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The PRAIRIE PROMOTER

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Grassroots Conservation at Work

Annual Meeting and Picnic a Blazing Success

By Rose Sime

The heavens were certainly with us on July 18th: the rains stopped just hours before the annual meeting and picnic of The Prairie Enthusiasts at our newly acquired Borah Creek Prairie. At least 65 people attended, with representation from The Prairie Enthusiasts, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, Driftless Area Land Conservancy and neighbors surrounding the prairie.

The day began with the The Prairie Enthusiasts Board of Director's meeting and tours of the prairie led by Gary Eldred and Jesse Bennett. The tours included good sightings of the Borah Creek's signature species: the Prairie Bush Clover. Folks were pleased to see the rattle snake master, blood milkwort and Hill's thistle along with many other species blooming that day. Everyone acknowledged the work that has been done since seeing the prairie two summers ago but allowed that a good deal more work remains.

We all enjoyed great food, an informative meeting regarding the workings of the organization, reports from the various chapters and field trips across the prairie by foot or wagon. Perhaps the most exciting event of the day was the transfer of the deed for Borah Creek Prairie to The Prairie Enthusiasts. Tim Jacobson, Executive Director of Mississippi Valley Conservancy, signed over the deed and literally "passed the torch" to The Prairie Enthusiasts when he handed me a specially engraved drip torch with the challenge to start every fire at Borah Creek Prairie with it. It was a great day for all involved!



Tim Jacobson, executive director of the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, passes the torch to Rose Sime. Photo by Scott Sauer.

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The Prairie Promoter is a quarterly publication of The Prairie Enthusiasts. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without permission. We welcome submissions of articles, announcements, artwork and photographs that are relevant to prairie and savanna ecosystems. Mail or email submissions to local chapter editorial volunteers or to The Prairie Promoter editor. Copy any text into the body of the email. Send photos (jpeg or bmp) as attachments. Letters and articles may be edited for length or style. Computer disks, art, and photographs will be returned. Deadlines for submission of material are Feb. 26 (Spring issue); May 21 (Summer issue); Aug. 20 (Fall issue); and Nov. 20 (Winter issue). If you would like to receive electronic notification of the newsletter please email Victoria Oberle at TPE@theprairieenthusiasts.org.

President's Message

By Evanne Hunt

The value of prairies and oak savannas is hard to measure. It is often expressed in spiritual rather than economic or societal terms. But TPE members readily grasp the intangible benefits provided by a viable native prairie remnant: prairies are our history; they are an important ecosystem for birds, mammals, and insects; they are priceless.

Sharing our excitement with friends, neighbors and politicians, however, sometimes seems difficult. How can we begin?

We can begin on October 10, 2010.

I have asked each of our chapters to schedule a work day on Sunday, October 10. We will join with individuals and groups around the world working together to cut carbon dioxide from our environment.

The 10-10-10 campaign was envisioned by 350.org, an international group focused on uniting the world around solutions to the climate crisis. The focus of this particular campaign is projects that reduce and remove carbon from the atmosphere.

Prairies sequester 1.2-1.8 tons of carbon dioxide each year. Since prescribed burns remove only the above-ground growth, managed prairies act as a carbon sink -- prairie plants and the soil in which they grow sequester, or hold on to, more carbon each year than burning releases.

I have nothing against planting trees ("some of my best friends are trees"), but they will not solve our carbon problem. Trees grow slowly so their yearly carbon sequestering ability is low. Trees planted in areas in which they are not native require more resources than native vegetation. New research shows that trees encroaching on native grasslands end up causing a net loss of soil organic carbon. In their native environments, prairie plants do a better job of sequestering carbon than do trees.

The Prairie Enthusiasts has been preserving and protecting our native prairie and oak savanna ecosystems for over 25 years. Now is the time to show our friends, families, and neighbors that native is best. Our work restoring and maintaining local prairie and savanna ecosystems has important repercussions for our society and our health. We are leaders in the fight against a degrading environment.

I ask that each of you make a special effort to attend your chapter's 10-10-10 work party—and to bring a friend or neighbor. If you have never been to a work party, this is a great opportunity to check them out. If you are a regular -- thank you! And please make the newbies feel welcome. Take advantage of their enthusiasm and encourage them to come back and enjoy the fun at all of your winter work parties!

Help Support Our Missions

By Dani Stolley, Development Director

It has been a busy summer out on the prairies, and we've also been busy indoors, creating a whole host of new development programs.

You'll soon receive our 2010 Annual Appeal in the mail. This year's campaign will be different from previous years' in several ways. For starters, we have introduced new benefits and recognition opportunities at each donation level.

After exceeding our campaign goal by nearly \$5,000 last year, we've increased our fundraising goal to \$50,000 for 2010. We will reach this goal if every TPE member gives only \$50 to this year's Annual Appeal.

Unrestricted annual gifts to the overall organization are our greatest area of need, while major gifts help guide our growth and evolution as a professional land trust, and a tri-state prairie education and conservation organization.

We hope our new gift giving levels, with their associated benefits, encourage you to truly make a difference for TPE, and provide an opportunity for you (or your business) to get the recognition you deserve.

Private gifts are crucial to our mission of restoring, managing and preserving prairies. Your generosity makes a difference.

Planned Giving

In addition to our Annual & Major Giving Programs, we also have a new Planned Giving Program, called the Prairie Legacy Program. Prairie enthusiasts who let TPE know of a planned or estate gift by July 30, 2012 will be considered charter members, no matter the size of the gift.

Giving a planned gift is easy. It can take as little as one minute! In fact, I joined as a Charter Member myself just a few weeks ago, by checking a box on a free life insurance policy through my local credit union. I simply named The Prairie Enthusiasts, Inc. as my beneficiary, and, in less than 30 seconds, I had given a planned gift.

To honor those individuals who make a planned or estate gift of \$25,000 or more to TPE, we have established our Prairie Legacy Circle.

Please be in touch with me if you're considering a planned gift, so we can give you the recognition and thanks that you deserve. We're planning a special event in 2011 especially for our Prairie Legacy Program members, and we'll be sure to keep you posted!

