

# THE PRAIRIE PROMOTER

Grassroots Conservation in Action

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The  
Prairie  
Enthusiasts



## Saving the “Heart” of Heart Prairie

The Charlotte Adelman & Bernard L. Schwartz Preserve

Joe Rising, TPE Communications Coordinator

Charlotte Adelman and Bernard Schwartz have a long commitment to conservation efforts and work hard to preserve and restore prairie remnants. They have written books such as *The Prairie Directory of North America* and *The Midwestern Native Garden*. Their interest in prairies goes way back and together they enjoy keeping an eye on our native landscapes.

As we know, prairies are always under threat of being tilled under and chopped up. This is wreaking havoc on biological diversity and opening the door to invasive species. A dark shadow falls on the land as restorative fires turn into brush and trees. Our prairie heritage is also often lost to surveyed lots and houses.

That is where Charlotte and Bernie came to the rescue. Given their interest in native landscapes, they identified an overgrown remnant as a small part of a landscape-scale prairie, historically called “Heart Prairie.” When this property went up for sale, in a subdivision of small lots, Charlotte and Bernie bought 7 of them, saving a 1.6 acre piece of prairie history. The property is unique in its location on a small lake, called North Lake, near Whitewater, WI. This property contains some of the best remaining woodlands, wetlands, undeveloped shore lands, flood lands, and wildlife habitat in southeastern Wisconsin. This Preserve happened to

be a future part of a Primary Environmental Corridor and is near the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Since buying the property they have been managing its native habitats and enjoying these wonders.

Charlotte shared a story with us about her background that grew into a love of nature and eventually the Preserve's history:

“When I was 6 years old, and my sister 4, my family summered in a lonely log cabin located on Lake McDonald in Eagle River, Wisconsin. Its primitive amenities included an outhouse, outdoor hand water pump, kerosene lamps, and a beautiful lake in which we bathed. My mother picked raspberries and



Charlotte Adelman and  
Bernard L. (Bernie) Schwartz.  
Photo courtesy Charlotte Adelman

Continued on page 9

## Our Mission

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

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## Our Bundle of Stories

Chris Kirkpatrick, Executive Director

This past May, we launched a brand new look to our website. I hope you have checked out the new site and taken a look around. There is a page for each chapter, and we continue to build pages on the sites we own and manage. One feature is a blog which has been used largely by land managers to discuss observations in the field on a regular basis. There is also an event calendar where field trips and work parties can be posted and filtered by the type of event or by chapter activity. One unique feature of the website is the ability to access your own personal information through the login portal. From the yellow login button on the top right of the webpage you can use your email address to set up a username and password. Once you are logged in you can renew your membership, change your contact information, and tell us about your skills and interests.

In addition to the new website, we have also begun using eNews to provide monthly updates about interesting news, activities, and events. People can also sign up as a contact through the new website to receive the eNews and get in touch with chapter leadership for volunteer opportunities. If you are on social media, we have also begun posting regularly on engaging information about our field trips, member pictures, blog posts, and interesting stories about prairie conservation. Please like us on Facebook and share our posts if you are inspired to do so; it broadens our network of interested people. Several chapters have their own Facebook pages which is a great place to share pictures of field trips, work parties, or observations on their own prairies. If your chapter doesn't have one it can be a great way to share your work with your friends and neighbors.

All of these new tools allow us to share an ever expanding bundle of stories and promote the amazing work being done out on the prairie. The variety of stories, pictures and observations that you provide can be shared with the entire organization and the general public. Knowing what is going on from Winona, MN to Montello, WI to Stockton, IL enables us to profile and highlight what you are doing in your own backyard. It helps members and the general public know more about the work going on in your area and will hopefully involve more volunteers and members in every chapter.

Please share your stories with the TPE staff. It can simply be a cool picture of the work you've done or the rare plant, insect or bird you find at a field trip or work party. Keep it in mind while you are out in the field and send your pictures and news to Joe Rising, Communications Coordinator at tpe@theprairieenthusiasts.org, or tag us in a Facebook post.



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# President's Message

Jack Kussmaul

The next President's Message will come from Scott Fulton, who is scheduled to assume this office at the picnic on July 17. With my final message, I want to take time to look back but also to look forward.

I have held this office for the last four years. It is gratifying to see how far we have come as an organization during this short time. This is attributable to our dedicated staff and to all of you volunteers who have given so much to the organization. Our staff four years ago consisted of a part time business manager. Our accountant was from an outside organization. Today we have a full time executive director, Chris Kirkpatrick, and part time staff consisting of Joe Rising, the Communications Coordinator, Jerry Pedretti, Bookkeeper and Winnie Bade, Accountant. Four years ago our office was a post office box in Madison and the closet in the home of our Business Manager. Today we have a real office located in Viroqua, which, as much of our growth has been north and west, is a more central location.

After much volunteer and staff effort our website has been greatly improved. The *Prairie Promoter* has moved from black and white to color. Four years ago we had 12 members of the Compass Club, those persons who give a \$1,000.00 unrestricted gift per year. Today we have 47. We have started having donor recognition events to let our donors know that we really do appreciate them. The sites we own have increased from 1,189 acres to 1,891 (and will probably be over 2,000 when you read this) and the sites on which

we hold conservation easements have increased from 969 to 1075. We are well on our way toward becoming an accredited land trust.

In 2013 we were named Wisconsin Land Trust of the Year. One of the best evenings of my life was at the awards ceremony at Monona Terrace when we received that award. In accepting the award I commented to the audience that there were probably thirty people in the organization who had done more than I had to enable us to earn this award, but I was the one who got to stand up there and feel happy. The same is true of these last four years. I have done my best to hold things together and work toward accreditation. It was the staff and all of you volunteers, however, who were responsible for all we have accomplished. I cannot thank you enough.

My successor in this office will be Scott Fulton. I had been looking forward to the transition because I was ready to retire from the position. After spending time with Scott I am looking forward to the transition for another reason. He has spent a lot of time analyzing the challenges and opportunities facing the organization. His skills as a successful businessman are the same skills required to manage a non-profit. I am looking forward to working with Scott to help in carrying out his vision for making us a more mature and solidly based organization. He will have my full support and I trust he will have yours.

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## Editor's Notes

Scott Fulton

It may be the fact that we are now being printed in color, but people seem to be paying more attention to the *Prairie Promoter*. After the March 2016 issue, I received two different notes from our readers about the contents.

Ron Gamble, an environmental compliance coordinator and technician for a parks district in Michigan, wrote "Couldn't help but notice, the photo (by Jerry Newman) on p. 8 is "better" than the verbiage suggests. The swallowtail on the left is a giant, *Papilio cresphontes*."



Prof. L.J. Musselman, a noted botanist and very early prairie enthusiast (see article on page 5 of this issue) wrote "In the article on The Species Conservation Project (page 6) reference is made to my old friend *Aureolaria*

*grandiflora* that occurred at several sites in Rock, Green, and Grant counties. Contrary to what the article says, it is easy to grow from seed. In nature it is found only on white oaks (subgenus *Quercus*) but can be grown in pots with a variety of woody hosts. The seed needs cold treatment before sowing."

I am so often completely awed by the knowledge base in our greater community!

As Jack so clearly points out in his President's Message above, I will be assuming the role of President of The Prairie Enthusiasts later this month. Given my new responsibilities, I regret to announce that it is time for me to find a replacement for myself in the role of editor of the *Prairie Promoter*. I have truly enjoyed this job for the last four years. Getting to know more of the talented people and huge range of activities that occur across our chapters has been a tremendous preparation for my new position.

If you have any interest whatsoever in helping to edit and produce this fine journal, please contact me at [editor@theprairieenthusiasts.org](mailto:editor@theprairieenthusiasts.org).

# Seed Sourcing for Restoration in a Changing Climate

Marci Hess

I had the opportunity to attend a Seed Sourcing Symposium at the Chicago Botanic Gardens on June 13. It was an important meeting and just the beginning of a very important discussion. The meeting moved from historical aspects of seed sourcing to current day projects and on to needed future actions. As promised, the day led to more questions than answers. I was surprised to learn organizations, government entities, and large institutions were focusing and directing resources to this topic. I'll provide some highlights from the speakers. Here's a link to a paper with indepth information on this topic. <http://driftlessprairies.org/ecological-restoration/native-seed-plant-sourcing>

Seed sourcing is the process of deciding which native seeds or plants will germinate and survive where you are planting them.

