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The PRAIRIE PROMOTER

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Grassroots Conservation at Work

An Unlikely Pair

By Randy Schindle

This article first appeared in the October 2010 issue of the *Minnesota Stewardship Newsletter* and is reprinted here with permission from the author and publisher.

What do a former refugee from Poland and a former North Mankato bartender have in common?

Both Henry Panowitsch and Scott Seigfried have received a Forest Stewardship Plan from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources(DNR).

Both are over achievers when it comes to conservation land management on their respective properties.

Both can often be found in the Good Thunder Café plotting their next land management move.

Panowitsch's family fled Poland at the end of World War II when he was three years old. They were taken in by a West German family. The head of the household was a forester and Henry, at an early age, was exposed to forest and game management. Immigrating to the United States, Henry became a professor of philosophy. After many years of teaching, he retired and purchased a parcel of land near Good Thunder, Minnesota. He now manages his land for wildlife, trees and environmental quality.

Projects that Henry has accomplished or is in the process of completing, include ten acres of prairie restoration, controlled burning of his prairies, tree planting, timber stand improvement cutting (favoring young oak and walnut) and a sale of black walnut logs.

Scott formerly worked for the DNR-Division of Parks and Trails at Bear Island State Park. Before that he was a favored source of advice at a watering hole in North Mankato.



Henry Panowitsch and Scott Seigfried. Photos courtesy of Randy Schindle.

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Preventing Nature Deficit Syndrome

By Rich Henderson

Important national legislation is being proposed to combat nature deficit syndrome in our youth. Here is a letter on the subject from Kevin J. Coyle, Vice President for Education and Training, with the National Wildlife Federation.

Dear Colleagues,

On November 18, the U.S. Congress took an important initial step toward addressing one of the deepest and most profound threats to the American conservation movement and future health we have ever faced. It is the "indoor childhood" phenomenon and is reflected in the stark reality that the average American child now spends 7 hours and 38 minutes per day watching TV and playing video games and, except for a sprinkling of organized sports activities, has largely given up on playing in and exploring the great outdoors.

Recognizing that American children are now under an insidious form of "house arrest," that will cost them their long term health and cost American conservation its core connection to a child's heart, U.S. Representative Ron Kind of Wisconsin has introduced the National Moving Outdoors in Nature Act (MONA). (H.R. 6426)

Its provisions include:

Directing the President to do a comprehensive review of the problem and develop an effective federal government strategy to more regularly connect children, youth and families with nature and the outdoors;

Encouraging and funding states to develop their own statewide plans that likewise incorporate public health, parks and recreation, transportation, and other outdoor-connection initiatives at the local level; and

Supporting comprehensive research better documenting the health, conservation, and other benefits of active time spent outdoors in the natural world.

To learn more about HR 6426 and what you can do to help: <http://www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/Media-Center/News-by-Topic/Get-Outside/2010/11-18-10-Moving-Outdoors-in-Nature-Act-Introduced-in-US-House.aspx>

Best,

Kevin J. Coyle, JD.
Vice President, Education and Training
National Wildlife Federation

Your Membership Matters

By Carol Winge

The success of The Prairie Enthusiasts is due in large part to the generosity of its supporters. Here are just a few reasons why your membership is so important to us:

- Membership provides financial stability over time. Although TPE receives some of its funding through grants, these funds are often one-time gifts or can be lost when priorities shift. But having members that are passionate about our mission and can see the impact that our work has had on the landscape will ensure that we will be able to pursue our goals into the future.
- Membership dollars are unrestricted. Grants and donations are often tied to specific projects and initiatives – but we all know that we need to have unrestricted cash available. Unrestricted gifts allow us to invest in opportunities that require rapid responses.
- Membership gives you a voice! Making a charitable donation is an easy way for you to make a difference. Every time you renew your membership or make a donation to TPE you are making an investment in the future of land conservation in our region.

We are so grateful to all of our members for making our important work possible – thank you!

In 2011 we would like to increase our current membership by 10 percent, a growth of approximately 110 new members. Our members are the base that sustains TPE for future generations, and we want to reach out to increase that base. You can help grow our membership:

- Give a gift membership in 2011.
- Tell your friends, neighbors, and families what a great organization this is and encourage them to become members.
- Bring a guest to a TPE event; field trip, work party, annual picnic, annual conference, chapter meeting and let them know about all the benefits of membership that you enjoy.
- Share your copy of the Prairie Promoter with a new prairie enthusiast who may be unfamiliar with the organization.
- And be sure to renew your membership in 2011!

For more information about membership in TPE, check our website, www.ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org or call Carol Winge at (608)577-0584.

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Today his best advice is promoting forest and prairie management to anybody who'll listen. His projects have included a native prairie restoration, tree planting and buckthorn control. Scott is also probably the only deer hunter who stays on his deer stand all day (I mean he stays in the tree all day, never coming down for anything).

Tenacious is a word that best describes both Henry and Scott. Both had major issues with exotic species in their native prairie restorations. Hours of mowing, herbicide spraying and hand pulling have created very diverse native grass and flower plantings.

Although they have received cost share assistance from government agencies, they have also invested a considerable amount of their own money to accomplish their goals.

So what did I do to make this a private land stewardship success story?