Business/Corporate Campaign

Our business campaign is also entirely new this year. Adopt-an-Acre and Adopt-a-Prairie programs give businesses and corporations of any size the chance to get involved in our mission and vision, while receiving certain benefits and recognition.

TPE member Chuck Bauer and his business, The Soap Opera, which sells natural/organic soaps in Madison, are the very first business to pledge an "Adopt-an-Acre" gift! Thanks again Chuck!

Our business campaign will run simultaneously with our Annual Appeal. You know the businesses in your area better than I do, so I hope to meet with most chapter leaders this fall to discuss local sponsorship. I plan to

visit in September or October—so start thinking about local businesses that might like to partner with us.

You can learn more about all of our new

campaigns and programs on our website, so please be sure to check it often for news and updates on the development front.



Evanne Hunt signs the deed for the Borah Creek Prairie, paid for in part by member donations, at TPE's Annual Meeting and Picnic while Tim Jacobson, executive director of Mississippi Valley Conservancy looks on. Photo by Scott Sauer.

Volunteer Monitoring: The Backbone of Conservation Easements

The Prairie Enthusiasts works to permanently protect lands and waters in the upper Midwest. Our organization has done this both by acquiring title to land and through the use of conservation easements. Easements allow a property to remain in private ownership while

simultaneously restricting development. To date we have used easements to permanently protect 834 acres on a total of nine sites.

To ensure the enactment of conservation values, TPE must monitor its protected properties through regular site visits, observing conditions over time, and documenting changes in land use on the property. Doing these things helps TPE build strong relationships with landowners. As TPE continues to protect more acres of land, these activities will become even more important.

On Saturday, July 17th, TPE held its very first Volunteer Conservation Easement Monitoring Workshop, taught by Bill Hogseth (Chippewa Savannas Chapter), at the Schurch-Thomson Prairie in Iowa County. The workshop began with a classroom session that focused on the basic theory of conservation easements, landowner relationships, the costs of land protection, and how to conduct a site visit in the field. The group spent the afternoon in the field conducting a real site visit of a real protected property.

The workshop was attended by nine TPE members who have volunteered to "adopt" a conservation easement. These volunteers will form the backbone of TPE's conservation easement monitoring program. They will conduct regular site visits, meet with landowners, and provide documentation of their observations. If you are interested in volunteering as a conservation easement monitor, contact Carol Winge (carolwinge@yahoo.com).

Prairie Conference Impresses

By Dani Stolley

"Restoring a National Treasure" was more than a theme at the 22nd Biennial North American Prairie Conference held recently at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls. The 560 people who spent five 12-hour days immersed and engrossed in all things prairie were quite serious about making that tagline a reality!

I know prairie people take their work seriously, but, as a relative new-comer, I was impressed by the sheer number of knowledgeable people who would literally give their right arm if they thought it would save another prairie remnant. Even more impressive was the fact that the vast reservoir of knowledge and commitment at the conference stemmed from both the lifetime enthusiasts and the newbies like me.

I spoke with dozens of passionate and energetic students from all across the Midwest and beyond (including one who came from Germany!) They impressed me with their ecological knowledge and with their true understanding of the cultural, historical and economic impact of prairie education and restoration as well.



New Many Rivers member Diane Jensen and Jan Kettel on the field trip to Cedar Hills Sand Prairie. Photo by Scott Seigfreid.

All told, it was really an incredible week and experience for me. I introduced hundreds of people to our Parsnip Predators and sold almost a dozen! Most people had no idea that TPE is a land trust, or that our territory is so large. Young and old alike came by our booth during the conference to praise our work and offer encouragement. I got to spend time with several of our members and listen to them present their research. Our newest chapter—Many Rivers—was exceptionally busy and visible at this year's conference, and I'm so glad we had representation from Minnesota! I think everyone will agree, this conference was worth the trek.

The 23rd NACP may very well be held in Canada in 2012. So keep your eyes peeled, and your driving record clean. You may need a passport the next time around!



Dani Stolley at The Prairie Enthusiasts booth. Photo by Scott Seigfreid.

Summer Interns Find Rare Species at Mounds View

By Rich Henderson

This summer, TPE once again had a great crew of student interns working in western Dane and eastern Iowa counties, WI. The interns, three from UW-Madison, three from UW-Stevens point, and one from UW-Platteville, had backgrounds in soils, biology, zoology, forestry, and wildlife ecology. Two of the interns, Karen Bednar and Sam Bader, were stationed at TPE's Mounds View Grassland preserve. They worked out of the Schurch-Thomson Prairie barn under the direction of Megan Goplin, who interned with TPE during the previous two summers. In addition to Mounds View, this crew worked at half-a-dozen other preserves in the area. One day a week, Megan and the Mounds View crew were joined by the five-person, roving Prairie Partners intern crew (Lauren Brooks, Jane Coughenour, Anne Gottwald, Tyler Hasheider, and Darren Ladwig). See Summer 2010 issue of the Prairie Promoter (Vol. 23, No. 2) for more details.

In addition to routine land management/restoration work, such as weed control, seed collecting and planting, and tending the seed orchard, the interns searched for and counted rare species. They helped conduct surveys of the regal fritillary butterflies, a State Endangered species dependent upon large areas of prairie sod with violets. It was a good year for regals at the Mounds View preserve. Interns found these insects in new locations and in high numbers across the preserve.

The interns systematically searched the long, north facing prairie remnant at Schurch-Thomson Prairie for Hill's or prairie thistle (*Cirsium hillii*) and found 124 plants. This was the last area in need of a survey for this State Threatened plant within the Schurch-Thomson and A to Z units of the Mounds View Grassland. Their tally brought our total count for those areas, including counts done by past interns, to over 2,300 plants! In 2002, before intense management of burning and brush clearing began, volunteers found only 150 plants total in those same locations.

