

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Education & Outreach



Moely Prairie land managers put up the finished kiosk to welcome visitors and serve as a substitute tour guide. (Photo by Amy Chamberlin)

2020 claimed “unprecedented” as the word of the year, but 2021 had its share of new experiences, too. In February we hosted our first online conference and prescribed burn school. The Minnesota Driftless chapter had been preparing a normal, in-person conference in Minnesota, but the summer surge of COVID cases gave us the opportunity to adapt – and gather online. The conference, themed “Inspired by Fire,” was our best attended ever with over 800 participants – including 200 students and new members. As a consequence, many chapters noticed an increase in burn volunteers freshly trained at the online prescribed burn school. All were inspired by conference keynote speaker, Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer’s, words on integrating scientific and Indigenous worldviews to restore the human relationship to land.

**The Prairie Enthusiasts welcomed
471 new members in 2021**

A year of new things continued at Moely Prairie, a “conservation island” managed by the Empire-Sauk chapter, where volunteers created a new interpretive kiosk welcoming visitors in HoChunk, Spanish and English, highlighting the history, cultural significance and overall importance of prairie ecosystems. The site is used frequently as an environmental education and field science resource for

local schools. The Many Rivers chapter brings the prairie to the students as volunteers continued to tend to the New Ulm School district’s teaching prairie project.

**In 2021, The Prairie Enthusiasts
hosted or participated in:
21 Field Trips
105 Other events and activities**

Numerous field trips and workshops provided space for learners of all experience levels to deepen their knowledge. The Minnesota Driftless chapter co-hosted a field tour of sites in the Pleasant Valley Pollinator Corridor sites, hosted a tour of a volunteer’s property with high-diversity plantings of various ages, and spotted dickcissel, grasshopper sparrow, bobolink, and eastern meadowlark on a field trip with a few exceptional birders. Bev Paulan, biologist and volunteer of the Northwest Illinois chapter, treated workshop attendees to a presentation titled “Native Plants Need Native Pollinators.” Prairie Sands volunteers collaborated with local partners to host invasive species workshops in the Central Sands region.

The Southwest Wisconsin chapter started a new, annual, scholarship of \$1,000 to support education of the next generation of Prairie Enthusiasts. See the Southwest Wisconsin chapter update to meet the 2022 award recipients! ■

2021 was a year of reemergence and rebalance. After the isolation of 2020, the cancelled work parties and events, we were all eager to nurture our souls and prairies in community once again. Our fire-dependent ecosystems depend on us and we, in turn, depend on each other. Our community of volunteers reappeared on the prairies together like a force of nature. Here are highlights of what your prairie community accomplished in 2021.

Land Protection



The Haag Addition to the Mounds View Grassland buffers the adjacent Shea Prairie, a favorite watering hole for the whooping cranes pictured here.

High quality remnant prairies are becoming more and more rare, which is why The Prairie Enthusiasts community – by the end of 2021 – protected a total of 3,667 acres, and actively managed 37 owned preserves and 15 conservation easements.

Starting small with the Haag Addition to Mounds View Grasslands - 2 newly acquired acres in Iowa County, Wisconsin, while not a vast addition, is still an important contribution to buffer and expand the Mounds View Grassland preserve, with a grant to restore, over the next two years, four acres of the immediately adjacent The Prairie Enthusiasts land back to the wetland habitat (sedge meadow and wet prairie) that was present in pre-settlement times. Having this parcel allows us to add 1.5 acres to the restoration effort and provide additional habitat for 12 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) currently present

on the preserve that would make use of the addition. This parcel brought the preserve boundary out to Mounds View Road making it easier to conduct prescribed burns.

The Prairie Enthusiasts devoted 69% of its 2021 budget to land protection, restoration, and land management activities.

While the Haag Addition was an example of a small but mighty conservation opportunity, the Prairie Bluff Chapter secured a conservation easement on large and mighty sale: the MacDonald York Prairie Refuge - 125 acres in Green County, Wisconsin. • Read the full story in the article about the MacDonald York Prairie Refuge on page 10. ■

Restoration and Land Management



University of Wisconsin – River Falls students picking seeds with the St. Croix Valley chapter in September 2021. (photo by Mike Miller)

Across all 11 chapters, volunteers were eager to return to working together on the land. Many burns and restoration events were cancelled and postponed in 2020 and, with the dawn of 2021, we returned to the land. Work parties became safer, and burns were back in full swing. The Prairie Bluff chapter completed burns at 28 sites – totaling 219 acres. With brilliant results – including the reappearance of golden alexander.

The Coulee Region chapter worked with partners at Holland Sand Prairie to remove perch trees from encroaching on remnant, while volunteers learned the way of the scythe and girdling (Which is easier than it looks!). The Northwest Illinois chapter's saw their rare plant garden project give new

life in unexpected ways. The St. Croix Valley chapter was finally empowered by the Minnesota DNR to manage remnant prairie at Blueberry Hill – all the seed they pick have to go somewhere!