Historically, the native seed zones were created to limit movement of seeds; the goal was to prevent genetic maladaptation. When compared to current climate data, the 1960-1990 data used to create these maps is showing measurable differences. Climate change is happening quicker than we expect. The result will be increases in extremes; heat waves will increase by 60% and increase in duration. Since 1980, we have experienced 188 catastrophic weather events. Perhaps we need dynamic seed zones rather than the current static ones. Some work has been done to create provisional seed zones for the western part of the U.S.

What used to be "how local is local" has changed to "is local still local." Speakers stressed the need to think ecologically when choosing species and sources. Latitude is an important component of ecologically-relevant seeds, especially as we consider climate change, which cannot be ignored. A quote from President Obama's 2nd Inaugural address in January 2013 speaks to the criticalness of acknowledging this and placing value on preparing our ecosystems for it.



Empire-Sauk Chapter volunteers preparing seed mixes at the Schurch-Thomson Prairie barn for use on TPE sites. Photo by Paul Kaarakka.

We, the people, still believe that our obligations as Americans are not just to ourselves, but to all posterity. We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations. Some may still deny the overwhelming judgment of science, but none can avoid the devastating impact of raging fires and crippling drought and more powerful storms.

Can we rely on adaptive evolution to rescue our wild populations from climate change? Can pollinators keep up with flowering evolution? Research is being done using trees in the northwest but we were cautioned that one species example cannot be extrapolated to another.

Commercial native seed companies were represented. They expressed a need for scientific evaluation of seed genetics. At present, their source identification is on the honor system. Native seed is not sold based on genetic standards; it is seed collected from native populations where no genetic testing of parent material has been conducted. It was emphasized that we are not able to genetically pinpoint a species. There is no historical genetic data on plants. We know genetic material is moved about via insects; we also know it is moved by bacteria and fungi.

Jack Pizzo, a commercial seed producer, used the analogy of Dr. Frankenstein to describe our current restoration practices. We take all these disparate parts with huge variability and put them together to recreate an ecosystem. These puzzle pieces are not static nor are they well studied. What is science and what is opinion when specifications of provenance for projects are written for commercial suppliers? Supply and demand must be considered. Is the demand for certain provenance, which may or may not be "genetically appropriate" keeping up with the economic realities?

A couple of presenters encouraged folks to "poke holes" in current practices. Not as a way to negatively criticize but as a way to "make it better." Playing devil's advocate and rethinking restoration practices is imperative and should be encouraged. Nature isn't static. Nature doesn't have a rote schedule. Neither should we.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has established a National Seed Strategy for Rehabilitation and Restoration; the success of this is based on "a nationwide network of native seed collectors"—from private individuals to organizations. The ultimate goal is to preserve our native seed stock and develop driven seed zones for each plant and tree which can be used for seed transfer. Our current use of serendipity rather than strategy backed with scientific evidence will not create resilient ecosystems. "We need the same forward-thinking management we demand for other natural resources such as timber and oil," states Peggy Olwell, BLM.

While the BLM has initiated the first steps to preserve and protect our native seed sources, they readily admit that making sure the "right seed is in the right place at the right time" is the responsibility of the practitioner. And gaps in getting the information from the scientific community to the practitioner cannot be denied.

Projects already initiated:

- Natural Selections - <http://www.tallgrassprairiecenter.org/natural-selections>
- Prairie on Farms - <http://www.tallgrassprairiecenter.org/prairie-farms>
- National Seed Strategy - <http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/more/CPNPP/o/seedstrategy.html>
- Seed Zone Summit – The northeastern area of the Forest Service will be holding this summit in 2017 to develop seed zones, develop guidelines for their use, and define terminology. The date and location are to be determined.
- Nature Serve has created a Climate Change Vulnerability Index to identify plants and animals most vulnerable to climate change <http://www.nature-serve.org/conservation-tools/climate-change-vulnerability-index>

Some needs that were discussed:

- Commercial seed producers need to unite and create a native seed organization that represents the interests of those producing, sourcing, and planting native seeds. At present, there is no political voice or educational component for this industry.
- We need direct funding for plants in our federal, state, and local budget. The BLM has no direct funding for plants at present.
- We need educational forums to connect the science to the practitioner. This is often lamented in restoration but was specifically noted with regard to seed sourcing and understanding of “genetically appropriate” plant materials.

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## A Prairie Enthusiast Returns

Tom Mitchell

A prairie enthusiast before our organization existed, Lytton J. Musselman returned to southern Wisconsin in June to tour some of the sites he first visited 50 years ago when he, along with Theodore Cochrane and others, compiled *Flora of Rock County*, published in 1971 in the *Michigan Botanist*. He marveled at how many prairies are now protected.

“This is so wonderful. A special, emotional day for me to see firsthand the palpable enthusiasm of your chapter,” he said after visiting Avon Ridge, Newark Road Prairie and Briggs Wetlands, all in Rock County, with Prairie Bluffers Rob Baller, Bill Walz and Tom Mitchell.

Musselman is a native of Beloit and a graduate of Beloit College, with a master’s degree from UW-Milwaukee and a Ph.D. in Botany from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is currently the Mary Payne Hogan Professor of Botany and chair of the department of biological sciences at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. In 1984 he established the Blackwater Ecological Preserve, the northernmost extension of the longleaf pine savanna, where he is the land manager of the 318-acre preserve for ODU.

The author of four books, Professor Musselman has lived in and worked in several Middle Eastern countries, serving as a Fulbright professor at the American University in Beirut. But he still visits family in Wisconsin every summer and was pleased to learn that TPE is very active in his native Rock

County. “When I was looking for prairies 50 years ago, the railroads were still running and those corridors were places to find native vegetation. An example is the Kessler Railroad Prairie that was completely free of brush and trees,” he recalled.



L to R: Rob Baller, Tom Mitchell and Lytton Musselman.  
Photo by Bill Walz.



# Diane Hills Departs as Empire-Sauk Volunteer Coordinator

Scott Fulton and Karen Agee

It is with considerable sadness that the Empire-Sauk Chapter said goodbye on June 30 to Diane Hills in her position as chapter volunteer coordinator.

Diane was hired in early 2013. She came to the job with a great background and career in both environmental conservation and community organization, and was very much able to hit the ground running. The primary early focus was on setting up an active process for reaching out to find new people interested in our work, to communicate more effectively with the chapter volunteer base, and to work to get everyone more engaged.

Part of this involved participating in and creating more outreach events (such as our Prairie Days events, the Wisconsin Science Festival and the Garden Expo) where Diane's talents as an event organizer were very much appreciated. Some simple things – like publicizing events in local newspapers and collecting contact information of interested individuals in a database – proved to be very effective, since the chapter had not done this consistently in the past.

Diane also worked hard to present TPE and its mission in more compelling and engaging ways through tools like the brochure, display materials and “branding”. These outreach tools were tested and refined at numerous events, and were much of the basis of what we are now using across the entire organization. Diane developed a new email announcement system which utilized both photographs and short but interesting announcements of events such as field trips and work parties. She later worked closely with the staff and volunteer team that put the new TPE website and e-news system online.

Getting both new contacts and active members more engaged with the chapter's activities was also a priority. One initiative was to coach work party leaders to think about how to be more welcoming and supportive with new volunteers. Direct contact was also important, and Diane spent many hours on the phone and email connecting with volunteers, supporting and encouraging them (and all of us!), linking

people with jobs that needed to be done.

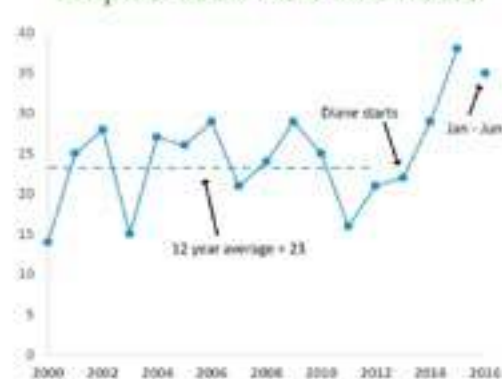
Another major area of focus (and a strong personal interest for Diane) was to get more involvement of young people, especially college students. She worked very hard with the Badger Volunteers program at UW-Madison to get students involved in a variety of ways. Some projects were less visible (such as starting up a TPE-wide photo library, which has now been

taken up by the 2016 photo contest winner, Joshua Mayer). One of the more successful projects has been a program (about to begin its fourth year – see article on next page) of having 3 – 5 students working weekly with experienced TPE land managers Ted Cochrane and Denny Connor on several of our sites over the course of the fall semester. It has been an ongoing effort to make these programs sustainable, but we all agree that this has been quite worthwhile for the organization.