On one prairie remnant in the A to Z unit of Mounds View, the interns found two flowering tuberous Indian plantains (*Arnoglossum plantagineum* [*Cacalia tuberosa*]). This is a State Threatened species that had never before been detected within the preserve. The flowering this year, which led to the plants' detection, was likely in response to the remnant having been burned in 2009 for the first time in many decades, then again this spring. On the same remnant, the interns also made a thorough search for marble-seed (*Onosmodium molle*), a State Special Concern species, and found 69 of them. This brings the count of marble-seed plants on the A to Z unit to 480.

Lastly, the interns found five new individuals of the Federally Threatened prairie bush-clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*). They also had a close encounter with a badger while doing so. This brings the total prairie bush-clover count up to 13 individuals found since the species discovery on the preserve in 2007. Having the sharp eyes of young interns out on our preserves is proving very worthwhile!



Student interns (L to R): Karen Bednar, Anne Gottwald, Jane Coughenour, Tyler Hasheider, Sam Bader, Lauren Brooks, Darren Ladwig. Photo by Megan Goplin.

Prairie Preservation: An Intern's Account

By Karen Bednar

Less than 0.1% of native prairies remain in the United States. Eighty percent of prairie plant biomass is underground. These statistics help reveal the importance of prairie preservation and are only a few of the facts I learned this summer as an intern for The Prairie Enthusiasts in the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area (MRPHA).

While I heard and read much this summer that revealed the glorious wonders of the magical prairie ecosystem, I valued most the knowledge I gained through personal experience. Rooted primarily in the Mounds View Grassland of MRPHA, the internship experience nurtured my prairie understanding and amplified my field work ethic. These skills intensify my vigor and enthusiasm for ecological fieldwork in the future.

Textbooks do not put dirt under your fingernails. Teachers do not induce parsnip burns. The prairie itself taught me these things. As the summer progressed, the prairie conditioned me to work with the natural world. It became easier to cooperate with the sun, the rain, the wind, the bites and the burns, than to resist them. My sweat and stings did not prevent me from enjoying the labor of restoration and the prairie's presence.

"Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass, it's learning to dance in the rain." Megan Goplin, intern crew leader and a recent UW-Madison graduate, encouraged a strong fieldwork ethic by example. She taught us the steps to the dance that is prairie restoration.

Working on the prairie full time shaped my fieldwork ethic as it shaped my understanding the prairie in general. My hands-on experience gave me a more holistic prairie view. I gained a feel for the prairie's role in the landscape ecology of neighboring wetlands and agricultural fields. I witnessed the complex dynamics embedded in this network of life as blooming cycles

exploded. I am familiar with prairie plant adaptation advantages that against which weeds cannot compete. The internship provided me with a gestalt understanding of the shape, the feel, the spirit of the prairie.

This internship is designed to give people the "opportunity to become familiar with both native and alien plants and to learn about their life cycles and ecological requirements; to observe what natural conditions and processes have been altered in a landscape; and to gain an understanding of restoration and management goals and objectives." I am confident that in addition to sculpting a fortified fieldwork ethic, the internship surely inculcated in me, and the other interns, such prairie wisdom. I cannot express my appreciation enough for this opportunity to grow in a field of interest, a field of prairie.



Rainy Day Sweet Clover Predators. Interns Darin Ladweider, Tyler Hasheider, Karen Bednar, Anne Gottwald, and Jane Coughenour. Photo courtesy of Megan Goplin.

Trial Prairie Plantings on Mesic Soil: Preliminary Results

By Rich Henderson

Planting prairie into productive soil can be very problematic due to intense competition from weeds on such sites. For some time now, people have been having great success in establishing diverse prairie vegetation on

deep, productive soil by growing RoundUp Ready corn or soybeans for a few years before planting to prairie. But what can be done when such cropping is not possible?

At TPE's Mounds View Grassland preserve in Iowa Co, WI, we have 150 acres of cropland either enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) under non-native cool-season grass cover (mostly smooth brome) or in old field cover with tree stumps. We wish to covert these areas to diverse native prairie vegetation, but we cannot plow and grow crops for the two to four years needed to prepare the site, either because of the stumps or because FSA rules do not allow for such restoration techniques when converting existing cover to prairie on CRP lands.

On the thin soiled, well-drained areas of the preserve (mostly dry-mesic conditions), the inter-seeding technique of annual fire for five to 10 years with repeated seeding events in the first two to three years has proven very successful, albeit slow (six to eight years), in establishing prairie in CRP brome fields. This technique does not tend to stimulate a massive flush of weeds from the seed bank, which repeated spraying with herbicide can cause in the absence of cover vegetation. In an attempt to come up with approaches to the challenge of planting on mesic soil, we started an inter-seeding trial on deep soil areas, to see how well it works on more productive sites. This trial is only in its 4th growing season, without much to show for so far. More recently we established two trial areas to test a one time spraying of glyphosate herbicide on mesic soil, in hopes of not over stimulating the weed seed bank. One trial is a tenth of an acre in an old field with tree stumps. The other is five acres of CRP smooth brome. Both were sprayed with broad-leaf specific herbicide during the growing season prior to the start of the trial. Both had been mowed periodically for several years to control weeds.

In 2007, the tenth acre, old-field trial was mowed in late June, sprayed once with glyphosate in September and burned off in late October. On April 6, 2008, we planted 44 prairie species. The prairie seedlings germinated and grew well, without a great deal of weed competition. Showy tick-trefoil (*Desmodium canadense*), wild quinine, rosinweed, showy sunflower (*Helianthus laetiflorus*), smooth aster, and false sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*) were robust. The latter two were set to bloom in their first year. However, by mid summer the weeds had become tall and dense, so we mowed on July 21 with a rotary mower. In 2009, more prairie vegetation was evident, including compass plant. Six species were set to bloom: golden Alexander, wild quinine, false-sunflower, smooth aster, wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*) and rosinweed. However, once again the weeds, including many flowering wild parsnip and some cool-season grasses, came on strong and rank so we mowed it twice that year, on June 9 and July 14, with a sickle bar mower to minimize smothering. By fall 2009, there was sufficient growth to carry a fire the next spring. We burned on March 27, 2010. The fire seemed to really help. This summer the prairie vegetation looked very good and was starting to dominate. There were many fewer flowering wild parsnip and thistles than in the previous year, so we removed them by hand, negating the need to mow. We detected 15 species in bloom, in this the third growing season. They were: yellow coneflower, false sunflower, wild bergamot, showy tick-trefoil, rosinweed, wild quinine, prairie blazingstar (*Liatris pycnostachya*), prairie cinquefoil (*Potentilla arguta*), giant St. John's wort, mountain mint, smooth aster, golden

Alexander, golden glow (*Rudbeckia laciniata*), showy sunflower and Culver's root

Things look promising in this trial. We'll see what next year brings. We plan to burn again, and we are planning to plant the rest of the old-field with the same approach.