Volunteers of the Chippewa Savannas chapter partnered with the Karner Volunteer Monitoring program to survey Seymoure Prairie for lupine – and were able to squeeze in a burn at Dobbs landing between bouts of drought and high wind. Thanks to the hard work of volunteers working together with local partners, Dobbs Landing is showing significant results. The Glacial Prairie chapter sponsored the

establishment of a dozen raised beds and hoops for a seed orchard. ■

2021 Landowner Services Program Activity

77

Landowner total visits

42

Conservation plans developed

1,657

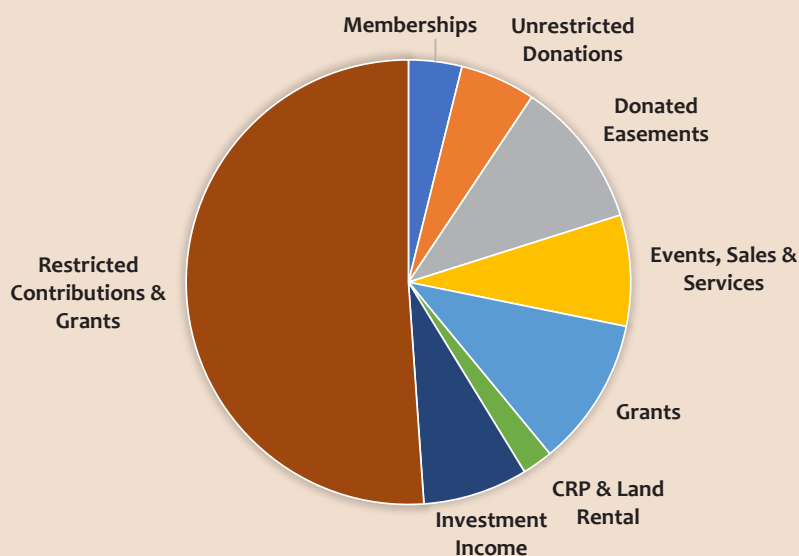
Total acres of potential habitat improvement and or new plantings

Statement of Activities

Statement of Position

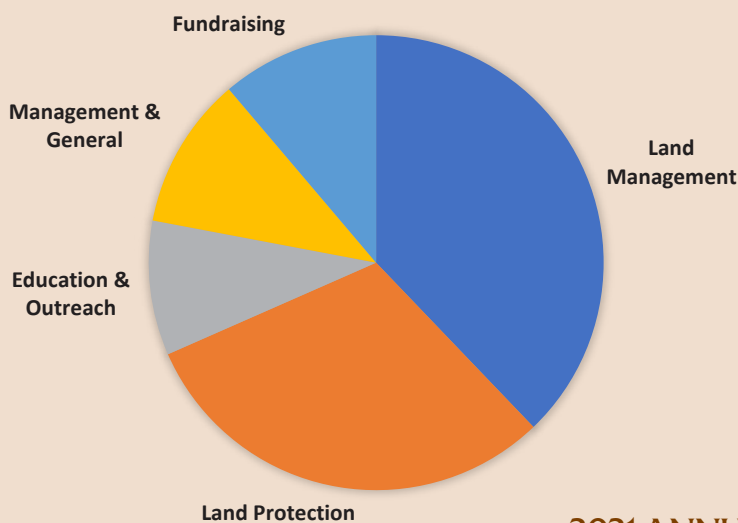
Revenues, Gains & Other Support

Memberships	\$	112,837	4%
Unrestricted Donations	\$	159,570	5%
Donated Easements	\$	313,125	11%
Events, Sales & Services		235,035	8%
Grants	\$	315,344	11%
CRP & Land Rental	\$	64,916	2%
Investment Income	\$	222,162	8%
Restricted Contributions & Grants	\$	1,487,566	51%
	\$	2,910,555	100%



Expenses

Land Management	\$	510,288	38%
Land Protection	\$	412,083	31%
Education & Outreach	\$	129,022	10%
Management & General	\$	145,981	11%
Fundraising	\$	151,030	11%
	\$	1,348,404	100%



Assets

Current Assets		
Cash & equivalents	\$	577,726
Receivables	\$	526,975
Other	\$	27,014
	\$	1,131,715
Property & Equipment (net of depreciation)		
Land & improvements	\$	9,532,377
Equipment	\$	30,157
	\$	9,562,534
Investments & Restricted Cash	\$	3,795,567
TOTAL ASSETS	\$	14,489,816

Liabilities & Net Assets

Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$	34,756
Deferred revenue	\$	5,866
Accrued salaries & expenses	\$	39,300
	\$	79,922
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	\$	1,034,485
With donor restrictions	\$	13,375,409
	\$	14,409,894
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$	14,489,816

Notes

1. Includes both The Prairie Enthusiasts, Inc. and The Prairie Enthusiasts Trust.
2. Financial statements audited by Johnson Block & Company.