One area where Diane's work has been particularly effective has been in helping to build the leadership for the volunteer communities that form around TPE's preserves. Diane has been very active in recruiting, training and supporting the leadership at our Smith-Reiner Drumlin preserve, our two sites in the Sauk Prairie area and most recently at our sites in northern Dane County. Her work has also been very effective in building local community awareness and interest through publicity, events and collaborations with other local organizations.

Diane's work in the position of volunteer coordinator for the chapter has been very important and effective for us. During this three year period the chapter added over 500 names and email addresses to its list, and has made contact with uncounted number of interested people from various events and outreach initiatives. Many of those contacts at events were from the service areas of other chapters, and Diane shared those contacts, some of whom went on to become members of the other chapters. The resulting Empire-Sauk Chapter memberships have increased significantly, as the graph below shows. We see that the efforts to increase TPE name recognition, give our organization a more polished and established “look” and efforts to get more people in personal contact with a prairie have resulted in the positive changes the chapter was seeking.

Empire-Sauk New Members



Those of us who have worked closely with Diane over the past three years, as well as all those who have benefited from her work wish to express our sincerest thanks for her skills, experience, passion and hard work, which have truly helped to move both the Empire-Sauk Chapter and The Prairie Enthusiasts to a new and better place.



Photo by Karen Agee

# Badger Volunteers on the Prairie

Ted Cochrane

Last fall the Empire-Sauk Chapter entered into its third year as a community partner with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Badger Volunteers program. Teams of students recruited through the program are paired for a semester with some 80 community partners focused on education, sustainability, and public health. Three undergraduates, Katherine Powers (team leader; accounting major), Natasha Simske (economics and biology), and Cadan Cummings (agronomy and engineering for sustainability), volunteered three hours each Tuesday afternoon, joining TPE supervisors Ted Cochrane and Denny Connor on work parties. The team was shuttled back and forth between the campus and work sites by Cochrane, having lost transportation funding due to program budget cuts.

The work parties took place on two TPE properties, the Smith-Reiner Drumlin and Hauser Road prairies, and two partnership properties, the Koltjes Addition and Westport Drumlin units of the Empire Prairies State Natural Area. They went from 2:30 p.m. until about 4:20 p.m. (not including travel time), followed by 10 to 20 minutes for stowing equipment, debriefing, and enjoying snacks. TPE supplied supervision and necessary equipment and supplies. Seven of us (Jane Graham and Randy Hoffman participated in two sessions each) spent a total of 98 hours at nine outdoor sessions, and four worked a combined 12 hours indoors, mounting plant specimens at the Wisconsin State Herbarium on the one day with inclement weather.



Volunteers Natasha Simske and Katie Powers, collecting infructescences of showy goldenrod at Hauser Road Prairie. Photo by Denny Connor.

discussions of prescribed fire, including a demonstration of equipment and the mowing of firebreaks; differences in species composition along the prairie gradient; and cutting and treating undesirable woody vegetation. Tasks consisted of collecting seed (the first six sessions), mixing and sowing seed (one session), and cutting, treating, piling, and burning small brush (final two sessions). Weather conditions were generally excellent except for one day, when it was cool and windy. On the final session Connor, Cummings, and Cochrane took turns working with a brush cutter while the others used hand tools. Thus, students learned about prairie communities; participated in some of the activities of hands-on conservation work, thereby contributing to restoration efforts; and enjoyed contact with natural habitats. TPE and the Wisconsin State Herbarium are very grateful to Powers, Simske, and Cummings for all their help.



L to R: Badger Volunteers Katie Powers, Natasha Simske, and Cadan Cummings listen as Ted Cochrane orients them to the prairie remnants and oak opening that were once part of the Empire Prairie. Photo by Denny Connor.

At the first meeting Cochrane told the volunteers about TPE, who we are and what we do, before giving background information on the Empire Prairies. He then explained that native plant species are planted or sown in ecological restoration projects and that successful establishment and survival depend on where seeds are collected and how they are treated. Selected later meetings began with brief



"Hummingbird on Hill's Thistle"  
2016 TPE Photo Contest finalist by Gary Eldred

# Chippewa Savannas Chapter Senior Scientist

Caroljean Coventree

In late 2015 our chapter welcomed Mark Leach as our new Senior Scientist. I interviewed Dr. Leach on January 27, 2016 to help us understand this new position and to encourage other chapters to consider similar actions.

CC: Thanks for agreeing to this interview Dr. Leach, tell us a little about your background.

ML: I have a PhD in botany and have taught in academia and worked in management and restoration of various ecosystems. In other words, I'm a plant and conservation biologist. For ten years I worked at the UW Madison Arboretum where we did research on ecological restoration and how systems change over time. For decades I've been collecting baseline data as fundamental research into the restoration process.

Now I want to focus on how plants and animals respond to different restoration techniques. TPE's long term view creates a good opportunity to learn more about what strategies plants and animals respond to in different ecological niches. TPE takes damaged ecosystems and tries to get them back into a state that is more natural. The question is how is that going? What circumstances lead to success quicker?

CC: How did the idea of the Chippewa Savannas Chapter having a Senior Scientist come about?

ML: I had been serving on the Central Board and a couple of committees and had been thinking about what I could do that other people don't have the training and experience to do. That led to my proposing this job. Other people can do as well or better on these committees. Perhaps I'm thinking more about my own legacy. I'm thinking about a number of sites that could generate baseline data that could be useful far into the future. So I presented a proposal to our chapter and the leadership group offered a minimal budget to help get the research in progress.

CC: What does a Senior Scientist do, what's the job description?

ML: I want to collect data in the Chapter's restoration projects, analyze and interpret it and then return that information to improve practices in the field. The focus here is indicators of prairie quality. What is the texture of the vegetation? Why do the higher quality sites have more species per square meter? We know, for example, that fire can sometimes limit the ability of plants to out compete each



other, but there are a number of things going on that are unseen or at least less documented that also affect the number of plants in any given area as well as how effective our management is. I want to discover and study those so we can use that knowledge in our management prac-

tices.

Another way to think about this is to ask what are useful goals to set for successful management of a prairie? I think that number of species per square meter is a good index, but there are other measurements.

As part of this work I'll also give educational talks and workshops, and respond to informal opportunities like hikes and visits to owners' properties like the one we did on your property a couple years ago, documenting what species you have in what areas.

CC: Can you explain some of your methods for base line data collection and analysis?

ML: There are a number of ways that prairies are measured or quantified. I want to compare diversity indexes for different sites and hopefully over a long enough time period that I'll be able to see what changes and which indexes produce the better data for management of prairie sites.

One popular diversity index is the Shannon index. Many people have heard of it as the floristic quality index - FQI. This involves a panel of experts that assign a number to every native plant species. This has been done for prairie plants in the upper Midwest. The number each species receives correlates to that species' fidelity to undisturbed habitat. For example, take a white ladyslipper. You don't find them any place that has been plowed or degraded much so a species like that is given a high number like a 10. By contrast, take ragweed. It has virtually no fidelity to natural sites - it will grow almost anywhere, so it gets a zero. To find the FQI, you take your species list for a site and calculate the mean of all those values, (the C values - c for conservatism) and multiply that by the square root of the total number of native species and that gives you the FQI.

My basic technique, the quadrat method, has been around a long time. To apply the quadrat method one delineates a series of square meter plots and records what is in those small plots. This is not a controlled experiment where one technique is used on one parcel and a different technique in another. This method is common in Wisconsin because it was used by John Curtis, a premiere plant ecologist in Wisconsin in the 40s and 50s. He produced significant data on various plant communities around the state. I've gone back to his sites to get some sense of what has changed over the past fifty or sixty years.

A graduate student, Amy Alstad, and I have co-authored on a new paper comparing such data. Amy sampled sites that both Curtis and I had sampled. Her study showed that the prairies that are not being well managed are degrading faster than those that have been managed well. This paper will be published in an online journal by the American Academy of Science.

Tom Rooney and I did a study on sites that had been sampled three times, in the 1940s, 1970s, and in the 2000s. We showed that fire and a minimal amount of brush cutting can really improve a prairie. In other words not a lot of work can really improve a prairie. We hope such research will encourage private landowners and public entities to consider



and engage in prairie restorations that may initially appear overwhelming.

