk 1991

farmhouse on Hwy 59 west of Albany. For many years, on a Saturday evening in early February, guests would assemble from across the frozen state. Some even stayed overnight.

We enjoyed genuine laughter and needling barbs among Eldred, Wilde, Mirk, and other prehistoric characters as dozens of comrades viewed Ochsner's slides of prairie antics from the previous year.

Unity

Both groups gained subscribers. Many came from beyond their local areas, including outside of Wisconsin. As in most new clubs, relatively few did most of the volunteering, it seems, while their subscribership grew. In 1991, Apfelbaum's firm moved to a new location, and WPE hibernated while its sponsor re-established a new corporate headquarters. There was no newsletter for a year, or much volunteerism.

For the next period, unfortunately, I have the least information.

The 'small group from the north that had been active for 10-15 years' in Dane County was formalizing. Sixteen people met at the UW-Arboretum McKay Center on Nov. 20, 1991, to organize the Prairie Oak Chapter, considering themselves at first an informal subset of the SWWPE. Many were volunteers from the WDNR, TNC and the UW-Madison. Their geographic scope included Dane, Columbia and Sauk counties in Wisconsin. The initial executive committee members were Rich Henderson, president; Robert Abernathy, vice president; Kathy Cartwright, secretary, and Missy Harris, treasurer. They had 10 committees.

Other Prairie Oak members listed on the back of The Prairie Promoter (Fall 1991) were Randy Hoffman, Steven Richter and Brock Woods.

Promoter Editor Mirk noted in the Fall 1991 newsletter (Vol 4, No 3) that the organization had grown 30-fold since 1987. The majority weren't even in the southwest corner of Wisconsin, and many were driving two hours to meetings or work days. SWWPE might be over-extended. It was time to consider becoming local chapters of a single, large organization.

The 1992 Prairie Oak Chapter minutes, detailed by Secretary Cartwright, recorded meetings at various places in southern Wisconsin, including the McKay Center, Henderson's house in Verona and Dodgeville. Sometimes, the meetings involved the SWWPE and the WPE to discuss a merger.

According to Eldred, there were at least four meetings during 1992 at the Bow Hunters Clubhouse north of Monticello. The Mirks recall these Clubhouse meetings were sometimes tense and uncomfortable. Some rejected joining a larger group for fear of losing local autonomy; others worried about DNR involvement, uncertainty about motives, and concern about hidden agendas.

The Prairie Oak minutes, March 1992, record that at one point, the three groups voted to name the potential new trinity the Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts, with three local chapters. Apparently WPE, already formed, didn't support the plan. The rest of the story is in later minutes, which I don't have. I can only affirm that by November 1992, the WPE voted to become a chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts, and the SWWPE would work on changing its bylaws to become one group with local chapters collectively named TPE.

By winter 1992, Eldred's meadowlark-on-fence-row logo on The Prairie Promoter said for the first time: The Prairie Enthusiasts. There were three chapters: Southwest, South Central (formerly Prairie Oak), and Prairie Bluff. The same Promoter announced the first TPE Board: Eldred, president; Henderson, vice president, and Alice Mirk secretary/treasurer. Directors were Jean Blum, Edie Goth, Walter Mirk, Steve Richter, Reynold Zeller and myself. (The Prairie Promoter Vol 5 No 4 Winter 1992)

According to the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, the SWWPE name was changed to TPE on Aug. 6, 1993. Legal work again was assisted by volunteer attorney MacGregor.

The upshot of this history for me, skeletal and incomplete as it is, has caused me to wonder if there are alternate birthdates for The Prairie Enthusiasts.

Presently, the anniversary is the incorporation date of SWWPE. But without the other groups, there is no TPE, and merger changed the organization into a new formulation. Should the birthday be when the organization became TPE? That would make the 30th anniversary in 2023.



by Gary Eldred



Briggs Wetland Burn Crew in a gag photo, holding mostly useless tools following April 15, 2000, burn. L-R Rob Baller, Pat Daniels, Jacob Faessler, John Ochsner, Fred Faessler, Unknown. (Photo courtesy Rob Baller)

Acknowledgements:

At least three major sources with substantial early TPE history were used for this article.

1) The Prairie Enthusiasts Serial Publications. All TPE-related newsletters were laboriously copied by Tom Brock and assembled at his expense into 2 hardback volumes in 2006. He prefaced them with a 3-page history/synopsis. Brock also created spreadsheets of seminal events. The spreadsheets are in his personal files. Brock donated the 2 volumes with his history to the Wisconsin Historical Society.

2) Support for Nomination of Gary Eldred to the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame, Stevens Point, Wis., Feb. 23, 2016. TPE president emeritus Eldred was nominated in 2016. Eldred helped prepare this 30-page booklet by drawing upon his personal journal. Nick Faessler and Rich Henderson were given copies. Nick gave me his for this article.

3) Rich Henderson provided the Minutes of the Prairie Oak Chapter 1991-92, recorded by Kathy Cartwright, secretary.

People interviewed included Steve Apfelbaum, Jean Blum, Kathy & Tom Brock, Gary Eldred, Fred Faessler, Nick Faessler, Rich Henderson, Alice & Walter Mirk, John Ochsner, Jim & Rose Sime. I tried to get Steve Richter, but he was excessively modest and claimed he did not have much to do with it.

~ Rob Baller



Vale Prairie in Green County, Wis., 1991. L-R Gary and Gail Adams, Gary Eldred, Mark Leach (sitting), 3 unknowns. (Photo by John Ochsner)



Butenhof Prairie Dedication 1988. Gary Eldred and John Ochsner. (Photo by Jennifer Salt)



1st Combined Prairie Banquet 1990 at Dodge Point Country Club. Alice Mirk Auctioneering. (Photo by Ochsner)



1st Combined Prairie Banquet 1990. At Dodge Point Country Club. Alice Mirk Auctioneering. (Photo by Ochsner)



Sulzer Prairie John Ochsner 1978



WPE 1st Banquet 1989 at Monticello House, Monticello. L-R Martha Tschudy, Gert Picket, Barb Grabow, Rob Baller, Hugh Iltis, Rich Henderson, Tom Bowditch. (Photo by Ochsner)

Prescribed Foraging in Prairies

Q & A with author Sam Thayer

By Joe Maurer

Celebrated Wild Food author and naturalist Sam Thayer was a guest speaker and plant guide for the Chippewa Savannas Chapter in spring 2017. I followed up with Sam to talk more about his concept of "Prescribed Foraging" and to learn about his new book. We talked at his off-grid home and orchard in Weyerhaeuser, Wis.

Sam offered me a leadplant tea and lunch of chicken gumbo soup seasoned with yellow pimpernel.

JM: Since we're talking about prairies, one of the first things I want to touch on is your view on protection.

ST: There should be a lot of caution.

JM: Could foraging in prairies go the way of ginseng where the plants are driven to near extinction?

ST: Ginseng is a bad analogy. If I had a bag of ginseng this big (holding hands a foot apart), I'd have a thousand dollars.

JM: Right. Perhaps wild leeks are a better comparison. We recognize this concern of over harvesting. Please talk about what it means to be a forager in the realm of prairies.

ST: Anything you do that involves natural resources, you can do irresponsibly. So to point out that it has been done in an irresponsible way, to me, does not mean the thing shouldn't be done anymore. You can say the same thing about hunting and fishing. If someone were to see someone fishing and shout: "Hey, you're wrecking the lake, there won't be any fish left," it would come off as odd to most reasonable people.

JM: Well we don't hunt endangered species so I'm not sure about the comparison there. Prairie lands are down to tiny remnants here in the Midwest.

