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The PRAIRIE PROMOTER

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Grassroots Conservation at Work

2011 TPE Conference

By Linda Lynch

TPE's Annual Conference is a great way to put winter to bed and start thinking about spring. This year's conference at UW-Platteville, hosted by the Southwest Wisconsin Chapter and the Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited, was no exception. Despite unpredictable weather, we enjoyed a host of great presentations, fellowship, and shopping at the silent auction/raffle tables. There were 172 people in attendance and the silent auction/raffle brought in over \$4500. We even signed up 13 new members!!!!

The conference theme, "Conservation in a Working Landscape," reflects reality in southwest Wisconsin and throughout the Midwest, where conservation is an integral part of our daily existence. Presenters shared efforts across Wisconsin to bring conservation to urban areas and re-connect people to the land as well as help farmers and others who live off the land understand the importance of sustainable land management.

The presenters challenged the idea that conservation only happens in rural and wild areas and showed us how we are all connected. These connections were highlighted in a presentation on stream rehabilitation.

We may have different missions, but our paths to accomplishing those missions often involve some of the same steps. We heard about tax benefits and conservation programs for landowners, as well as updates on land management issues such as prescribed fire, grazing, and improving grassland bird habitat. To cap off the evening, Michael Forsberg, a conservation photographer from Nebraska, shared some wonderful images of grassland ecosystems as well as his philosophy on conservation.

It was good to see old friends and new faces. See you at our annual picnic in July!



Jan Ketelle was named The Prairie Enthusiast of the Year (story on page 5). Award presented by Evanne Hunt. Photo by Richard Oberle.

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President's Message

By Evanne Hunt

2011 is off to a rough start.

Projects throughout Wisconsin -- including three TPE projects -- that depended on money from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund have been put on hold pending review by the DNR.

Although Wisconsin Governor Walker's state budget did not include cuts to the stewardship program, Gathering Waters reports that some legislators will look to cut funding. In addition, the Governor's proposed policy changes will make it more difficult to protect prairie and oak savanna remnants using Stewardship funds. For example, before property could be purchased, we would need a resolution of support from the municipality where the property is located. Read Gathering Waters complete analysis at "E-News: What's Next for the Stewardship Program" (wisconsinlandtrusts.org).

To the west, a Minnesota House bill would allow corporations to write their own environmental impact statements. While very few statements are written each year, the bill reflects the legislature's focus on business growth and is a portent of things to come.

Minnesota and Wisconsin DNRs will see funding cuts for staff and projects. There is also great concern that the DNR will be forced to sell state land, including the prairies and oak savannas we have maintained for years.

A House proposal at the federal level would eliminate the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and State Wildlife Grants — two programs TPE uses to manage and protect wildlife resources.

Your passion, commitment and enthusiasm are needed now more than ever.

To quote Peter Forbes of the Center for Whole Communities (wholecommunities.org):

"[W]e need to find new approaches to our work simply because no property boundary will ever survive a suffering humanity. We speak of 'protecting' land through conservation easements or fee acquisitions but how do these tools 'save' land from climate change, acid rain, or a public that simply no longer cares? To be truly meaningful and enduring, the work of conservation must be grounded not just in legal statutes, but in peoples' hearts, minds, and everyday choices."

We prairie enthusiasts can leverage our passion to change the attitudes of "a population that largely doesn't understand, doesn't relate, perhaps doesn't care and, right now, is asking for something different." Each of us can bring a friend, neighbor, or a relative to a field trip and help them understand why we care. Grass roots conservation efforts have always been the most effective means to save our prairies and oak savannas.

Continued on page 7

Jack Kussmaul: Prairie Legacy Society Charter Member

Thanks to TPE Vice President Jack Kussmaul, TPE's permanently preserved acreage—as well as our endowment funds—will both see a sharp increase in the future (although not the near-future, we hope!)

As a Charter Member of the Prairie Legacy Society—as well as the Prairie Legacy Circle—Jack has promised to TPE not only his 92-acre prairie, oak savanna and oak woods remnant and restoration in Grant County, but also a very generous accompanying endowment fund gift. This accompanying endowment fund gift is necessary in order to manage and maintain the property in perpetuity, says Jack; something TPE takes very seriously as a prairie land trust.

“We have a very strong, very passionate crew of volunteers that are doing a lot of the restoration work now on all our prairies and savannas, but who knows what the future will bring, in terms of how restoration work gets accomplished, and by whom,” says Jack. “That’s why giving a cash endowment gift was so crucial—it ensures that my property becomes a real legacy, vs. a real liability.”

A native of the Mt. Hope area, and practicing attorney for the last 42 years in Lancaster, Jack wanted to invest in the ecological restoration of the place he called home, so in 1981 he bought a piece of property located on the south side of the Wisconsin River, twelve miles upstream from where it enters the Mississippi River, in the Town of Millville.

For the last 15 years, Jack has worked tirelessly to restore and manage the land. As a result, he has identified 342 species, including cream, stiff and fringed gentian; seneca snakeroot; rattlesnake master; wood betony; yellow lady's slipper; showy orchis; Adam and Eve orchids; and hairy puccoon. Jack has also invested in restoration using prescribed grazers – specifically goats – thanks to the work of last year's Prairie Enthusiasts of the Year, Jesse Bennett and Jaye Maxfield of the Driftless Land Stewardship, LLC.

In addition to the land donation and accompanying endowment, Jack has also named TPE as a cash beneficiary on one of his retirement accounts.



"I am awed by TPE's ability to acquire properties worthy of protection," says Jack, who joined TPE's board of directors about five years ago. "Now I just wish we were as good at collecting endowments to support these properties!"

We can't thank you enough, Jack, for all that you do for the Southwest Chapter and for TPE, Inc.

Want to join Jack and others in the Prairie Legacy Society, as either a Charter Member, Prairie Legacy Circle Member, or both? Please contact Development Director, Dani Stolley, to find out how! Dani@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org or 920-420-4104.

TPE's Special Funds

By Jon Traver

The Prairie Enthusiasts has five funds that support our mission.

TPE Land Management Trust: This formal trust has its own trustees, separate from TPE. However, TPE is the sole beneficiary of its earnings. The funds TPE receives from the Trust are to be used solely for land management activities, such as on the ground restoration and management work by staff, interns, or contractors; for purchase and maintenance of equipment and improvements; and for supplies. As of 12/31/10, the Trust's value was \$129,814. The goal for the Trust is \$2,000,000.

Easement Monitoring Endowment: This endowment provides up to 4% of its value annually to cover the costs of monitoring easements granted to TPE. Annual monitoring ensures that the eased lands are in compliance with the provisions of their easements. As of 12/31/10, the value was \$49,709. The current goal for the endowment is \$120,000, but this, of course, will increase as additional easements are taken on.

Legal Defense Fund: This pool of money is set aside in case the need ever arises to litigate or defend any TPE held easement. As of 12/31/10, the value was \$17,458. The current goal for the fund is \$200,000, but this, of course, will increase as additional easements are taken on.

