



The PRAIRIE PROMOTER

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Grassroots Conservation at Work

John Shillingshaw Honored

At its twelfth annual awards banquet on October 17, the Friends of the Arboretum (University of Wisconsin, Madison) awarded the Henry C. Greene Award for innovative approaches in restoration to John Shillingshaw.

A member of The Prairie Enthusiasts Prairie Sands Chapter, John conducted Karner blue butterfly population surveys and studied the movement of these federally endangered butterflies between suitable and unsuitable habitat. His work restoring old farm fields to their original dry prairie habitat, a complex process taking years and lots of lupine seeds, overturned the assumption of experts that corridors of open habitat or habitat cleared of trees are required to aid in the dispersal of the weak-flying Karner Blue butterfly.

His published study has shown that Karner Blue butterflies can fly greater distances than assumed and over “unsuitable” habitat. The study also noted that the butterflies could locate small lupine stands and colonize them, and found that populations increased 10-fold after their restoration work. Biologists have been able to use this information to establish larger Karner populations with less cost and effort.



*L to R: Mark Martin (Madison Audubon Society & TPE), Darcy Kind (Friends of the Arboretum & TPE), John Shillingshaw, and his son Kirk.
Photo by Sue Foote-Martin*

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John, AKA Johnny Lupine Seed, has convinced many of his neighbors to allow him to spread lupine seeds on their land. Driving around the countryside surrounding his property, he's constantly on the lookout for potential dry prairies in need of lupine seeds.

The Friends of the Arboretum oversees this prestigious awards program, in partnership with the Aldo Leopold Foundation. The awards honor deserving recipients in four categories who have advanced the craft, knowledge and public awareness of ecological restoration in Wisconsin.

The Season of Giving

Chris Kirkpatrick, Executive Director



As I sit here looking out my window, it is snowing. I drive by several prairies on my travels and enjoy seeing the red hue of little bluestem sticking out above the snow, while the rough legged hawks fly overhead seeking their small prey. It brings back memories of spending cold winter days clearing brush and trying to keep warm either through the effort of the work or by getting a brush pile burning. I realize how much we give to the land with our work, and how much we are revitalized by seeing the fruit of our labors when a new remnant is cleared off and we have helped the prairie claim a stronger foothold in our local area. I am amazed at how strong our commitment is to ensuring these landscapes have a place to thrive into the future, and how much we give to ensure they will survive into perpetuity.

I am also amazed when looking at The Prairie Enthusiasts and seeing the significant dedication we have towards our mission. In the spirit of the holiday season I thought I would highlight how one of our members is giving to further our mission. This fall, as we began working on our budget for the coming year, I mentioned the need for a vehicle for the organization to help save on travel costs and enable staff to travel to chapters. To my surprise I am happy to report that TPE Treasurer Nick Faessler and his wife Linda were motivated by this committee discussion, and TPE is now in possession of a corporate vehicle donated by Nick & Linda. I can't thank them enough for stepping up and thinking of a creative way to help TPE and for their commitment to the organization.

Whether it is through volunteering for a work party this winter, participating in a prescribed burn this spring, or leading a field trip this summer, there are so many ways in which we are all engaged in the work we do. The commitment we have to ensure the future of prairie communities is integral to the nature of our giving, and through this giving that we each personally enable TPE to carry out its mission. Whether it is a membership donation, annual appeal, or something as substantial as donating a vehicle, know that your contributions are all gratefully appreciated. I can't personally thank you enough for your past support, and I look forward to the future work we collaborate on together.

As we move into the New Year, I will be out traveling to your local chapter to hear about the great plans for the coming year and what we can do together as a strong grassroots organization. At the same time you will have a chance to see our new vehicle, and if you get a chance you can pass along a much deserved thanks for Nick & Linda for their commitment to TPE!

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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. The Prairie Promoter is a quarterly publication of The Prairie Enthusiasts. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without permission. We welcome articles, announcements, artwork and photographs relevant to prairie and savanna ecosystems. Mail or e-mail submissions to local chapter editorial volunteers or to The Prairie Promoter editor. Deadlines for submission of material are Mar. 14 (Spring issue); May 30 (Summer issue); Aug. 15 (Fall issue); and Dec. 5 (Winter issue). If you would like to receive electronic notification of the newsletter, please e-mail Joe Rising at TPE@theprairieenthusiasts.org.

President's Message

By Jack Kussmaul

In a recent edition of “Field Guide” a quarterly publication of Land Trust Alliance, I found an article entitled “Managing Organizational Growing Pains.” It began by describing Life Stages of Land Trusts. As I read it I realized that they could be describing TPE. For example:

“Usually born of a dynamic individual or small group, a nonprofit in the invention stage has seemingly boundless opportunities, creativity and energy. At this stage there is little to no structure for pursuit of the vision. Lack of funding and resistance to organizational structure make implementing the conservation dream difficult.”

“Once the idea has traction, the organization moves into the incubation (or start-up) stage with enthusiastic people and a charismatic leader typically its heart. Formalization may seem unnecessary, but the organization ultimately incorporates to legitimize its land conservation efforts and completes its first projects.”

