



www.theprairieenthusiasts.org

The PRAIRIE PROMOTER

VOL 20, No. 2 Summer 2007

Grassroots Conservation at Work

President's Message

By Evanne Hunt

In July, I will have completed one year as president of The Prairie Enthusiasts. Over the last year, my perspective has broadened -- from one devoted mainly to a chapter and my friends to one that embraces the entire organization.

I once felt disadvantaged because my chapter did not hold title to a prairie. Now, I realize that I do -- because I am a member of The Prairie Enthusiasts. The Schurch-Thomson Prairie does not lie in my geographical region, but it is as much mine as it is Rich Henderson's and everyone else's in TPE. My monetary donations help pay transaction fees and my spotted knapweed pulling hours at Foster Cemetery in River Falls count in grant applications.

In the last year, I have also learned that each chapter has particular strengths. For example, the Prairie Smoke chapter excels at community outreach and membership recruitment, Empire-Sauk gobbles up land titles and easements almost as well as a developer, and the St. Croix Valley has an extraordinary concentration of educational professionals, and so on through each chapter.

Your chapter has responsibility for the care and management of prairie and oak savanna in your geographical region. Your chapter is where you get your sense of community and belonging, but make no mistake -- you belong something much bigger. You are The Prairie Enthusiasts, Inc.

I ask each of you to bring your expertise -- the gift of gab, Microsoft Word wizardry, writing and editing, teaching, and so forth -- to the attention of your chapter president, Renae, or me. You could help us all fulfill our important mission- who wouldn't want to do that?



Renae and Amy
in our new office:
Suite #1 at
222 S. Hamilton
Madison, WI.
We are very grateful
to Willis Brown for
under-writing the
rent for our first 6
months! Our PO
Box will remain as
our mailing address.

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THANK YOU Advantage Copying and Printing!

A big "Thank You" is in order for Dick Schultz and the staff at Advantage Copying and Printing in Dodgeville, Wisconsin. Last year, when TPE was in need of a new printer vender, we went to Advantage and Mr. Schultz could not have been more helpful and considerate. They are a great business for TPE to work with, now and in the future. Thanks Dick and everyone at Advantage!

TPE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Gary Eldred, <i>Southwest Chapter</i>	
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Vacancy, <i>member-at-large</i>	
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Executive Director	Renae Mitchell
Membership Coordinator	Victoria Oberle
Restoration Ecologist	Amy Staffen

If you would prefer to receive electronic notification of the newsletter please email Victoria at TPE@TDS.net.

The Prairie Promoter is a quarterly publication of The Prairie Enthusiasts. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without permission. We welcome submissions of articles, announcements, artwork and photographs that are relevant to prairie and savanna ecosystems. Mail to local chapter editorial volunteers or e-mail submissions to jenkinma@uwplatt.edu. Use MS Word and do not format. Letters and articles may be edited for length or style. Computer disks, art, and photographs will be returned. Deadlines for submission of material are March 4 (Spring issue); May 25 (Summer issue); August 25 (Fall issue); and November 25 (Winter issue).

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Prairie Smoke Chapter 507-867-9229	Andrea Mueller andreahtoparts@msn.com
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TPE was incorporated in Wisconsin in 1987 as a private nonprofit, tax exempt corporation under section [501(c) 3] of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible.



Birdsfoot Violet, Schurch-Thomson Prairie, May 8, 2007. Photo by Amy Staffen

From The Desk of the Director (Overlooking Elderberry Prairie)

By Renae Mitchell

I was recently awarded a scholarship from the national Land Trust Alliance to attend an excellent training workshop with executive directors of land trusts from around the country. Our facilitator had us line up according to various criteria. **The Prairie Enthusiasts was in second place in terms of the number of acres we own, hold conservation easements on and manage but we were in last place in terms of operating budget, active board members and number of staff.** That is a testament to our fiscal frugality and dedicated volunteers. It is also an indicator of our organizational need for more board and committee volunteers and the need to support our operations budget.