Operations Endowment: This endowment will eventually provide up to 4% of its value annually to help cover the costs of administrative staff and overhead of TPE. As of 12/31/10, the value was \$17,242. The goal for the Endowment is \$1,000,000.

Thomson Memorial Endowment: This endowment will eventually provide up to 4% of its value annually to help cover the costs of providing internships for students doing land management, inventory, and protection, or education outreach. As of 12/31/10, the value was \$4,239. The goal for the Endowment is \$100,000.

We hope to eventually establish funds to assist land protection and education/outreach projects, as well.

The endowments and funds are held in trust at the State Bank of Cross Plains. They are all invested for the long term and governed by the Investment Policy approved by TPE's Board of Directors in January 2008. That policy defines the investment guidelines for all of the funds. We utilize a globally diverse portfolio including a variety of asset classes, for diversification, by investing in passively managed (indexed) low cost, mutual funds. The funds are composed of 60% stocks and 40% bonds and are re-balanced every January back to the 60%/40% ratio. Currently, the stock portion of the funds is invested in 8 different Vanguard stock mutual funds, and the bond portion is invested in 3 Vanguard bond funds. By design, this strategy is mechanical. We do not trade stocks or try to guess where the stock market is going in the future. We have defined the asset allocation of 60% stocks and 40% bonds and will stick to that for the long term.

This policy has served us well. The portfolios were set up in early 2008. During this difficult year for the stock market, the S&P 500, a general stock market index, fell 39%. Fortunately, because we cautiously implemented our policy, our portfolios only lost 13-17% in 2008. With strong markets in 2009 and 2010, our portfolios recovered faster than the S&P 500. Our portfolios are up 13-18% versus original cost at the beginning of 2008, compared to the S&P 500 which is still down 7-14%.

If you have questions about, or want a copy of, TPE's Investment Policy, contact Jon Traver at jontraver@aol.com or 608-222-9247.

If you have questions about contributing to any of these funds, contact Dani Stolley, Development Director. Dani@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org or 920-420-4104.

More Rare Plants Found at Mounds View Grassland

By Rich Henderson

This past summer, student interns working on TPE's 530-acre Mounds View Grassland Preserve found additional numbers and new locations of several uncommon prairie-specialist plants, including the State Special Concern marble-seed (*Onosmodium molle*), the

State Threatened Hill's or prairie thistle (*Cirsium hillii*), the State Threatened tuberous Indian plantain (*Arnoglossum plantagineum* [a.k.a. *Cacalia tuberosa*]), and the Federally Threatened prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*). For more details, see "Summer interns find rare species at Mounds View" in The Prairie Promoter, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2010.

But that was not the end of discoveries in 2010. In late September, to my surprise and delight, I stumbled upon two more species that had gone undetected during 10 years of restoration work. The first was wild quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*), a State Threatened species. In Wisconsin, it is restricted to remnant prairie sod in the southwest and southeast corners of the state. Wild quinine becomes more common in Illinois and points farther south, but here in Wisconsin, at the northern limits of its range, its mesic to dry-mesic prairie habitat has been lost.

Wild quinine is easy to propagate, and TPE has established seed production beds using seed from local native Wisconsin populations. Consequently, we have been seeding it, along with other prairie plants, at Mounds View Grassland, in attempts to expand the preserve's prairie habitat. However, the wild quinine I found was over a quarter-mile from any restoration work at the

preserve. It was in a small patch of remnant prairie sod, 0.2 acres in size, surrounded by cropland. It looked to be a native population that has apparently survived 150 years of isolation! The nearest known native population is four miles away. The patch's small size most likely protected it from grazing by domestic livestock. Lack of regular grazing may have helped save this "island" while the species disappeared from the rest of the preserve's 100-plus other acres of original prairie sod, nearly all of which had been heavily grazed at some point.

The other new species I found was rough white lettuce (*Prenanthes aspera*). This was a total surprise. Rough white lettuce is a prairie specialist typically found in dry-mesic settings. It is limited to the tallgrass region of the central U.S. Once widespread, it is now rather uncommon throughout its range. In Wisconsin it is listed as Endangered and has been reported at only a dozen or so sites, many of which have been lost. Only three or four of the remaining sites in the state have large populations.

I found two specimens of this rare *Prenanthes* blooming on the Underwood Prairie, which abuts the Mounds View Grassland preserve. TPE has been restoring



Wild Quinine (Parthenium integrifolium). Photo by Kathy Henderson

this important conservation site for more than 10 years under a management agreement with the Underwood family. We are grateful to the family for allowing us to clear trees and brush, control weeds, and conduct burns on this site. The lettuce plants were in a former brush thicket that was cleared nine years ago.

When in flower, rough white lettuce reaches 2-5 feet tall. When not in bloom, it puts up only one or two basal leaves 4-6 inches long that can be easily overlooked in dense vegetation. If the plants had not been in flower, I most likely would not have seen them. So there may be more of them.

Several things made this find so unexpected. First, the seed of this species has not been introduced at Mounds View. Second, the species is exceptionally rare in Wisconsin. Third, for 10 years, the Underwood prairie remnant has been scoured many times a year by volunteers removing brush, pulling weeds and collecting seed, yet this is the first observation of this rather large (at least when in bloom) and distinctive plant. It is possible that the *Prenanthes* root stock had been living suppressed under the invading brush and it took nine years of re-established sunlight to recover sufficiently enough to start blooming again.

The seemingly ceaseless discovery of new plant and animal species and the ever increasing populations of rare species at the Mounds View Grassland complex, which continues years after restoration work began, is most rewarding

and exciting. It gives hope that this nearly lost ecosystem can be brought back to health using brush removal, weed control and fire. See also "Recovery at Schurch-Thomson Prairie" and "Regal fritillaries rebound at Mounds View Grassland" in *The Prairie Promoter*, 2009, Vol. 22, No. 2, and Vol. 22, No. 3. Thank you to the hundreds of people who contribute time, resources and money to the effort at Mounds View and all of our other preserves. We are making a difference one acre and one species at a time.

Prairie Enthusiast of the Year: Jan Ketelle

Jan Ketelle holds an unassuming but deep commitment to conservation and helping provide opportunities for people to get outside to experience and enjoy nature. She has a great dedication to saving and healing the remnants of our native ecosystems.

Although she is not a professional naturalist or ecologist, she has learned a great deal over the years.

By training, she is a nurse and volunteers as an EMS.

Her care for people has spilled over to nature as well.

Jan has been volunteering with conservation groups in WI for decades. She has been a steadfast volunteer for The Nature Conservancy, Ice Age Trail Foundation, and Dane County Parks, and has been volunteering with TPE for nearly 20 years. Starting in 2004 she stepped up her contributions to TPE to 200-300 hours a year. In the past couple of years, reduced work hours and retirement have allowed her to contribute well over 500 hours a year to TPE, all while remaining active in other groups as well.