Henry was experiencing trouble finding someone to spray his old CRP planting in preparation of upgrading it to native grasses and forbs. I knew that Scott had recently sprayed his upgrade with his own equipment so I arranged them to meet and see if Scott could assist Henry.

Following completion of the spraying, Henry and Scott discovered they were kindred spirits when it came to land management ethics. After that my assistance was to get out of their way.

Henry and Scott have since formed the Many Rivers Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts. This multi-state agency promotes the management of prairie remnants. Currently this group is renovating a superb prairie remnant by Judson, Minnesota. Numerous educational events have been sponsored by this organization.

So what is to be learned from this story?

With our limited staff dedicated to private lands assistance, we should be looking for those opportunities that create local champions for private landowners. They seem few and far between but they are out there. We need to recognize those individuals that can carry the banner of private land stewardship and bring them together. The synergism that can be created can be quite surprising, as it was in this case.

I have to go, I've been paged to the Good Thunder Café. Seems Henry and Scott have something else up their sleeves.



TPE at the MN-WI Invasive Species Conference



The first joint Minnesota and Wisconsin state conference addressing the threat of invasive species was held in downtown St. Paul on November 8-10. According to conference chairs, "there were 582 attendees from not only Minnesota and Wisconsin, but from other surrounding Midwest states and even as far as Florida, Texas, Massachusetts and Utah!"

Evanne Hunt, TPE president, staffed the booth and talked to probably 100 people. "I was pleasantly surprised at the large number of people who were familiar with TPE. I want to pass on their thanks for our great work."

Evanne passed out a lot of brochures and expects a good number of new members.

Conference topics included state weed laws, biocontrols, herbicide use, management techniques and many more.

A Bucket List Prairie

By Deanna Pomije

In mid-September, I treated myself to a week-long tour of Kansas' Flint Hills. What remarkably amazing, awe-inspiring, vast beauty there is to behold in Kansas, of all places. I had no idea. The vast tallgrass prairie of the Kansas Flint Hills, the largest remaining area of unplowed tallgrass prairie in North America, puts our small prairie treasures in the Upper Midwest to shame.

The Flint Hills are nestled between Topeka, Salina and Wichita, Kansas. These tallgrass prairies contain everything you would expect in a tallgrass prairie: from endless Indian, Big Bluestem and Switch Grasses to the brilliant Snow-on-the-Mountain, Compass Plant, Butterfly

Milkweed, Aromatic Aster, Western Ironweed, Missouri Evening-Primrose, Stiff Goldenrod and the never-ending Sunflowers. Thanks to poor, shallow limestone soils, the Flint Hills have escaped the plow and intensive grain crop production. Instead the area is the home to grazing beef cattle, bison and the rare American cowboy.

Two Flint Hills Prairies to behold are the Konza Prairie and the new Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. Together, these jewels of tallgrass prairie comprise nearly 20,000 acres.

The Konza Prairie, named after the Kanza Indians and owned by the Nature Conservancy, is a long-term ecological research natural area focusing on conservation of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem and educational outreach. Kansas State University manages the research on this prairie and there have been many scientific articles published from Konza. Formerly part of the Dewey Cattle Ranch, the Konza Prairie has an impressive herd of bison helping to manage the grasses. Greater Prairie Chickens and Henslow Sparrows also inhabit these grasslands. Konza has dedicated and knowledgeable docents available to lead tours.

The second prairie gem, the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, became a reality in 1996. It is just a baby in terms of our National Park System. The park headquarters is located in an historic 1880's limestone ranch mansion, formerly the Z-Bar Ranch. Also noteworthy is the massive three story barn also made of the same two foot thick native limestone and a nearby historic country school house. Surrounding this is an extensive intact tallgrass prairie landscape. They have just begun to incorporate bison into their management system.

As Aldo Leopold once stated, "What a thousand acres of compass plant looked like when they tickled the Bellies of the Buffalo is a question never again to be answered, and perhaps not even asked." Well, in the striking prairies of Kansas this question can STILL be asked, maybe just on a smaller scale than what it was originally intended. *Silphium integrifolium*, or Compass plant was seen scattered impressively throughout the Kansas prairies; they were less dominant in the grazed areas as they are a palatable favorite for cattle and bison alike.

Normally, when out in prairies, I spend more time looking down identifying and appreciating the plant and insect world. However, on my Kansas trip I found myself looking up more often than not, to behold the prairie expanses (see photo on page 7). I found myself strolling through the tallgrass with both arms outstretched lightly touching the seed heads, feeling one with nature again. I felt the worries and burdens of normal life just dropping off with each step I took through the prairie. It was like stepping back in time. It was easy to envision the pioneers seeing the never ending prairie for the first time following the wagon trail west.

I went with a small group of eight; organized through Naturalist Journeys. Normally they coordinate birding trips; this was the first to incorporate prairie ecology into the trip. It was led by Ed and Sil Pembleton, who will be hosting another such event next May (see TPE website for details).

Land trusts changing the landscape of conservation

By Ron Seely

This article first appeared in the *Wisconsin State Journal* on October 5, 2010. It is reprinted here with permission from the author.

Land preservation in Wisconsin has changed dramatically, due mostly to the largely invisible rise of land trusts — private, non-profit organizations that have worked with local and state government to protect hundreds of thousands of acres of forests, lakes, prairies and farmland.