CC: Why is baseline data so important for such research?

ML: When dealing with prairies we are looking at ecosystems that have been around for a really really long time and ecosystems that hopefully will be around much longer into the future. As humans, due to the relative short life span we have in comparison to the life span of a prairie, we can only perceive a little piece of that time. If we want to allow the people of the future to compare what has changed over time we must collect data now. If we don't collect the data, they won't be able to do that. For example, little if any scientific data was collected by the early white settlers or Native people at that time. Imagine what we would know if we had data from then and now!

CC: What activities have you already done with the Chapter in connection with your role as Senior Scientist?

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#### Adelman-Schwartz Prairie continued from page 1

made jam on the wood stove. A bold attack by a male red-winged blackbird triggered my awareness of the beauty and mystery of nature. During my husband's early years in Iowa, he experienced country roads, picking strawberries and a relative's farm. Coinciding interests led to bird watching in Chicago's Lincoln Park, walking in the forest preserves and acquiring a place to bird watch and walk on at North Lake in Walworth County, Wisconsin.

A 1935 historical account credits James Holden with the first settlement in 1837 of what he designated "Heart Prairie." He *'viewed his future domain from a high bluff laying west thereof, when the shape of the prairie in the midst of surrounding timber suggested the name he gave it.'* Included in the property was *'the lake which was long known by his name, recently rechristened 'North Lake,' by resort promoters.'* According to a 1970 Wisconsin DNR report, *'The greatest value in North Lake rests with its marsh fringe and bordering wetlands to the west. The lake has supported bullfrogs for years, a unique attribute shared by few lakes in southeastern Wisconsin, Game and song birds, marsh animals, and the shallow, often glass-smooth water are prime aesthetic values.'*

On North Lake we indulged our fascination with nature watching sand hill cranes raise a baby bird, raccoons watching eastern snapping turtles laying eggs in our gravel driveway, muskrats swimming and playing on and around a lodge, and a snake sunning atop some flowers. The view from our location on the banks of a narrow portion of the marshy lake included floating cattail bogs and yellow and white water lilies, which looked particularly beautiful against trees on the water's opposite side. We bought a number of small lots across the lake until the project became unaffordable when development began. In addition to its woodlands, wetlands and shore, the property holds a dry or perhaps a hill prairie.

In 2006, we entered into an easement with Kettle Moraine Land Trust and erected signs designating the protected site the Charlotte Adelman and Bernard L. Schwartz Preserve. We hung a "Heart Prairie" sign on our porch. Transferring title of our small but remarkably diverse preserve to

ML: I have collected some data this summer from Dobbs Landing, the project that our chapter is involved with as part of the Dunn County Alliance of Sports Clubs.

We are also collaborating with the Eau Claire County Parks and the Eau Claire County Gun Club on the Seymour Project. I've been making species lists there and taking quadrat data there as well.

Subject to my availability, I'm hoping to do more baseline data collection on members' private land during the summer. I'm also hoping to collaborate with other ecologists, for example, entomologists studying dragonflies or grasshoppers.

I'm excited. Perhaps other chapters will consider similar research positions as they develop. Baseline data can provide significant value both today and in the future in our work to save prairies.

the Prairie Enthusiasts in 2015 ensures it will always have the respect and care it deserves. We are grateful to the Prairie Enthusiasts for accepting this responsibility."

This preserve became the first property of TPE's Glacial Prairie Chapter. With the leadership of Walter and Alice Mirk and Site Steward Zach Kastern, chapter members and volunteers have been out removing thistle, girdling aspen and removing sumac.

Zack decided to become Site Steward when he learned the Preserve was near his home and because this role matched his interests in ecological restoration, pollinator support movements, and experience with the State Natural Areas program. He says his experience gives him an eye for restoration. "Most people can just stroll through an area and comment on the 'beautiful nature' around them without understanding what they are really looking at. They see flowers and small trees, and then I chime in about all the invasives like Dame's rocket, buckthorn and honeysuckle I see and what needs to be done." And he is out doing it.

When you are ready to see this unique remnant or help with restoration projects get ahold of the Chapter, or visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ThePrairieEnthusiastGlacialPrairieChapter>.

Attorneys who retired early to devote themselves to environmental issues, Charlotte and Bernie are co-authors of *The Midwestern Native Garden-Native Alternatives to Nonnative Flowers and Plants* <http://www.ohioswallow.com/book/The+Midwestern+Native+Garden>, *Prairie Directory of North America – The United States, Canada and Mexico* <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/prairie-directory-of-north-america-9780195366952?cc=us&lang=en&>, and the forthcoming, *Midwestern Native Shrubs and Trees-Gardening Alternatives to Nonnative Species* <http://www.ohioswallow.com/book/Midwestern+Native+Shrubs+and+Trees>.

We are so thankful for Charlotte and Bernie's heartfelt donation and look forward to partnering with the Kettle Moraine Land Trust. Together we are grassroots conservation in action!

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## TPE Annual Picnic Sunday July 17

The 2016 TPE Picnic and Membership Meeting will be held on Sunday, July 17 at Shelter #2, Brigham County Park, Blue Mounds, WI. Brigham County Park is just northeast of the Village of Blue Mounds on County Highway F.

This 212-acre park is named after Ebenezer Brigham, one of the first settlers in this area. We chose this site for its open shade, potential for breezes and the fabulous view. Also the park is close to several TPE preserves; Parrish Savanna, Pleasant Valley (<http://pleasantvalleyconservancy.org>) and Black Earth Rettenmund Prairie to the north and Erbe Road and the 570 acre Mounds View Grassland Preserve to the south.

Both guided and self-guided hiking opportunities to several TPE preserves will be offered on both Saturday and Sunday. There is a lot to see! Plan on staying over a night or two and take a walk at several of TPE's beautiful sites. Brigham County Park is a half hour drive east of Dodgeville and a 10 minute drive west of Mount Horeb.

Visit the TPE website (<http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org>) for more details.



## Have Camera, Will Travel? TPE Seeks Volunteer Monitors

Are you one of TPE's many amazing photographers? Would you like the chance to see some of TPE's protected sites that aren't all open to the public? We can use your skills and help with visiting some of these sites, take pictures, and report back what is observed. TPE is seeking volunteers who can assist with our annual easement monitoring program. One way that we help protect prairie remnants is by working with private landowners to conserve their land through a permanent agreement with TPE. This agreement is called a conservation easement. It is written with restrictions to ensure the rare habitats are protected forever while the landowner still owns and manages the site. One of TPE's responsibilities is to conduct annual visits to document the changes over the past year and observe the activities with photographs and summarizing reports through these annual visits.



TPE staff will provide training on the steps and process to be a volunteer monitor. The general requirements are:

- Ability to hike for a few hours at a time, sometimes in rugged terrain
- Feel comfortable using a map to hike around the boundaries of the property
- Possess a smart phone or camera to take pictures of the site
- Ability to use Microsoft Office programs to compile the pictures and a summary report

Most of these sites are located in southwest Wisconsin and the ability to have your own transportation is required. The monitoring visit only has to be done once a year and typically takes up to 8-10 hours between travel time, the site visit, and compiling the report. It is also hoped that volunteers will monitor the same site over consecutive years.

This volunteer activity provides a unique chance to see some of TPE's conserved sites up close. Many of these sites are not open to the public and provide a special opportunity to see sites that the general public aren't always able to see. It also helps TPE in its responsibilities as a land trust to ensure these sites are protected forever through these regular annual visits. Interested volunteers can contact Chris Kirkpatrick, TPE Executive Director at 608-638-1873 or [executivedirector@theprairieenthusiasts.org](mailto:executivedirector@theprairieenthusiasts.org) to discuss the program further.

## Save the Date - TPE's Annual Conference

The Prairie Enthusiasts will hold their 29th Annual Conference and Banquet on Saturday, March 4, 2017. The event, hosted by the Northwest Illinois chapter, will be held at the Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa in Galena, IL.

This year's theme will be *Landscapes of the Future: Challenges & Opportunities*. Two keynote speakers will be Jeff Walk of The Nature Conservancy, speaking on "Climate Change and Habitat Preservation & Restoration" and Bob Palmer of the Effigy Mounds National Monument, speaking on "Fertile Ground - The Upper Midwest and Leaders of the Conservation Movement in the Late 19th and 20th Centuries"

We look forward to seeing you there!