Hands on management, restoration, and monitoring are where Jan contributes the most. She participates in prescribed burns; weed pulling, cutting, and spraying; tree/brush removal; burning brush piles; collecting, cleaning, and planting seed; working on improvements; conducting frog and regal fritillary butterfly surveys; collecting stream

monitoring data; and occasionally providing treats to volunteers. She often takes the initiative and simply put: just gets things done.

When there is a work party, interns in need of guidance in the field, or something else that needs to get done, Jan is there. The rare exception is when she is helping another conservation group or visiting family.

Jan also contributes financially to conservation causes, including TPE, and serves on the TPE Land Management Committee. But most impressive is how she



Rough White Lettuce (Prenanthes aspera).
Photo by Kathy Henderson

has inspired many others to get involved and to make cash donations, often in significant amounts, and often in her honor.

Jan is amazing, and a great asset to Wisconsin's conservation community. Thank you, Jan!

See photo on page 1.

Regal Fritillary Farewell

By Gary Eldred

The prairies of my beloved Green County are quiet now, cloaked in white snow and resting for the winter. Many of the birds that call Muralt Prairie home left last fall for the winter, but they will be returning soon. We look forward to hearing their uplifting calls in the coming spring.

The native insects that live here will soon be stirring from their winter dormancy, just as they have done for 10,000 generations. Sadly, many of the birds that have called this place home for thousands of years will not be seen or heard here this spring, or the next spring. Maybe never again!

Gone are the Prairie Grouse, the Curlews, Kites, Plovers, Meadow Larks, Bobolinks, Dicksissel and many more.

Did anyone notice when the last Prairie Chicken boomed and strutted in a warm spring morning on the prairie bluff?

Did anyone note in their journal when the last long billed Curlew glided over the glistening prairie grasses of the ridge top?

For many of us, Muralt Prairie and its native residents represent a most special place. It sparked our imaginations and ignited a curiosity that has lasted a lifetime.

Perhaps The Prairie Enthusiasts would not exist if we had failed with that first prairie conservation project, the "Muralt Bluff Prairie".

In 1980, when I moved away from Green County, the care and management of the preserve was taken over by the State of Wisconsin. We felt the place was in good hands.

Last year I learned that one of Muralt's rarest residents, indeed one of the states' rarest residents, the Regal Fritillary (see article on page 11) had been extirpated from Muralt Prairie. This has been a devastating blow to me personally.

I have spent thirty-five years giving my best shot at leaving a prairie heritage for those who would love it as much as I have. Some experts said that it was only a matter of time before the Regals would disappear because of a shrinking habitat and isolation.

Still, other expert managers wasted precious time bickering about how to manage our last population of

Regals best. While they bickered, the brush took advantage of the years without fire to lay claim to much of the last of the Regals' critical living space.

Now that our Regals are gone, the experts hope that by changing management practices, our Regals will miraculously spring forth from some mysterious and secret place. I truly hope they are right.

Alas, time moves on and the experts will be faced with other natural resources protection and management challenges. They will be required to do the best they can to meet these challenges with less and less funding and fewer people to do the job right.

The demise of our Regals in Muralt Prairie will pass from their thoughts. For me, it will not be so easy.

The loss will nag at me for the rest of my days! I will ask myself over and over if I have done more harm than good. Should we have bought and tried to preserve the prairie remnant? Could I have done more? Where will the next loss take place? Which precious species will we lose next?

Who will know about it?

Who will care?



Regal fritillary butterflies. Photo by Gary Eldred.

TPE Photo Contest Winner

Gary Shackelford's photo, "Prairie Dropseed in Autumn," was the popular winner of TPE's second annual photo contest (see below). Other entries in the contest may be seen at The Prairie Enthusiasts website. www.theprairieenthusiasts.org

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This is my last President's Message. My term as president concludes in July and Jack Kussmaul, TPE vice president, will take the reins.

I told Jack that the best part of being president was at the conferences and banquets when the members stopped to thank me. It really meant a lot. Thank you!



Gary Shackelford's winning photo, "Prairie Dropseed in Autumn," was taken in Kohler, Wisconsin.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Southeast Wisconsin Chapter

Save the Date: March 26

Several Prairie Enthusiasts, including Alexandra Handlos, have taken steps to establish a new chapter of TPE in southeast Wisconsin. Two preliminary meetings have been held, the first in Delafield on January 15 and the second in Waukesha on February 15.

On March 26, all interested parties are invited to the inaugural meeting of the new chapter at the Northside Public Library in Kenosha at 2 p.m. Members will vote on an official chapter name, officers, and chapter rules. Only TPE members can vote, so please pay your dues.

Also, please bring pictures of your favorite prairie plants and sites. After voting, members will discuss prairie restoration in southeast Wisconsin and discuss potential sites for future projects.

Lafayette County Bluebird Society Celebrates 30 Years

The Lafayette County Bluebird Society will celebrate 30 years of bluebirding on April 17 in Darlington, WI. The event will be held from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in the meeting room at the Super 8 Motel. Steve Hubner, Zoning Administrator, and a member of The Prairie Enthusiasts will present a program on prairie plants common to southwest Wisconsin. Lori Cwynar, owner of Nature's Gifts Greenhouse, will talk about plants that attract birds. Bluebirds and other cavity nesters will be discussed. The event is open to the public. There will be door prizes and refreshments. For more information email: lafayettecountybluebirdsociety@yahoo.com

Warblers, Savannas, and Rivers: Train Ride in the Tiffany Wildlife Area *Save the Date: May 14*

Chippewa Savannas Chapter is hosting an open-air train ride deep into remote areas of the Tiffany Bottoms. We will travel through extensive lowland hardwood wetlands, wet meadows, open prairies, and floodplain savannas in the heart of the Lower Chippewa River.

May is the peak of spring bird migration. The 13,000 acre Tiffany Wildlife Area is an excellent observation point. The Tiffany, owned and managed by the WDNR, is a concentration area for waterfowl and songbirds, with numbers exceeding 25,000 on many fall days. As many as 30 species of warblers can be found here.

Our train will leave at 7a.m. so birders can catch the "dawn chorus". Jeanette Kelly will be on the train to share knowledge about bird identification, bird behavior, biology, etc. The train will return after lunchtime.

We will stop at various habitats on the way with a focus on prairie and savanna areas. Riders may walk with local experts who will share their knowledge about the region's ecology, natural history, and habitat management.

Join us on the train! Cost is \$30 per person for non-TPE members and \$25 per person for TPE members. The event is a fundraiser: funds will go towards Chippewa

Savannas efforts to restore prairie and savanna habitats in the Lower Chippewa River area.

Contact Agnes Welsch, Chapter Outreach Coordinator, for more information or to sign up. awelsch@dishup.us.

2011 Annual Picnic and Meeting *Save the Date: July 16-17*

This summer, the Prairie Sands Chapter will host TPE's annual picnic, board meeting, and general membership meeting in Westfield, WI. This central sands location is convenient to many attractions and field trips.