“At the adolescent stage, an organization often experiences rapid or ongoing growth in projects, demand for services and community support. There is a strong sense of accomplishment, and programming becomes more diverse. The land trust may increase its stewardship of projects, and perhaps even prepare for accreditation.” The article points

out that this is when the trust may begin to hire staff, and goes on to say: “ Leaders often feel overwhelmed by the many changes of adolescence coupled with a lack of, or transition to, vital systems (e.g. recordkeeping policies, internal financial controls.)”

“A mature organization is typified by sustainability. During this stage, land trust leaders feel more secure because of dependable sources of revenue.” The article states that maturity can be followed by stagnation or decline.

At this point, TPE seems to be moving from adolescence to maturity. We do have staff and we are looking at accreditation. There have been stresses, but these are not unusual. The article states: “Another common occurrence is that programs become very effective, yet the administrative resources necessary to support long term conservation lags. This situation can be stressful . . .”

Does any of this look like the history of TPE and where we are now? It is reassuring to know that what we are going through is part of a normal life cycle for land trusts. The good news is that we have passed through the invention and incubation stages. We are moving beyond adolescence and into maturity. Any stresses we experience are normal as we move to a higher level.

We are not alone as we deal with these often stressful transitions and they have paid off. We have a great future because of all that has gone before us.

WE Badger Volunteers

by Ted Cochrane

WE Badger Volunteers is a new volunteer partnership designed to help university students get involved in sustainability and environmental stewardship projects in their own community. Developed and promoted by the Morgridge Center for Public Service at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, it matches teams of UW-Madison students with community partners on a weekly basis for an entire semester. Diane Hills, our Volunteer Coordinator, arranged for TPE to participate in the program this year as a way to encourage more student involvement.

This fall, Denny Connor and Ted Cochrane, of TPE’s Empire-Sauk Chapter, and Tony Abate, of the Madison Audubon Society, were joined by WE Badger Volunteers Maikou Vang, a fifth-year undergraduate studying environmental sciences, and Stephen Wyman, a graduate student studying cartography and GIS, who helped advance the work of restoring our rare and beautiful prairie landscape. They carried out practical tasks on the Koltjes Addition and Westport Drumlin units of the Empire Prairies State Natural Area, collecting seeds of many species of native prairie plants and cutting and treating small brush.

In addition to completing a total of 54 hours of reliable and meaningful service on behalf of TPE, Maikou and Stephen each worked six hours in the Wisconsin State

Herbarium on two rainy days. TPE owes a big “Thank you!” to this small team for committing their time and lending a hand to help care for Wisconsin’s natural habitats.



*WE Badger volunteers Stephen Wyman and Maikou Vang
Photo by Ted Cochrane*

You CAN Take It with You

By Walter Mirk

I first became interested in prairie and savanna communities in 1978 after purchasing 27 acres in Grant County. In April I saw numerous unfamiliar plants, bought some books to help me identify them and kept seeing references to prairies and savannas. One thing led to another and I soon became obsessed. For 35 years I have continued to learn from books, journals, workshops and especially from others similarly afflicted with this grand obsession. The learning has never ceased and has kept my obsession in full flower (pun intended).

This past summer I found an e-mail awaiting me from Nancy Faulk, Services Specialist at Prairie Home Cemetery in Waukesha, WI. She offered a field trip to Glacial Prairie Chapter members that would include a visit to a reconstructed prairie in the cemetery and the opportunity to learn about natural burial. This was an offer that I could not forego! I arrived in time to view some of the prairie from outside of the fence before my 10:00 AM appointment. To say it was beautiful is an understatement. The heavy overcast provided contrasting emphasis to the array of brilliant late summer color. I did not bother to take any photographs because I eagerly anticipated walking on the other side of the fence.

After welcoming me, Nancy introduced me to David Brenner, Prairie Home Cemetery Manager. As an introduction to natural burial, David asked me what I knew about the Civil War's impact on funeral practices and thus immediately captured my full attention. He explained that prior to the Civil War, natural burials were the norm. The deceased's body was often washed and clothed, and possibly wrapped in a shroud (but not embalmed), placed in a wooden coffin and buried within 24 to 36 hours of death. David then explained that the Civil War was the first highly mechanized war resulting in tremendous casualties. The war also occurred during a time of relatively efficient transportation: trains were able to bring back the dead for burial within weeks. Of course, this required some effort to preserve the bodies, giving rise to steadily improving embalming techniques. Thus the modern funeral industry was born. As this form of burial was perfected, prices came down and it became something not just for the rich but for the masses.

David noted that "green burial" began to re-emerge as a burial option in the U.K. in the 1990s. Prairie Home refers to it as Natural Burial because they do not want to imply that the entire cemetery operation is "green". Prairie Home still offers the full range of burial options, some of which are not "green". However, the natural burials at Prairie Home follow all green protocols, and are a greener option because: no carcinogenic embalming fluids are used, only degradable shrouds, or coffins (wicker, sea grass, bamboo, unvarnished wood) are employed, and there is no high fossil fuel energy consumed as in cremation. Simplicity and a true "return to the earth," (wrapped in a shroud, placed in a simple box and lowered into the ground on a burial board)

are emphasized. Areas dedicated to natural burial are often in park-like settings that invite peaceful contemplation, while Prairie Home's is a prairie setting.