ST: That's right. But we hunt sharp-tail grouse here in Wisconsin. By any objective measure, that species should be a threatened or endangered species in Wisconsin. The only reason it isn't is because there is a hunting lobby that wants to hunt it. I don't think that's wrong. The reason I don't think it's wrong, and I think this example is applicable to prairies, is the Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society is one of the few organized bodies of people in the Midwest concerned with the conservation and management of pine barrens. I went to a meeting of that organization when I was 18 years old and was impressed because I'm also really into reptiles and amphibians, and pine barrens support these species.

JM: I'm aware that there are premier pine barrens being managed by the Prairie Sands Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts.

ST: Pine barrens are a key habitat for smooth green snake, prairie skink and five-lined skink. And certain parts of the state where pine barrens are adjacent to wetlands, it's key habitat for Massasauga rattlesnake, which is a state endangered species. It's key habitat for Karner blue butterfly and Kirkland's warbler, a federally endangered species. If the Sharp-tailed Grouse Society is moved to harvest the sharp-tail grouse, and they maybe take 1, 2 or 3 a year per, but in turn, maintain a whole habitat which hosts all of these other species, I can get onboard with that.



Sam Thayer holding an edible milkweed plant.
(Photo Provided)

JM: Are you drawing an analogy between people who harvest a grouse and people who might forage a particular plant?

ST: I'll give you a really good example of this. I volunteered for The Nature Conservancy at age 14. I wanted to preserve habitat for all these obligate prairie species: ornate box turtles, slender glass lizards, six-lined race runners and blue racers. For me, I thought prairies like this were limited, precious, diminishing habitat. I thought: "Yes, there's something edible on it, but I'll leave it for the snakes, the lizards and the birds and all the animals that use the prairie." Meanwhile, I've got to watch prairie remnants get totally destroyed through ambivalence. Not through people trying to destroy them or trying to help them, but because nobody cared. There used to be a steep bank along Highway 78 close to Sauk City. That's a place as a teenager I would go to harvest prickly pears. It was a quarter-acre sandy, dry prairie, but it had a lot of other prairie plants in this remnant. I could go there and pick 2-3 gallons of prickly pears. Doing this did no long-term negative impact to that prairie or plant. Fast forward to my late 20s; they've done road construction on Highway 78 and totally obliterated the prairie. Nobody noticed. Also adjacent to the Spring Green Preserve, being managed by The Nature Conservancy, there are hundreds of small lots on the Wisconsin River at the base of the bluffs in the outwash sand of the valley. A lot of these people have five-acre yards and what isn't lawn and was prairie is now overgrown Siberian elms and box elder, which have shaded out these prairies. What if one of those people, just one, ate prickly pear fruit or collected prairie clover for tea? A relationship to plants could change the relationship to their landscape. The potential loss of prairie from this type of harvest is totally irrelevant. A bison collects 40 pounds of prairie in a day. I don't collect 40 pounds of prairie in a year. I'm harvesting like a woodchuck or a deer.

JM: So what's your approach to responsible harvesting?

ST: There are things I would never touch on the prairie. I'm not at all talking about harvesting every edible on the prairie. For example, I've never harvested a prairie turnip in Wisconsin. I would never do it. But I've harvested leadplant. It's a really tough plant. My Dad lives in central Wisconsin in a pine barrens area. The leadplant grows along ditches despite being mowed twice a year. To me, this is responsible harvesting. The idea of me causing harm harvesting leadplant in this context strikes me as ridiculous. The plant can handle really heavy pressure as long as we maintain its habitat.

JM: Obviously, I have strong feelings for prairie and its rareness. And I can relate to others in The Prairie Enthusiasts who want their protection. At the same time, I have a hard time with the sentiment "love the prairie, but love it the way I love it." I think we need to be open to other uses of prairies.

ST: I've had a long time to think about this. I believe there is a simple explanation for it. It's human territoriality. We are territorial animals, and we instinctively fear people taking "stuff" from a landscape we claim as our own. I used to be a public representative for The Nature Conservancy when I was aged 17. Almost all of the land preserves that they manage have parking lots and access roads for cars. These have far more impact on the prairie than I ever will. It's that simple.

JM: One impression I have when reading your books is that you have made nature your life. They are way more than guidebooks to wild edibles. Wild edibles have been a way of life for you. Knowing this can be a bit overwhelming for someone new to thinking about food and landscape like this. What are your thoughts on someone saying: "I'm too set in my ways" or "I can't learn to forage this late in life?"

ST: It's one plant at a time. Just like friendships, each relationship to a plant has value just as each friendship has value. I can look at a compass plant and marvel at its beauty. I can think about a newly developed Cope's gray tree frog and think about how they love to sit on compass plant leaves. I can also say when that compass plant shoot is 14 inches high, you can cut at the base and peel off the outer skin and it's a pretty tasty snack. I could take a few stalks off a compass plant that has 14 stalks every year, and I would never hurt that plant. You can have a relationship with your plant and have your plant for dinner, too.

JM: Can you talk about soil disturbance and its benefits in prairies?

ST: Most plants that are monocarpic perennials, plants that fruit once and then die, need minor soil disturbance or micro disturbance. If you have people digging evening primrose in a prairie, you will maintain a population of evening primrose in that prairie. Other examples include ... gorgeous native thistles, fabulous plants, and the act of digging up those thistles creates their habitat. In a prairie that has not been

disturbed in a while, these plants disappear. Pocket gophers, badgers, ground squirrels as well as humans, can perform these ecosystem services. It's not like human beings are the only ones that benefit from this disturbance. All kinds of her-

bivores that would naturally be on the prairie benefit from the disturbance, and these disturbance-dependent plants. The act of digging up a thistle in a prairie benefits spiderwort. Anise hyssop) is a species of special concern. You don't dig that plant up - but the act of micro disturbance gives this species a place to germinate. As long as you don't go overboard, you can perform intelligent ecosystem services through the act of harvesting. JM: Do you have a calendar of food?

ST: I do. One of the benefits of foraging for what's in season is that

one gets to see what's happening in the landscape. When I go to harvest prairie clover for tea, or when they're young in spring, the greens are excellent. I will always spend about twice as much time pulling spotted knapweed. The two are fierce competitors; they like the exact same conditions. A lot of people think of a prairie restoration as something you do once. But thinking of the prairie as a garden, you can stay on top of things.

JM: Tell us about your new book.

ST: My new book is called *Incredible Wild Edibles - 36 plants that can change your life*. It follows the format of the first two books. I'm presenting my vision for the deeper relationship people can have with nature through foraging. Not just a means of staying connected to nature, but as actually a practical, meaningful way that property owners can get a substantial portion of their food from their property. I have stories of harvesting prairie turnip in there. I talk about a trip I took out to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota with native harvesters. I interview them about their practices and sustainability. It was really eye opening to see. Even though this family had been harvesting prairie turnip on their prairie for 120 years, they still had

the plant growing all over. It was beautiful to see their belief was not a supposition, rather, it was based on long-term experience with the plant.

For more information on Sam Thayer's books and work, please visit <https://www.foragersharvest.com>

The leadplant grows along ditches despite being mowed twice a year. To me, this is responsible harvesting. The idea of me causing harm harvesting leadplant in this context strikes me as ridiculous. The plant can handle really heavy pressure as long as we maintain its habitat.

I have a hard time with the sentiment "love the prairie, but love it the way I love it." I think we need to be open to other uses of prairies.



Gary with award.
(Photo by Brown County Soil & Water)

Minn. Member Honored for Conservation

By Jim Lynch

Gary Rathman, 70, of Comfrey, Minn., was chosen to receive one of six “Conservation Faces of Minnesota” awards by Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever for his many and varied efforts to conserve wildlife habitat. Gary, a TPE member since 2010, is one of Many Rivers Chapter’s most active members.