Saturday, July 16 –self-guided options include:

Prairie Nursery, 10 minutes from Westfield. This local business has been serving the prairie public for many years. A demonstration garden and retail store are described here: <http://www.prairienursery.com/store/>

BisonRidge Ranch, 30 minutes from Westfield, is a popular place to take a tour (reservations required. TPE members receive a \$1 discount on tickets): <http://www.bisonridgeranch.com/>

John Muir Memorial Park/State Natural Area, 30 minutes from Westfield. Plant communities here include a rich fen, sedge meadow, open bog, northern wet forest dominated by tamarack, southern dry forest, oak opening, and wet-

mesic prairie. A trail guide about plant communities in the park is available at: http://marquette.iceagetrail.org/shop/marquette.iceagetrailalliance.info/files/1277319628_marquette_muir_park_guide.pdf. Other information:

<http://www.tn.buffalo.wi.gov/community/muirpark.asp>

Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, about 45 minutes from Westfield, offers all comers 44,000 acres of remarkable diversity and a look at resident Whooping cranes. Stop at the Refuge Office which is open until 4 p.m. on Saturday for orientation, or find maps and info at their site: <http://www.fws.gov/Remidwest/necedah/>

Saturday night campfire (weather permitting) and/or tent camping under the oaks at David and Shelley Hamel's, about 15 minutes from Westfield. Bring your own camp food and marshmallows to roast over the

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owners of
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cobblestone campfire ring at the bog and spin tales about the (prescribed) fire that got away and other scary ghost stories. And if you want to come early Saturday (anytime after noon) to set up a tent, make arrangements with Hamels ahead of time: 608-296-2866 or sdhamel@maQs.net. Campfire will be burning good at 6:30p.m. and everyone is welcome.

Directions to Hamels via Pioneer Park in Westfield: To get to Pioneer Park, take exit 113 off I-39. Turn west at end of ramp (either coming from north or south); turn right at McDonalds (N. Pioneer Park Road) and continue past Pioneer Park on the right. Turn right (north) at next stop sign (County CH/County M). Go past Westfield High School and watch for the surprise left turn that County M makes. Turn left (west). Stay on County M until 4th Avenue (not 4th Drive which is the street before 4th Avenue). Turn right on 4th Avenue and go north. After you cross Deerborn Avenue, be on the lookout for fire # N8973 on the left. If you reach the 'tee' at 4th Road, you just passed us on the left. Log house, log shop behind evergreens. Park in driveway.

All other lodging in Marquette County: <http://www.marquettenow.com/lodging.php>

Sunday, July 17

Location: The Chuckwagon Pavilion in Pioneer Park, Westfield WI:

To get to Pioneer Park, take the Westfield exit 113 off I-39. Turn west at end of ramp (either coming from north or south); turn right at McDonalds (N. Pioneer Park Road) and continue until you see Pioneer Park on the right and the large, covered pavilion.

9:00 a.m. Coffee, juice, complimentary continental breakfast at Chuckwagon Pavilion in Pioneer Park.

9:30 a.m.: Tour group leaves Chuckwagon Pavilion for Hamel property tour of the "Hugh Iltis Prairie and Savanna" restoration. This site hosts the federally-endangered Karner Blue butterfly. Work to increase the caterpillar's host plant, lupine, and multiple nectaring species has been ongoing since 1989. Survey monitoring indicates impressive success in these efforts.

Eighty acres of this 110-acre property are permanently enrolled in the USDA Grassland Reserve Program that restricts many kinds of development. Dry sand prairie and incipient jack pine barrens are a stark contrast to the fertile soils of southwest Wisconsin. The remaining property includes a tamarack bog with cranberries, sundews, and pitcher plants and oak woods which provide nesting sites for red-headed woodpeckers. The property has been considered for state natural area designation, a process still underway. The walk begins at 10a.m. and continues until 11:45 a.m., in time to drive back to the Westfield Pavilion for picnic lunch.

10:00 a.m.: TPE Board Meeting at Westfield Pavilion

12:00 noon: Picnic lunch at Pavilion. As has been customary in the past, the Prairie Sands chapter will provide a main dish for lunch and asks that participants bring side dishes to share and plates/cups/utensils for personal use.

1:00 p.m.: TPE Member meeting, at Pavilion

2:15 p.m. Tour Option 1: Tour group leaves Pavilion to tour Keith Baker's prairie restoration that is ongoing since 1992. Keith will talk about some of the successes and failures regarding a select harvest of white oak in 1989, a ten year stand of lupine with new areas in the making, oak wilt and his method of dealing with it, and a warm season grass hay and horse pasture. This is an 80-acre site with a good deal of walking, although parts of the property are accessible by small car. Keith also is willing to demonstrate his Forestry Mulcher, a monster machine that turns big trees into tiny chips in no time.

2:15 p.m. Tour Option 2: Tour group leaves Pavilion to tour Prairiehill Farm: 100 acres of restored and reconstructed prairie, oak-hickory savanna, sedge meadows, and emergent wetlands surrounding and containing a glacial drumlin. Over 80 species of endemic savanna plants survived a century of farming and new discoveries are made each year. Restoration ecologists, Laurel and Alan Bennett, who have owned and managed Prairiehill Farm for 30 years, will lead this walk. Participants will see large burr oaks that pre-date settlement; see how restored prairie vegetation is responding to active management; and learn about successful and unsuccessful restoration techniques.

Contact information for the weekend event: Ann Woldt, annralph@centurytel.net

CHIPPEWA SAVANNAS CHAPTER

Tyrone Prairie Restoration – Duscham Creek (TPE Work Day)

Trip Leader: Matt McFarlane (715-737-2434)

Where: Duscham Creek, Tyrone Property, Rock Falls, WI

When: Saturday, April 16. 9 a.m. until ???

What: Duscham Creek contains several rare prairie-dependent species. Xcel Energy is working with TPE and the WDNR to restore this dry hill native prairie. Aggressive tree removal has occurred on the upper terrace. In summer 2010, the site experienced a lightning-strike wildfire that will benefit the prairie vegetation. At this workday we will cut and pile trees and shrubs (using chainsaws) from the hillside prairie. Certified personnel using approved personal protective equipment will operate chainsaws. Anyone not operating a chainsaw will

haul brush out of the unit or to burn piles. Piles will be burned in the winter 2011.

How to get there: Meet at Rock Falls Feed Mill (west of Rock Falls, E9075 Highway 85) at 9:00 a.m. and we will carpool from there (Tyrone is 4 miles west of Rock Falls).

What to bring: Please wear warm, work-appropriate clothing (boots and work gloves are a must). Anyone with a personal chainsaw who has experience and proper safety equipment (required: chaps, helmet, leather gloves, steel toe boots) is encouraged to bring them. Bring snacks and lunch. Bring extra water to stay hydrated.