The first time the Prairie Home Cemetery land had been officially used for burial purposes was in 1849, although evidence suggests that burials were done as early as 1835. The town became a city in 1896, and today the cemetery consists of 69 acres with over 23,000 burials. As mentioned earlier, the cemetery offers a startlingly complete array of burial options from a cremation garden and state of the art mausoleum courtyard to Natural Burial (for details, go to (www.prairiehomecemetery.com)).

David developed the idea for natural burials at Prairie Home and did conceptual work and analysis with a cemetery design firm. He then presented this to the Prairie Home Cemetery Commission and got approval to proceed further. Ultimately it was brought before the Waukesha Common Council where it was also approved. Midwest Prairies, Milton, WI was contracted to develop the two different forbs and planted the prairie itself.

Unfortunately, my plans for a closer inspection of the Prairie Home Cemetery prairie were thwarted by a heavy and rather lengthy downpour. However, my earlier tantalizing glimpse of the area and the wonderful presentation were more than enough for me to seriously reconsider long held plans for cremation and having my ashes scattered on a favorite spot in Wisconsin's Driftless Area. Being lowered beneath prairie sod has a real appeal.

David and Nancy will, I hope, be able to answer questions and provide further information at TPE's annual conference and banquet in March, 2014. I have shared my experience with some other prairie enthusiasts who are eager to hear more.



M-Prairie Sleeps

2013 TPE Photo Contest Finalist by Marjie Bennett

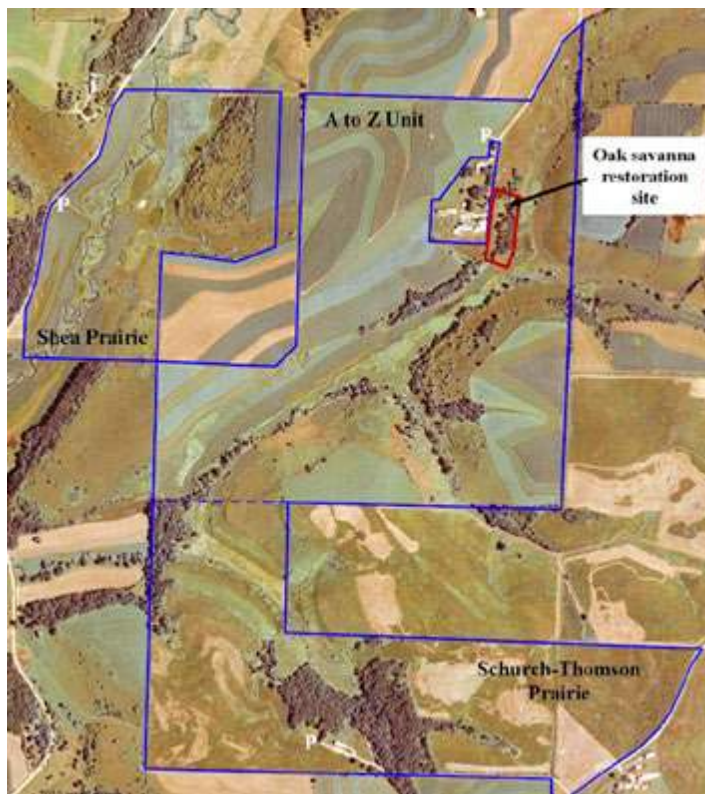
Looking for a Savanna to Restore?

Do you have an urge to restore your very own savanna, but do not have a piece of ground with mature oak trees on which to do it? TPE is looking for someone to take charge of planning and implementing a four-acre restoration of oak savanna on a TPE preserve in far eastern Iowa County, WI. The site is located 4.3 miles south of Blue Mounds on the A to Z unit of TPE's Mounds View Grassland (see aerial image). Access is at the end of Arneson Road, which is a dead end road off of Prairie Grove Road.

You, as the manager, would be in charge of planning and implementing the work with some technical guidance and resource assistance from the Mounds View Grassland Land Management Committee. Within certain guidelines, such as what species may be introduced and what general restoration/management methods may be used, you will otherwise be in charge and may work at your own pace. You will have responsibility of doing much of the work yourself, but TPE will provide assistance in the form of equipment, supplies and time from volunteers and interns as needed.

The site has mature bur oak trees on an east-facing slope above a wetland complex. Up until eight years ago, the land had been heavily grazed. Consequently, almost no native ground layer vegetation remains, so relatively little shrub and tree invasion exists, at least not yet.

Activities that you, as manager, would likely plan and implement, or plan for others to assist you, would include site assessment & restoration planning, establishing and mowing fire-breaks, controlling invasive, mostly non-native, plants, collecting and planting native savanna and prairie seed, planning & leading work parties and prescribed burns, keeping records and leading periodic field trips.



If this opportunity interests you, contact Rich Henderson at tpe.rhenderson@tds.net or 608-845-7065.

Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin Awards Grant to TPE

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin provided \$737 through its C.D. Besadny Conservation Grants program to support the creation of an education kiosk at TPE's Smith-Reiner Drumlin Prairie near Cambridge, Wisconsin. The grant requires a 100 percent match of in-kind services and materials, cash or both.

According to Ruth Oppedahl, executive director of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, "Our Foundation promotes conservation education, saves endangered species and protects public lands and waters. The Besadny grants fund small projects that have a big impact in local communities. This year, we gave more than \$26,000 to 30 projects across the entire state of Wisconsin. It was a very competitive process, and we're pleased to support the wonderful work of The Prairie Enthusiasts and this education project."

Smith-Reiner Drumlin Prairie State Natural Area is a preserve of The Prairie Enthusiasts. It has rare examples of the original native prairie ecosystems that greeted the first

European settlers to the area 170 years ago. The kiosk will inform visitors of the site's natural and cultural history and its conservation significance as critical habitat for rare and endangered species and native prairie. The funding will go towards professional services in the design and production of the panels. Volunteers will build and install the frame for the panels.

The C.D. Besadny Conservation Grants Program promotes the responsible stewardship of Wisconsin's natural resources at the local level by providing matching grants for small-scale natural resource projects and programs. Named for C.D. "Buzz" Besadny, former head of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and co-founder of the Natural Resources Foundation, the program honors Buzz Besadny's dedication to the conservation of Wisconsin's natural resources. Projects are also supported through the Foundation's Teachers' Outdoor Environmental Education Fund. Public and private organizations, including schools and governments, may apply for the grants.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TPE Annual Prairie Conference and All Chapter Banquet

The Glacial Prairie Chapter of TPE has organized an excellent program for this year's Annual Conference and Banquet to be held on Saturday, March 1, 2014 in Pewaukee, WI. The theme this year is "Gardeners of the Prairie: Rediscovering Sustainability." The conference co-sponsor is The Wild Ones, who will share their passion for butterflies, birds and rain gardens. The venue is the Country Springs Hotel, Water Park and Conference Center so be sure to bring your family!

The program will feature general session speakers as well as concurrent tracks on Landscaping, Restoration and Prairie Fauna. The open presentation is by author and educator Dr. Mark Leach who will explore the origins and development of grassroots environmentalism. The luncheon

speaker is Phil Milhouse, archeologist and ethnobotany specialist who knows uses of plants and will share his perspective on Ritual Plant Use Among Native Americans in the Upper Midwest. The concurrent sessions will end with an important roundtable discussion with members of the Land Management Committee on the TPE Burn Policy. You will certainly want to stay for the banquet to hear keynote speaker Paul Zedler explain about "Prairie enthusiasm and the plight of nature in the Psychozoic Era." Psychozoic refers to the period beginning with the appearance of man on the prairie so it will certainly be fascinating and educational!

There will be ample time catch up with old and new friends during the informal meetings throughout the day, at the social mixer and the annual all-chapter Banquet! Be sure to read the enclosed conference agenda for more information on registration, speakers, lodging and banquet details.

Raffle and Silent Auction

A big part of the annual TPE conference is the raffle and silent auction, the proceeds of which go to the chapters donating the items. We typically have over 150 items you can bid on or win with a \$1 raffle ticket! And the diversity of items makes this an exciting event -- we have had skulls, pottery, art, furniture, beer, wine, tickets to shows, and experiences!

Each chapter is limited to 15 items because of space. Chapter members to donate or convince a business or artist to donate a treasure. Depending on their value, a chapter could take home \$100-\$1,000 at the end of the day.

Your chapter must identify a raffle/silent auction coordinator. This person or team is responsible for getting a list of items, their estimated cost and the donor names to Evanne Hunt by February 1. This person or team must also help at the conference with set up and distributing items to winners at the end of the night. A complete set of guidelines and the item registration sheet will be sent to your coordinator.

Help your chapter! Donate something fabulous to the raffle or auction!

*Evanne Hunt, TPE Raffle/Silent Auction Coordinator
715-381-1291 eahunt@pressenter.com*

Annual Photo Contest

TPE members are encouraged to submit photos for annual photo contest! Images can portray all things prairie, so be creative! Details and a submission form can be found on the TPE website. All photos will need to be submitted in digital format. Maximum three entries per member. A finalist group of submitted photos will be displayed at the annual conference in March. The membership can then vote for their favorite photo, which will be used on the cover of the 2013 TPE Annual Report. 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, 2014. For details and a photo submittal form go to: www.ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org. Thank you for sharing these views on prairie life!



Sunrise through the Indian Grass
2013 TPE Photo Contest Finalist by Scott Seigfreid

New TPE Website Coming Soon

TPE staff and a team of volunteers are working on a new website and information system for the organization. As TPE continues to grow, it is time to revitalize this key element of how we interact with each other and the outside world. Equally important, our "back-end" systems, such as our database of membership information, have not kept pace. The new website will address both of these critical needs.