Gary and his wife of 47 years, Jean, converted their entire 680-acre farm in Brown County to a high diversity prairie. About 200 acres are enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and are permanently protected. The remaining 480 acres were sold to the Minnesota DNR and are now managed as a Wildlife Management Area.

Within the 200 acres of CREP, there are 17 different prairie plantings. The planting with the fewest species holds about 164 different native grasses and forbs, and other plantings boast more than 300 diverse species. Gary is in the process of growing nine milkweed species for seed production to enhance the already diverse prairie plantings.

“I got interested in prairies when I retired from farming and needed something to replace it,” Gary said. “I keep busy with it, and it’s very rewarding. So many prairie birds and animals have returned to live in the prairie.”

Gary also cooperates with the University of Minnesota’s Bee Atlas study to inventory the native bee species in the state. There are 56 bee boxes scattered throughout his CREP acreage, one of which is part of the bee study. The remaining 55 bee boxes are a result of a partnership with the MN DNR. In addition to bee boxes, Gary has more than 100 bird houses, bat boxes, woodpecker drumming boxes, and a created wetland on his property.

Gary was in the Air Force for four years and farmed his entire life. He is currently a supervisor with the Brown County Soil and Water, and continues to live on the old farm. He and Jean have two sons, Christopher and Jerry, and four grandchildren.

Thanks to Dustin Van Thuyne, “Pheasants Forever” for information used in this article.



Work day at the farm. L-R Gary, Steven Gahm, Nick Kunz, Jon Kutz, Scott Siegfried and Henry Panowitsch. (Photo by Randy Schindle)



Gary is visited by one of many appreciative wildlife companions on his farm.
(Photo by Randy Schindle)

Prairie Promoters Remembered – Kay Fandel

By Joe Rising



Kay Fandel, former Wildlife Biologist with the WI-DNR, prairie restorationist for Polk County, Wis., National Park Service Educator, and TPE Central Office volunteer, died Aug. 28, 2017, at her home in Viroqua, Wis., after a long struggle with cancer. Kay is survived by three children and her husband Joe Rising (TPE Communications Coordinator.)

Kay grew up near Cold Spring, Minn., and spent summers swimming in the waters of Grand Lake where her family had a cabin. She spent every summer amidst an oak savanna, surrounded by prairie and agricultural fields. Joe's family had a cabin across the lake where he spent summers, too.

After graduating from St. John's Prep School, Kay earned a bachelor's degree in nutrition. She spent several summers as a counselor at Trail Blazer's Camp in Montague, NJ, and traveled throughout the US and Europe. These activities shaped the course of her life.

Kay attended graduate school where she obtained a Masters' degree in Wildlife Biology and went on to pursue a career in that field. Noted ornithologist and St. Cloud State University Professor Al Grewe was her advisor, and Kay and Al spent many days studying birds at Crex Meadows Wildlife Area.

It was not long after this that Kay and Joe married and spent 25 loving years together raising their beautiful daughters. They enjoyed living in many wonderful places including Grand Marais, Minn., and at Shanti Camp on the banks of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway near Crex Meadows, finally settling in Viroqua.

While employed with the DNR, Kay was on numerous burn crews and participated in many burns on Crex Meadow's 7,000 acres of prairie and savanna.

As part of the Polk County Conservation Department, Kay restored prairies and taught prairie educational workshops and events. During their time in Viroqua, Kay worked at Organic Valley, in positions that allowed her to use her knowledge to support nutrition and the environment. Kay helped design and plant Organic Valley's first prairie at its La Farge headquarters. In 2007, she received the Organic Valley "Green Spirit" award for living the values promoted by the nation's largest organic cooperative.

Kay enjoyed going on TPE field trips and hiking at State Natural Areas. She also liked to identify and photograph the species she encountered. She contributed photos to the TPE Iris Drive Prairie brochure and the TPE Facebook page. Over the years, Kay was very helpful to TPE's Central Office. She worked on many of the large mailings, and toward the end of her life, she asked if she could help stick stamps onto TPE letters as that was all she was still able to do.

Kay had an unending love of nature and drive to share her interests in plants and animals with young and old. Kay was a



lover of simple and natural beauty, a friend, inspiration, and beacon of light to many. As part of Kay's Celebration of Life, Prairie Moon Nursery designed a custom seed packet called "Kay's Beautiful Life" Prairie Pollinator Mix. More than 150 pollinator gardens will be planted from these packets in her memory.



Kay wrote a message that pertains to many of us: "Please remember my love of nature and share it with your families. Nature always provided me

with the center, a grounding and joy. I wish that there will always be wild lands and places for you to go and explore, amazing plants and animals to admire and wonder about. Please take a stand and fight to keep sacred places in the US."

Donations from family and friends were encouraged to TPE in Kay's memory.

Member Profile – Pioneer Nick Faessler

By Tom Mitchell

Nick Faessler of the Prairie Bluff chapter was one of the first prairie enthusiasts.

His introduction to prairies was courtesy of Steve Apfelbaum, owner of Applied Ecological Services, Inc. (AES), who had moved to Nick's rural neighborhood in southern Wisconsin and was bringing together folks from Brodhead, Albany, Boscobel, Beloit and Madison. (For the full history of his involvement in developing The Prairie Enthusiasts in 1987, see cover story on Page 1.)

At the time, Nick had heard rumors about early spring pasque flowers still blooming somewhere near the Wisconsin-Illinois border, on somebody's back 40. He eventually found them a short distance away in Stephenson County, Ill. It was unplowed land owned by the Meinert family. He contacted the family and obtained their permission to visit the prairie for potential restoration.

He found a ravine with steep slopes running diagonally across the prairie, which made it difficult to farm. Parts of it would have been dangerous to plow or cut hay, even with horses. And when tractors replaced horses in the first half of the 20th century, it was still too steep to work safely. Like most prairies deprived of fire, it was invaded by eastern red cedar trees and brush that had been mostly removed. But a remnant prairie remained.

Meinert Prairie still has its pasque flowers, plus shooting stars, pale purple coneflowers, lead plant and New Jersey tea. Nick leads a field trip every July for the chapter's picnic potluck supper.

"Patience," he says, "is one thing that this prairie work has taught me. For 30 years I've been looking after Meinert Prairie. I always hoped that some day it could be permanently protected, and we may be getting closer to that day."

Nick grew up on a farm in Spring Grove Township, Wis., where he and his four brothers helped their father with farm chores. Every day, they milked cows, cleaned out the stalls and hauled manure. In the spring, they planted crops; in the summer, they cut one or two hay fields for feed and bedding, and in the fall, they harvested the crops and prepared the fields for the next cycle.

Nick was first elected to the TPE Board of Directors during the presidency of Gary Eldred. He served on the board as that office was held successively by Rich Henderson, Evanne Hunt, Jack Kussmaul and currently Scott Fulton, before deciding this year he had served long enough and handed off the chapter representation to Jerry Newman. He was also TPE's treasurer and still serves on the Finance Committee.

During his years with TPE, our organization has employed a development director, business manager, and now executive director.

"In the early days of TPE, each chapter had two representatives on the board, and Prairie Bluff selected me and Reynold Zeller ... I would have let Ren be the chapter rep, but he had the same idea, and I ended up staying on the board."

Reflecting on his years on the board, Nick says: "(It's

been) "an eye-opener to see the many places we protect, to meet the many people involved in prairie restoration, and to learn how differently the chapters operate. I've enjoyed the conferences and picnics. This summer's hike to Fort McCoy, for example, was a great opportunity to see a place that is not normally open for visits."