Hill Prairie Restoration – O'Connor Farm

Contact: Marcie O'Connor (651-645-2043 or marcie@haven2.com)

Where: O'Connor Farm, Buffalo County

When: Saturday, April 23. 10 a.m. - 4P.M.

What: Clearing Brush on the Knife Edge - a steep south-west facing prairie remnant. The top of the slope is dry rocky prairie, overgrown with sumac, grapevines, prickly ash, and birch and walnut trees. Toward the bottom, the slope turns into an overgrown remnant savanna, with numerous old, open-grown oaks. Participants will cut and treat brush and vines using hand clippers and saws, and will pile the cut brush.

For more information about the O'Connor Farm: <http://aprairiehaven.com>

What to bring: Pair of loppers and/or a pair of garden clippers (if you have them). Lunch. Water bottle.

How to get there: From Mondovi: Take Hwy 37 south. Turn left (east) on County Road B. Go about 1 mile and turn right (south) on Sand Road. Go about 1/2 mile, to where Sand Road dead ends in Hwy 88. Go straight ahead onto Hwy 88. When you come to County Road U, start counting driveways on the right side of the road: the O'Connor Farm is the third driveway, approximately 1 mile past County Road U. The fire number is S1287. There is no mailbox.

Burning in the Chippewa Valley

By Kristin Westad

The Chippewa Savannas chapter is planning to burn an old field near Durand this spring. The field was only briefly farmed and retained many of its native sand prairie species as well as a robust population of bullsnakes. In order to minimize disruption of these ecologically important reptiles, we hope to burn before they emerge in March. A lot of snow needs to melt before we can do that.

Last year, Chippewa Savannas hosted a one-day burn school. Some of the graduates are offering to help burn

this year. Our chapter developed a burn plan template based on Wisconsin's NRCS burn plan and the standard National Wildfire Coordinating Group plan used by many large fire agencies. Our plan is much briefer than the latter. The first plan in our template is four pages long including the map.

So far, eleven people have volunteered to help conduct burns with the Chippewa Savannas chapter. Six have taken the S130/190 class that serves as a basic entry point for many fire organizations. The chapter has an ample supply of hand tools and fire-resistant clothing for this size crew, but does not have a water-bearing vehicle. We plan to use old-fashioned water-stingy methods like clean breaks and dependence on flappers to hold the fire line and reserve backpack pumps for fighting spots.

Those interested in joining the burn crew contact Kristin Westad. kristin.westad@yahoo.com

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

Please check chapter newsletter for announcements.

Coulee Region Member Profile: Don and Donna Justin

This article was originally published in the Winter 2011 Coulee Region Chapter Newsletter and is republished with permission.



Don and Donna Justin

The Coulee Region Member Profile is a new feature for our chapter newsletter. It is our intent to focus on both new and veteran members to illustrate the commonality, and the diversity, of our Chapter's membership. It is our hope that these Profiles will help to forge stronger connections between our members and to advance our individual and collective efforts to enhance prairies and savannas in our region.

Don and Donna Justin are recent additions to TPE's Coulee Region Chapter. While they are new to TPE, they are neither new to the region nor to an interest in enlightened land management.

Don's grandparents established the Justin farm southwest of Leon in 1918. After many years making their living on the farm, Don and Donna opened the Justin Trails Resort in 1986. Justin Trails offers bed and breakfast accommodations as well as a variety of recreational activities for their guests on the 208 acre property.

An interest in prairies and savannas is a natural outgrowth of the Justin's commitment to their natural lands and to sustainable agriculture. They have already established a small demonstration prairie and are preparing to do a large-scale savanna restoration. They are looking forward to hearing whether they will receive funding assistance on their savanna restoration project through Wisconsin's Landowner Incentive Program.

Don and Donna have begun an innovative service program that enables their B & B guests to participate in their land management efforts. Guests who would like to volunteer several hours of "sweat equity" during Justin Trail's Work Weekends receive a reduced room rate and gratis lunches. The guests participate in activities such as clearing brush and trail maintenance. What a great way for a landowner to share the joys (and sore muscles) that go hand-and-hand with property improvement!

The Justin's are excited about working with others in the area that share their interest in the natural world, land stewardship and outdoor recreation. It sounds like they're ready to be active and engaged members in the Coulee Region Chapter.

EMPIRE – SAUK CHAPTER

Ruth Hine Donates Library to TPE

By Mike Mossman

Shortly before she passed away, Ruth Hine (1923-2010) and her partner Hazel Heimstra, donated her library of nature-related books to TPE. Ruth was an ecologist, writer, editor, administrator, and educator with an unassuming way and contagious enthusiasm for the natural world. During her 36 years at Wisconsin DNR and through her work at Bethel Horizons near Dodgeville, WI, Ruth inspired generations of Wisconsin conservationists.

In 1952 she was among the first women to earn a PhD in Zoology at the UW (under John Emlen), and—despite several significant setbacks—she helped break the gender barrier within the wildlife field. Her interests ranged from game biology to small mammals (her PhD work), amphibians (she started the Wisconsin Frog and

Toad Survey) and prairie restoration. She initiated many programs benefitting endangered and threatened wildlife, in the days when "nongame" was not emphasized. Her work as a technical editor had lasting, tangible benefits to conservation and to the hundreds of researchers who not only produced excellent reports and publications with her help, but actually learned how to write!

I worked for Ruth in the early 1980s. I watched her bring out the best in many aspiring biologists and editors, both young and old. She helped us bloom and bring our love for the natural world, and need to share it to fruition. She was a great editor and administrator: passionate, considerate, visionary, brilliant and genuine, with a true ecological sense. Most importantly, she understood. By treating authors and coworkers as friends with a common mission, she helped build our faith in that mission.

She stated her philosophy this way, "I look upon the world as a magnificent, living organism created by God and sustained by God. Human beings are part of that creation, part of nature, if you will. I think it's very important for human beings to realize that we're part of the earth. We forget that sometimes. We set ourselves up above everything else, but we're just a part of the earth."

It is fitting that Ruth was inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in 2010.

TPE is fortunate to be the recipient of Ruth's nature library, comprising some 340 volumes, thanks to the generosity of her longtime friend and companion Hazel Hiemstra. It is for us to do with as we see fit, to further her abiding love for nature, learning, and her fellow stewards of the earth.



Ruth Hine. Photo by Susi Nehls.

Counting Regal Fritillary Butterflies in the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area

By Ruth Kearley

Do you want to contribute to conservation while enjoying nature? How about a chance to sweat on sunny, low-wind days in treeless prairie for the sake of a State Endangered Species? If not for science, would you do it for love, or beauty or ethics?