The system will include website content management (enabling easy updates), a membership information and donation database, an online member directory, a filterable calendar for all TPE events, event management, photo libraries and support for both chapters and committees.

Implementation is well under way, and we will be demonstrating the new system at the conference on March 1. If you have questions, comments or suggestions, contact Scott Fulton at scottfulton@gmail.com or 608-345-8297.

EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER

Short-eared Owl and Other News from Smith-Reiner Drumlin Prairie

By Rich Henderson

Since its permanent protection by TPE and its designation as a State Natural Area by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in late 2011, Smith-Reiner Drumlin Prairie has undergone some significant changes. The land management committee for the site, headed up by Peter Thomford and consisting of Todd Casanova, Gary Birch, Denny Connor, Mark Martin and Rich Henderson, have been moving the site closer to its full potential as an important part of prairie ecosystem conservation and education in Wisconsin.

So far, the entrance off Clearview Road has been graveled, the preserve boundaries have been posted and a grant from the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin (see article in this newsletter) has been obtained to help develop an interpretative kiosk for the preserve. The plan is to have the kiosk in place by late spring. Access lanes are being established along the preserve's entire perimeter. Having these lanes in place will greatly aid with prescribed burns and other management activities. Much additional tree and brush removal and weed control has been done in the past two years, continuing the substantial work done over the previous 10 years by volunteers and contractors when the site was managed by TPE under an informal agreement with the owners. These efforts have re-established the site's original prairie landscape and should increase its attractiveness to declining grassland birds looking for habitat in which to forage and raise young. It appears to be working.

On November 24, Gary Birch and Rich Henderson observed a short-eared owl at Smith-Reiner Drumlin Prairie, and the owl has been seen as recently as December 21. This owl is a rarely seen specialist of open grasslands. It was flushed at mid-day out of knee-high grass where it had been roosting. This interesting species, with a wingspan of 33-to-43 inches, requires large, treeless areas of grassland, sedge meadow or marsh habitat to establish breeding territories (it nests on the ground) and for hunting areas. Short-eared owls hunt mostly at night but sometimes also during



Short-eared owl
by Gary Eldred

the day. They are most often seen at dawn and dusk sitting on fence posts or flying low over open ground using a low, slow, graceful flight reminiscent of a butterfly and locating prey by ear. They hunt small mammals such as voles, shrews, mice, rabbits and, occasionally, birds.

Historically, short-eared owls nested in the prairies and sedge meadows of southern Wisconsin. However, due to habitat loss, they now breed only in the treeless tundra of Canada and in scattered, large, treeless areas (thousands of acres in size) farther south, such as the Buena Vista prairie chicken area of central Wisconsin. There is hope among conservationists that, should large enough grasslands become re-established in the south, the species will once again nest here. Until then, we will have to settle for short-eared owls visiting us during migration in the spring and fall in the small grasslands we have left, and occasionally during the winter months in years of little snow cover and high rodent populations.

In addition to remnant prairie, Smith-Reiner Drumlin has 26 acres of former cropland that was planted to non-native, cool-season grasses 25 years ago. This past spring and summer, this acreage was prepared for conversion to prairie vegetation, which consisted of tree/brush removal, burning, mowing and broadcast application of herbicide. Prairie seeds were planted in the fall with the use of a tractor provided by local volunteer and new TPE member Steve Querin-Schultz. Much of the seed was collected by volunteers (see article in this newsletter) from native populations on site and within 25 miles of the preserve. The seed collectors were Peter Thomford, Todd Casanova, Jay Watson and Scott Sauer. The plan is to continue collecting and planting seed into the former crop fields over the next several years.

Smith-Reiner Drumlin Prairie State Natural Area is located southwest of Cambridge in eastern Dane County. If you would like to get involved with seed collecting, other restoration and management work or conducting bird surveys at the preserve, contact Diane Hills at volunteers@theprairieenthusiasts.org or 608-239-4699.

Winter Work Party Plans

This winter, the Empire-Sauk Chapter will continue its efforts to restore prairie remnants. Volunteers are needed to clear trees/brush and burn brush/wood piles. This winter, we will be working at Mounds View Grassland (includes Underwood, Shea, A to Z and Schurch-Thomson Prairies) south of Blue Mounds, Ripp Prairies north of Waunakee, Westport Drumlin/Koltes Prairie east of Waunakee, Mazomanie Bluff, Schluckebier Prairie west of Prairie du Sac, Rettenmund Black Earth Prairie, Kalscheur Savanna south of Hollandale and Smith Drumlin Prairies near Cambridge. Be on the lookout for fliers, e-mails and other notifications of work parties. Bring friends. Winter work parties come with refreshments (such as home-made cookies and apple cider), crisp weather and a fire to warm up by (when there is snow on the ground); they are a good source of outdoor winter exercise. You always leave with a sense of accomplishment after clearing trees and brush.

If you wish to help with work on these sites, and you are uncertain as to whether or not you are on the e-mail or phone notification lists, please contact Diane Hills at volunteers@theprairieenthusiasts.org or 608-239-4699.