In recent years, Nick has witnessed a transformation of The Prairie Enthusiasts during the land trust accreditation process. "It has forced us to examine every thing we do – accounting, baseline monitoring, legal defense, insurance, audits and annual reports." He gives much credit to former president Jack Kussmaul, whom he says was the "early driver" of the process. Nick expects land trust accreditation will give donors a higher level of confidence in our ability to permanently protect and manage these natural areas, resulting in our organization's continued growth.



The Parsnip Predator.
(Photo by Dan Barron)

Developing the Parsnip Predator

Nick's contributions to TPE's Prairie Bluff Chapter go way beyond his service on the board. He has generously allowed us to use a portion of his shop to store our equipment. He's our chief mechanic on trucks and mowers, and Nick oversees the production of the Parsnip Predator. We use his skid-loader, his tractor and brush mower, and he does all our boom spraying. It would be impossible to carry out our management tasks without him. And he's also the chief steward at Avon Ridge.

"An amazing story," is how Nick characterizes the history of the Parsnip Predator. "It started when George and Kay Barry encountered wild parsnip at the Honey Creek Park planting that they had begun in 1987. They asked how they could get rid of the pesky weed without winding up with 'parsnip bracelet,' the

What One Central Staff Worker Does for Us

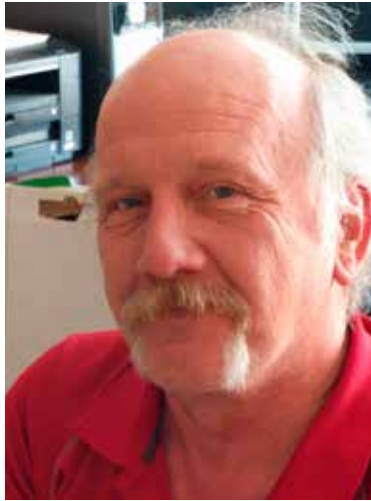
Alice Mirk
Board Treasurer

This is a question often asked by TPE members who, for the most part, are separated from the behind-the-scenes work that keeps a large non-profit land trust humming along. The TPE Board thought it might be a good idea to introduce each of the staff over the next several issues of The Prairie Promoter and tell you what they do for you.

We are going to start with finances, as it's a subject close to most of our hearts. Without financial support from our members and donors, we would not be sustainable as an organization. Our go-to guy for finances is Jerry Pedretti. We are very lucky to have him. Not only does he have years of bookkeeping experience, but he has in-depth knowledge of rural township business. This means he knows exactly what to do when we purchase land in townships and need tax exempt status and more.

Jerry works 15 hours a week for TPE and is primarily responsible for the maintenance of the Timberlake database (our membership software) and QuickBooks (accounting software), and he's the primary contact with our accountant, Winnie Bade.

Money comes to TPE via cash, checks, PayPal, and web-based credit card transactions. Donations need to be kept in separate revenue streams for reporting purposes. For example, memberships (new or renewal), grant money, donations dedicated to particular projects or management of certain sites, donations to TPE Central, donations to chapters, sales, donations to chapters for services rendered (such as burns), donations split between general TPE and a chapter, and conference fees. Money is sometimes received without any clear



allocation, so we require staff to ensure all monies are allocated correctly.

In addition to routine weekly transactions, Jerry has significant workload with three chapters because of their size and activity level. The Empire-Sauk Chapter, for example, has six employees and significant revenue from CRP income, restricted site management donations, and endowments. The Prairie Bluff Chapter has land management transactions and Parsnip Predator sales. Sales are processed, integrated into the bookkeeping system, and reconciled. All contacts from Predator sales are also entered into Timberlake as potential future members. The Northwest Illinois Chapter accounting must be integrated with TPE Central's system.

Jerry is also available to all chapters during his office hours for consulting and questions about finances and chapter budgets. He also periodically produces reports from QuickBooks for chapters. Because of the different financial structures and reporting needs of the different chapters, these reports have yet to be completely standardized.

Finally, Jerry also works with Chris, Joe and Winnie to conduct the annual audit and IRS Form 990 reports for both TPE and TPE Trust. These are all requirements of a 501 (c) 3, which is invisible to most members.

From October through February, Jerry tracks conference registration payments, and he works the conference sales table. Be sure to stop by and say "Hi!" And when your chapter receives a membership list, or a financial statement, think of Jerry, and all the ground he covers in 15 hours a week.

rash on your wrist that comes from careless handling of the plant. Rob Baller suggested a modified shovel that could sever the root below the soil surface. So Fred and I made a prototype at the shop. We used Faith Engineering to cut the shovel and Greenco – a sheltered workshop for intellectually and developmentally disabled – to modify the handle.

By the way, Nick, a full-time farmer, is now president of ARC (Advocate for People with Disabilities) of Green County, which hosted its fund-raiser, the Monroe Balloon & Blues Festival, last June.

"We made our first batch of 30 Parsnip Predators, and we wondered if we would ever sell them all," he remembers. "But we had tapped into a market. We increased our orders to 60, then 90, and now we order 180 shovels at a time." We use Bartels Sandblasting to remove the coating from the shovels, and Faith Engineering has a plasma cutter to give us the narrow

spade, but volunteers are still essential to the process of turning a shovel into a Parsnip Predator.

Chapter members remove the labels before sandblasting off the coating that inhibits the plasma-cutter from producing a sharp edge on the tool. We then smooth off the rough edges, put on a coat of black paint, turn the handle 90 degrees, apply our Parsnip Predator brand with a hot iron, and attach the instructions to the finished product.

Our annual sales continue to increase, according to chapter expeditor Jim Freymiller, who takes internet orders and ships the Predator to weed-extractors from coast to coast. The product has become a revenue stream for the chapter, allowing us to do more work at the sites that we manage.

~Tom Mitchell

A Message from the Future

By Grace Vosen

The specter of The Younger Generation hangs over every board meeting, conference panel, and coffee date in the conservation world. Conservation groups are struggling to bring youth into the fold. I hear uncertainty and even fear in the voices of older adults. “How do we connect with young people?” they ask. “What will make them show up?”

Millennials like myself may be the biggest challenge conservationists have ever faced. We are the great unknown, living behind a wall of social media. We no longer get information about the world from parents or teachers. Our computerized life has left us detached from other generations and from the land.

Even I get nervous about the future. Too often I receive blank stares when discussing conservation issues with people my age. At those times, my own generation seems like an alien species. Small wonder that older adults are worried.

Still, we must have a voice in this discussion. Who is better equipped to talk about young people than a young person? In that spirit, I want to respond to Anna Cordray’s article (“How to Save a [Planet’s] Life”) in the August Promoter. I feel that Cordray has perpetuated a common myth about my generation, one that may do more harm than good.

My own perspective is that of a millennial, a conservation professional, and a member of TPE. I have been an employee of the Empire-Sauk Chapter since 2015. For me, phrases like “environmentally friendly” fall short of describing TPE’s work. Prairie Enthusiasts do specific, often physical, tasks to improve the health of their land. They operate as volunteers, not consumers. Their success depends on an intimate knowledge of the regional landscape.

Conservation’s small scale distinguishes it from campaigns to “save the planet.” Yes, all aspects of life on Earth can be made more sustainable. But TPE need not broaden its focus. The prairies would suffer if it tried. Other nonprofit groups can help millennials save energy, while millennials who are curious about land management can turn to TPE.