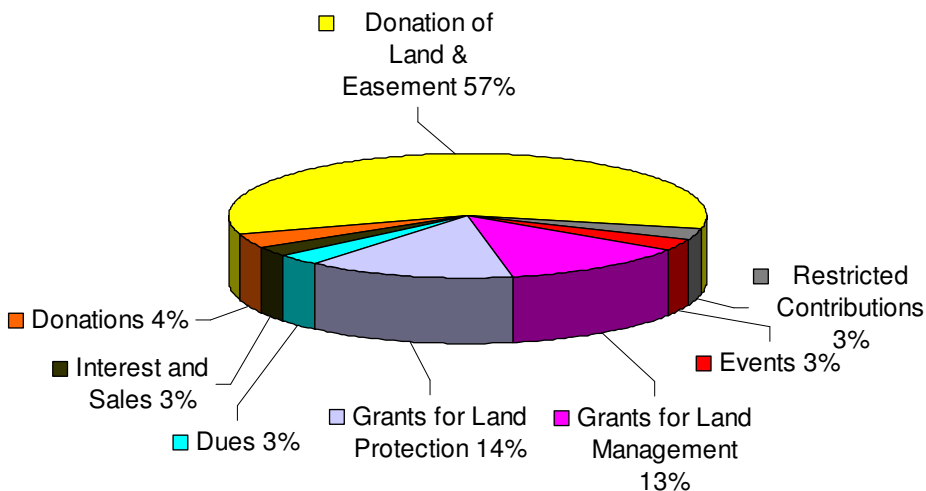
As you know, most land management is done by our talented and loyal volunteers in the field. **We are increasingly able to leverage this volunteer labor with grant monies for contractors** to do some of the

management work. Grant management and other administrative, fundraising, protection and outreach work that I perform is increasing as our capacity is growing. **Please see our Annual Report (available online at www.theprairieenthusiasts.org) and my article on our protected lands in this issue for more insight into how TPE works.**

members and friends. Sometimes folks get confused about “donations” vs. “membership dues.” Some people mainly give through their volunteer time. We assure you we TRULY appreciate every prairie enthusiast and your support in ANY form!

This summer we will be approaching potential donors inside and outside of the organization to help fill the remaining \$25,000 of operating need going into 2008. We'll also be offering options for planned giving or outright contributions to our new **Operations and Management Endowments or Land Protection and Legal Defense Funds**. The Endowments will guard the principle and only use the interest for the intended purpose. The Funds will be accumulated until such time as there is a need for funds to purchase land or defend an easement. Our investment policy is also in place. If you have an interest or suggestion, please contact Richard Oberle, Chair of the Endowment and Fundraising Committee, at Oberle@execpc.com.

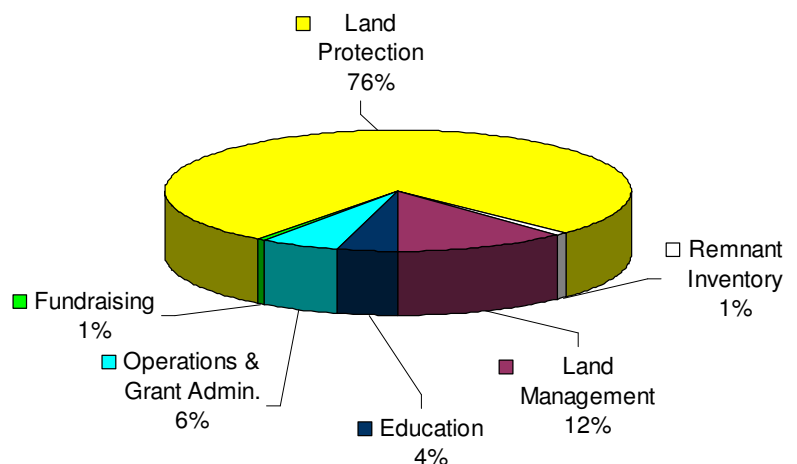
2006 TPE TOTAL INCOME



If you compare this Annual Report to last year's you can see how much we are changing and growing. I am printing our income and expense pie charts in this newsletter. They have been revised from earlier versions because, as part of our auditing process, we moved some things into different categories and included all land donations and purchases.

Our essential operating need is now about \$100,000 a year. The TPE Board of Directors has pledged to kick in \$6,000. About \$25,000 comes from memberships and we hope many folks will Bump Up for three years. Your annual membership dues are an important stabilizing force for us. Currently, 30% of your dues go directly to your chapters. We ask you for additional donations during our Annual Fund Drive in October. We have a goal of raising \$12,000 this fall through our letter to both

2006 TPE TOTAL EXPENSES



The Prairie Enthusiasts, Inc. is a Premier Land Trust

By Renae Mitchell

Part of a series of articles on Land Protection and Conservation Tools.

The Prairie Enthusiasts Land Protection and Land Stewardship Committees, chaired by Jack Kussmaul and Rich Henderson respectively, develop the criteria to fulfill our mission of perpetuating and recovering prairies and oak savannas in the upper Midwest. The TPE board recently approved a model conservation lease and land management agreement which I can send you upon request to tpedirector@idcnet.com. The committee welcomes your input as we develop policies and procedures.

Each chapter and landowner has their own goals and approaches to management and protection. How can we best ensure that our hard work of management won't be wasted because the land is sold to a developer or plowed under? By having TPE lease, hold title to the land or hold a conservation easement on the property whenever feasible. These conservation tools ensuring protection in perpetuity are especially important in certain areas such as the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area and Mississippi Blufflands. Here landscape scale protection goals include restoring large viable prairie areas for grassland and migrating birds, so acquiring land or easements is a priority among the project partners.