Valuable Local Seed Collected for Empire-Sauk Chapter Conservation Projects

This past summer and fall, volunteers, with some assistance from our summer interns, collected and processed hundreds of pounds of seed that will be planted this fall and next spring over at least 100 acres in our ongoing efforts to enhance and expand our preserves, which are anchored on original remnant prairie and savanna sod. The lion's share of the effort went into the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area in western Dane and eastern Iowa counties. The affected preserves were Mounds View Grassland, Erbe Grassland, the Goplin Prairies and Kalscheur Savanna. This came to 476 lbs. of seed of 104 species with an estimated value \$146,500. Forty percent of that came from seed orchards, and the rest was collected from wild populations.

Volunteers also collected seed in eastern Dane and western Jefferson counties for planting at Smith-Reiner Drumlin Prairie. Approximately 30 lbs. of 21 species (\$13,000 value) were collected for the site. Over the next five years, we hope to collect much more seed of many more species for the 26 acres of planting areas at Smith-Reiner. Seed was also collected for projects in northwest Dane County at both Pleasant Valley Conservancy and Pleasure Valley Conservancy, and in northern Dane County for the Westport Drumlin (Koltjes Prairie) complex. Next year, we are planning to start collecting seed in earnest in Sauk and Dane counties for planting at Schluckebier Sand Prairie and Gasser Sand Barrens preserves, and to expand efforts for Westport Drumlin. Collecting for the projects at Westport and Smith-Reiner drumlins is being done in collaboration with Madison Audubon. If you would like to get involved with seed collecting and processing to enhance and expand TPE conservation projects, please contact Diane Hills at volunteers@theprairieenthusiasts.org or 608-239-4699.

Specialty Seed Collectors Sought

The primary objective of the prairie/savanna planting being done on TPE preserves managed by the Empire-Sauk Chapter is to buffer and expand remnants of original ecosystems, and to provide critical habitat for rare and declining species. The ultimate goal of these projects is to create "scientific" restorations that have the same species composition and structure of the original. Most prairie species are relatively easy to collect in mass or to mass produce in seed orchards should remnant populations be scarce or limited. Consequently, restorations tend to be replete with those species, including the asters, goldenrods, Silphiums, Liatris, sunflowers and most other species in the composite family, but also species in the legume, carrot/parsley, gentian and milkweed families, along with some others.

It is the hard to come by species that are generally lacking, or underrepresented, in most prairie plantings, including those being done on preserves managed by the Empire-Sauk Chapter. The chapter now has hundreds of acres of plantings in need of such species. If we are to reach our goal of restoring the original prairies, we need to increase collection of these hard-to-come-by species. They

tend to be species that bloom early in the year and ripen in late spring or early summer when we are distracted with control of invasive species and other management work, or are very tedious and time-consuming to find and collect in large quantities, or both. Some examples include yellow star-grass (*Hypoxis*), violet wood sorrel (*Oxalis*), hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum*), prairie buttercup (*Ranunculus*), prairie violet, three species of *Panicum*, some sedge species, northern bedstraw (*Galium*), false toad-flax (*Comandra*), milkwort species (*Polygala*), false dandelion (*Krigia*), pussy-toes (*Antennaria*) prairie turnip (*Pediomelum*), yellow loosestrife species (*Lysimachia*), wild onion (*Allium*), death camas lily (*Zigadenus*), false foxglove species (*Agalinus*), and orchid species.

We have a great need for volunteers willing and able to focus on these hard-to-collect species in Dane, southern Columbia, eastern Iowa, southern Sauk and western Jefferson counties. If interested in taking on this important work, please contact volunteer coordinator Diane Hills at volunteers@theprairieenthusiasts.org or 608-239-4699. Training and guidance will be provided.

Donations Sought for Annual Raffle/Auction

It is time 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 Rich Henderson (tpe.rhenderson@tds.net). Proceeds from items donated to the chapter help with land protection and land management activities in the chapter's geographic area of operation. **All items must be preregistered.** The banquet and raffle/auction are the weekend of March 1, 2014. See details under banquet and conference announcement; note the deadline for registering items.

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS CHAPTER

End of the Season, Volunteer of the Year & An Eye to the Future

By John Day

NIPE has ended the Season on a high note. We've harvested well over 1,000 pounds of seed - enough to plant more than 100 acres of restoration. As part of our land management and restoration efforts we have planted seed on several of Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation Properties. We were sowing seed by hand, as late as December 3rd on about four acres at Caspar Bluff near Galena. Additionally, several of our members were provided with seed for conservation and restoration efforts on private properties. Our efforts, combined with those of other conservation groups and private land owners have made a significant, positive impact on the environment in northwest Illinois.



*Seed harvested by NIPE volunteers in 2013.
Photo by John Day.*



*L to R: Ed Strenski, Barb Siekowski, Paul Rode (adorned with the Volunteer of the Year laurel wreath), Laura Dufford, John Day.
Photo provided by John Day.*

PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

by Tom Mitchell

The highlight of 2013 for Prairie Bluff Chapter was the acquisition of Muralt Bluff Prairies, two parcels totalling 75 acres, from Green County. These dry prairie remnants were the first pieces of prairie ever “discovered” by Gary Eldred and John Ochsner, independently in 1975, that led ultimately to the founding of the Southwest Prairie Enthusiasts and the Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts, two of the groups that merged to form The Prairie Enthusiasts in 1987. Our chapter now manages five TPE properties, four of them within a few miles of each other in Green County.