"To put it simply, people have seen an opportunity, recognizing that government can't do everything," said Michael Strigel, executive director of Gathering Waters Conservancy, an organization that provides services for and advocates for the state's land trusts.

Fifteen years ago, there were perhaps 15 such organizations in Wisconsin. Today there are 70.

Between 2005 and 2009, acreage in the state protected by the work of land trusts jumped from 80,000 acres to more than 220,000 acres. The land protected ranges from stands of North Woods pines to hardwood forests in the Baraboo Hills to prairies and even farmland in southern Wisconsin.

From small, local groups to powerful statewide organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, land trusts negotiate with landowners and local and state governments to preserve sensitive tracts of property. They do this by using a combination of private, state and federal money to either purchase land outright or buy development rights that remain with the land, protecting it even after a change of ownership. The land trusts then monitor those lands to make sure they remain protected.

Gene Roark, a longtime Wisconsin conservationist, helped start the Wisconsin chapter of The Nature Conservancy in 1960, making it one of the state's oldest land trusts.

"More and more people have seen what's happening to land," Roark said. "It almost sounds like a cliché; but if you drive through the country and see a place you like and all of a sudden you see signs that say 'Lots for Sale,' people want to do something about it."

Story continued next page

Second Annual TPE Photo Contest

The great response that we got to last year's first photo contest has led us to believe that the Second Annual TPE Photo Contest will be even bigger and better.

We will again be looking for images that portray all things prairie. So, hopefully you have been capturing the sights of spring, summer, fall, and winter.

Subject matter may include anything that includes plants, animals, insects or amphibians that are native to prairie areas or, activities that are taking place on a prairie.

We're working on making the submittal process easier than last year, as well as finding a way that all of our members can view the photos without jeopardizing the photographer's copyright. Full details will be available on our website by January 1st. Here are a few basics:

All photos will need to be submitted in digital format. Maximum 3 entries per member.

A finalist group of submitted photos will be selected by a professional photographer. The finalists will be displayed at our conference in February. The membership can then vote for their favorite photo, which will be used on the cover of the 2010 TPE Annual Report.

All photographers who have a photo selected as a finalist image will receive \$100 and a fine print suitable for framing.

Copyright remains with the photographer.

Submittal deadline is February 1, 2011.

For details and a photo submittal form go to:
www.ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org

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Long history of conservation

Mary Jean Huston, director of The Nature Conservancy, said the desire to protect threatened places runs deep especially in Wisconsin where conservation giants such as Aldo Leopold and John Muir enriched our understanding of how important undeveloped landscapes are to our well-being.

Thus, in 2008, The Nature Conservancy stepped in when the proposed construction of a high-end residential development with big homes and large lots threatened to fragment an extensive stretch of prairie, grassland and oak savanna — some of the state's most threatened ecosystems — along the Military Ridge Trail in Iowa County. Using a matching grant from the state Department of Natural Resource's Stewardship Fund, the land trust negotiated with the developer and purchased 153 acres to forestall the development and extend the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area.

That effort is evidence of another powerful reason for the growth of land trusts in Wisconsin — the existence of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund. Established in 1989 and financed by the sale of state bonds, the fund provides \$86 million a year for the purchase of ecologically important lands. Most important to the state's private land trusts, the fund, which has protected more than 500,000 acres since it was created, provides \$12 million a year in matching grants to the groups.

The availability of that money has extended the reach and the influence of land trusts, according to Mary Teves, director of the DNR's Bureau of Community Financial Assistance. The arrangement, she said, has allowed both the DNR and land trusts to stretch the value of Stewardship dollars, as was the case with the Military Ridge prairie purchase.

Land trusts benefit from being local

But many of the land trusts, while often dependent upon such government dollars, offer something that government land protection programs cannot — a local touch. And that's another reason why land trusts have grown in power and popularity, according to Teves. They are often started and run by local residents who have a specific concern about a local landscape, one which may have been overlooked or may be too small to warrant the attention of the state.

Vicki Elkin, who worked formerly with Gathering Waters and now works with the state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, said the hope among those encouraging the establishment of land trusts is that they become an accepted and valued part of a community.

"It's really a grassroots movement," said Elkin. "It was our hope that these groups would become community institutions, like the local library."

Today, across the state, more than 50,000 people are members of a local land trust, according to Gathering Waters. The volunteer boards of directors are made up of local residents. Often, when a landowner in a particular community wants to preserve their land by working with a land trust, they end up dealing with a person they know.

That's a crucial distinction, according to Jim Welsh, director of the Natural Heritage Land Trust, which was recently honored by Gathering Waters as Land Trust of the Year. Many times, Welsh said, a landowner will feel more comfortable dealing with a land trust than with a government agency.

In recent months, for example, Welsh has been working closely with a Dane County farm family to purchase and protect fields surrounding a beautiful, oak-covered drumlin in the Town of Westport. The drumlin had already been purchased by the DNR. But the Koltes family, which had lost the farm during the Great Depression and bought it back in the late 1970s, wanted the surrounding land protected, too.

The farm fields will eventually be returned to prairie and will give visitors a glimpse of what the landscape looked like before settlement when a vast grassland called the Empire Prairie stretched all the way to the Illinois border.

Jim Koltes, speaking for the family, said he turned to Welsh and the Natural Heritage Land Trust because he knew of their work and because he knew the land trust would see to the land's protection long into the future. A final deal on more than 100 acres of land was completed two weeks ago and Koltes said his late father, Otto, would be thrilled to know that even a century from now the family's land will be covered by prairie grass rather than concrete and homes.