Many people do not realize how much land TPE is currently responsible for - over 1,350 acres protected and another 2,000 under management. About half of our land acreage has been protected in the past two years with much time and effort put into these important transactions. Several more ecologically significant sites, ranging in size from 7 acres to 160 acres, are currently under negotiation for protection in 2008. Following this article is a chart of our current conservation easements and owned lands as of May 30th.

Some generous landowners donate their land or sell the land or an easement to us at a reduced cost and provide a management fund. If you are considering donating land to TPE soon or in your will please contact me or Jack Kussmaul so we can discuss the best options for the future of your land. Individuals and other organizations often contribute funds to help us purchase land and their support is crucial. Often we can leverage the donations as a match to find state or federal support as well.

The vast majority of our income for Wisconsin land purchases and management funds came from the WI

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund which is up for reauthorization in the legislature this summer. If you live in Wisconsin, your elected leaders need to hear that the Stewardship Fund matters. Everyone who values our parks, trails, prairies, forests, and rivers can help. Please go to www.gatheringwaters.org/stewardship for details on the issue and how you can help.

Site	Type	County	State	Acres	Chp.(s)
Pleasure Valley Conservancy	Cons. Easement	Dane	WI	131.00	ESC
Pleasant Valley Conservancy	Cons. Easement	Dane	WI	106.24	ESC
Goplin Prairie	Cons. Easement	Dane	WI	30.00	ESC
Sime Bald	Cons. Easement	Grant	WI	36.50	SWC
Everham (Hollandale)	Cons. Easement	Iowa	WI	72.00	SWC
Lone Tree Prairie	Cons. Easement	Jo Daviess	IL	65.20	NIPE
Pleasant Valley Conservancy	Title	Dane	WI	37.00	ESC
Erbe Grassland	Title	Dane	WI	63.20	ESC
Thomas Wet Prairie	Title	Grant	WI	13.60	SWC
Bush Clover Prairie	Title	Grant	WI	2.65	SWC
Eldred (Ellenboro) Prairie	Title	Grant	WI	45.00	SWC
Vale Prairie	Title	Green	WI	16.05	SWC, PBC, ESC
Iltis Savanna	Title	Green	WI	22.00	SWC, PBC
Butenhoff Prairie	Title	Green	WI	15.00	PBC
Shea Prairie	Title	Iowa	WI	62.00	ESC
Kalscheur Oak Savanna	Title	Iowa	WI	19.00	ESC
Schurch-Thomson Prairie	Title	Iowa	WI	160.00	ESC
A to Z Farm	Title	Iowa	WI	276.00	ESC
Briggs Wetland	Title	Rock	WI	23.88	PBC
Elmville Prairie	Title	Jo Daviess	IL	2.98	NIPE
Hanley Savanna (Robert's)	Title	Jo Daviess	IL	44.00	NIPE
Hanley Savanna (Lewis farm)	Title	Jo Daviess	IL	109.90	NIPE
Lewis Easement	Transferred Easement	Jo Daviess	IL		NIPE to NLI
Rachuy Easement	Transferred Easement	Jo Daviess	IL		NIPE to NLI

First Wisconsin Collection of *Lechea mucronata* (Hairy Pinweed)— *Cistaceae* By Josh Sulman

While conducting private land surveys for the Prairie Enthusiasts last fall, I found an unusual *Lechea* on a small sandstone-bedrock prairie-savanna remnant. Not being terribly familiar with our species of *Lechea* (the pinweeds), I collected it, and it sat in newspaper for the whole winter. When I got around to keying it out, I was mightily surprised to identify it as *Lechea mucronata*, new to Wisconsin. The Wisconsin State Herbarium lists it as Excluded, there being no verified collections from the state.

This species is typical of sandy savanna further south, being noted from NE Illinois by Swink & Wilhelm (1979) as found in “acid sandflats often in partial shade.” Where I found it, near Hollandale in Iowa County, the habitat was a white oak savanna-dry prairie over sandstone. Associates included: *Sorghastrum nutans*, *Monarda fistulosa*, *Polygala sanguinea*, *Potentilla simplex*, *Pycnanthemum virginianum*, *Ranunculus fascicularis*, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, *Viola sagittata*, *Digitaria cognata*, *Hedeoma hispida*, *Cyperus* sp., *Selaginella rupestris*, *Chamaesyce* sp., and *Malus ioensis*. *Lechea mucronata* has a spreading pubescence and bright green, ovate leaves.