## Empire-Sauk Chapter Offers a Wisconsin Master Naturalist Training Course in August and September

The Wisconsin Master Naturalist Volunteer Training Course is a 40-hour series of classes and field trips. The course curriculum is set by the Wisconsin Master Naturalist (WIMN) statewide office and covers these topics: geology, ecology, plant communities, wildlife, interpretation, water, water life and human impacts. Course materials, provided by the statewide office, present a consistent, statewide perspective on Wisconsin's natural resources, ecological processes and conservation issues.

To become a WIMN volunteer, a person takes this 40-hour training course. Then, each year, the naturalist volunteer must complete 40 hours of service and eight hours of advanced training to maintain the certification.

After training, the master naturalists volunteer in a variety of ways:

- **Education/Interpretation** — direct or indirect outreach to the public, such as presenting natural resources information, developing educational materials or leading natural history walks.
- **Stewardship** — natural resources management activities, such as trail work, invasive species removal or restoration projects.
- **Citizen Science** — gathering data to support research projects, such as monarch larval monitoring, plant or animal counts or water quality monitoring.

Any adult who is curious about nature, enjoys learning and wants to work on behalf of conservation efforts in his/her community, can become a WIMN volunteer. You can learn more at: <https://www.wimasternaturalist.org/>.

The Prairie Enthusiasts (TPE) is hosting a field-based course at Mounds View Grasslands, a 530-acre property owned by TPE south of Blue Mounds. The site includes remnant prairies, prairie plantings, prairie seed production beds, woodlands, streams and wetlands. Course topics will include geology/landforms, plant communities, animals of the grasslands and prairie restoration. Our instructors are chapter

members and volunteers, Patricia Trochlell and Rachel Potter. Pat is a wetland biologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and a volunteer site steward for TPE's Parrish Savanna. Rachel is a retired Madison school teacher with a life long passion for natural history. Both of these volunteers are excited about experiential environmental education and field-based learning.

The instructors will draw from a wealth of experts and researchers as guest instructors throughout the course. In addition to exploring the prairies, woods and wetlands at Mounds View, the class will take an all-day trip to the Avoca Prairie along the Lower Wisconsin River, the largest natural prairie east of the Mississippi River. (Avoca Prairie and Savanna State Natural Area)

This course will be mid-level strenuous, as we expect to spend approximately 70 percent of our time outdoors, walking through terrain that includes hills, cross country terrain, farm lanes and dodging badger and woodchuck diggings. Our indoor classroom will be the rustic Schurch-Thomson barn. In September, this working barn is a center for prairie seed collection and processing as seed is prepared for planting. Amenities on site include a Porta potty, drinking water, picnic tables and barn equipped with electricity and a refrigerator.

The class will meet every other weekend rain or shine.

### Schedule:

Aug. 27, Saturday, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Aug. 28, Sunday, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

Sept. 10, Saturday, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Sept. 11, Sunday, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

Sept. 24, Saturday, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Sept. 25, Sunday, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

Oct. 2, Sunday, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

\*OPTIONAL, October 1, Saturday field trip with Wisconsin Master Naturalist Instructor Pat Trochlell and Blue Mounds Area Project, a 5-mile hike from Blue Mounds State Park to TPE's Parrish Savanna.

**Fee:** \$250 includes all class materials and a one-year membership with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.

**Location:** The Prairie Enthusiasts Mounds View Grassland preserve, Reilly Road, Brigham, WI.

**Questions:** Email [info@wimasternaturalist.org](mailto:info@wimasternaturalist.org)



Pat Trochlell and Rachel Potter. Photo by Karen Agee.



# CHAPTER NEWS

## Coulee Region

### Whip-Poor-Will Hike

Jim Rogala

When the Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC) was planning an evening event at the Schultz Farm near Arcadia, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to offer a hike before the event. The 400-acre farm owned by Vicky Schultz has numerous hill prairies. Jon, one of Vicky's sons and a TPE member, has done an incredible amount of work along with other family members through prescribed burning and tree/brush removal. I first visited the site with Jon back in 2008, and Jon hosted a TPE picnic in 2009. I was looking forward to seeing the progress that was made since those two visits.

The educational part of the event included the hike, followed by a presentation and discussion on conservation easements. The hike offered a chance to identify some common and uncommon hill prairie species (death camas was flowering), and talk about prairie ecology. There were also signs of the restoration work that has been done, so we shared our thoughts on techniques and successes/failures. The presentation on easements was given by Abbie Church, Conservation Director for MVC and long-time TPE member. She told the story of the Schultz Farm protection to highlight the importance of restricting uses to retain the conservation value of properties. There was a direct threat to the farm from frac sand mining interests, and that didn't match well with the land ethic of the Schultz family.

As with many hikes, it offered a good chance to see old friends and acquaintances. Gary Eldred and Gary Adams made the trip up from the Southwest Chapter, and several folks crossed the Mississippi River from our neighboring state of Minnesota. Many of the usual suspects active in prairie restoration efforts in the La Crosse area were there as well. Conversations ranged from geographical differences in flora and fauna to the discussions on various management options and progress we've made at the sites we work on.

As for hearing the whip-poor-wills, those that endured the swarming mosquitoes were treated to at least four birds calling later that evening.



Photo by Kevin Cram

## Chippewa Savannas

Caroljean Coventree

It's been a productive spring for the Chippewa Savannas Chapter of TPE. We started in April with a well-attended training for new prescribed burn crew members. This effort included work on an actual burn.

We ended April pulling buckthorn on the goat prairie at Savannah Moon, Cynthia Lane's property in Pepin County, a beautiful day on a steep slope. Students from Steven's Point joined in both the work and the hearty lunch afterwards.

Our annual fundraiser, a train ride into the Tiffany Botoms State Natural Area along the Chippewa River with ornithologist Brian Collins and plant biologist Mark Leach, occurred on the coldest morning in May. It was twenty-five degrees Fahrenheit at the start of the ride, with a breeze! Bundled in winter wear, we thought ourselves hardy and still managed to hear or see over eighty bird species. The early spring had given the leaves on the trees quite a head start so some of the singing warblers were hidden by foliage. The morning's highlights included magnolia, blue-winged, and golden-winged warblers, a yellow-billed cuckoo, and a nest of woodcock eggs on one of the prairies.

In May we also partnered with the Beaver Creek Nature Reserve for a workshop and field trip with lichenologist Mary Bartkowiak - "What's not to Lichen?" Her stimulating presentation opened the world of lichens to newcomers as well as garnered questions and discussion from other plant biologists at the gathering. Outside the Citizen Science Center we pointed our lens at lichen species on nearby trees, whose splotches of black, green, white, brown, or red, had now become alive to us.

Throughout the spring we've had a variety of work days mostly removing brush at our two main sites, Dobbs Landing and the Seymour Project. We've also held our annual meeting to elect, actually reelect, our officers. Big thanks to everyone on the Board of our Chapter and all the volunteers at our work parties. We make it happen together!

## Empire-Sauk

### Growing Strawberries for Restorations

Rich Henderson

In the Spring 2015 issue of the *Prairie Promoter*, I wrote an article about the great abundance of wild strawberries in the original Midwest prairies, especially in the deep soil mesic and wet-mesic prairies. The article also commented on the lack of strawberries in today's prairie restorations and thus the incompleteness of these efforts. In an attempt to remedy this, we put out a call for volunteers to grow wild strawberry plants for out-planting at Mounds View Grassland and other TPE sites. Karen Albright answered the call.

On the 6th of June, 2015, Karen dug up approximately 25 strawberry growing points from four different patches at Schurch-Thomson Prairie and took them home to propagate them in her gardens. It was a resounding success, from the original 25 plants she produced close to 400 plants in one growing season!

As Karen described it, she “put 12 in Lasagna garden in middle, an additional 10 on edges. One plant went in my raised bed Veggie garden. Scattered the rest in various flower beds (these did not get watered while on vacation in July). Those in Vegetable gardens got watered. Lasagna garden yielded 200+ plants from middle. The one in raised bed about 15 plants. The ones in the flower beds only had a couple survivors and didn’t spread. There are more plants on edges of lasagna garden and growing into lawn. Got too tired and ran out of time to dig more for transplanting.”