For prairie plant enthusiasts the re-discovery of the state endangered *Lespedeza leptostachya* at Vale Prairie was a notable event. We had not seen prairie bush clover there for many years, but an aggressive effort with brush removal and prescribed fire has resulted in its reappearance. The search at Vale continues for the exceedingly rare pink milkwort, not seen there since 1992, an endangered plant known from only three sites in Wisconsin, according to Cochrane & Iltis. Our monitoring at Vale of the formerly extirpated Mead’s milkweed, introduced in 2000 by Eldred and Rich Henderson, counted a single plant remaining in 2013 from the 20 seedlings planted from seed propagated by Marlin Bowles at Morton Arboretum.

Our work parties were out 172 days during 2013, logging 1,689 volunteer hours performing management tasks at the dozens of sites that we manage. Major projects included the basswood harvest at Iltis Savanna, sumac control at Muralt Bluff and Butenhoff Prairies, access improvement to Muralt South Prairie, garlic mustard control at Abraham’s Woods, seed collecting for the Stauffacher Prairie SNA and brush control at Vale Prairie.

The chapter conducted 15 TPE-sanctioned prescribed fires in 2013 on 123 acres, 10 in the spring and five in the fall. It was another incident-free burn year with four spring fires coming in May and all fall burns occurring

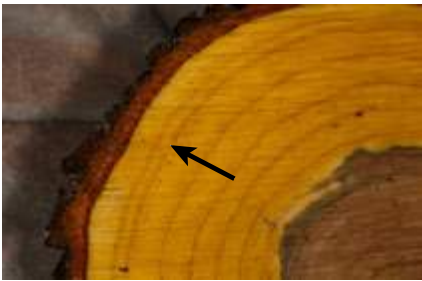


*Paul Rode (right) with volunteers picking seed.
Photo by John Day.*

At a brief luncheon at Lone Tree Farm, the home of Jim and Rickie Rachuy, Paul was named Volunteer of the Year and awarded the Prairie Laurel Wreath. Congratulations, Paul! We could not have accomplished all that we have without your help. That laurel wreath, by the way, was designed and created by our own Barb Siekowski from native plants found on our prairies.

Looking to 2014 we’ll be meeting during the winter months to plan an expanded seed processing center, look at an effort to expand our membership and plan for the upcoming work season. We will be considering some large prairie restorations and land management projects. Having recently celebrated our twentieth anniversary, it can be safely said that the next decade appears to be filled with great things for the Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts.

in November. The chapter has been very active in this important aspect of prairie, savanna, woodland restoration, logging 72 burns since 2009. Special thanks to Nick Faessler and Marci Hess for their unsung contributions to TPE boards and committees.



*Tree rings from cherry removed from Muralt South showing a narrow band for the dry year of 2012.
Photo by Marci Hess.*

PRAIRIE SMOKE CHAPTER

Prairie Smoke Member Offers Buckthorn Control Class

November 2nd was a beautiful fall day, the kind of day that is perfect for doing most anything in the woods of Southeast Minnesota. Twenty eight learners, including eighteen members of the Prairie Smoke Chapter, took advantage of the weather to get an introductory education on buckthorn. Greg Lamp, a Prairie Smoke member from Grand Meadow, Minnesota, led three hours of classroom learning and in the field demonstrations as a Community Education class.

The classroom portion provided participants with a fairly comprehensive introduction to buckthorn. The devastation it is bringing to the woods of the Midwest was reviewed. Attendees learned the history of how this plant was introduced, and participated in discussions on identifying buckthorn and how to distinguish it from other native trees. Then buckthorn control methods were reviewed for pros and cons to aid in an individual's choice for their project. The classroom session ended with a reminder that an individual really needs a passion for the effort to tackle a buckthorn infestation. That passion comes from knowing you have done what it takes to keep your woodland healthy and viable for another hundred years!

The field part of the class was held a few miles east of Grand Meadow at Greg's home. Twenty acres of woods have had buckthorn removal work done for each of the past eight years. The field demonstrations provided folks with visual results of the various stages in a progressive control project. As a reference for the participants, a walk to the neighbor's property line showed the untreated buckthorn infestation and provided an appreciation for the transformation taking place in the woods. Demonstrations were performed for control methods used on this project, as well as some control methods not used on this project so folks could consider them all as they make decisions for their own property.



*Community Education field trip in Grand Meadow, MN
Photo by Dawn Littleton*

Over the last couple years, a great deal of progress has been made in controlling the buckthorn on this property. While there's certainly more work to be done, it's already getting easy to see the fruits of this labor and what keeps the passion strong!