Cited Works:

Swink, F. and Wilhelm, G. 1979. Plants of the Chicago Region. The Morton Arboretum. Lisle, IL.
USDA PLANTS profile: *Lechea mucronata*.
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=LEMU3>

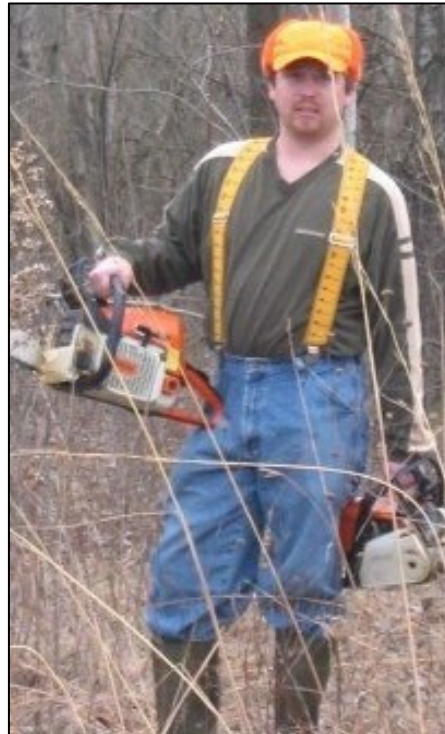
Wisflora: Wisconsin Vascular Plant Species. Wisconsin State Herbarium, UW-Madison.
<http://botany.wisc.edu/wisflora/>

TPE NEEDS NEW EDITOR

We are in need of a new formatter/editor for the Prairie Promoter newsletter. Due to the arrival of a new family member, Mary will no longer be able to do the newsletter. Please consider volunteering for this highly important and creative task. The Prairie Promoter is one of The Prairie Enthusiasts major modes of communication and recruitment, not only to our membership, but also to the public. **If you are interested, please contact Renae Mitchell at tpedirector@idcnet.com**

Introducing Eric Tarman-Ramcheck

Note from Renae: Eric is assisting me by developing a database of all important documents related to lands TPE owns, leases, holds easements on, or manages. We would appreciate your sending us info on any sites your chapter is managing. We will also be coordinating these sites with data from the TPE Inventory project. Eric will create a Geographic Information System (GIS) of our sites and a series of maps for internal use and generalized maps as needed for outreach to the general public. Some of you may have met Eric at our conference in March. I asked him to describe his projects below.



My name is Eric Tarman-Ramcheck. I am a prairie enthusiast who is currently working on a research thesis for my undergraduate degree in biogeography at UW-Whitewater. My thesis focuses on the vegetation patterns of the past and present on a cluster of properties in East Troy, Wisconsin. My report will identify all the variables that have influenced the

present vegetation patterns. It will also contain management plans for the future. I have been working with a Camp and other landowners to restore the properties near the Beulah Bog State Natural Area. The study area has a unique history with low intensive farming at a former Potawatomi settlement and at the Divine Word Seminary in post-settlement times. It is a mosaic of remnant dry prairies, dry-mesic prairie, tamarack bog, oak woodland, leatherleaf bog, sedge meadow, emergent aquatic wetland, and a proposed oak savanna restoration site with management funded through the Landowner Incentive Grant Program. Please contact me for any further information or questions at exaviertr@gmail.com.

Schurch Thomson Prairie Preserve Dedication Celebration!

Dennis W. and Joan Schurch Thomson were childhood residents of southwestern Wisconsin, and they cherish still its farms, woodlands and prairies. In honor of the values and love given them by their parents, Alfred and Velma Schurch, and John and Olive Thomson, it is to them they dedicate the Schurch-Thomson Prairie. In so doing, they acknowledge also the love and support of Heather S. Thomson, and Erik S. Thomson and his wife Sarah, the next generation of Schurch-Thomsons.

The Prairie Enthusiast's volunteers have been working with the Schurch-Thomson family for 10 years to restore the original prairies and savannas of this 160-acre farm. It forms an integral part of the Mounds View Grassland within the 50,000-acre Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area. Through the assistance of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and a generous donation from the Schurch-Thomson Family, this property will remain forever protected and managed as a natural habitat for many rare and endangered plants, insects and grassland birds, as well as animals like the badger and bull snake. We will also be dedicating the nearby A to Z Farm Industries land transferred to TPE from The Nature Conservancy; the land was purchased with assistance from the WI Stewardship Fund. The Prairie Enthusiasts held the Schurch-Thomson Preserve Dedication Celebration and Field trip on June 9th.