Last summer, with the help of a Citizen-Based Monitoring Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to The Prairie Enthusiasts, 15 volunteers and seven staff from three agencies started a long-term program to monitor regal fritillary presence on remnant and restored prairies in the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area in eastern Iowa County and western Dane County. The regal fritillary is listed as a Federal Species of Concern. Once widespread, it has nearly disappeared east of the Mississippi River. In Wisconsin, it is listed as Endangered due to low or declining populations and is considered critically imperiled because of its vulnerability to extinction in the state (see article on page 6). Occurrences have been documented in 14 counties in Wisconsin through the Natural Heritage Inventory program, but currently there are only three or four areas where potentially viable populations still persist.

The regal fritillary is a striking orange, black and white butterfly slightly smaller than a monarch. The larvae depend on violets for food, and the adults require open prairie habitat. To prevent overgrowth by brush, the incursion of trees or takeover by non-native, cool-season grasses, prairies must be managed through controlled burns, mowing and/or mechanical clearing of woody growth. All of these practices may positively or negatively impact regal fritillary populations. The monitoring program seeks to increase our understanding of the ways in which regals respond to management of prairie remnants and to the creation of new habitat.

The goal of the program is to have consistent, long-term monitoring in place at sites with known or potential regal fritillary presence. Last summer, 18 sites were monitored. These sites include privately-owned lands as well as preserves owned by The Prairie Enthusiasts and The Nature Conservancy. Sixty-two transects were established across the sites for counting observations of regal fritillaries, and 23 additional areas were monitored for the presence of the butterfly. Altogether there were 748 sightings of regal fritillaries made over 113 volunteer hours.

Because the monitoring program has only one season of data, not much can be said about the results. It will be several years before data analysis begins. The significance of the first season was getting an enthusiastic group of

volunteers involved and getting them started! However, more volunteers are still needed.

Would you like to participate? No previous experience is required, just a love of nature and the outdoors and tolerance for warm, sunny days. Training will be provided. We are, however, looking for commitment over several seasons. The monitoring program runs June 25 to July 31, with each monitoring team making four visits to their site spaced about a week apart. The monitoring training program has an evening and a field component. Training opportunities will start in May. Please join us in this important endeavor! Contact Ruth Kearley to learn more or to sign up: rekearley@gmail.com or 608-729-4050



Regal Fritillary on Liatris. Photo © Richard Oberle

Mihlbauer and Preston are Empire-Sauk Chapter Volunteers of the Year

Empire-Sauk Chapter has so many great volunteers it is difficult to select just one volunteer of the year. Therefore, the chapter leadership selected two members for recognition in 2010: Earl Mihlbauer and Eric Preston. The chapter recognized both Earl and Eric at The Prairie Enthusiasts banquet in Platteville on February 26 (see page 1). They were presented with TPE hats and T-shirts.

Earl has been a Life Member of TPE since 1994. He is active in land management, especially tree/brush removal (chainsaw operation seems to be a hobby of his) and prescribed burns. For the past five years, he has also served as chair of the land management committee for TPE's Schluckebier Sand Prairie in Sauk County, WI. This State Natural Area was transferred from TNC to TPE. More recently, Earl has brought his experience as former Executive Director of the Wisconsin Technical Colleges District Boards Association to TPE's Fundraising and Endowment Committee. Earl also serves as a trustee for the Prairie Enthusiasts Trust (see article on page 3). In 2010, Earl contributed at least 150 hours to TPE's efforts. Thank you, Earl!

Eric, and his wife Kim Kreitingner, are relative newcomers to TPE, but they hit the ground running a couple years ago, showing great enthusiasm for TPE's mission. They quickly assumed the lead stewardship role at the 60-acre Shea Prairie, a sub-unit of the Mounds View Grassland Preserve. Unfortunately, Kim was laid up for an extended period with a tendon injury. Then, they were blessed with a baby boy, Anders, (our youngest volunteer). Even with these increased commitments at home, with Kim's support Eric managed to keep volunteering at a high level. In 2010, he contributed nearly 200 hours to land management and restoration related activities. He attended work parties on tree/brush control, weed control, seed collecting, and seed cleaning, and served on the Mounds View Grassland stewardship committee. Eric is also an excellent photographer (see <http://ericpreston.com/>), and he generously supplies TPE with images to use in education and promotion. Lastly, Eric has taken on the task of organizing the chapter's seed collecting efforts. He is using his computer skills to develop a database that will track which species need to be collected when and where, and then identify volunteers to accomplish the collecting. Thank you, Eric and Kim!

Want to Help with Bird Surveys?

If you can identify birds by song and sight, TPE could use your help this spring. We plan to conduct breeding bird surveys at Mounds View Grassland in eastern Iowa County. Volunteers will receive guidance and instruction on how to conduct the surveys; they just have to have reasonable competence in identifying birds typical of southern Wisconsin grasslands, brush lands and open woodlands. The surveys will take place during late May and all of June. The projects are as follows.

Brush thicket surveys

We wish to document bird use of brush thicket habitat in open landscapes at the 530-acre Mounds View Grassland preserve during the breeding season. Volunteers are needed to observe selected thickets. Likely species to be encountered include Bell's vireo, brown thrasher, catbird, willow flycatcher, song sparrow, field sparrow and yellow warbler.

This survey is important to the management of the preserve. These thickets provide critical, specialized habitat for a suite of birds that rely on brush thickets in relatively open landscapes. One species, Bell's vireo, is listed as Threatened in the state, and three others (brown thrasher, willow flycatcher and field sparrow) are considered Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the state. However, maintaining these thickets in an otherwise open grassland habitat comes with management costs and conservation tradeoffs. Maintaining thickets is labor-

intensive because they harbor invasive weeds and non-native brush, and it requires extra effort to protect them from fire. Also, their presence often reduces the amount and quality of habitat available for the many species of declining grassland-dependant birds that are a primary conservation target at the preserve. Therefore, it would be beneficial to eliminate unused thickets while retaining the productive ones. Repeated bird surveys will identify which thickets to keep and which to eliminate.

Area search survey

We are adding a 40-acre parcel to the Mounds View Grassland. It consists of a drained wetland, a pasture of original prairie sod that is partly overtaken with trees and brush, and five acres of cropland. Our goal is to restore the entire parcel back to its original wetland and prairie habitat. However, a requirement of the deal is to document the recovery of the site. Therefore, before any restoration work can begin, we need to quantify which species of birds, and how many, currently use the 40-acre parcel, and then repeat the survey after the restoration has occurred. Volunteers are needed to walk the site on a number of different days this spring and early summer and record the locations and species of birds present on the 40 acres.

If you wish to help with either of these surveys, please contact Rich Henderson (608-845-7065 or tpe.rhenderson@tds.net).

Are You Mechanically Inclined?

The Empire-Sauk Chapter is looking for a volunteer or two to maintain and repair 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, backpack propane torches, fire-pump units, and seeders. The workshop at the Schurch-Thomson barn is ready to be used for equipment maintenance and repair. Most equipment will likely be stored at the barn, however, maintenance work may be done at other locations. If you wish to help, please contact Rich Henderson (608-845-7065 or tpe.rhenderson@tds.net).