On the five acre CRP field, we sprayed once with glyphosate in September, 2008. Burned it off in mid October, and planted it with 86 species, using a broadcast spreader, on December 5, when there was 2" of snow on the ground. In 2009, there was an amazing flush of prairie seedlings early in the year with vigorous, fast growth (ideal growing weather), before the weeds came on. But eventually they came with a vengeance. We mowed the area 12 inches high with a sickle-bar mower in early July, but the weeds kept coming. They became so tall and dense that we had the area chopped and the cut material removed in late July. This year, the weeds came back, but not as thick. Unfortunately, there were enough flowering wild parsnip, sweet-clover, and thistles, and dense enough weed cover in most areas, to warrant cutting. We had 4 of the 5 acres chopped and the material removed in early July. The driest portion of the field (closest to dry-mesic conditions) was least invested with weeds, so we hand cut and pulled weeds there instead of mowing. Young prairie plants and seedlings were still abundant this year even with last years weed problems, and 27 species bloomed in this their 2nd growing season. Species blooming were: Golden Alexander, white prairie clover, yellow coneflower, cupplant, black-eyed Susan, rosinweed, tick-seed (*Coreopsis palmata*), showy tick-trefoil, biennial gaura, Illinois tick-trefoil, indiagrass, upland boneset (*Eupatorium altissimum*), little bluestem, big bluestem, old field thistle (*Cirsium discolor*), prairie phlox, Canada wild-rye, wild bergamot, rough blazing star, prairie blazing star, prairie cinquefoil, smooth aster, mountain mint, tuberous Indian plantain, prairie violet, rigid goldenrod and false sunflower

The prairie plants appear to be off to a good start in this CRP field. Hopefully there will be enough fuel next spring to carry a fire, and the weeds minimal. A fire would do much to stimulate the prairie plants and set back the non-native cool-season grasses, which are starting to creep back in (weed mowing appears to be to their advantage).

So far, based on these two trials, one time spraying in September seems to be a better choice than inter-seeding on mesic soils. It will be interesting to see how things look in year 10.

Volunteer Spotlight

By Jim Rogala, Coulee Region Chapter



Jeff Fredrick. Photo courtesy of Jim Rogala.

Like many members of our organization, Jeff Fredrick puts his talents and professional position to work behind the scenes to assist The Prairie Enthusiasts. Although he has only attended a couple of chapter meetings since joining the organization in 2004, Jeff makes it a point to work a few burns every spring and has attended several field trips over the years.

So what makes Jeff "spotlight" worthy? Jeff works for the La Crosse Sign Company as a graphic designer, working on signage ranging from large electronic message centers to small informational displays. His experience producing informational displays gave him the chance to volunteer with TPE.

Jeff has produced signage for the TPE photo exhibit, a tabletop display on hill prairies produced by the Coulee Region Chapter, and the general TPE tabletop display. In addition to his own volunteer work, the La Crosse Sign Company has been generous during these projects as well.

Jeff would certainly like to attend more TPE activities, but he's a busy guy. These days it is his family with three young children that needs his attention. He also continues to try to find time for creating artwork, working on the prairie plantings on his property, and do some hunting. He's a perennial turkey calling champion in Wisconsin, a finalist in National competition, and produces his own line of turkey calls. One of his goals for the hunting community is to divert some of their food-plotting efforts to planting native prairie.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Take a Tour, Make a Donation

September 11-18, 2010

This fall, TPE members Ed and Sil Pemberton will lead a week-long tour through the tallgrass prairies of central Kansas and the Flint Hills ecosystem. This is the only remaining area in America with intact, extensive tallgrass prairie landscapes. The tour sponsor, Naturalist Journeys, has agreed to donate \$100 to The Prairie Enthusiasts for every participant who signs up. If you plan to go on this excursion, make sure to mention you heard about the trip through The Prairie Enthusiasts newsletter. Also, include a SASE with TPE's business address on it when you send in your registration materials to facilitate the donation.

Carol Winge
c/o The Prairie Enthusiasts
PO Box 1148
Madison WI 53701

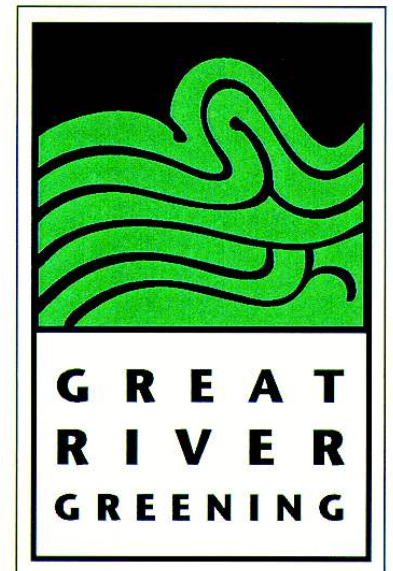
For more information, visit The Prairie Enthusiasts' website: <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/> A link to the Pemberton's trip is at the bottom of the page.

1, 2, 3... Green!

Join Great River Greening's first ever 3-week initiative to restore prairies, woodlands, and natural wildlife habitats around Washington County!

Sign up for one, two, or all three of these events, and make a difference in the beautiful natural landscapes that this area has to offer.

Individuals of all ages, families, community and corporate groups are welcome. Pre-registration is required, so sign up today!