"I know he would have been happy," Koltes said.

New Prairie Legacy Program

By Dani Stolley, Development Director

In our next issue, we will feature the new Prairie Legacy Planned Giving Program and highlight a few inaugural members, including Vice President Jack Kussmaul. Jack recently planned a generous, cash endowment, as well as an estate gift of almost 100 acres of native and restored prairie, oak savanna and oak woods in southwest Wisconsin. Thank you, Jack!

If you are considering (or have already made plans) to include The Prairie Enthusiasts in your will or estate, (especially as friends and family gather for the holidays) please email Dani @ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org or call (920) 420-4104.

We want to thank you and tell you about your options for the various types of planned gifts. Give a call today and leave a legacy that last forever! Thank you!

TPE Volunteer Recognition Program

\$276,336.64*

That is the value of the 13,493 hours of volunteer time contributed by TPE members in 2009. We use these numbers in grant applications and to illustrate the amount of member support TPE has. This level of "boots-on-the-ground" activism differentiates TPE from many other organizations.

The Membership Committee recommended to the Board, and they approved, a Service Award program to begin on January 1, 2011 to annually recognize our members who donate their time -- on committees, as chapter leaders, at work parties, leading field trips, and so forth.

There is down-loadable form on the website (under TPE Business) for you to track your volunteer hours. Submit this form to your chapter leaders at the end of each calendar year. Currently, the chapter leader submits volunteer time spent by category to Carol Winge for the annual report. They will now also submit the time by member.

All TPE members who volunteer will receive recognition in the Prairie Promoter. If you contribute over 100 hours you will also received a token of appreciation such as

- 101 - 249 hours/year -- TPE certificate and lapel pin
- 250-499 hours/year -- TPE "Volunteer" t-shirt
- 500 or more hours/year -- choice of TPE pen, mug, t-shirt or lapel pin

* http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time
This is based on an average value of \$20.48 per hour across our three states (volunteer time in Illinois is more valuable, but that is another story!).



"I found myself strolling through the tallgrass with both arms outstretched lightly touching the seed heads, feeling one with nature again." Deanna Pomije immersed in the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. See article on page 4. Photo by Ed Pemberton.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2011 Wisconsin Wetlands Association Conference: Wetlands in the Landscape

Save the Date: February 16-17, 2011



Wisconsin
Wetlands Association's
Wetland Conference
brings together
Wisconsin's wetland
and water resource

community to share the latest in wetland science, management, restoration and protection issues. This year's conference centers around the theme *Wetlands in the Landscape* and features a plenary session, concurrent sessions on a variety of wetland-related topics, poster session, exhibit hall, conference banquet and presentation, silent auction, field trips to local wetlands, and more!

For more information or to register, please visit:
www.wisconsinwetlands.org/2011conference.htm

2011 TPE Conference and Banquet: Conservation in a Working Landscape

Save the Date: February 26, 2011



The Southwest Wisconsin Chapter is pleased to co-sponsor this year's conference and banquet with the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited. The conference will feature general session speakers as well as concurrent sessions on a variety of topics that illustrate conservation and restoration of prairie ecosystems and trout streams occurs within working landscapes. The conference will open with a general session featuring Dr. Curt Meine, Senior Fellow with the Aldo Leopold Foundation. Given this year's conference theme, it is fitting that this authoritative biographer of Aldo Leopold will lead our opening session with the talk: *From Wild Lands to Working Lands to Urban Lands: Connecting Conservation Across the Landscape*.

This year's conference will feature a wide variety of topics from grazing to burning issues; navigating bureaucracy, taxes and landowner issues; surveying techniques old and now; biodiversity and "biologic agriculture;" stream corridor restoration and much more. There will be ample time to see and catch up with friends old and new informally, at our planned social mixer, and at the annual all-chapter Banquet. In addition, the raffle and silent auction, important sources of funding for our chapters, will be back again this year.

Agricultural lands largely occupy the historic range of prairies and the conservation and restoration of prairie ecosystems now occurs within these working landscapes. We are pleased that Gary Zimmer will speak at our closing general session. He has spoken throughout the country and will present his thoughts on best farming practices that work with nature, not against it.

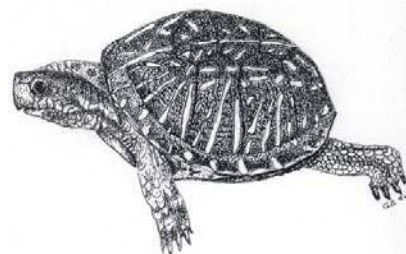
During the banquet, noted conservation photographer Michael Forsberg will address the membership. Mike's images, which focus largely on North America's grassland ecosystems, have appeared in such publications as *Audubon*, *National Geographic*, *National Wildlife*, and *Natural History*. Mike's presentation is sure to be visually stunning!

We hope you'll join us for a stimulating day at UW-Platteville on February 26, 2011. Doors open at 8:00 a.m. for check in. Come early to meet with vendors and view silent auction and raffle items prior to the first presentation. Be sure to read the enclosed conference agenda for more information on speakers, lodging and banquet details.