Spring Burn Season is Upon Us

We have nearly 50 burns scheduled for this spring. Experience and training is desired, but not required. Novices will be paired up with experienced people. Personal protective fire-resistant (Nomex) clothing is highly recommended but not required. If you are interested in helping, but have not yet let us know, please contact Empire-Sauk Chapter volunteer coordinator, Ann Calhoun. volunteers@theprairieenthusiasts.org

MANY RIVERS CHAPTER

Many Rivers Chapter 1st Anniversary

By Scott Seigfreid

On the cold snowy afternoon of January 29th, 42 Many Rivers members gathered for a business meeting and celebration of our first year as an organized and fully functioning Chapter of TPE. This gala affair at the downtown Mankato Buffalo Wild Wings was the first event attended by many members. It gave them a chance to see what our chapter has been up to for the 11 months of our existence. Based on email feedback, quite a few members were surprised at how active we have been.

A PowerPoint presentation of the past year's events included everything from prairie workdays to educational events, public information, field trips, a picnic etc, for a total of 44 chapter sponsored functions this past year. These events included a total of 1217.5 volunteer hours for the betterment of our prairies here in the eight counties covered by our chapter.

Henry Panowitsch spoke to the chapter on issues faced by the Board of Directors. He explained what it means to commit to maintain a remnant indefinitely. He compared it to care taking a cemetery-it is forever and demands fiscal responsibility and physical commitment.

We then moved on to new business. We have some exciting projects planned for this summer. Our chapter has agreed to help members Jim & Kathryn Vonderharr restore approximately five acres on property they own in the Minnesota River Valley near the Kasota Prairie Area. Most of the seed will be collected from the immediate area. We will enhance and restore the species diversity to try to get it close to what it once was originally.

We have also agreed to supervise and work cooperatively with the City of Mankato on a four-acre native planting in the Rasmussen Woods Park. This particular park has a relatively high use rate, and the Native Planting will be a good teaching tool for the folks at the Elks Nature Center. Our role will be to monitor the planting for invasive species as well as to train the neighborhood group to identify invasive species.

The Many Rivers Chapter is also proud to be the sponsors of the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program: Big Woods-Big Rivers to be taught at the Elks Nature Center at Rasmussen Woods Park in Mankato. This 11-week program will be on Monday evenings from April 4th thru the June 20th and also includes two eight hour fieldtrips on Saturdays, dates to be announced. The theme was chosen to reflect the fact that in the Mankato area, we are at the confluence of two biomes: Big Woods and Tall grass Prairie. The course cost is \$200.00 per student and Scholarship money is available. The class is limited to 20 people and for each student who takes the course our

chapter will receive \$50.00. You may enroll online <http://www.minneotamasternaturalist.org/> or contact Amy Rager, Minnesota Master Naturalist Program 1-888-241-4532.

As we wrapped up our new business, we held a drawing for door prizes which included T-shirts, Snakes & Lizards of MN books, and donations from local vendors. The Prairie Enthusiasm flowed thru the room along with the Leinenkugels and visions of spring danced in our thoughts; a good time was had by all.



First anniversary meeting January 29th at the Mankato Buffalo Wild Wings. Photo by Gregg Andersen.

He Does the Footwork, She Does the Bookwork

By Deanna Pomije

Nick & Mary Kunz of rural Madelia, Minnesota are truly avid Prairie Enthusiasts. It started innocently enough with reading conservation literature and nature magazines. Then the Kunzes visited Schaefer Prairie, a 160-acre tallgrass prairie remnant near Glencoe, owned by the Nature Conservancy. Schaefer Prairie contains 275 kinds of plants: a few of the protected species include Sullivant's milkweed, Nuttall's bur-reed, and Hill's thistle.

The Kunzes went on to visit Cottonwood River Prairie MN DNR Scientific and Natural Area, also known as the Prairie Sky Unit. This nearly 500-acre prairie runs along a ridge between Cottonwood River and Mound Creek. Prairie Sky Unit was named for the breathtaking view that can be seen from the hill top. The abundant plants of this SNA include prairie bush clover, purple coneflower, lead plant, puccoon, blazing star and the amazing butterfly weed. With these two prairies as inspiration, Nick & Mary Kunz started work to create their own prairie closer to home.

Nick and Mary Kunz were married later in life after he completed service in the military. Nick worked for the local telephone company for 33 years and farmed alongside his brother. As Nick neared retirement age, though, the prairie bug bit this couple hard.

They started off small, with a three acre prairie planting around their house. Then, in 2000 and 2001 they planted another 75 acres. Their diverse acreage boasts not only prairie but also the Watonwan River's beautiful timbered hillsides. The Kunzes began by planting 5 grasses and 16 forbs. Their prairie now contains side oats grama, blue eyed grass, hoary puccoon, and other species.

To better enjoy the entire growing season, they built a small, screened-in porch in the prairie. Neighbors lovingly call their land the 'Park' and have described it as a little bit of paradise.

Nick is one of those people who never let any grass grow under his feet...with the current exceptions of Big Blue and Indian grass. He is forever confronting the challenge common to most prairie restoration land owners: undesirable vegetation. In addition to mowing, clearing, and cutting brush and trees, Nick tries to burn the prairie on a three year rotation. He has also planted trees and shrubs around some of their property. Being an ardent hunter, Nick has focused on such nut-bearing species as hickory, hazelnut and oak. Through the years, he has experimented with many management techniques.

Mary's love of nature started with her mom, who took her mushroom and hazelnut hunting. Like Nick, Mary keeps busy with prairie activities. She has quite a collection of plant ID books and has photographed a vast range of prairie plants. Through the years she has become quite an authority in prairie plant identification. She also starts many prairie forbs and grasses from seeds. It helps to pass the time through the end of a long winter and generates even more enthusiasm for spring's arrival. This time of year, the plants provide much needed greenery to the living room. At times it may seem like too much greenery; but it has helped Mary with young plant identification. Mary also collects rain water throughout the year to care for their many prairie seedlings. To stay well rounded, Mary also fosters a small vegetable garden.

Together Nick and Mary are also citizen stream monitors for the MN Pollution Control Agency on the Watonwan River. Every week they monitor the quality, temperature and turbidity of the river along with rain gauge record keeping. The ease with which both Nick and Mary talk about their prairie activities and projects reveals how much they value prairie ecosystems. When the couple isn't busy at home with their many prairie projects and other activities they may also be found out exploring other surrounding prairies. Now through the Prairie Enthusiasts both Nick & Mary will get even more opportunities to share the love they have fostered for the prairie and all its' intricate facets.

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS CHAPTER

Chapter news can be found at: www.nipes.org

New Executive Director

By Karin Strenski

The Northwest Illinois Chapter is pleased to announce that Christine Larson has accepted the position of Executive Director, following Jim Rachuy's recent retirement. Jim held the post of Executive Director for many years, and was instrumental in the development of the chapter and the Hanley Savanna restoration. We are pleased that Jim will continue to be involved in the work of our chapter, and are grateful for his contributions.