Schurch-
Thomson
Barn

Dennis and Joan



100,000 Shooting Stars Bloom at Schurch-Thomson Prairie in May! Photo by Rich Henderson

Editors Note: Correction

We regret that in an attempt to save space in the Spring 2007 issue of the Prairie Promoter (Vol. 20, No. 1), important acknowledgments were deleted from the article "The Prairie Enthusiasts Assist Landowner in Protecting Rare Orchid." **Our sincere apologies to Craig Annen and John Van Altena for this oversight.** The following represents the key text:

In 2005, Craig Annen of Michler & Brown, LLC was hired to create a management plan describing the details of this eastern prairie white-fringed orchid habitat rescue. Mr. Annen has devoted much of his private and professional time investigating control measures for reed canary grass. After months of deliberation between the author, Mr. Annen and the landowner, we felt confident that we had considered every possible angle in relation to ensuring the protection of these federally-listed orchids during management, while striving to maximize their habitat enhancement with available resources. This project not only represents a success in habitat management, but also an exciting example of a productive partnership between a private landowner, a conservation non-profit organization, volunteers, a highly specialized private contractor, a state agency, and a federal agency. Special recognition of Craig Annen and John van Altena is vital – they provided the technical knowledge and driving force behind this project and its success.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Northwest Illinois Prairie Restoration

Workshop June 18 in Elizabeth, Illinois.

Contact: Jim Rachuy at jr.grassroots@verizon.net

8:30 Registration & Introductions Mark Maidak

9:05 Jim Rachuy - intro to prairie restoration

9:45 Rich Mattas--- local prairies, plants and critters

10:45 Cory Ritterbush--- prairie design & installation

11:30 Amy Staffen--- prairie restoration & management

12:15 Lunch (provided)

1:00 Hanley Savanna Tour (bus)

Join the Illinois Prairie Guardians for a memorable day of canoeing this summer. Beginners welcome.

The group will meet at Bob's Riverside office on **Saturday August 11 by 9:30AM**. We will ride 10 miles upriver in shuttle vans with canoes in tow. Here, Bob's staff members will help us launch from a beach for our leisurely paddle down the river. The water is cool, clear and clean. The shore is completely undeveloped for 80% of the trip and power boats are scarce. We will choose from the many sandy beaches and sandbars for a picnic lunch, and, later, an afternoon swim. **Canoe Rental Reservation:** We only have 15 canoes reserved, so contact Jim Mantey ASAP to make a reservation. **Phone 815-858-2574 or email jimsgarage@mchsi.com.** Then, by June 15, send a check for \$35 for each canoe to **James Mantey, 33 Tamarack Row, Galena, IL 61036. Your check will guarantee your reservation. The \$35 includes one canoe and van shuttle.** Each canoeist also gets a life vest and a paddle. There are only two seats in the canoes, but a third person could bring two cushions or a folding boat chair and ride comfortably amidst cooler/cargo. Expect to return to Bob's Riverside by 4:30 PM. Located at S13220 Shifflet Rd, Spring Green WI, 608-588-2826 www.bob'sriverside.com.

3rd Fire in Eastern Oak Forests Conference:

Learning from Experience May 20-22, 2008,

Carbondale, IL **for managers of oak and associated ecosystems** at Southern Illinois University. For more information contact: Charles Ruffner: Phone (618) 453- 7469 (ruffner@siu.edu).

The Prairie Enthusiasts Annual Membership Meeting and Picnic

Submitted by Renae Mitchell

July 15th (Sunday), 2007 This year it will be hosted by the Coulee Region Chapter at the intriguing Holland Sand Prairie on an ancient Mississippi floodplain in Holmen, WI.

We invite you to participate in the committee meetings and the question and answer session with TPE accountant Claudia Vlisides, CPA. Ask questions or give suggestions at the annual meeting. There will be two different times for field trips so those participating in the committee meetings can still visit the prairie. With an **air-conditioned town hall** available, if we need it, we will have the best of both worlds, plus good food!

9:00- 11:00 **Outreach & Education Committee Mtg.**

10:00 **Field Trip** at Holland Sand Prairie

11:00 **Board Meeting**

12:30 Lunch (Potluck at picnic shelter)

1:30 **Annual Meeting** (shelter or town hall)

2:30 **Q & A with TPE Accountant** Claudia Vlisides

3:30 Repeat of **Field Trip** at Holland Sand Prairie

3:30 **Endowment & Fundraising Committee Meeting**

Exit onto HWY 35, by La Crosse north off of I-90, then exit onto McHugh Road, north of Holmen. Go west for approx. 3/4 mi., on the left are the Town Hall & Picnic shelters.



Next Year's Banquet and Conference Will Be In La Crosse, WI!