How will these young people get – and stay – involved? The popular solution, echoed by Cordray, is the Internet. Older adults have been quick to equate “youth” with “technology.” They believe that the Internet is our native language. Just laying eyes on a well-designed website will motivate us to act. Conservationists view websites as shiny bits of wire, and millennials as so many magpies.

This idea ruled the day at the 2016 conference of a certain Midwest land stewardship group. The group revealed its new website under the guise of a panel on youth involvement. The site’s creators did a fine job, but I would have liked to ask them one question. Namely, what is one website to a generation that has used the Internet since grade school?

Websites number in the hundreds of millions. No matter how much work went into it, a new site is as commonplace to us as a new strip mall. I can barely remember which webpages I visited in the past week. Adding to that list is not a revolutionary way to reach young people.

This is not to say that websites are out of fashion. I simply



Grace Vosen at Erbe Grasslands.
(Photo by Rob Baller)

mean that our computers aren’t wired to our brains. Our decision-making process is not as linear and “attuned to appearance” as Cordray indicates. While I appreciate a clean, modern website, I have never volunteered for a group because of its graphic design. The location, the work, and my fellow volunteers interest me more than the group’s Instagram following.

Websites are tools for advertising events and sharing basic knowledge. They cannot, however, replace actions. Cordray acknowledges this in her piece. She asks older adults to “explain,” “define,” and “break down” actions that we can take. But she dilutes her point by focusing on social media that have no roots in the real world. Only experiences can forge lasting connections between young people and the land around them.

Consider the impact of letting a millennial collect seed from the park where she played as a child, or of teaching a college class to conduct prescribed burns, or of providing guidance to young families who manage a neighborhood prairie. Experiences like these make a difference on the land and in the hearts of participants. Even the most attractive Facebook post is fleeting in comparison.

My generation understands the value of experiences. Here I agree with Cordray; if we have not acted, it is because we “lack the knowledge, motivation and resources to do it effectively.” Sometimes all we need is transportation to a work site. In other cases, we may need tools or technical knowledge. A respectful adult can provide these without making us feel small. Respect and empowerment are the apps most likely to recruit millennials.

Our opinions, passions and methods will never be identical to those of older adults. Yet we are not a separate species. We are willing to learn as long as we are taken seriously. As Cordray says, we often feel pressured to save the entire world with our actions. If we know that older adults are on our side, that pressure may disappear.

Millennials are eager to act. We learn about environmental damage on a daily basis and know that clicking a mouse will not be enough. Many of us have already created change in our corner of the world. Why, then, do older adults insist on showing us more screens?



The Coulee Region Chapter presents:

31st Annual Conference & Banquet



(Photo by Erik Thomsen)

Saturday, Feb. 24, 2018

UW-La Crosse campus

La Crosse, Wisconsin

“Addressing Landscape Level Issues Locally”

Join us for our annual celebration of prairies and savannas. One part of The Prairie Enthusiasts mission is to provide educational opportunities, and this event is one of our primary outlets to do so. Landowners, volunteers, educators, students, scientists and natural resource professionals will share information and ideas for the purpose of improving our prairie conservation efforts.

Highlights include:

- Keynote speaker: Karen Oberhauser will provide her perspective on conservation based on more than 30 years of work in Monarch conservation.
- A variety of sessions for participants of all levels of knowledge. Learn the basics or expand your knowledge of land management and various components of prairies and savannas.
- A panel discussion providing a chance to share your ideas and concerns about the challenges facing private landowners managing prairie and/or savanna on their lands - now and in the future.
- As always, this will be an opportunity to meet new people with similar passions and renew connections with colleagues.
- Enjoy social time at the banquet, which will include a speaker and an update on TPE!

Don't miss this day packed with “all things prairie!” Read the next three pages and register now!

Conference Schedule

- 8:00 a.m.** Conference registration,
continental breakfast
- 8:45 a.m.** WELCOME
- 9:00 a.m.** KEYNOTE ADDRESS
*Dwindling numbers for an iconic insect:
A conservation biologist ponders moving beyond
the documentation of declines* - Karen Oberhauser,
Director of the UW-Madison Arboretum
- 10:00 a.m.** BREAK
- 10:15 a.m.** CONCURRENT SESSIONS
(attend two 45-minute sessions)
Three presentations in each session. Themes
include large-scale conservation, prairie flora and
fauna, and meeting the needs
of private land managers.
- 12:00 p.m.** LUNCH
- 1:00 p.m.** BREAKOUT SESSIONS (attend two 45-minute
sessions) Three presentations in each session.
Themes are the same as the morning sessions.
- 2:45 p.m.** BREAK
- 3:00 p.m.** PANEL DISCUSSION (two panels)
Meeting the needs of prairie landowners
How to plant diverse prairies
- 4:30 p.m.** Social Hour, Cash Bar
- 5:30 p.m.** Dinner Banquet
- 6:30 p.m.** DINNER PRESENTATION - *Human culture,
held aloft by the wings of pollinators* -
Barrett Klein, Entomologist at UW-La Crosse
- 7:00 p.m.** AWARDS/SOCIAL



Monarch on Hairy Puccoon.
(Photo by Emily Weiser)



Woodland burn
(Photo by Kathleen Carlyle)



Biodiversity
(Artwork by Barrett Klein)

Conference Highlights

Keynote Speaker

Karen Oberhauser, Director of the UW-Madison Arboretum. Karen and her students have conducted research on several aspects of monarch butterfly ecology. She has authored over 90 papers on monarchs, insect conservation and citizen science. Karen is passionate about the conservation of the world's biodiversity, and believes that the connections her projects promote among monarchs, humans, and the natural world promote meaningful conservation action. She is the chair of the Monarch Joint Venture, and a founding officer of the Monarch Butterfly Fund. In 2013, Karen received a White House Champion of Change award for her work with citizen science.

TPE Photo Contest

A major highlight of every TPE annual conference is the Photo Contest. Photos can be submitted by anyone of anything related to prairies and savannas. The finalists will be selected by the conference host chapter (Coulee Region Chapter for the upcoming conference - see insert in this issue), and the winners are determined by a vote of the conference participants. All finalists receive the framed print of their photo used at the conference, and the winning photograph will be used on the cover of our next annual report. Please send your photo files by email before Friday February 2, 2018 to Joe Rising at TPE@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org. Please contact Joe at (608) 638-1873 with any questions.

Pre-conference Social Gathering

On Friday, Feb. 23 from 5:30-8:30 p.m., we will be having an informal gathering for all conference attendees and guests at Stoney Creek Inn lounge, where refreshments and food will be available to purchase.

Raffle & Silent Auction

You'll have the opportunity to bid on and buy raffle tickets for a variety of great items, ranging from artwork and artifacts to beer and wine. The raffle and silent auction benefit our local chapters. If you wish to donate to the raffle and silent auction, contact your chapter chairperson no later than Feb. 10.

Sponsors and Exhibitors

Be sure to visit our sponsor and exhibitor displays featuring information about plants, land management and more. The Prairie Enthusiasts will have a table where you can purchase tote bags, t-shirts, hats, books and other items; please bring checks for payment.

Thanks to our Conference Sponsors



Check the TPE conference website for other generous sponsors.

Lodging

There is a large organic farming conference (MOSES) in La Crosse through Saturday that will make room reservations difficult. TPE has a limited number of rooms blocked off for Friday and Saturday night. Most blocked rooms will be held through Jan. 23, but make plans early as choices will be limited. Make sure to mention "The Prairie Enthusiasts" for the blocked rooms. There are other lodging options in the La Crosse area, but reservations must be made early.