Christine holds a Bachelor of Science degree from University of Wisconsin-Parkside, and a Masters in Management degree from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

She spent 20 years in the telecom industry at Ameritech as Vice President of national field services and of sales and services. She also was Director of Operations at CCC Information Services in Chicago.

Christine started weekendng in the northwest Illinois area in the 1990's, and relocated to the area in 2006 to serve as Executive Director of the JoDaviess Conservation Foundation. She held this position from 2006-2008. She currently serves as Treasurer and Board Director of the Conservation Foundation, and is on the staff of Four Mounds Foundation in Dubuque, Iowa.

Christine finds many similarities between working with big corporations and in leading a not-for-profit organization. She has led both teams and large, diverse groups. According to Chris, "It takes leadership and passion for what you are doing. Those same attributes are important for you to be successful. In order to get things done in any organization, you have to have some talent to get people to follow you."

In a few short years, Christine has been involved many of our local conservation groups. She brings a wealth of both knowledge and a desire to learn more about our own mission. We feel that both TPE and our local organization will benefit from her involvement.

PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

No information submitted.

PRAIRIE SANDS CHAPTER

Soils and Water

More than 40 area residents braved bitter cold to learn about the ground and water affecting their gardens and natural areas. On Tuesday, February 7, Maureen Muldoon, assistant professor of Geology at UW-Oshkosh, spoke at the Wautoma Public Library.

Dr. Muldoon, who is a groundwater specialist, gave a quick overview of various soils and geological regions in Wisconsin before answering questions about soil and groundwater conditions in Waushara, Waupaca and Marquette Counties. She shared the following resources:

Soils: There is a published soil survey for each county in Wisconsin, found in libraries and county offices, etc. Surveys include detailed soil type maps and descriptions of typical soil profiles. Soil data are also available online from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service). Soil testing services are available at the two UW Soil Testing Labs in Madison and Marshfield. <http://uwlab.soils.wisc.edu/>

Geology: The Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, plus much other information, is available at <http://www.uwex.edu/wgnhs/>

Plant Communities: Classic source is Curtis' Vegetation of Wisconsin obtained via original surveyors' notes. Other, newer sources include a new map of land cover available at the UW-Madison Forest Ecology Lab <http://landscape.forest.wisc.edu/>, the state Department of Natural Resources' Ecological Landscapes webpage <http://dnr.wi.gov/landscapes/>, and the Virginia M. Cline Collection, Ecological Communities of Wisconsin, available from the UW Digital Collection, Ecology and Natural Resources Collection at <http://digioll.library.wisc.edu/EcoNatRes/>.

The presentation was sponsored by The Prairie Sands Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts, with assistance from Shar-a-Gardeners—Waushara County Master Gardeners.

PRAIRIE SMOKE CHAPTER

No information submitted

ST. CROIX VALLEY CHAPTER

This year we formed two committees to implement goals from our strategic plan:

Land management will write management and burn plans for each of our sites. They will also focus on the scheduled planting of prairie next to the Blueberry Hill remnant. (Wayne Huhnke, Mike Miller, Keith Relyea and Rob Calahan)

Education will create a plan for doing plant inventories at our sites. (Burt Levy, Barb Bend, and Ginny Gaynor)

Volunteers Needed

We still need volunteers to staff TPE booths for Earth Day in River Falls, Hudson, and Prescott. If anyone has a mannequin we can borrow for Prescott, please let Evanne know.

Next Chapter Meeting

We hope to have a chapter meeting in April, but it depends on when burn season begins. Watch the website for more information.

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN CHAPTER

A Big Thank You

From Rose Sime and Jim Huebschman

As conference chairs, we'd like to thank all of the Southwest Chapter's board of directors who were so very involved in making this year's conference a huge success. We'd also like to extend a special thanks to Carol Winge, TPE's business manager, for keeping us on task during the planning process and doing so much behind-the-scenes work to make this conference the success that it was. We'd like to thank the UW-Platteville events staff, in particular Nathan Manwiller, for their work in ensuring that the conference ran smoothly. Many individuals provided much needed assistance the day of the conference with a variety of tasks, including: help with set-up, staffing the sales table, selling tickets, counting raffle tickets, and distributing raffle and silent auction items to the winners. Those helping with all of these duties were: Steve and Susan Carpenter, Barbara Glass, Jack Kussmaul, Earl Mihlbauer, Gayl Stewart, Peg and Jon Travers, Bill and Jayne Wisler.

Thanks also to the many members who donated items to the raffle/auction. We have yet to hear the results of the raffle/auction but appreciate all that donated items. This is one of our most successful fundraising activities.

We have heard many, many positive comments about the speakers and the conference in general. We want to send a hearty thank you to the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited and to Steve Carpenter in

particular, who was on our planning committee and helped line up speakers and added his two cents worth on various aspects of the conference.

SW Chapter Volunteer of the Year

by Rose Sime

Not many people could juggle being the Chair of the UW Platteville Biology Department, being a well-loved professor, serving as an active member on the SW Board of Directors, and showing up for most work parties of the SW Chapter. But, Jeff Huebschman, who has been a super active member for years since moving to Wisconsin from Nebraska, succeeds at this. Moreover, he was our Prairie Enthusiasts' Conference Chair this year! We really appreciate all that he has given to the Prairie Enthusiasts over the years. He has given the big "3M" mind muscle and money. Thank you, Jeff.



*Jeff Huebschman, Jesse Bennett, Rose Sime.
Photo by Rich Oberle*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The following people have joined TPE in the period November 20, 2010 – February 28, 2011.

James Alwill, Bradford, IL
Paulette Anderson, Hammond, WI
Jeremy and Margaret Batson, Spring Green, WI
Glenna Benjamin, Oregon, WI
Leon Boland & Katherine Stahl, Elk Mound, WI
Rachel & Randall Bolger, Waunakee, WI
Jim & Mary Danforth, Ann Arbor, MI
Keyron Eagan, Platteville, WI
Rick Fenstermaker, Hammond, WI
Joy Follendorf, Madison, WI
Joan Forsythe, Hammond, WI
Elizabeth Frieders, Platteville, WI
Janice Gary, Madison, WI
Victoria Graham, Kenosha, WI
Charles Heide & Emma Jung, Racine, WI
Kay Helms, Mankato, MN

Chuck & Marjean Hendrycks, Lafayette, MN
George & Marilyn Johnson, Madison, WI
Ben Johnston, Wilton, WI
Arthur Kneeland, Menomonie, WI
Jon Kutz, Lake Crystal, MN
Christine Larson, Hanover, IL
Barbara LeDuc, Fall Creek, WI
Jennifer Linder, Kearney, NE
Janet Maciver, Waukesha, WI
Jo Ann Rucker, Durand, WI
Roger Stewart, Dodgeville, WI
Kate Thomas, Afton, MN
Peter & Kathy Vanderloo, Dodgeville, WI
Jean Vandewalker, Cary, IL
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