Contact:

jrogala@usgs.gov for more information

Artwork by Gary Eldred

"Caring for Our Local Place"

Conference

Submitted by Cate Harrington

Holy Wisdom Monastery (formerly St. Benedict's) is hosting a conference entitled "Caring for Our Local Place" on Saturday, June 23, 2007. The conference will focus on the mission of local environmental groups (such as TPE, Friends of Pheasant Branch, National Heritage Land Trust and Aldo Leopold Foundation) and the motivation behind their activities. There will be a guided field trip to Pheasant Branch and Holy Wisdom's restored prairie. The two keynote speakers are Rich Henderson of TPE and Cal DeWitt of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at UW-Madison. Registration, including lunch, is \$5 (\$7 day of the event). For more information visit www.benedictinewomen.org

June 2007 Marks the 3rd Annual Invasive Species Awareness Month

Submitted by Rachel Orwan, ISAM Coordinator

A Call to Action: Governor Doyle has declared June as Invasive Species Awareness Month (ISAM) and has recognized this as an opportunity for all of us to join forces and "take action against the introduction and spread of invasive species."

ISAM is an educational campaign, taking place in June, which aims not only to raise awareness of citizens to the serious threat of invasive species, but also aims to give them the knowledge they need to prevent and manage invasive species incursions throughout Wisconsin. Events are held all over the state and engage local folks in learning about species that threaten lakes, wetlands, rivers, prairies, fields, forests, parks and backyards. Typical events include workshops, field days, hikes, bike rides, canoe floats, garden tours, lectures and workdays.

Now is the time of year to start thinking about how you and your organization can encourage positive change in Wisconsin's natural and managed landscapes. A meaningful way to do this is by passing on your knowledge and motivation for invasive species management to the citizens of Wisconsin. Imagine if you could reach 20 people and those 20 people actually did something to slow the spread of invasives on their land or public land! Or better yet - what if they did something to prevent infestations in the first place?

I'd like to invite each of you to hold some sort of event during June aimed not only at educating and raising awareness of invasive species, but also aimed at giving people the knowledge they need to prevent and manage invasive species incursions throughout the state.

Anything goes, just as long as you are teaching people about invasive species. You could plan something as simple as a presentation to your local garden club or as complex as a field day targeting landowners and legislators. You can combine talks about invasive species with more "fun" activities such as hikes, bike rides, canoe floats and garden tours. Think about holding a work day to get some on-the-ground work accomplished, while showing folks how labor intensive management can be and how much easier it is to tackle invasives as a group. The sky's the limit!

Visit the Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species website, (invasivespecies.wi.gov) for ISAM information, including scheduled events, resources to help you plan your own events and details about the Woodland Field Days and the Art Contest. Contact me, Rachel Orwan (isam_wi@yahoo.com), if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Don't feel qualified to organize an event? Visit the ISAM on-line events calendar to find out what is scheduled in your area. If there are no events in your neighborhood, contact the local DNR or Extension office, Land and Water Conservation Office or other conservation organization to request they hold one.

EMPIRE – SAUK CHAPTER

Calendar of Events

An Empire-Sauk Chapter board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 18 at TPE's office at 222 S. Hamilton, Madison. Meeting time TBD. All members are welcome.

Election of Chapter President and Secretary to be Held

Submitted by Rich Henderson

Nominations are being sought to fill the chapter officer positions of President and Secretary. These are two-year terms. The election will be held at the annual meeting of the chapter membership on the evening of Wednesday, July 11 (see chapter picnic for details). Please attend the meeting to help us fill these positions.

Empire-Sauk Chapter Picnic and Annual Meeting is July 11

Submitted by Cate Harrington

The annual picnic of the Empire-Sauk chapter will be held Wednesday, July 11, 2007, at Pleasant Valley Conservancy, a prairie/oak savanna restoration in western Dane County. Hosts will be Kathie and Tom Brock. Pleasant Valley Conservancy is an outstanding example of savanna restoration with exceptional ridge top views. The Brocks recently donated a conservation easement on 106 acres of the Conservancy to TPE, and the Savanna Oak Foundation, established by the Brocks, transferred 37 acres to TPE. The Savanna Oak Foundation is managing the site, and designation as a State Natural Area is pending.

Drinks and sandwiches will be provided; bring a dish to pass. Eating will begin at 6 PM, followed by a short business meeting, and a field trip.

Directions: Go west on U.S. 14 from the Beltline to the Village of Black Earth. Turn left at the traffic light (Shoe Box corner) and follow County Highway F south and west through the village. Continue south about four miles to Pleasant Valley Road. Turn left and proceed to fire number 4609. Park on the road. Those with an extra hour to spare might consider a visit to Black Earth Rettenmund Prairie, a Nature Conservancy property managed by TPE, which you will pass on your way (corner of County F and Fesenfeld Road; entrance 1000 feet west on Fesenfeld). Any questions, call Kathie or Tom Brock at 238-5050.