Photos by Karen Albright

This spring, on April 30 and May 1, Karen, Jan Ketelle, Kathy Henderson, and I planted 240 of Karen’s wild strawberry plants into prairie restorations at Schurch-Thomson Prairie where they are now growing and spreading by runners. Within a decade or so, there should be a nice understory of strawberries in those restorations. There are still many sites in need of strawberries. If you wish to help propagate plants starting this September or next spring, contact me at [tpe.rehenderson@tds.net](mailto:tpe.rehenderson@tds.net). Also, be on the lookout for notices about helping to plant strawberries next spring.

## Glacial Prairie

Alice Mirk

The Glacial Prairie Chapter had a busy spring. We had our very first work party on our new prairie (The Adelman-Schwartz property - see front page story). The day was fine and cool and the setting was beautiful, with the call of waterfowl across the lake to accompany our work. We noticed the snakes were out too, as we disturbed a very large garter snake and a very attractive milk snake.

Under the direction of the site monitor Zach Kastern, we girdled every aspen and removed several 30 gallon bags of garlic mustard. Girdling was a new task for some of us and we learned quickly how to strip the bark and peel it off. We became a very efficient machine! There is a lot to be done to bring this site to its full potential and the management plan is in the development stage. In the meantime, we have thistle to remove and sumac to mow this summer.



Work party at Adelman-Schwartz Prairie. Photo by Alice Mirk

The Monarch Butterfly Initiative was culminated by the chapter with the planting of 614 prairie plants on the Mayville Middle School Prairie by the 5th grade class under the supervision of Walter and Alice Mirk, parent volunteers and the school staff. Jim Widmer, well-known local historian, superb photographer and one of TPE’s earliest Dodge County members, was on hand to witness what his years of support have achieved so near his home in Theresa. For the fifth graders, this was the end of a journey. They spent the year studying prairie history and the prairie ecosystem. Walter addressed the class, last fall and this spring, on various aspects of prairies with a dynamic powerpoint featuring the flora and fauna of various types of prairie. Each child picked a plant and studied it, as well as the soil/moisture/sunlight needed for a prairie and use of fire as a management tool.

Planting day was from 8AM to 3PM. Wave after wave of 5th graders came out to take their turn at planting. There were 89 kids all keen to plant. Each class was given a team number and flags so they would know which plants they planted as they grow over the summer. Clusters of plants attractive to monarchs were planted in groups of 4 or 5. Walter was kept busy with the auger attached to a cordless drill and Alice had the hori-hori. The ground was rocky and several trowels were bent, but the planting was all done by 2 pm. Then came the watering. Six hoses were joined together and the kids formed a long snake holding up the hose so it would not drag across the plants. Of course, anything involving water and children is fraught with possibilities, and several went back to the classroom damper than when they had joined the hose party. By 3pm all was complete and we packed up to go home, muddy, dirty and satisfied that 89 children enjoyed the day on the prairie.



Fifth graders at Mayville Middle School planting on the school prairie. Photo by Alice Mirk.



A week later Walter was off again to install the last of the Monarch Initiative plants at a large prairie reconstruction at a municipal cemetery in Waukesha. This time it was 588 plants and a crew of 4. A thunderstorm in the morning interrupted the activities which started at 7:00AM! After the 40 minute hiatus the ground and the surrounding prairie were saturated which made it nice and wet to work in. By 3PM all the holes were drilled. The last plants were installed before 9:00 AM the next day. The Glacial Prairie Chapter is especially grateful to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Private Lands Biologist, Rachel Samerdyke, for her support and assistance in both the aforementioned efforts and in those carried out by Wehr Nature Center in Franklin and by Riveredge Nature Center in Racine. We all hope that we see more monarch butterflies as a result of such state-wide and national efforts.

Meanwhile our work continues on protected privately owned sites. In late April we spot-applied herbicide to thistle on the Adam Birding Sanctuary by Whitewater. This property is number 2 in Jefferson County for bird species diversity. As if to prove a point, Dale Karow, in rapid succession, flushed the following hens off their clutches of eggs: ring-necked pheasant, mallard, and wild turkey! We know that pheasants aren't native birds but bobolinks were spotted later that day!

We had a solid working morning at Willowbrook Conservancy removing yet more buckthorn. We started a huge fire and were such an inspiration to the neighbors that they came over to volunteer their help! We debated about T-shirts which say Buckthorn Fear Us after we cleared a huge patch and dragged it to the clearing for burning. It will be exciting to see what comes up on the savanna next spring! Already sedges are welcoming the sunlight.

## Many Rivers

*Jim Lynch*

After completing most of the prescribed burns on our chapter's list this spring, Many Rivers members have returned to the never-ending job of controlling weeds and clearing brush. On a recent warm and humid (is there any other kind?) June morning a work crew gathered at a 20-acre prairie remnant near Judson, MN to field-test his new brush cutter.



L to R: Jon Kutz, Steven Gahm, Henry Panowitsch (Not pictured: Linda Engstrom). Photo by Jim Lynch.

## Minnesota Driftless

*George Howe*

Springtime in southeast Minnesota was a very busy season for Minnesota Driftless Chapter members this year. There were numerous prescribed burns to do, on both private and public lands, and tree removal work to finish before the heat of Summer arrives. In all, five prescribed burns were completed by Chapter members this April! A loan of 2 water back-cans from TPE's Coulee Region Chapter helped to make these burns possible.

Chapter members partnered with Winona County and the La Crescent Area Fire Department to conduct a prescribed burn on the County's popular "Apple Blossom Overlook Park," just north of La Crescent, MN on Winona County Road 1. Most of the upland portion of the 50-acre park has been planted with native prairie species and burned every 2 to 3 years for the past 15 years. Chapter Chair George Howe arranged and led the burn, and volunteers Stephen Winter and Anne Morse assisted also.



Apple Blossom Overlook Park. Photo by George Howe

A burn was also completed at the Dietmaier prairie in New Hartford Township, on a stunning ridgetop remnant that hadn't seen fire for many decades. Already, hoary puccoon, cream wild indigo, and blue-eyed grass are springing forth from the blackened ground. Landowner Nick Dietmaier and Chapter members hope to hold a hike in the future to showcase the results. Landowners Sara Miles, Kevin O'Brien, and George Howe also completed burns on their properties, some of which were made possible by help from Chapter volunteers Tim Connolly and Stephen Winter.

Restoration work continues on the Dietmaier prairie, with volunteers working about one day per week on cedar removal and invasive species control. The majority of work is expected to be finished by this Fall, and more of the prairie will be burned next Spring.

Chapter members are working on plans to offer landowners options for permanent land protection with TPE in southeastern MN. The state of MN offers grants to qualified organizations to purchase land and/or conservation easements and Chapter members have asked TPE to research this opportunity. Private land near Winona with a large and scenic bluff prairie is currently for sale and Chapter members have contacted the seller. Some landowners have indicated that they wish to donate conservation easements also. Chair George Howe has had discussions with several landowners interested in protecting their land with TPE.



# Northwest Illinois

## Seed Shed Doings

Rickie Rachuy

You probably think we've been snoozing the winter away here at prairie central, but far from it. Ed, our land manager, spent many of the warmer winter days cutting brush and removing fallen trees from firebreaks in preparation for the 15 spring burns he conducted. He has also been busy organizing this year's prairie restoration projects.



Photos courtesy Rickie Rachuy

Jim Rachuy, the Prairiemeister, has been slaving away in front of the computer updating the database with last year's picking results provided by Laura Dufford and Barbara Siekowski, our prairie divas. Now he's busy tweaking the seed mixes for this year's projects and designing a garden for the next phase of the Species Conservation Project. Don't know what that is? It was the feature article in the last *Prairie Promoter*.

In late fall, the prairie divas and I sowed purple milkweed (*Asclepias purpurascens*) and aromatic aster (*Symphotrichum oblongifolium*) into the prairie garden and Laura and Barb overseeded 16 other species into designated areas in Lone-tree prairie.

And me? I've been doing some early season weeding of the production beds—the lilies are coming up like gang-busters—and babysitting two trays of seeds to boost our seedling production.



Our Michigan lily (*Lilium michiganense*) seeds spent three months in damp sand under a heat lamp, then three months in the refrigerator. On May 4th we placed the sprouted seed into one hundred peat pots (4 seeds per pot) and Laura took them to the greenhouse for propagation. They cannot be planted out until they have a true leaf each. Here we are, like proud ladies at a bake sale, with the seedlings.



I am still tending a tray full of New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*) seeds which were scarified with boiling water, then placed into damp sand in the refrigerator. I rinsed the sand off a few days ago and put them between damp paper towels in preparation for potting up in chapter member Bill Hunt's greenhouse at the end of May. We plan to put them into the prairie garden where they can grow into healthy bushes (we hope!) and provide seed for years to come.