Week 1: Saturday, September 25th
Woodbury Conservation Corridor Prairie Restoration
8:30am – 12:30pm
Seed Collection

Week 2: Saturday, October 2nd
Franconia Bluffs
8:30am – 12:30pm
Acorn Planting

Week 3: Saturday, October 9
Lost Valley Scientific and Natural Area Restoration
8:30am – 12:30pm
Invasive Species Removal

To register, contact Mark Turbak, at
volunteer@greatrivergreening.org or 651-665-9500 x 11.

Run to Restore *October 16, 2010*

Join TPE member and race director Jeff Durbin at the inaugural Indian Lake Trail Run. All proceeds from this event benefit prairie restoration and trail maintenance at beautiful Indian Lake County Park in Dane County. The race directors have planned 6K and 12K trail runs and a 1K kids' fun run. Come run or volunteer. Volunteers are still needed on the course, at aid stations and at the finish.

For more information visit friendsofindianlake.org or email the race directors at jgardnerdurbin9@gmail.com

2011 TPE Conference and Banquet *Save the Date: February 26, 2011*

The Southwest Chapter hopes you will mark your calendars for the Annual Conference and Banquet at UW-Platteville. This year includes an exciting agenda for all as the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited have agreed to co-sponsor the event with the theme "Conservation and the Working Landscape" which encompasses the missions of both The Prairie Enthusiasts and Trout Unlimited.

We are most excited to announce that Michael Forsberg, noted conservation photographer, will be our banquet speaker. Mike's images, which focus largely on North America's grassland ecosystems, have appeared in such publications as Audubon, National Geographic, National Wildlife, and Natural History. Mike has received numerous awards for his work, including the Conservation Education Award from The Wildlife Society. He was also the recipient of the North American Nature Photographer's Association Mission Award in 2009. Mike recently published the beautiful book, Great

Plains: America's Lingerin Wild. Mike and his family live in Nebraska. To see examples of Mike's work, visit his website at: www.michaelforsberg.com.

Registration materials for the conference will be included in the winter issue of the Prairie Promoter. Be sure to watch our website for more information as it becomes available.

Prairie Remnants for Sale

The Kettle Moraine Land Trust is looking for a partner interested in helping preserve a couple of properties located near Beulah Bog State Natural Area and Lake Beulah in East Troy, Wisconsin. A few property owners are interested in selling their properties with biodiverse prairie remnants and diverse oak woodlands/savannas. The Land Trust is looking for someone who has the financial resources and a conservation ethic for protecting remnant prairies to help us purchase these properties to create a corridor between Lake Beulah and Beulah Bog State Natural Area. The three properties total 14 acres in size and it is our hope at the Kettle Moraine Land Trust that they will be the catalyst for preservation of other properties in the area. If you are interested in helping out or would like more details, please contact Eric Tarman-Ramcheck at Ericxtr@gmail.com and/or 262-470-6997.

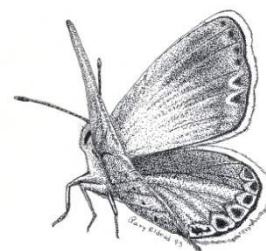
TPE Second Annual Photo Contest

The great response to last year's photo contest has led us to believe that the second annual TPE photo contest will be even bigger and better.

We will again look for images that portray all things prairie. Hopefully you have been capturing the sights of spring and summer and are prepared to find more this fall and winter.

As promised, we have streamlined the entry process, determined a way to confirm that your photos and entry materials have arrived safely, and found a way for members to view all of the entries.

Entry details will be in the next Prairie Promoter. In the meantime, keep your cameras handy, your eyes alert, and your minds open to capture some more fantastic prairie images.



CHIPPEWA SAVANNAS CHAPTER

Chapter Launches New Stewardship Apprentice Program

We are happy to announce a new Stewardship Apprentice Program. The goal of the program is to provide students with the opportunity to gain ecological restoration-related skills and knowledge through real-world experience. In coordination with the TPE Land Manager and the Chapter President, the Stewardship Apprentice will participate in all aspects of CSC-TPE's land management and stewardship activities. The apprentice will help plan and implement ecosystem restoration work events. In this way, the apprentice will gain valuable habitat management and natural areas conservation skills. It is our hope that these skills will serve as a foundation for future work in natural resource conservation. We are very happy to welcome our first two Stewardship Apprentices: Jodi Shaw and Jake Pulfer.

Jodi was born in Wisconsin but grew up on a dairy farm in Idaho where she developed a love for nature and learned to be a steward of the land. She obtained an associate's degree from the College of Southern Idaho and has resumed her studies at UW-Eau Claire where she is currently majoring in Biology/Ecology. She has served as intern at the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve as a Plant Community Ecology Intern, where she focused on prairie plant species. This was her first exposure to different habitats and prairie restoration. This summer she worked for the WI-DNR to coordinate a group of volunteers for the Karner blue butterfly Recovery Project, where she spent several weeks in the field marking transects and surveying. She is excited to begin volunteering with TPE. She plans to contribute some hard work and sweat and in return, learn more about prairies and how to maintain or restore healthy habitats. She wants to play a role in preserving biodiversity and to be a part of something she can feel proud of.

Jake Pulfer is a senior at UW-Stout majoring in Environmental Science with a Land Management Concentration. He is also minoring in Geographic Information Systems. Jake is active on campus volunteering for the environmental organizations Greensense and the Sustainability Council. Through his experience with TPE, he hopes to gain a working knowledge of skills such as prescribed burning, invasive species control, and management planning.

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

Please check chapter newsletter for announcements.

EMPIRE – SAUK CHAPTER

Chapter Meetings

Tuesday, September 14, time and location to be announced. All members welcome.

Seed Collecting Help Needed

We need help collecting seed this fall. We need individuals working both on their own and at organized group work parties. Eric Preston, the Empire-Sauk Chapter coordinator for seed collecting efforts, will match volunteers with collecting needs. Major seed collecting areas this fall will be Underwood, Schurch-Thomson, and Shea Prairies and nearby sites south of Blue Mounds and at Rettenmund Black Earth Prairie and other locations. If you wish to be on the contact list to help with seed collecting, please contact Ann Calhoun, our volunteer coordinator, (volunteers@theprairieenthusiasts.org).