Successful Clean-up at Schurch-Thomson Prairie

Submitted by Rich Henderson

On Saturday, May 12th, thanks to the donated use of a 30-yard dumpster from Pellitteri Waste Systems, the donated use and operation of a skid-loader by John Field, and 14 volunteers putting in over 80 hours, the barn, milk house, and yard areas at the Schurch-Thomson Prairie were cleaned out and picked up. This is a big job out of the way. The 30-yard dumpster was filled to the top and 4 large piles of scrap metal were made by the volunteers. The metal has since been

hauled away by a metal salvage business. Thank you to the hard working volunteers that pitched in to help. It is amazing what can be accomplished in such a short time when enough hands are involved.



Burn at the West Middleton School Prairie, conducted by the Empire-Sauk Chapter, Spring 2007. Photo by Richard Oberle

Unusual Burn Season

Submitted by Rich Henderson

Less than cooperative weather this spring with prolonged periods of high winds and rain and a major snow event in April, resulted in fewer areas getting burned than originally planned. But the season was salvaged by the dedication of our volunteers to take off work to burn during the day on weekdays. We were able to accomplish 80% of the burns we had hoped for.

The Blufflands Project (a joint project of TPE Empire-Sauk and the Aldo Leopold Foundation) accomplished 15 burns totaling approximately 300 acres with the help of many volunteers. The rest of the Chapter completed another 40 burns on 20 properties for a total of 250 acres. These latter burns were accomplished with the help of both e-mail and phone notices made by volunteer coordinator Kathy Cartwright, and the participation of 60 burn volunteers! Volunteers logged 310 person-burn events (775 hours).

Thank you to the many volunteers out there. You're helping keep our prairie and savanna heritage alive and well. A special thank you to the Brocks, Hendersons, and Oberles for generously letting their trucks be used once again as pack horses for the pumper units.



Black-Earth Rettenmund prescribed burn, April 2, 2007. Photo by Amy Staffen.

Meeting the Garlic Mustard Challenge

Submitted by Rich Henderson

Thanks to the continued leadership of Jan Ketelle and help from several volunteers, significant work was done in May on garlic mustard control at Schurch-Thomson and Shea prairies (Mounds View Grassland complex). With Jan's persistence, we are starting to get the upper hand on the garlic mustard invasion at those sites. We also participated in on going garlic mustard control work at Noll Valley Oak Savanna.

Underwood Seed Orchard in Good Shape

Submitted by Rich Henderson

This spring, TPE volunteers cleaned up and weeded, and did maintenance work on the fence at the Underwood Seed Orchard. Most of the work was done by Kay Bongers, Kathy Henderson, Paul Jacobson, and Jan Ketelle. Most species in the orchard came through the winter in good condition, although meadow voles were hard on the *Liatris* bulbs this year.

The orchard now has 52 species and is nearly full. A few more additions are planned. Species present are mostly those characteristic of deep soil mesic and wet prairie. For the most part, the beds are of species not readily available from local remnants and roadside populations. The starter plants are grown from seed that TPE volunteers have collected from local native populations. The seeds produced by this orchard go to both TPE restoration plantings and those of our partners in the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area (MRPHA) project (see the Spring 2004 issue [Vol. 17, No. 1] of *The Prairie Promoter* for details on the MRPHA project).

Summer Help Needed with Land Stewardship to Match Grant Dollars

Submitted by Rich Henderson

As always, help is needed through the summer to collect seed and to cut or pull sweet clover, parsnip, and knapweed. But this summer we once again have various grants for land management work that require match of in-kind volunteer time to earn the grant money. So for every hour of volunteer time that you put in, you generate from 3-4 hours of paid contract labor for control of weeds, trees, and brush on our project sites. This summer, we will be working at Underwood Prairie, Schurch-Thomson Prairie, Shea Prairie, Ripp Prairies, Koltes Prairies, Smith/Egre Drumlins, Mazomanie Bluff, Schluckebier Prairie, Black Earth Rettenmund Prairie, and other sites. If you wish to be on the contact lists to help with these activities, please contact our chapter volunteer coordinator, Kathy Cartwright (839-5148 or kjcartwright@verizon.net).

PRAIRIE SMOKE CHAPTER

Join us for the following:

June 10 (Sunday) Whitewater Wildlife Area Field Trip Wabasha County, MN

Join us for a trip into the Whitewater Wildlife Management Area to view lupine and possibly the federally endangered Karner Blue Butterfly. This is a fun hike into an oak savanna area that is being restored. We can also hike up the large bluff adjacent to the savanna to see spring prairie flowers in bloom.

Time: 10am **Contact:** Jaime Edwards (507-252-4605)

Directions: Meet at the Beaver intersection of Cty Rd 30 (out of Plainview) and Cty Rd 74. Please wear long pants and shoes suitable for hiking on rough terrain. Hiking the bluff is strenuous, but the savanna portion is moderate. Bring drinking water as well. If you want a close-up of butterflies, a pair of close-focusing binoculars is helpful.