Reptile ID

Many Rivers Chapter members Scott Seigfried and Deanna Pomije recommend the Minnesota DNR's full-color, online reference for reptile and amphibian identification.

http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/natural_resources/animals/reptiles_amphibians/snake_lizard_mn.pdf



CHIPPEWA SAVANNAS CHAPTER

No information submitted.

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

Please check chapter newsletter for announcements.

EMPIRE – SAUK CHAPTER

Donations Sought for Annual Raffle/Auction

It is that time of year again to line up items for TPE's annual raffle/auction fundraiser. If you wish to contribute items to the Empire-Sauk Chapter, please contact Peter Thomford (thom.pete@mac.com or peter.thomford@covance.com). Proceeds from items donated to the Chapter help with land protection and land management activities within the Chapter's geographic area of operation. All items must be preregistered. The banquet and raffle/auction are the weekend of February 26, 2011. See details in the banquet & conference insert. Please note the deadline for registering items.

Seed Collecting & Cleaning in 2010



Taking a break from seed collecting at Schurch-Thomson Prairie. Photo by R. Henderson.

2010 was an absolutely outstanding year in terms of Empire-Sauk Chapter's seed collecting efforts! Volunteers and interns managed to collect and process an estimated 758 lbs of clean seed. Such a feat could not have been accomplished without many hands pitching in. We appreciate the 40 volunteers who put in 440 hours of seed collecting and processing. You all are making a

difference in bringing back a nearly lost ecosystem and an iconic part of the Midwest's natural heritage.

Tom & Kathie Brock headed up the seed collection and processing at Black Earth Rettenmund Prairie and Pleasant Valley Conservancy where they collected 193 lbs of clean seed from 149 prairie and savanna species! Other Empire-Sauk Chapter efforts, with some help from the Southwest Wisconsin Chapter at their Hollandale seed orchard, brought in nearly 565 lbs of clean seed from 110 species. Kay Bongers also headed up seed collecting for restoration efforts at Schluckebier Prairie in Sauk County. The most active seed collectors and cleaners this year were Jan Ketelle, Eric Preston, Rich & Kathy Henderson, Todd Casanova, Peter Thomford, Erik Goplin, Jim O'Brien, and Richard Oberle.

Our chapter collected and processed an estimated \$170,000 worth of seed (retail value) in 2010. Approximately \$133,000 worth was collected for the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area projects (including the Mounds View Grassland complex, Goplin Grasslands, and Erbe Grassland) and Kalscheur Savanna. Some also went to help the Southwest Wisconsin Chapter's efforts to help the Boscobel Schools plant 20 acres of prairie within the Paul Brandt Memorial School Forest. In addition, seed was collected from and for Rettenmund Black Earth Prairie and Pleasant Valley Conservancy. This seed was worth many additional tens of thousands of dollars.

All of the seed collected by the Chapter's effort go to TPE restoration projects or those of our conservation and education partners. We use the seed to augment degraded remnants, to plant buffer lands around high quality prairie remnants to increase critical habitat for a wide range of rare and declining prairie and savanna plants and animals, and to plant sites used for education purposes.

Seed orchards are still making a significant contribution to our seed collecting efforts. In 2010, 31% (239 lbs) of the seed came from three TPE orchards. The Underwood Orchard produced an estimated \$12,000 worth of seed (42 pounds). The seed orchard run by Erik Goplin produced an estimated \$15,000 worth of seed (72 pounds). The Hollandale Orchard (established by the Southwest Wisconsin Chapter) produced an estimated \$18,000 worth of seed (125 pounds).

MANY RIVERS CHAPTER

Chapter Meeting

We plan to host a social gathering this January. If you are interested in being on the planning committee, please contact Scott Seigfreid at (507) 317-8532.

Kutz Work Days

This fall we have had numerous field days at the Kutz prairie just outside Mankato. Our goal is to prepare the 20-acre site for burning next spring. We are well on our way. We have been clearing and treating trees and brush, collecting seed and identifying the many plant treasures we have found. We will be reseeding the areas where brush clearing has created open beds. The Kutz prairie is well on its way to being restored to the jewel that it once was. The fire lines are all cut and ready for spring. Don't miss out on the burn next spring or the exciting plant explosion to follow.

Minneopa Park Seed Collecting

On Saturday, October 2nd, the Many Rivers Prairie Enthusiasts in coordination with the Harry Meyering Center's developmentally disabled adults met at Minneopa Park, just west of Mankato. Fourteen of us spent the day sharing and learning as we gathered and cleaned native grass and forb seeds to be used in restoring the tallgrass prairie within the park.



Ed Brekke Kramer explains how to clean the prairie seed. Photo by Scott Seigfried.

Prairie Presentation

The evening of October 21st, sixty five naturalists gathered at the Unitarian Universalist Church to experience the prairie through an informative and entertaining presentation on prairie life. The event was hosted by the Humanities Series of the Mankato Unitarian Universalist Church. The presentation covered the history, endangerment, restoration, protection and future of the prairie. Randy Schindle gave an impressive lecture

on prairie life through history, its' complexities, values, challenges and future prospects. Henry Panowitsch and Scott Seigfried co-presented the event, adding their experiences and knowledge of prairie life. The event was preceded by an astonishing display of prairie photos of a plethora of flowers and insect life collected by Scott Seigfried. We are hoping to have more educational events to come this winter. Stay tuned.