The divas are putting together this season's seed picking schedule and I'll be sending it your way when it's ready. Seed picking generally starts in July and, as always, we are counting on you for help! We hope you will consider helping us with the inevitable weeding that is part of any garden and heed the call when I request your help. If you have a green thumb and a bit of space in your own garden, consider adopting a species and tending it for seed production. If you are interested, drop us a note at [info@nipes.org](mailto:info@nipes.org) May your prairie garden grow!

## A Prairie Celebration

John Day

On May 28, the Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts held their annual meeting and picnic at Hanley Savanna, one of our properties. The prairie gods smiled upon us, providing us with sunshine, blue skies and a gentle breeze. The panoramic views of the prairie coming into bloom made the day perfect.

Friendships were renewed with members and supporters whether they might be new or old acquaintances. Jim Rachuy led a wagon ride tour of the prairie, identifying those forbs that had blossomed and those that were soon to be flowering. Jim offered explanations as well about the work being done to ensure the continued growth and health of this superb example of what Carl Sandburg called the Grand Prairie. No doubt, in addition to the prairie, many of us noticed the Eastern Blue Birds, swallows and the soaring Turkey Vultures among the many other grassland birds to be found at Hanley Savanna.

A picnic style lunch was served featuring hot dogs, bratwursts and walking tacos along with the usual fare of salads, chips, slaw and other tasty stuff. The roasting of hot dogs and bratwursts on the tines of a pitch fork over an open fire (with folks much younger than us) was part of the fun and done for good reason. This year's event found us surrounded by an unusually large number of young people.

Never missing an opportunity to expand a celebratory event we made the decision to use this occasion to honor some of our own, not only for past efforts with us, but for personal accomplishments and one of life's milestone events. We celebrated the high school graduation of Noah Haskins, who was helping out as a volunteer and eventually became a part time employee. We honored Noah's fellow graduate and friend, Daniel Klever, as well.

Some years ago Noah came along with board member Paul Rode to help us out with the myriad of tasks that need to be done to maintain a large prairie. Paul's influence seemed to have sparked an interest in the outdoors for Noah. Over time, Ed Strenski, our land manager, took Noah under his wing and

became a mentor. It didn't take Noah long to become a regular for seed picking, burning, weeding and a multitude of other tasks. There may have been a harrowing event now or then with the ATV or something else, but Noah learned fast and well. Of course, sharing a good thing, some of Noah's friends began to come along. Daniel is one of those friends. Daniel, along with a few others, will be working with us for the summer.

Perhaps it was the positive influence of Paul and Ed that triggered their interest in things natural or, perhaps, Noah fell under the spell that is sometimes cast by the Tall Grass Prairie. Standing in the open stretches of prairie while the wind seemingly whispers to you can be a mystical experience. Whatever the case, these young men have proven to be an asset for NIPE and our efforts.

Over the years, Noah has not only worked hard on the prairies, he graduates this year as a member of the National Honor Society and has received a scholarship to Illinois Wesleyan. Before the day was over I had the opportunity to chat with him and asked what he thought he would like to study and what career path he believes he may be choosing. The expression on his face was thoughtful as he replied, "Something along the lines of conservation".

As the day was ending I looked to the west across the wide expanse of the prairie at Hanley Savanna and recalled an expression often used by an old friend; "Some things make you say Hhmmmm".

## Prairie Bluff

Tom Mitchell

Twenty-eight crew – some new but many very experienced – attended the Prairie Bluff Chapter's annual Fire Refresher held in March at Nick Faessler's shop in Green County. The indoor sessions included lessons learned from the prior burn seasons, safety, fire weather parameters and writing burn plans. Outdoors we reviewed our ignition and suppression equipment including the operation of the pumper units. We have been working with our members to gain experience and would like to announce that Jim Hess and Marci Hess were nominated as burn bosses. Our intent is not only to be in compliance with the TPE burn policy, but also to improve the skills and instill confidence in our members to put fire on the ground safely on their own properties, since TPE cannot possibly burn all the acreage that can benefit from prescribed fire.



Karin Stenski and Noah Haskins. Photo by John Day



Prairie Bluff Chapter fire refresher. Photo by Rob Baller.



Two of us – Mike Davis and Tom Mitchell – were invited to a March meeting of the New Glarus Historical Society to tell about the prairie landscapes that the Glarner settlers saw in 1845 on their trip upriver from St. Louis to Galena and then overland through Mineral Point to their new home in southern Wisconsin. We also gave a short history of prairie enthusiasm to the Green County Garden Club, and led an April tour of Abraham's Woods and Muralt Bluff Prairie.

Chris Roberts and Tom Mitchell took part in the Green County Conservation Day in May at Honey Creek Park in Monroe, demonstrating equipment and talking about our prairie heritage to 150 fifth and sixth graders from Albany, Juda and Monroe's Abe Lincoln and Northside schools.

Memorial Day at Green's Prairie Cemetery featured an excellent program put together by Bill Kuenzi, a prairie enthusiast and president of the cemetery association. About 70 visitors heard author David Green relate that most of the settlers buried in the one-acre graveyard came from the state of New York, whence the township was named York. Tom Mitchell told the story of David Ash, a veteran of the War of 1812, one of three vets from that war who is buried at the Postville burial grounds, which also has monuments for a veteran of the Black Hawk War and seven soldiers from the Civil War. John Ochsner provided a brief history of the cemetery and TPE's involvement in its management.

Town of York chairman Dan Reeson was presented with a "Quilt of Valor" by Vicki Sasso and Sue Levan-Green of the Sugar River Quilters of Valor, whose members Barb Brunner and Jeanne Keller helped to piece with fabric this decorative and functional quilt, their 103rd quilt awarded to a veteran. The recipient is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and a member of the Blanchardville post of the American Legion, who has been very supportive of the chapter's management of the tallgrass pioneer prairie cemetery.

On April 30, Marci Hess organized a Reptile Workshop at Barb Smith's property. Dr. Rebecca Christoffel discussed how to identify the various reptiles and brought a few for close-up viewing. It was a rainy, cold day so our field work portion was cancelled. Attendance was high and folks enjoyed the opportunity.

## Prairie Sands

Ray Goehring

In early June, chapter members David and Shelley Hamel, along with Muirland Bird Club president, Daryl Christensen, canoed over to Carol Island in Buffalo Lake at the request of Rich Brefeld, a teacher at High Marq Environmental School. They were asked to do a plant inventory of the island and to give their recommendations about the suitability of the island for a student outdoor education project. David Hamel said, "My impression is this would make a pretty good plant identification classroom if the watery access can be managed for a classroom of kids. Because it has been unfarmed for over 100 years, there are many plants close at hand--you don't have to walk far to see over 58 plants, trees, and shrubs." Muirland Bird Club will lead the stewardship effort.



L to R: Elaine Butler, Sally Leque, Dale Johnson, Fred Wollenburg, Cathy Franks, Bill Franks, Karen Wollenburg, Shelley Hamel, Laurel Bennett and David Hamel. Photo by Ray Goehring

There have been several chapter workdays at Page Creek Marsh (a property of The Nature Conservancy in Marquette County) battling invasive species like garlic mustard, honeysuckle and spotted knapweed. Pictured below is a group of Prairie Sand "honeysucklers" who, with the generous help of a grant from Thrivent Financial Services, continued the efforts begun last fall to eliminate honeysuckle. The \$250 grant helped to pay for the herbicide and lunch from More Healthy Foods of Montello for the work crew.



Prairie Sands Chapter members Charles Church (far left) and Cathy and Bill Frank (4th and 5th from the left) with some of the DNR crew at the May 7th Observatory Hill workday. Photo by Ray Goehring

Prairie Sands chapter members have been busy this spring helping area partners with plant inventories and fighting invasive species. One major project has been helping the DNR in their efforts to restore savanna to another Marquette County site, Observatory Hill. Jared Urban, Observatory Hill steward said, "We, together with several new volunteers, had a successful workday spraying garlic mustard at Observatory Hill State Natural Area. A long term project has been initiated by the DNR. We hope to return the site closer to what John Muir experienced as a boy and as an example of the different types of savannas disappearing from Wisconsin and the world. In fact there have been reports of red headed woodpeckers returning to the site. We are planning a workday July 23rd to remove Japanese hedge parsley." Contact Jared Urban at [jared.urban@wisconsin.gov](mailto:jared.urban@wisconsin.gov) for more details.