June 16 (Saturday) Pleasant Valley Cemetery Workday Mower Co, MN

Pleasant Valley Township Cemetery is a pioneer cemetery located next to the Immanuel Missouri Synod Lutheran Church in Mower County, MN. The historically significant site, which is owned and minimally maintained by the township, includes 2 acres

of poetically nested prairie remnant. Prairie Smoke members visited the site in 2005 & discovered listed species including wild quinine, rattlesnake-master, cream & white indigo, PSC agreed to work cooperatively with local agencies (township, community, state non game program, master naturalists, genealogy & historical societies) in developing and implementing a stewardship plan. Please assist us in our first work day on the cemetery in removing parsnip.

Time: 10 am **Contact:** Bonnie Maffitt (507-367-4633)

Directions: Meet at 9:30am near the Fleet Farm South gas station in Rochester, MN to carpool, or meet us at 10:00 am at the entrance to the cemetery next to the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church in Pleasant Valley Township in Mower Co (south 63 past Stewartville, Co Rd 8 to Co Rd 15 to 720th Avenue). Note: we will be working with parsnip, so dress accordingly and bring work gloves.

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS CHAPTER

We've installed electric power, water, and irrigation equipment at Hanley Savanna. All in support of the 10,000 new plugs and plants at the Rare Plant Nursery. The planting will be completed by June. A big Hanley Savanna thank you to all the volunteers this spring who volunteered at Hanley: Beth Pomaro, Pam and George Johnson, Judith and Bob Wehrle, Marcy Kiefer, Pat Caine, the JDCF crew (the 3 C's), Jim and Rickie Rachuy, Joan Harmet, Dick Peterson, Paul Hansen and the Twin Ponds crew, Chuck Wemstrom, Ed Strenski, Kay Day, Kay Weibel, Steve Freeman, Dana Vincent. And a special thanks to Ed and Karin Strenski for donating a black oak and a swamp white oak!

NIPE and Natural Area Guardians are looking for volunteers. We do lots of neat things because of all our great volunteers. We need a few more, so please join us. You missed your chance, for this year at least, to plant plugs, but we will still need your help this summer to keep the garden looking spiffy. And soon we will start picking prairie seed. Compared to planting plugs, picking prairie seed is a piece of cake and believe it or not, it is lots of fun. Nothing like walking along picking, chatting or daydreaming and all the while enjoying the very prairies we've planted together over the years.

We've been working on the Hanley Savanna Prairie Restoration Project for over four years and now it's time to show off. We're going to host a series of prairie walks this summer and fall, Evenings on the Prairie, starting

July 11. Come on out and join us for a little food, sometimes a little music and a guided tour of one of our prairies. Please join us and see prairie restoration in action, right before your eyes. See calendar at the chapter page on the TPE website.

OTHER PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS CHAPTERS

No information submitted. Any member can submit information for the newsletter - see page 2 for contact info.

Do Not Mow Signs Available

\$10 each, plus \$1.50/sign for shipping. Order through Renae Mitchell at 262-473-2956 or [email](#).



Help protect remnants and prairie plantings!

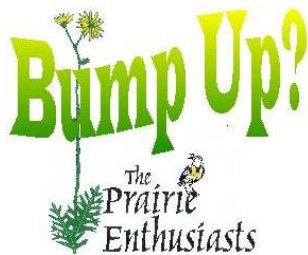
These "No Mow" signs are 6" by 9", and made of heavy, sturdy aluminum that will last 20 years or more - if no one mows them over! They have holes on the top and bottom so they can easily be mounted to a fencepost with wire. We recommend talking with your township or county road department to make sure they will honor these signs.

We only have 25 left so get these No Mow signs before we don't have no mo! Checks should be made payable to TPE and sent to Renae Mitchell, 7916 N. County Line Road, Whitewater, WI 53190.

THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS
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The Prairie Enthusiasts needs you to bump up your membership to a higher level so we can enhance our member and volunteer services and continue our mission of protection, restoration and education.

We are asking that you pledge to continue at this new level for three years so we know we can count on your support!

Thank you, Your TPE Endowment & Fundraising

committee

I/We *name(s)* _____ will bump up from a current membership level of _____ to the _____ level. Enclosed is a check for the difference of \$ _____ for 2007.

The Prairie Enthusiasts Membership Levels:

\$15 Student, \$25 Individual, \$40 Family,
\$100 Shooting Star, \$200 Blazing Star, \$500 Compass Plant,
\$1,000 Monarch, \$5,000 Benefactor

Please send form and check to:

The Prairie Enthusiasts, P.O. Box 620556, Middleton, WI 53562-0556