Eagle Scout Project at Rasmussen Park



Michael (l) and Joe (r) Vogel taking a break during Joe's Eagle Project. Photo by Scott Seigfried.

Rasmussen Park, nestled in a pristine valley in the heart of Mankato, was the site of Joe Vogel's Eagle Scout Project to eradicate buckthorn. More than a dozen dedicated Boy Scouts led the event with members of the Prairie Enthusiasts giving help as needed. Joe organized and coordinated the event: from gathering the tools and work force to providing refreshments and a lunch after the work party. The Boy Scouts' brought energy and enthusiasm to share in the appreciation of the park while destroying the much detested buckthorn. This one day resulted in a huge batch of young and old buckthorn being cleared and treated along the main trail leading away from the Elks Nature Center building.

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS CHAPTER

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

PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

No information submitted.

PRAIRIE SANDS CHAPTER

Prairie Sands Chapter will be hosting the annual picnic July 17, 2011, with proposed field trips to members' prairies and camping opportunities for families.

Quarterly Meeting Update

The Prairie Sands chapter met on Wednesday evening, September 29, in Mt. Morris, Waushara County, for a special potluck dinner and quarterly meeting. We welcomed two new members. A report on a fall species inventory at Discovery Prairie on the Mekan River, which is a chapter project, showed a robust population of native grasses this year as well as a reduction of spotted knapweed. In an effort to increase plant diversity, members have gathered abundant local genotype seeds on their individual prairies to share with each other and with Discovery Prairie. A seed-sowing workday

will be scheduled to disperse purple and white prairie clovers, leadplant, goat's Rue, New Jersey tea, side-oats grama, bergamot, Joe-Pye weed, cup plant, Kalm's brome, butterfly weed, and false sunflower on this DNR-owned site.

Field Work

Prairie Sands chapter members met on November 9 at Discovery Prairie on the Mekan River to plant seeds locally collected and donated by the membership. The DNR manages this small prairie, which has been an on-going project for Prairie Sands. It was rewarding to see rotting pine stumps from previous tree removal efforts as we dug in our goat's rue, bergamot, sunflower, side-oats grama, beard-tongue, liatris, purple prairie clover, hoary vervain, Culver's root, butterfly milkweed, round-headed bushclover, and cup plant. Paul Bruett, DNR's site manager, says our chapter's help allows him to manage more for invasives, particularly spotted knapweed which is being controlled by frequent Milestone spot spraying.

Members also had a chance to observe prescribed burns in November on prairie restorations at Charlie and Barbara Church's, Cathy and Bill Frank's, and Fred and Karen Wollenburg's.



Laurel Bennett and David Hamel select from a table full of carefully packaged and labeled seeds.

PRAIRIE SMOKE CHAPTER

No information submitted

ST. CROIX VALLEY CHAPTER

Work Parties

Details and directions are on the website.

Date: December 18 (Saturday)

Site: Alexander Oak Savanna

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Goal: "Solstice Party" with mulled wine. Your volunteer hours are especially important to help us meet the in-kind match for the Turkey stamp grant.

Date: January 1, 2011 (Saturday)

Site: Foster Hill Prairie

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Goal: "New Years Party". Continue clearing along creek by Wendy Hill's house.

Winter Talk: Prairie 101

Chapter members Burt Levy and Barb Bend present an evening slide show on prairie habitat (past and present) featuring locally restored or replanted prairies. They will explain the challenges of restoration and provide guidelines on how to establish a prairie planting.

Date/Time: Tuesday, February 8, 7:00-9:00 PM

Location: St Croix Central Continuing Education, Middle School FCE room, 1295 Vine St, Hammond, WI

Fee: \$10

Directions and details will be posted on the website.

Winter Talk: Prairie Research

Chapter member Shawn Schottler, PhD, and senior scientist at the St. Croix Watershed Research Station, conducts research on restoration obstacles such as cost, non-local genetics, lack of plant diversity and technical training. At this talk, Shawn will describe the findings of his latest research project.

Date/Time: Tuesday, January 11, 7:00-9:00 PM

Location: River Falls Public Library, 140 Union St., River Falls WI

Fee: \$10

Directions and details will be posted on the website.

Fall Burn Update

In late October and early November, volunteers burned Alexander Oak Savanna and Simon Prairie.

At least 90 percent of the unit at Alexander, a challenging goat prairie, actually burned. Each year we remove more and more trees and brush, opening the savanna to sun, and each year we are rewarded with better and better burns.

The Simon burn was a little less rewarding. This was the first burn after Landcraft Seed and Services removed trees and brush, so we expected meager fuel. Nonetheless, some areas had sufficient grass to make it exciting. We expect 2011 to be a fantastic growing season for Simon.

Thank you to our 2010 fall prescribed burn crew!

Dick Alexander	Burt Levy
Jamie Bolwerk	CW Malick
Rob Cahalan	John McKay
Caroljean Coventree	Rob McManus
Katharine Grant	Dave Middleton
Harvey Halvorsen	Mike Miller
Wayne Huhnke	Keith Relyea
Evanne Hunt	Kurtis Weber
Jeannie Kant	

Seed Collecting Update



"I've got my apron. I've got my crutch. Now show me the seeds!" Kyle Danziger collects forb seed. Photo by Evanne Hunt.