Please visit the following link to the Prairie Smoke web site to learn a bit more about buckthorn - www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/chapter/smoke/buckthorn.htm

ST. CROIX VALLEY CHAPTER

The chapter will have several work parties this winter, including January 4 at Alexander Savanna, River Falls, WI (to fulfill requirements for the DNR Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) grant with our in-kind labor), January 18 at Blueberry Hill Prairie, Bayport, MN and February 1 at Foster Conservation Area, River Falls, WI. All work parties begin at 10 am. See the chapter website for more info.



*The chapter got in one last burn for 2013. Thanks to Wayne Huhnke, Mike Miller, Lynette Anderson, Molly Breitmun, Jordan Jones, Tara Kelley and Ned Phillips. The site, Blueberry Hill, is a tiny remnant strip on a bluff over the St. Croix River.
Photo provided by Evanne Hunt.*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The following people have joined TPE during the period September 1 – December 15, 2013

Kenneth Lange, Baraboo, WI	Susan Schramm, Wauwatosa, WI	Mike Jensen & Jane Peck, Lanesboro, MN
Rachel Potter & Melanie Sax, Madison, WI	Rachel Curtis, Madelia, MN	Annie Baker, Plover, WI
Warren & Marion Lang, Menomonie, WI	Janice Aull, Lake Bluff, IL	Robert and Deborah Benada III, Waupaca, WI
Joe Plouff & Lavonee Solem, Prairie Farm, WI	Tom Fey, Monroe, WI	Frederick Blank, Neshkoro, WI
Montgomery Baker, Edgerton, WI	James & Karen Freymiller, Monroe, WI	Hans Hassler, Wautoma, WI
John Czercpanski, Madison, WI	Janet Rich, Madison, WI	Nancy Katzbeck, Montello, WI
Elizabeth Tuttle, Madison, WI	Kathryn Richardson, Madison, WI	James & Dorthy Beix, River Falls, WI
James & Joan Vennie, Madison, WI	Robert & Kathryn Richardson, Madison, WI	Jerry & June Ertenberg, Hartford, WI
Andrew & Barbara Holtz, Mukwonago, WI	Brett Sandleback, Princeton, WI	Rod Skora, Minneapolis, MN
Ben Johnson, Waukesha, WI	Stephen & Susan Carmichael, Rochester, MN	Brian Woody, Viroqua, WI

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

To: Lisa Maas, McGregor, IA

From: Jack Kussmaul

THANK YOU DONORS

We thank everyone who made a donation to The Prairie Enthusiasts during the period September 1 – December 15, 2013.
These gifts above and beyond membership dues and the annual appeal are truly generous and appreciated.

\$1000 or more

Rural Advantage	Anonymous <i>(for Sylvan Road)</i>
Robert & Kathryn Richardson	James & Rumi O'Brien

\$500 - \$999

Bob Tonneson	Barbara & Ted Cochrane <i>(for Sylvan Road)</i>	Mike Engel & Hannah Spaul <i>(for Sylvan Road in honor of Jan Ketelle)</i>
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\$100 - \$499

Jim & Jo-Ann Lynch <i>(in honor of the marriage of Henry Panowitsch & Susan Chambers)</i>	Chris & Chuck Wellington <i>(in memory of Janet Studesville)</i>	Patricia Feist <i>(for work on Feist Prairie)</i>
Tom & Marjie Bennett	Marilyn Workman	James & Rumi O'Brien
Doris Rusch	Thomas & Susan Stenson	James & Karen Freymiller
Fran Hanson	Lafayette County Bluebird Society	<i>(for Skinner Prairie burn)</i>
		Jean Clark

Under \$100

Eugenia Beecher	David & Shelley Hamel	Harriet Irwin <i>(for Sylvan Road in memory of Ken Wood)</i>
Tom Fey	Evanne Hunt	Keith & Eunice Roe <i>(for Sylvan Road in memory of Roger W. Suhr)</i>
Christina Rathman	Carol Fleishauer	Mark Krosch & Crista Browne-Krosch
Eleanor Wolf	Bill Grimm & Sylvia Marek	Mary & Richard Goehring
John & Janet Bauknecht	West Side Garden	



COMPASS CLUB

The following are new members of the Compass Club, who give \$1000+ to TPE on an annual basis.

Rich & Kathy Henderson	Kenneth Lange	Ken Wade & Pat Trochlell
Gerd & Ursula Muehlelehner	James & Rumi O'Brien	Charles & Ann Heide
Paul Jacobsen	Dennis & Nancy Connor	

Laura Oschner, mother of John Oschner (one of the original members of TPE) died last summer. The following people donated a total of \$525 to TPE in Laura's memory:

Tom & Jenny Mitchell	Donna Bahler
Frank Grenzow	Jennifer Salt
Bill & Eloise Kuenzi	Peg Bredeson
Nick & Linda Faessler	Walter & Alice Mirk
Loren & Cindy Bagley	Jim & Marci Hess
Steve Hubner & Mary Zimmerman	Chris & Chuck Wellington
Jean Blum	

John Oschner
Photo provided by Tom Mitchell



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Questions? E-mail Joe Rising (Communications Coordinator) at TPE@theprairieenthusiasts.org.

Thank you.

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The Prairie Enthusiasts Membership Levels:

- | | |
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