# St. Croix Valley

Evanne Hunt

## Prairie Day 2016 - August 20

The chapter will once again host a "Prairie Day" at Willow River State Park. Please join us as a volunteer or spectator!  
The schedule for the day is loaded!

### Hikes:

- Adult prairie walk south of park entrance (8:30)
- Family prairie walk south of park entrance (9:30)

### Exhibits:

- Exhibits open outside Nature Center (10:30)

### Presentations:

- Ben Eichman demonstrates "Buckthorn Management" (8:30 & 9:30)
- Showing of film "Prairie Enthusiasm" (10:30 and 12:30)
- Dr. Stanley Temple in Nature Center (11:00-12:00)
- Games:
  - Bison chip throwing contest (10:30)
  - Plant ID buzzer board (8:30 - 12:00)
  - "Put out the fire" with burn equipment (8:30 - 12:00)



Photo by Evanne Hunt

## Chapter Field Trips

Watch our chapter Facebook page and web page for details:

<https://www.facebook.com/TPESCV/>

<http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/chapter/stcroix/stcroix.html>

## Southwest Wisconsin

Jack Kussmaul

On Saturday, May 14, the Southwest Chapter hosted a Reptile Workshop on the Jack Kussmaul property near Millville, WI. It was conducted by Rebecca Christoffel, an expert in the field. The day began with turtles, including a two hour power point program on how to identify the various species and

ways to protect them. There was also a collection of turtle shells for participants to study. The presentation on lizards did not take long, only as there are only four species living in Wisconsin. After lunch the program moved on to Wisconsin snakes.



Dr. Rebecca Christoffel presenting on Wisconsin herptiles.  
Photos by Jack Kussmaul.

The presentation was followed by a hike. Ideally we would have found some species, but it was a cold, 50 degree day so nothing was out. Dr. Christoffel showed sites where reptiles would normally be found and things that could be done to create more habitats. We arrived back at the classroom at 2:30, when the program was to have ended. The group was advised they could end it at that point but everyone was so enthusiastic about the presentation that they stayed another hour to look at the live turtles and snakes Dr. Christoffel had brought with her. All agreed it had been a great program.



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The following people have joined TPE between March 1 and June 28, 2016.

Steve Bablitch & Elaine Kelch  
(Madison, WI) *Gift membership from Jack Kusssmaul*  
Gail Behr (Spring Valley, WI)  
Janet Bethke (Eau Claire, WI)  
Bernard Buchholz (Oak Park, IL)  
Diane Budyak (Madison, WI)  
Kathy Clark & Art Nizza  
(Madison, WI)  
Louise Coumbe (Oshkosh, WI)  
*In memory of Olive Thomson*

Randy & Sally Cutler (Milladore, WI)  
Jodi Dansingburg (Rushford, MN)  
*Gift membership from Kevin Obrien*  
Marcia Getto (Madison, WI)  
Bridget Gilmore (Hudson, WI)  
Alice Gould (Madison, WI)  
Paul & Judy Helgeson  
(Menomonie, WI)  
Pam Holy (Kenosha, WI)  
Andrew Kranz (Winona, MN)

Karl & Dorothy Legler  
(Sauk City, WI)  
Neil & Connie Letts  
(Minneapolis, MN)  
John & Martha Lunz (Glendale, WI)  
Rob & Wendy Mckenzie  
(Hudson, WI)  
Bonnie McMullin-Lawton  
(Madison, WI)  
Kevin Obrien (Rushford, MN)

Ann Marie Ott & Scott Riedasch  
(Blanchardville, WI)  
Jill Pyatt (Viola, WI)  
Caroline Sawyer (Fitchburg, WI)  
Lindy Smith (Des Moines, IA)  
Kathy Speck (Verona, WI)  
Dennis Tande (Waunakee, WI)  
Miles Tomlinson (Viroqua, WI)  
M. Resha Wyman (Dodgeville, WI)

# THANK YOU DONORS

We thank the following who donated to TPE between March 1 and June 28, 2016.

These gifts include those from our annual appeal, are beyond membership dues and are truly generous and appreciated.

## \$1,000 or more

Anonymous  
(To Prairie Bluff Chapter)  
Karen Agee & Scott Fulton  
Izaak Walton League #79  
(To Many Rivers Chapter)  
Gary Kleppe (To Prairie Bluff Chapter  
for prescribed burns)  
Kenneth Lange  
Robert & Kathryn Richardson  
(To Prairie Bluff Chapter)  
Ted Ross & Kathie Ayres  
Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation  
(To Many Rivers Chapter for the  
Traverse deSioux site)  
Doug Steege & Kris Euclide  
(For West Dane Conservancy)  
Charles & Chris Wellington  
(To Prairie Bluff Chapter for pre-  
scribed burns)

## \$500 - \$999

Douglas C. Hancock (To Northwest  
Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts)  
John Peterson  
(To Prairie Bluff Chapter)  
John & Catherine Schwenn  
(In Honor of Olive Thomson,  
to John & Olive Thomson Internship  
Endowment Fund)  
Ken Wade & Pat Trochlell  
(To Empire Sauk Chapter)  
Kristin Westad  
Terry & Susan Willkom  
(To Chippewa Savannas Chapter)

Nancy Winter (To Northwest Illinois  
Prairie Enthusiasts)

## \$100 - \$499

Mike Bowar  
(To Empire Sauk Chapter)  
Pat & Dave Casper (To Northwest  
Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts)  
Andrew Gulya (To Northwest Illinois  
Prairie Enthusiasts)  
Robert Gurke, Jr. (To Northwest  
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Dick & Joan Harmer (To Northwest  
Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts)  
Galen & Grace Hasler  
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to John & Olive Thomson Internship  
Endowment Fund)  
Sylvia Hasler Thatcher  
(In Honor of Olive Thomson,  
to John & Olive Thomson Internship  
Endowment Fund)  
Ralph & Deborah Henry  
(To Prairie Bluff Chapter for pre-  
scribed burns)  
Evanne Hunt  
Duane & Barb Johnson (To North-  
west Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts)  
Jan Lavacek & Carole Sullivan  
(To Northwest Illinois Prairie  
Enthusiasts)  
Randy Nyboer (To Northwest Illinois  
Prairie Enthusiasts)  
John & Barb Rutherford (To North-  
west Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts)

Hugh & John Simon (To Northwest  
Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts)  
Kevin & Maria Spaight  
Blue Earth Vietnam Veteran  
Memorial Fund (To Many River  
Chapter for prescribed burns)  
River Falls Garden Club  
(To St. Croix Valley Chapter)

## Under \$100

Chris Barlow  
Dave Delap & Beth Boschee  
(In Memory of Kathy Kirk)  
Wild Birds Unlimited of Galena  
(To Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthu-  
siasts)  
Sharon & Kevin Cahill (To Northwest  
Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts)  
Johnn & Nita Carson (To Prairie Bluff  
Chapter for prescribed burns)  
Community Shares of Minnesota  
John & Kay Day (To Northwest Illinois  
Prairie Enthusiasts, In Honor of Ed  
and Karin's 25th Anniversary)  
Bonnie Garrity (To Northwest Illinois  
Prairie Enthusiasts)  
Dennis & Jane Graham  
(In Memory of Bennie Alvin Bowers)  
John & Rita Hoffmann  
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Vito Ippolito (To Northwest Illinois  
Prairie Enthusiasts)  
James & Jennifer Johncox  
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(To St. Croix Valley Chapter)  
Laura & Greg Nessler  
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Leslie Pilgrim  
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Trish Quintenz & Rip Yasinski  
(To Northwest Illinois Prairie  
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Trish Quintenz & Rip Yasinski  
(To Northwest Illinois Prairie  
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siasts)  
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Timothy & Isabel Simon (To North-  
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Monica Sitter  
(In Memory of Kathy Kirk)  
Mark Smith  
Larry & Nancy Stoneburner  
(To Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthu-  
siasts)  
M. Dian Strenski (To Northwest Il-  
linois Prairie Enthusiasts)  
Kenneth & Beverly Waller (To North-  
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**Questions?** E-mail Joe Rising (Communications Coordinator) at [TPE@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org](mailto:TPE@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org)  
or call us at 608-638-1873.

**Thank you!**

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Address: .....

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- |                                                |                                                |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100+ Shooting Star  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000+ Compass Club |

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