Chapter members collected tubs of forb seed from all of our project sites, the Girl Scout Camp, and Hammond cemetery this fall. Some of the seed was spread immediately at the site; the rest is being dried and cleaned

at Mike Miller and Susan Goode's farm. It will be spread on sites in the spring.

This was a very successful first year for our seed collecting program. Look for announcements early next year as the spring-flowering forbs go to seed.

Thanks to Jan Amberson, Kristin Beardsley, Barb Bend, Jaimie Bolwerk, Holly Cahalan, Rob Cahalan, Kyle Danziger, Wayne Federer, Ginny Gaynor, Susan Goode, Katharine Grant, Harvey Halvorsen, Wendy Hill, Jean Hoffman, Wayne Huhnke, Jeannie Kant, Carol Kojis, Jim Kojis, Bob Lorenzen, Buck Malick, John McKay, Mike Miller, Ed Pemberton, Sil Pemberton, Mike Perry, Mary Qualls, Keith Relyea, and Taliah Scheibinger.

Five Year Plan Update

In the Summer of 2009, the St. Croix Valley Chapter (Susan Goode, Jeannie Kant, Keith Relyea, and Buck Malick) embarked on a strategic planning approach to help determine what would have happened or will be happening five years from now, if the chapter is successful. To do this, we summarized what was happening in our chapter and in the community around us, defined potential outcomes and our priorities, and developed an action plan to achieve our goals. At our October chapter meeting we reviewed the action plan to identify our accomplishments:

Land Management Strategy Accomplishments

- Use the Parcel Prioritization Scorecard to prioritize sites we manage.
- Manage the properties adjacent to the Foster Conservation Area as a single project.
- Ensure each of our parcels has a management plan.

Education Strategy Accomplishments

- Offer two seed collection field trips per year to teach members how and when to collect, clean, and store seeds.
- Include plant identification activities in all field trips.
- Standardize field trip experience with a checklist for trip leader.
- Ensure work days are educational opportunities (designate an informed member or two at each work project to engage with newcomers, explain the broader context of the work being done that day and be available to answer questions).

This is excellent progress for the first strategic plan. Our focus for 2011 will be additional items from the plan:

- Work towards permanent protection for each of our key parcels.
- Develop annual work plans for each parcel with estimates of the person-hours required.
- Develop plant and animal inventory skills.

The entire Chapter Strategic Plan is available from any of the team.

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Winskill Elementary Students at Eldred Prairie by Rose Sime

It's amazing what approximately 60 young people can do to help establish a prairie. On September 28th, Marcia Chambers, science teacher at Winskill Elementary School in Lancaster, arrived at Eldred Prairie with her 4th grade students to help collect prairie seeds. Prepared with the history of Eldred Prairie by Gary Eldred and Jesse Bennett and prior instruction about prairies from Mrs. Chambers, the children were eager to get out and collect seeds. We spent about an hour helping the children smell, feel and hear about the adaptation techniques of prairie

plants while they collected seeds. Their questions and enthusiasm showed that they had learned a great deal before coming out to collect. With bags of seeds in hand, the students eagerly stomped their seeds into the area that had been recently cleared of the evergreens by Lambert Forestry and Driftless Land Stewardship. The Enthusiasts that came out to help, Carol Bendorf, Jesse Bennett, Gary Eldred, and Jim and Rose Sime, all had a delightful time sharing the experience with the children.



*Carol Bendorf with fourth graders from Lancaster.
Photo by Rose Sime.*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The following people have joined TPE in the period August 11-November 19, 2010.

Pam Albrecht, Pine Island, MN
Bill & Kathe Andresen, Packwaukee, WI
Gregg Anerson, Mankato, MN
Jamie Bolwerk, Hammond, WI
Mary Marti Borstad, New Ulm, WI
Ed & JoAnn Boss, Sussex, WI
Jon Brouchoud, Oregon, WI
Florence Cohen, Greenwood, MN
Susan Dickert & Philip Whitford, Cross Plains, WI
Chad Heins, Mankato, MN
Timothy Jacobson, LaCrosse, WI
Gary & Jan Johnson, Pepin, WI

Chad Jorgensen & Stephanie Safgren, Byron, MN
Justin Trails Resort, Sparta, WI
Judith Lively & Curtis Stine, Arkansaw, WI
Melissa Morgan & Kevin Moore, Eau Claire, WI
Daniel Nye, Madison, WI
Elisha Polomski, Eau Claire, WI
Jamie Swenson, Le Sueur, MN
Paul Vogel, Mankato, MN
Darrell Voitik, Oswego, IL
James & Kaathryn Vonderharr, Mankato, MN
Gary & Phyllis Winkler, Ontario, WI

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

To:

Mark Bromley
Steve & Jennie Smith
Mary & Jim Danforth

From:

Jack Kussmaul
Eric Preston
Eric Preston

THANK YOU, DONORS!

We thank everyone who made a donation to The Prairie Enthusiasts during the period August 11-November 19, 2010. These gifts above and beyond membership dues are truly generous and appreciated.