Hotel/Property	Rooms	Rates	Phone #	Other
Americinn Hotel & Conference Center 1835 Rose St., La Crosse, WI	30	\$109.99	608-781-7000 877-688-9260	reservationdesk.com
Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center 3060 S. Kinney Coulee Rd., Onalaska, WI	10 5	\$121.00 \$136.00	608-781-3060 800-659-2220	StoneyCreekHotels.com
Comfort Inn 1223 Crossing Meadows Dr, Onalaska, WI	35	\$72.00	608-781-3233	CM.WI028@choicehotels.com
Gundersen Hotel & Suites 1520 Clinic Court, La Crosse, WI	15	\$124.99	608-792-0200	info@gundersenhotel.com
Holiday Inn Express 9409 State Rd 16, Onalaska, WI	10	\$114.99	608-783-6555	www.hiexonalaska.com

Registration

Conference includes:

- Continental breakfast
- Lunch
- Snack at afternoon break

Banquet includes:

- Dinner (select your choice below)

Register online with a credit card at:
www.ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org

Or, complete this form and mail with your check payable to "The Prairie Enthusiasts" to the address below.

Walk-in registration fee is \$80



P. O. Box 824
Viroqua, WI 54665
608-638-1873

Attendees: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

	#	\$ Each	\$ Total
Conference			
MEMBER (before Feb. 17)		X \$60 =	
MEMBER (after Feb. 17)		X \$70 =	
STUDENT*		X \$25 =	
Banquet			
BANQUET DINNER		X \$20 =	
Teriyaki chicken breast topped with tropical salsa			
Marinated/grilled portabella mushroom on rustic garden pilaf			
Steak spiral filled with spinach, feta and provolone cheese, and sun-dried tomatoes			
* Includes 1 year membership with TPE.		TOTAL	



“The Tallgrass Prairie: an Introduction” – Book Review

Sarah Aslakson

“The Tallgrass Prairie: an Introduction,” Cindy Crosby (2017). Published by Northwest University Press.

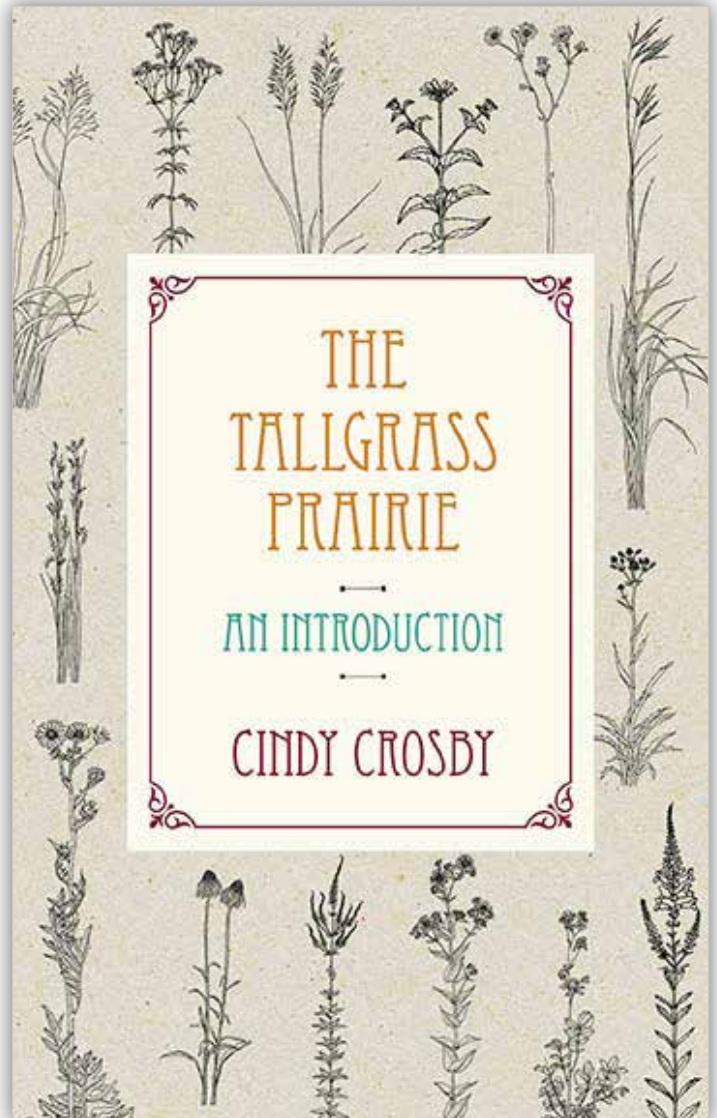
My 50-acre prairie was planted on cornfield about 10 years ago. I would say I have a mid-level understanding of the prairie, its flora and fauna, and how to maintain it. Because I’m certainly no expert, this book helped me explore the basic concepts of a prairie.

At 100 pages, it’s short, clear and presents information about what a tallgrass prairie is all about. The author lives and works in Northern Illinois, and the emphasis lies there. Crosby covers not only the technical questions but also a bit of philosophy on why a prairie is important. I would arrange her thoughts into these areas:

- The physical prairie
- What is a prairie? The three types of prairies and how they were formed
- Prairie plants and minerals, and the use of Latin names
- Prairie fauna: mammals, birds and insects
- Why should we care about and respect prairies?
- History of the land, traditional uses of the land
- Use of plants for food and pharmaceuticals, and utilitarian devices like brooms
- Omens of luck and weather
- How to experience the prairie by sight, touch, taste, smell and sound
- How to be comfortable in the prairie
- Techniques to encourage prairies
- What is restoration, reconstruction and maintenance?
- Basic techniques used to maintain prairies such as clearing, chemicals, mowing, grazing, weeding and burning
- The difference between non-native and invasives
- How to plant your own prairie patch at home and address neighbor objections

The book is easy to follow, fast to read, well organized, with good explanation of terms and a nice glossary. I wish it had more photographs to illustrate the differences between the look of the different prairie types. I would recommend this book for those who want a simple, brief overview.

About the Book Author: CINDY CROSBY is a steward supervisor for the Schulenberg Prairie at the Morton Arboretum and a steward at Nachusa Grasslands, a Nature Conservancy site. She is a writer, teacher and lecturer on the tallgrass prairie and nature conservation.



The Tallgrass Prairie: An Introduction,” Cindy Crosby (2017). Published by Northwest University Press.

Endangered Bumblebee found at Foxglove Savanna and Alsum Farms

Jeb Barzen

This summer, a newly listed endangered species, the rusty-patched bumblebee, was found at Foxglove Savanna and at a newly proposed site for The Prairie Enthusiasts, Alsum Farms.

TPE sponsored a bumblebee identification workshop, taught by Susan Carpenter (UW Arboretum) and Sarah Warner (US Fish & Wildlife Service) in early July, and trainees then spread out to survey bumblebees at various TPE sites.

In addition to the rusty-patched bumblebee, we recorded a total of six species (out of a likely 15 species) at Foxglove Savanna and a total of six species at Alsum Farms.



A rusty-patched bumblebee hiding under purple Joe-Pye-weed in a cold rain. Of interest, this is an area that was brushed for savanna restoration at a TPE work party during the previous winter. (Photo by Jeb Barzen)

Chapter Smitten with Badgers

Karen Agee

Although we've been aware of badger diggings at Mounds View Grassland for many years, we can now see them thanks to trail cameras placed at dig sites by Eric Preston. Here's his story:

"In March, I noticed a huge mound of sand on the hillside of the valley near the barn at Mounds View Grassland. Based on the footprints in the sand, and the amount of sand that had been excavated, I thought it might be a badger den, so I decided to put a trail camera on it. I bought an inexpensive camera and attached it to a flimsy fence post.