We are also looking for people to lead seed collecting parties at specific sites. If interested, contact Eric Preston (ericw.preston@gmail.com , 608-257-1513 (H) or 414-235-4182 (C)).

Seed Cleaning Help Needed

We need help cleaning and processing seed this fall. Most of the work will be done at the Schurch-Thomson Prairie barn. If you wish to be on the contact lists to help with these activities, please contact Ann Calhoun, our chapter volunteer coordinator, (volunteers@theprairieenthusiasts.org). If you wish to help lead and direct seed cleaning, contact Rich Henderson (608-845-7065 or tpe.rhenderson@tds.net).

Plant Donations

Thank you, Laura Brown for growing 50 vigorous seedlings each of prairie violet and blue-eyed grass for the Empire-Sauk Chapter. These plants were put into seed production beds and out-planted into restorations at the Schurch-Thomson Prairie preserve. Laura grew the plants from seed volunteers collected from the preserve's remnant prairie. This is the second year Laura has provided this service.

Growing small, hard to collect species is a great way to get them into our restorations. Our violet seed production beds are producing nearly a pound of seed per year. If you too wish to put your green thumb to work for prairie conservation, contact Rich Henderson (tpe.henderson@tds.net or 608-845-7065).

Seed Cleaning and Planting Coordinator Needed

The Empire-Sauk Chapter needs to plant wetland, prairie, and savanna seed on hundreds of acres over the next several years to recover degraded remnants and expand critical habitat for many rare and endangered plants and animals. Eric Preston is coordinating seed collecting, but we still need someone to get our seed cleaning and processing program up and running in earnest. Our seed processing facility at the Schurch-Thomson Prairie barn, south of Blue Mounds, is up and running. If you are interested in this leadership role, or have ideas as to who might be willing, please contact Rich Henderson (608-845-7065 or tpe.rhenderson@tds.net).

Fall Work Party Plans

This fall, the Empire-Sauk Chapter will continue its work restoring prairie remnants. Volunteers are needed to clear trees and brush. We do have several in-kind grants to help with the work. These grants match volunteer time with grant money. So, for every hour you volunteer we receive several hours of paid contract labor. This fall and winter, we will work at the Underwood, Shea, A to Z, and Schurch-Thomson Prairies south of Blue Mounds; Ripp Prairies north of Waunakee; Mazomanie Bluff; Schluckebier Prairie west of Prairie du Sac; Rettenmund Black Earth Prairie; Walking Iron County Park near Mazomanie, Kalscheur Savanna south of Hollandale; and Smith Drumlin Prairies near Cambridge. Be on the lookout for fliers, e-mails, and other notifications and plan to bring friends. Fun fall/winter work parties include refreshments (such as home-made cookies) and crisp weather and are a good source of outdoor winter exercise. You always leave with a sense of accomplishment after clearing trees and brush.

If you wish to help with work on these sites, and you are uncertain as to whether or not you are on the e-mail or phone notification lists, please contact our chapter volunteer coordinator, Ann Calhoun (volunteers@theprairieenthusiasts.org).

Are You Mechanically Inclined?

Empire-Sauk Chapter is looking for a volunteer or two to be in charge of the maintenance and repair of field equipment. This includes, but is not limited to, drip torches, water backpack cans, backpack herbicide sprayers, hand tools, brush-cutters, chainsaws, mowers, tractors, a truck, ATVs, propane torches, fire-pump units, and seeders. The workshop at the Schurch-Thomson barn is up and ready to be used for equipment maintenance and

repair. The barn is where most equipment is stored when not in active use, however, maintenance work may certainly be done at other locations. If you wish to help, please contact Rich Henderson (608-845-7065 or tpe.rhenderson@tds.net).

MANY RIVERS CHAPTER

First Annual Picnic - Tranquil!

Our first annual chapter picnic was a tranquil gathering. About 35 people, just over half of our membership, came together at Henry Panowitsch's prairie and farmstead retreat, just north of Good Thunder, MN. Saturday, July 31, was warm and balmy, but despite the heat we shared a meal, visited some incredible prairie sites and discussed our latest prairie endeavors and hopes for the future.

The setting was a refurbished farmstead nestled in a small valley, adjacent to the mighty Maple River. Henry purchased the site just over 10 years ago. Since then he has had restored the site from, to put it bluntly, a tire and refuge dump site to the lovely farmstead valley it is today. The farmstead includes the original scenic barn, a split rail fenced vegetable garden, an immaculate outhouse, a chicken coop converted into a quaint cottage and horticultural flowers throughout, including Hostas. The only thing missing were the chickens.

We started the morning with a tour of Al Berner's amazing remnant prairie and surrounding restored prairie. The remnant sits atop a steep hill overlooking a beautiful stand of big blue stem, his restored prairie. Al explained the history of the site and his hopes for expanding the size and diversity of his remnant prairie with the help of The Prairie Enthusiasts. As our tour group climbed around the hillside identifying unique prairie treasures such as prairie plantain it was easy to see the diligent work Al had put into maintaining and improving his prairie sites.

A true Minnesota pot luck, there was plentiful and delicious food complimented by new friendships and stories shared throughout. We did manage to discuss a bit of business. Henry explained The Prairie Enthusiasts' simple organization using the new TPE tri-fold poster display. True to form, Henry listed many benefits of the organization; especially the social benefits, such as forming new friendships, companionship in like company, sharing stories and experiences out in our natural world appreciating prairie: all things that are needed in today's hectic world. It was mentioned that we should keep our focus not only on the prairie details, but on the ecology as a whole, just as Randy Schindle has shown in his work. As a chapter we also discussed potential projects and possible resources. We expressed our desire for our chapter to encourage open discussions and new ideas. We

are always open to new avenues in which to expand our chapter's activities, whether they be new prairie work sites, social gatherings or educational avenues.