\$1000 - \$5000

Anonymous, *in honor of Jan Ketelle's birthday*
George Barry, *in memory of Kay Barry*

\$100 - \$499

Alliant Energy Foundation, Inc., *matching gifts program, Linda Lynch*
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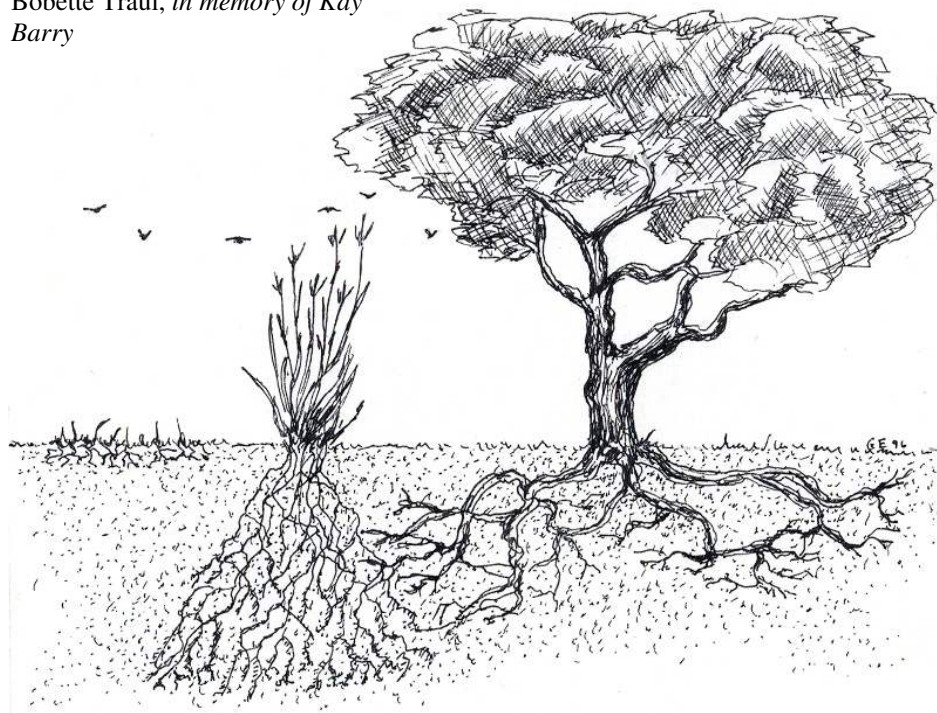
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Naturalist Journeys, *on behalf of Deanna Pomije*
Jim & Diane Rogala
Laurie Yahr & Rich Kahl

Under \$100

Jean Blum, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Joan Braune & Tod Highsmith, *in memory of Leon Pullen*
Peg Bredeson, *in memory of Kay Barry*
John & Kay Day
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Mary Flisram, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Friends and family of George and Kay Barry, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Mary & Richard Goehring
Ross Hamilton & Cynthia Babler, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Forrest & Theresa Hayden
Tom & Susan Howe, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Dr. John & Barbara Inman, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Henry & Miye Kanazawa, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Darcy Kind & Marc Vitale
Paul & Marjorie Klinzing, *in memory of Kay Barry*
William Kuenzi, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Ruth & Thomas Little
Dawn Littleton & Brian Lind
Shey Lowman
Bruce & Ruth Marion
Duane & Peggy Marxen
Tom & Jenny Mitchell, *in memory of Kay Barry*

Bill & Ginny Nelson
Don & Carol Nelson
Hal & June Patinkin
David Quade, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Diane Rains & Stuart Janis
Daniel Schicker
Vlad & Bonnie Sokolov
Margaret Stiles, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Elaine Strassburg
Bobette Traul, *in memory of Kay Barry*

Lore Wahl, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Joe Walton
Charles Wellington, *in memory of Kay Barry*
Phil & Sue Wheeler
Ralph & Ann Woldt
Marilyn Workman, *in memory of Kay Barry*



ANNUAL APPEAL

Thank you so much to the following people who have given to the 2010 Annual Appeal as of November 19. These gifts above and beyond membership dues are truly generous and appreciated.

*Prairie Preservers (\$2500 - \$4999)*_____

Ronald Endres

*Prairie Protectors (\$1000 - \$2499)*_____

Kathie & Tom Brock
Jack Kussmaul

*Prairie Restorers (\$500 - \$999)*_____

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Judith & John Lovaas
Gary Werner & Melanie Lord

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Eugene Woehler
Telle Zoller

*Prairie Partners (\$100-\$249)*_____

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Barbara & Ted Cochrane
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Kathy & Michael Meehan

Ted Ross
Kay & Joe Schmitz
Laureen Thorstad
Phil & Mary Wegmann
Bill & Jayne Wisler

*Prairie Supporters (\$1-\$99)*_____

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Glenn Teschendorf and Mary Anne Derheimer
Todd Tessmer
Claudia Vlisides
James Welsh
Susan & Joseph Wieseler
Roger Williams
Tim Yanacheck
Paul & Joy Zedler

Thank you again for all of your support! We're still short of our \$50,000 goal, but there's plenty of time left to reap 2010 tax benefits. Please send in your check today or give online via our secure PayPal account at www.ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org! And thanks again for all you do for prairies!

The Prairie Enthusiasts
PO BOX 1148
MADISON WI 53701

www.ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org

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

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Address: _____
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\$5,000 Bur Oak Benefactor, \$1,000 Monarch, \$500 Compass Plant, \$200 Blazing Star
\$65 Pasque Flower, \$40 Big Blue Stem, \$25 Little Blue Stem, \$15 Student

Please send form and check to:

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