Within days, I was amazed to find great footage of a badger lounging, scratching, and rolling around its den. I left the camera there all spring and summer, and added two more cameras at two different potential den sites in Mounds View. At each site, I recorded a badger at least once, and I recorded raccoons, rabbits, deer, opossums, mice, weasels, minks, and more than 20 species of birds. Many of the birds used these sandy areas as a place to take a dust bath; some of the footage is quite hilarious.



Badger Cam photo from Mounds View Grasslands.

The Brown Thrashers are the masters of the badger den dust bath, but the best recording was of a Great Horned Owl that spent at least 10 minutes bathing at the original den site. There are so many badger dens throughout the almost 600-acres at Mounds View. It's my dream to have cameras on many of them and make a full-length movie of the badger action on TPE properties."

Eric has put together some delightful short videos of the footage, which can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chAXQMX-9eI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK54uzod47I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rPcHMOxVP8&t=13s>

To date, Eric has been funding this project himself. If you would like to help expand the project and help purchase cameras, please send a donation to TPE noting it's for the Badger Cam Project.

Butterflies & Dragonflies Celebrate the Fourth

Rob Baller

On the Fourth of July, TPE partnered with Southwest Wisconsin Butterfly Association and Swamplovers Foundation, for an annual combination dragonfly and butterfly walk. About 60 naturalists gathered at the Swamplovers site just west of Cross Plains, Wis., and were treated to a lovely, sunny day with blue sky, low humidity and calm winds.

Swamplovers - founded by Gerry Goth, Lee Swanson and Tom Kuehn - also celebrated its 30th anniversary this year with tours and food on June 21.



Empire-Sauk Chapter butterfly walk. (Photo by Rob Baller)

Glacial Prairie

Alice Mirk

Glacial Prairie Chapter members have been busy this summer and early fall. We continue our education mission with talks to adult groups and area schools. We gave a presentation at the Fort Atkinson Library on pre-settlement landscapes, presented a slideshow of prairie and savanna plants suitable for urban landscapes to the Wauwatosa Heritage Garden Club, and we continue an on-going relationship with the Mayville Middle School, teaching 5th and 6th graders about tall grass prairies and prairie plants.

GPC stewardship volunteers also continue to work on the protected lands in southeast Wisconsin. We volunteer with the WDNR on State Natural Areas in the Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest every second Saturday of the month. We are starting to work on our own Adelman-Schwartz Preserve on the third Saturday of the month. We regularly work at Willowbrook Conservancy, Adams Birding Conservancy, the City of Muskego's Luther Parker Cemetery - a high-quality mesic prairie remnant and pioneer cemetery, Waukesha's Prairie Home Cemetery, which contains a 12-acre reconstructed prairie, and Mayville Middle School's three-quarter-acre prairie planting.

We hope to grow the chapter's reputation for stewardship as a means of growing both the chapter membership and the very active volunteers. The volunteers are a close-knit but far from a closed group. We invite all interested individuals to join us for a work day and experience the joy that comes with making a positive difference. Anyone would quickly feel the camaraderie that is characteristic of our stewardship volunteers. Check out our Facebook page at TPE-The Glacial Prairie Chapter, or email Alice Mirk at aimirk68@icloud.com for more information or to get the regular volunteer schedule.



Willowbrook Conservancy.
(Photo by Alice Mirk)



Adams Birding Conservancy.
(Photo by Dave Adams)



Muskego Cemetery walk.
(Photo by Alice Mirk)

Northwest Illinois

John Day

The Prairie Enthusiasts formed 30 years ago with the belief that there was a need for likeminded people and groups to come together and pursue their shared goals and objectives with regard to conservation. Across southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois, small organizations saw an opportunity to join forces and resources to pursue a common goal. That goal was the preservation and restoration of the Midwest prairie ecosystems.

Over 30 years, chapters have been founded in Minnesota as well as Wisconsin and Illinois. Due to the efforts of many volunteers otherwise lost prairie land has become protected, restored and maintained by these many chapter volunteers.

The Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts chapter (NIPE) was founded shortly after TPE and since that time, NIPE has been restoring and protecting land to its natural state. This has been done for the most part with the help of volunteers. Additionally, NIPE has provided assistance to private land owners in their efforts to restore lands to native prairie.

In its early days, NIPE volunteers often used relatively

primitive methods to harvest, mill and plant prairie seeds. Imagine a large field being sown by hand. Ever tried grinding seed in a steel barrel with a string trimmer? Today, NIPE is one of the preeminent conservation organizations. Modern technology and science is used to bring back prairie remnants and old pastures to a natural state.

Today, NIPE can point with pride to a number of its projects such as Lonetree, Elmovalle and Hanley Savanna as examples of its efforts.

As times and needs have changed, NIPE has begun considering the future. In addition to assisting private landowners and other conservation groups with restoration projects, NIPE has begun providing land management and care. NIPE has also begun a program to provide pollinator seed mixes for small plots and continues to offer opportunities for volunteers to learn more about prairie habitats.

Looking ahead, NIPE has taken on a project of considerable importance. The preservation of endangered native prairie plants is more critical than ever as habitat is lost. NIPE

Northwest Illinois History

Rickie Rachuy



(LEFT) The Northwest Illinois (NIPE) Board of Directors stands near a bench at Hanley Savanna, which was placed at NIPE's 20th anniversary in honor of Jim Rachuy's years of conservation work.

(Photographer unknown)

(TOP-RIGHT) In 2001, 'seed cleaners' work at the home of Elsbeth Sheerin, in the days before we used mechanical equipment and seeded our prairies by hand.

(Photo by Rickie Ruchuy)

(LOWER-RIGHT) Aunt Ida's Prairie is one of the earliest restorations TPE's Northern Illinois Chapter did. Located in the Witkowski Wildlife Area in Jo Daviess County, the prairie was seeded in 1993. L-R June Patinkin (red hat), Jim Rachuy and Barbara Rutherford.

(Photographer unknown)

is collecting and growing rare plants in its own gardens. The seeds from these plants will eventually be shared with other conservation groups in an exchange program called Northern Illinois Seed Exchange (NISE). For the most part, however, this seed will be planted on protected sites in our area to ensure a minimum of three viable populations of each species in the wild.

As Texas and Florida and other parts of the country were subjected to historic rainfall, over and over again a nationwide audience heard narrators speaking about the loss of habitat. Reference was made to the acreage around Houston being covered with concrete and blacktop. Open lands throughout Texas and Florida have become ever scarcer. The trend of climate change and its resulting effects have openly pointed to the increasing need for better conservation, land restoration and organizations capable of the task that lies ahead.

Over the next 30 years, those of us who care for and about the land can look forward to dealing with some major challenges.



Southwest Wisconsin

Linda Lynch

The Southwest Wisconsin Chapter took advantage of the warm fall to explore the prairie at Borah Creek. With the help of Jim Sime and others, we were able to locate some downy gentian in bloom and many other native species getting ready to spread their seed. The group had a nice hike around Heather's Prairie and followed it up with lunch and a short meeting.



Chapter members explore Borah Creek prairie.

Prairie Bluff

Tom Mitchell

New species were added to the plant lists for Prairie Bluff Chapter sites this summer with an orchid at Muralt Bluff, a plant without chlorophyll at Iltis Savanna, a panic grass at Butenhoff Prairie, and three showy flowers at Vale Prairie.

Great Plains lady's tresses is a short, late-blooming white orchid, and a population of four was found by our work crew on Sept. 18. All who bowed low to smell the flower detected the scent of vanilla, one of the keys that differentiate it from nodding lady's tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*.) We also noted the lack of basal leaves and the yellow arching tips of the lateral sepals.