In the afternoon, we toured Henry's two restored prairie sites. His beautiful, well-maintained upland prairie consisted mostly of short grasses such as sideoats grama and little blue stem. It was impressive to see how vigorously some of his prairie plants have been growing. His bottom land site has been more of a struggle to establish given its' previous history as a weedy tree farm. Henry's passion for prairie is easily observed in how carefully he has restored these two sites. Every year a little less maintenance is required as the sites become more fully restored. As the afternoon wore on, a few picnic stragglers couldn't resist to tour yet another restored prairie site. We visited a neighbor of Henry's, Ron Bergemann's 100 acre prairie. It was another amazing prairie scene, a vast expanse of prairie surrounded by woods with bright blue skies and cumulus clouds drifting by. It was a perfect end to a perfect day.

A grand thank you goes out to Scott Seigfreid and Randy Schindle for organizing the event and supplying and grilling the delectable hamburgers and brats. A special thank you is sent out for Henry Panowitsch for hosting the event. The location was picturesque.



Conversation at Many Rivers first picnic. Photo by Scott Seigfreid.

Hughes Prairie Burn

By Chris Hughes

The Many Rivers Chapter gathered on a mid-May evening to perform a controlled burn at the Hughes prairie in the beautiful Minnesota River Valley just west of Mankato. The prairie sits atop limestone bedrock terracing the Minnesota River. On top of the limestone, thousands of years of vegetative growth and decay have resulted in about 9 inches of rare black Copastan soil, native forbs and grasses. This burn was the second in two years. It is

only one tool that is being used to enhance the diverse, and in some areas degraded, intact native prairie, stimulating native species germination and diversity.

Prior to burning, Randy Schindle, Many Rivers chapter secretary and DNR ecological services specialist, provided burn training and Scott Siegfried, Many Rivers Chapter president, provided burn-day planning and leadership. By 9:30 p.m. the burn was complete. The appearance of sullivants milkweed, blazingstar, grey coneflower, small white lady slipper, common boneset and Maximilian sunflower signal improving species diversity in some portions of the burn area while reed canary and brome grass signal additional work ahead for this remnant.

The late afternoon and evening burn provided an interesting view of a smoke-filled sunset and the chance for chapter members to get to know each other a little better. As the final vehicles departed, coyotes howled a few hundred feet away at river's edge.

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS CHAPTER

Volunteer of the Year



Marilyn Strenski. Photo by Karin Strenski.

Marilyn Strenski, the Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts' 2010 Volunteer of the Year received the award for inside work, not work outside in the field. The Northwest Illinois Chapter has made 'seed picking aprons' for a number of years, and has sold them at TPE events as well.

When Marilyn injured her knee, chapter President Ed Strenski asked his mother if she'd like something to keep busy while she recuperated. She is always willing to help, and said she would take over the job of making the aprons. She is a very accomplished seamstress, and volunteered for 25 years at the Norwood Park Nursing

Home near Chicago, taking care of the residents' mending, hemming, buttons and even clothing 're-makes'.

She took the NIPE task seriously, and sewed nearly 50 aprons for the chapter.

Marilyn currently lives in the Chicagoland area, but enjoys helping the chapter whenever she is able. We are grateful for her help on this important project

Additional chapter news can be found at: www.nipes.org

PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

Summer Update

By Tom Mitchell

New equipment was put to use during an especially bad weed season in 2010. Our chapter used some of Hugh Iltis' donation to purchase a walk-behind mower and a clearing saw, both of which were helpful in knocking down large patches of sweet clover. These biennial weeds are stimulated by fire and require vigilance each summer to prevent seed set. Our weekly weed sweeps with our new tools, Parsnip Predators and scythes, make us confident we are not losing these annual battles.

We have also introduced two species of flea beetles at Butenhoff Prairie, where the invasive plant leafy spurge has resisted our efforts at chemical control. Bio-control is a new tool in our weed management plan, with results anticipated in three to five years.



Wood or prairie lily (*Lilium philadelphicum*). Photo by Rob Baller.

Wood or prairie lily (*Lilium philadelphicum*) made an appearance at two mesic prairies after an absence of a few years. This striking, orange-colored flower with spotted blossoms, turned up in mid-June at Green's Prairie

Cemetery and Sulzer Prairie, both of which were burned in the spring. The plant is listed in six states.

With help from Scott Sauer we continue to monitor the population of woolly milkweed at Hoesly Prairie. The populations are alive and well, but this season's seed production was negligible compared to last year. This plant is listed as threatened in Wisconsin.

We are also monitoring Mead's milkweed at Vale Prairie, where 20 plants were introduced in 2001 by Gary Eldred and Rich Henderson from seeds germinated at Morton Arboretum. Four of the plants continue to survive; the largest with 12 leaves. Studies suggest that it may take 15 years or more to mature to a flowering plant. The most robust plant now has two stems, which suggests rhizome formation, which is common to this genus. Mead's milkweed is a federally threatened plant. The reintroduction is part of its recovery plan.

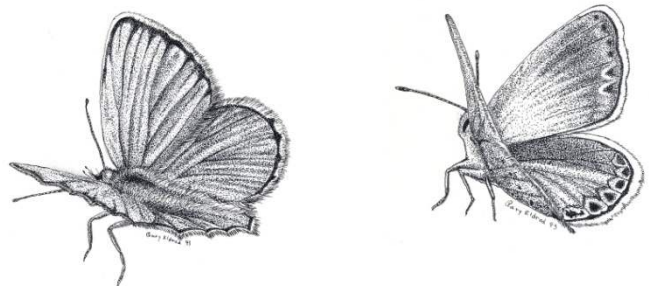
Eighty visitors came on Memorial Day to Green's Prairie Cemetery, where the Boy Scouts and veterans from New Glarus helped us celebrate the lives of David Ash and Elisha Gorham, who served America during the War of 1812.

Finally, a somber note, Kay Barry, a founding member of our chapter, passed away recently in Madison at age 93. Kay and George lived for many years in Monroe, where they were instrumental in creating a prairie planting at Honey Creek Park.