Keying out plants is always a challenge for an amateur who has never had a botany course, mostly due to unfamiliarity with terms. So the glossary in *Flora of the Chicago Region* is helpful when encountering words like basal callosities, virgate and caulescent.

According to prairie enthusiast Scott Weber's article in *Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine*, lady's tresses respond well to fire. At Muralt Bluff, the lady's tresses were inside the burn unit at our prescribed fire on March 21 this year.

In early September, Chris Roberts was mowing firebreaks on the east side of Iltis Savanna when he found a congregation of several Indian pipes - inches high white plants, on both sides of the two-track trail. Indian pipes is a native forb, not a fungus.

This plant has several other common names - ghost flower, corpse plant, fairy smoke and ice plant - and medicinal uses. It's not a commonly encountered wildflower but a botanical curiosity, according to many field guides. "This species is cyclic, in that it carpets the ground in certain years," say Wilhelm and Rericha in *Flora of the Chicago Region*, who note that weevils "mate on the corollas and feed on the floral parts" causing "browning to the petals."

At Butenhoff Prairie, we thought perhaps we had found Wilcox's panic grass. But in July, it was keyed out as long-stalked panic grass (*Dichanthelium perlongum*) by Kevin Doyle, natural heritage botanist for the DNR. Doyle thinks that Wilcox's panic grass is underreported, and he urged us to keep looking for it.

Culver's root, ironweed and Canada milk vetch were new plants that flowered and set seed - again in recently burned areas - at Vale Prairie in August. They were found on the rem-

nant, north-facing slope, in an area that had formerly been shaded by trees and heavy brush. According to John Curtis in *Vegetation of Wisconsin*, Culver's root is found in prairie and sedge meadows; ironweed can be found in prairie, savanna, forest, sand dune or sedge meadow, and the milk vetch resides in prairie or savanna.

We found three plants of Canada milk vetch on the lower northeast-facing slope with sky blue aster, silky aster, bush clover, blazing stars, showy and Canada goldenrod, bergamot, pasture thistle, panic grasses and Indian grass.

We also discovered about a dozen stems of Culver's root that had flowered and set seed, across the North Slope close to an area that may have been planted in the 1990s at Vale Prairie. Also seen were heath aster, showy goldenrod, rattlesnake master, bush clover, mountain mint and Indian grass.

And at least 13 ironweed plants in three populations were spread across the lower northwest quarter, just at the edge of the remnant north-slope prairie, with reed canary grass, heath and sky blue asters, showy goldenrod, Rubus, nannyberry, hawthorn, bergamot, grey dogwood and Canada wild lettuce. This area is unlikely to have been planted or overseeded.



Prairie Bluff identified Indian pipe at Iltis Savanna.
(Photo by Tom Mitchell)

Prairie Sands

Ray Goehring

In spite of overcast conditions, the Aug. 26 Prairie Sands Chapter tour of Mekan Prairie was a success.

On Sept. 20, the chapter met, discussed and agreed to send a group of Prairie Sands members to prescribed burn training. The trained burn crew will partner with Jeb Barzen's project "Healthy Grown Farms," where he has been working with Waushara potato farmers to plant and maintain prairie buffer zones.

We also discussed US Fish and Wildlife's Karner blue butterfly grant, our future plans with The Nature Conservancy and Page Creek, our new Facebook page, Golden Sands Research & Development firm and their efforts to form a new invasive species' management region, ongoing efforts to partner with UW-Stevens Point's Land Conservation Society, and finally, a date for our annual Christmas Party and Seed Exchange. We set 6:30 p.m. Nov. 29 at More Healthy Food & Café in Montello for the event. If you have not received a copy of the meeting minutes and would like one, contact Ray Goehring at raygoe@yahoo.com.

Also, check out, "Like" and follow our new chapter Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/TPEprairiesands/> Thank you to Tiffany Lodholz, Tom Ellington, Beth Johnson and Joe Rising for helping in this effort.



People gather before touring Mekan Prairie to listen as the property owner John Shillinglaw gives a brief overview of the restoration work he has done on the 230 acres since the 1990s. (Photo by Ray Goehring)



John Shillinglaw (far left) explains how transects are set for annual Karner blue butterfly counts, which occur weekly during late July and early August. (Photo by Ray Goehring)



Sharing prairie stories and getting to know new friends at a picnic lunch after the hike. (Photo by Ray Goehring)

St. Croix Valley

Evanne Hunt

Chapter Receives Pheasant and Turkey Stamp Grants

Combined, the stamp grants provide approximately \$17,000 to hire two interns. From the end of the school year in May 2018 through the summer, UW-River Falls students will work independently and with chapter members to remove invasive species from several sites in St. Croix and Pierce counties. In addition to this hands-on restoration management opportunity, we will provide educational experiences such as help with rare plant monitoring, collection of early spring seeds, and cleaning seeds.

This is an exciting opportunity to strengthen our relationship with UW-River Falls, the professors and the students. We get to share our knowledge and, in return, the students' enthusiasm helps us rediscover our passion.

Students from UW-RF Collect Seeds

Dr. Eric Sanden brought his class -- Prairie Restoration and Fire Ecology Course -- out to TPE sites to collect seed each Friday in September. Mike Miller and Alex Bouthilet brought tools and showed the students what to pick. In October, the students cleaned the seed at Mike's facility. We will hand broadcast the seed on our project sites after clearing buckthorn this winter and next spring.



UW-River Falls students clean seeds for their ecology course. (Photo by Mike Miller)



Evanne represents TPE at Friends of Southwood Nature Preserve event.

Chapter Represented at Southwood Nature Preserve

Evanne answered questions and tried to recruit new members at the annual Prairie Day hosted by the Friends of Southwood Nature Preserve in North St. Paul, Minn. A beautiful day encouraged quite a crowd of children and their parents.

Upcoming Events

A number of events have been scheduled for the rest of the winter. Please check our chapter web page, Facebook page, or Twitter account for any changes.

- November 4 -- Work party, 10am; site TBD
- November 14 -- Chapter meeting, 6:30- 8:00 pm; River Falls Library
- November 18 -- Work party, 10am; site TBD
- November 21 -- Talk, 6:30- 8:00 pm; River Falls Library
- December 2 -- Work party, 10am; site TBD
- December 12 -- Chapter meeting, 6:30- 8:00 pm; River Falls Library
- December 14 -- Talk, 6:30- 8:00 pm; River Falls Library
- December 16 -- Work party, 10am; site TBD
- December 30 -- Work party, 10am; site TBD
- January 13 -- Work party; 10am; site TBD
- January 23 -- Chapter meeting, 6:30- 8:00 pm; River Falls Library
- January 27 -- Work party, 10am; site TBD
- February 10 -- Work party, 10am; site TBD
- February 24 -- Work party, 10am; site TBD

Thank You Donors

We thank the following who donated to TPE between July 1 and October 1, 2017. These gifts include those from our annual appeal, are beyond membership dues and are truly generous and appreciated.

\$1000 or more

Anonymous, Compass Club
Willis Brown, For Hauser Road Prairie
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Nick & Linda Faessler, Compass Club
Fred Faessler, For Briggs Wetland
Thomas Ferrella, Compass Club
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To the Prairie Sands Chapter



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Please consider The Prairie Enthusiasts in your will or estate plans. If you've already done so, please let us know, so we can personally thank you for ensuring the perpetuation & recovery of prairies and savannas. For more information please contact Chris Kirkpatrick, Executive Director at 608-638-1873 or executivedirector@theprairieenthusiasts.org.

Artwork by Gary Eldred



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Questions? E-mail Joe Rising (Communications Coordinator) at TPE@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org
or call us at 608-638-1873.

Thank you!

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