PRAIRIE SANDS CHAPTER

DNR Karner Blue Butterfly Survey

At the Iltis Prairie and Savanna in Marquette County, Prairie Sands chapter members and property owners, David and Shelley Hamel, cooperated with the DNR Bureau of Endangered Species to do a formal distance sampling survey of Karner Blue Butterflies on 38 acres of their 80 acre restoration. Under the US Fish and Wildlife Service's program, Partners for Wildlife, Karner habitat had been dramatically increased from a pre-existing 2-acre site to 80 acres by planting lupine and nectaring species as well as conducting prescribed burns. The 10-year process has yielded substantial numbers of these federally-endangered and state-threatened butterflies. DNR biologists Gregor Schuurman, Bob Hess, and Emma Pelton led four surveys throughout the summer and results



showed that, among the survey sites in Wisconsin, Iltis Prairie ranks within the top two for density per acre coming in at 79 per acre.

In addition, tiny samples from the wings of 30 butterflies (all released afterward) have been sent to West Virginia for DNA analysis to see what relationships exist between this population and others within the Karner blue butterfly recovery area. In addition to participating in some citizen science, the Hamels enjoy the knowledge that what used to be a corn field just twenty years ago is now a thriving prairie.



Emma Pelton (left) carries a distance sampling pole while Shelley Hamel records Karner butterfly data. Photo by Gregor Shuurman, WI DNR.

PRAIRIE SMOKE CHAPTER

No information submitted

ST. CROIX VALLEY CHAPTER

Falls Prescribed Burns Planned

Portions of Alexander oak savanna, Blueberry Hill, several areas at the Foster Conservation Area, Simon Prairie and Cedar Hills Nature Park will be burned this fall. Volunteers are needed.

These will be fairly simple prescribed burns; the sites are fairly level with good fire breaks. They are excellent sites to gain experience or to dust off your equipment.

If you are already on the prescribed burn list, you will be contacted. If you are not on the list and would like some experience, contact Evanne Hunt (715-318-1291 or eahunt@pressenter.com).

Seed Collecting Volunteers Needed

We have started a seed collection program. Locally collected seed will be used to re-seed Alexander Prairie, the Foster Cemetery site, and Simon prairie.

We have identified some large sites where we can collect this fall and we need quite a few volunteers. To volunteer or ask questions, contact Ginny, Wayne, or Mike at:

Ginny Gaynor: wayneandgin@frontiernet.net

Wayne Huhnke: 715-425-7605(H) or 715-222-6910 (C) whuhnke@dishup.us

Mike Miller: pureprairiseed@gmail.com

When the seed at these sites is ready, you will be contacted with the date, time, and location to meet.

Chainsaw Safety Class

An all-day chainsaw safety class will be held on Saturday, September 25 at the River Falls Public Library. The cost will be \$20 per person.

The class will be taught by Jim Olive of the Forest Industry Safety & Training Alliance (FISTA). Jim is a logger and certified instructor with over 15 years experience.

The indoor portion of the class starts at 8:30 a.m. It covers personal protective equipment, tools used to safely fell trees, and chainsaw features.

We break for lunch about 11:30 a.m. After lunch (at a local restaurant), the class will reconvene at our oak savanna restoration site at Alexander Oak Savanna.

The outdoor portion includes a demonstration of tree felling and releasing limbs and spring poles under pressure. Everyone will have the opportunity to practice the techniques on actual trees.

Space is limited. Pre-register with Evanne (715-381-1291 or eahunt@pressenter.com) by September 20.

Dress appropriately for the weather. Bring your chainsaw if you have one. If you do not, this class is useful in deciding on what type of equipment to buy.

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN CHAPTER

No information submitted

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The following people have joined TPE in the period June 1 – August 10, 2010.

Brent Bauer, Durand, WI
Ann Calhoun, Madison, WI
Julia Ela, Madison, WI
Glen Fisher, Eau Claire, WI
Alexandra Handlos, Nashotah, WI
Caleigh Hoiland, Amery, WI
Chris Hughes, Mankato, MN

Geralyn Karl, Amery, WI
Maggie Karschnia, Saint Paul, MN
Joseph Maurer, Eau Claire, WI
Jim & Debbie Rand, Lanesboro, MN
Aari Roberts, Watertown, WI
Ted Ross, Rockford, IL
Randy Schindle, Saint Clair, MN

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

To:

Jim Perry
Robert Agee & Deb Belongea
David Lovell & Irene Wren

From:

Jack Kussmaul
Karen Agee
Karen Agee

THANK YOU, DONORS!

We thank everyone who made a donation to The Prairie Enthusiasts during the period June 1-August 10, 2010. These gifts above and beyond membership dues are truly generous and appreciated.

\$1000 - \$5000

Kim Kreitinger & Eric Preston
Max & Shelley Lagally, *Mounds View Land Management*
Gail & Willi Van Haren

\$100 - \$499

Anonymous
Barbara & Ted Cochrane
Driftless Area Land Conservancy, *in memory of Jane Kopitzke and Bud Jordahl*

Jean Feehan
Sharon Foster
Linda Lynch

Under \$100

Andrea Benco
Caroljean Coventree
Maggie Karschnia
Buck Malick
John McKay

Brad & Abbie Meyer
Mound Vue Garden Club
Richard & Victoria Oberle
Neal & Diane Smith
Kathleen Sulzer

Glenn Teschendorf & Mary Anne Derheimer
Robert & Susan Wallen
Bill & Jayne Wisler

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Please note your membership renewal date is printed above your address. If you feel the renewal date is in error, help us keep our records accurate by emailing Victoria Oberle, membership coordinator at TPE@theprairieenthusiasts.org. Thank you.

If your membership has expired, tear off this back page, note changes below, and send in your check today!

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____

The Prairie Enthusiasts Membership Levels:

\$100 Shooting Star (recommended level)
\$5,000 Bur Oak Benefactor, \$1,000 Monarch, \$500 Compass Plant, \$200 Blazing Star
\$65 Pasque Flower, \$40 Big Blue Stem, \$25 Little Blue Stem, \$15 Student

Please send form and check to:

The Prairie Enthusiasts, P.O. Box 1148, Madison, WI 53701-1148