

# The Prairie Enthusiasts



## 2020 Annual Report



“Restoring land without restoring relationship is an empty exercise. It is relationship that will endure and relationship that will sustain the restored land.” -Robin Wall Kimmerer

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## Executive Director's Message

We are still absorbing the impact of all that took place in 2020. Yet from the turmoil and isolation we endured, The Prairie Enthusiasts are emerging ripe for renewal.

As we've connected more deeply with nature, our role as stewards has been strengthened. Our Landowner Services Program launched and was soon flooded with requests for advice on restoration projects. Chapters rallied after spring burn cancellations and safely conducted our most ambitious fall burn season yet. We adapted to new technologies and overcame barriers to connect with and build our prairie community.

Your search for a new Executive Director gave you the opportunity to reflect on your progress and imagine what continued growth might look like for our grassroots organization. And my, how we grew! We welcomed 188 brand-new members to The Prairie Enthusiasts and increased operating revenue by 15%. Through the transformative power of giving, a little ingenuity, and a lot of dedication, we're finding our way forward.

The credit for this success is not mine to claim. But I take tremendous pride in the organization you've built and look forward to our work together in the years to come. Thank you for your service, your kindness, your energy and your boundless enthusiasm for the prairies we protect and steward together. And thank you for welcoming me to a community I love a little more each day.

With hope for our future,



**Debra Behrens**  
Executive Director



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## Restoration & Land Management

Our prairie community has been built through our shared connection with the lands we steward. For some, 2020 was a more isolated time of working alone on our own land, carrying out independent service projects or on rare occasions working with limited small groups of volunteers outdoors at a minimum 6-foot distance. Most spring burns were cancelled, but our site stewards and chapter volunteers devoted countless hours of planning and effort to ensure that stewardship of our sites was not neglected. Seeds were collected and invasives managed, and our prescribed burns roared back to life again in the fall season.

The Empire-Sauk Chapter celebrated a major milestone with the expiration of the Managed Forest Law contract at Mounds View Grasslands. After years of waiting, they could

***The Prairie Enthusiasts devoted 46% of its 2020 budget to restoration and land management activities.***

finally harvest the walnut trees crowding out open-grown oaks and begin restoration work on a 25-acre savanna. Rosebud and Duchess, a pair of Suffolk Punch work horses, became the heroes of the day as they hauled out the logs that would be sold to help fund the restoration.



(Photo by Stephen Winter)



(Photo by Eric Preston)

# Working with Landowners

The Prairie Enthusiasts' founding members have many stories of boldly knocking on the doors of complete strangers in their search for remnant prairies. After decades of working closely with our dedicated volunteer stewards, many landowners have come to share our enthusiasm for these rare natural communities and have permanently entrusted them to our care. Since then, we've continued our tradition of working closely with landowners and through these relationships The Prairie Enthusiasts have protected a total of 3,540 acres, actively managing 36 owned preserves and 14 conservation easements.

In 2020, we launched our Landowner Services Program to help those with conservation goals better assess the restoration opportunities and management needs of their lands. With funding from The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Landowner Services Coordinator Dan Carter was hired in the spring. His first field season exceeded all expectations. No more knocking on doors... today, the landowners are coming to us! This is a credit to the work that has been done for decades to raise awareness and build an appreciation for prairie landscapes.



TPE Landowner Services Coordinator Dan Carter on his first site visit in May 2020 with Coulee Region Chapter members John and Rita Hoffman at their property in Viola, WI

## 2020 Landowner Services Program Activity

**66 landowner visits in 3 states  
and every chapter region**

**46 short plans and  
7 detailed management plans developed**

**1,436 total potential project acres**

# Outreach & Education

In 2020, we learned to adapt. Most field trips and in-person learning opportunities were cancelled, though there were a few limited-attendance, socially-distanced outdoor events and burn trainings held following The Prairie Enthusiasts' COVID policy.

We also learned to try new things. The Empire-Sauk Chapter innovated a successful online burn school that gave us the confidence to host more events online. The Prairie



(Photo by Rob Baller)

Enthusiasts' Annual Meeting and Picnic, usually a small gathering, was a lively virtual celebration that drew nearly 100 members.

And we learned to make good use of our time at home. Inspired by the fifth-grade students of Mayville Middle School in Southeastern Wisconsin, Glacial Prairie Chapter member Walter Mirk finished his ambitious and versatile Wisconsin prairie curriculum that is now available to teachers for their classrooms and to our chapters for outreach activities. Now that he has put the finishing touches on the Wisconsin curriculum, Walter has started a version for Minnesota and plans for Illinois and Iowa curricula to follow.

In 2020 The Prairie Enthusiasts hosted or participated in:

**12 Field Trips**

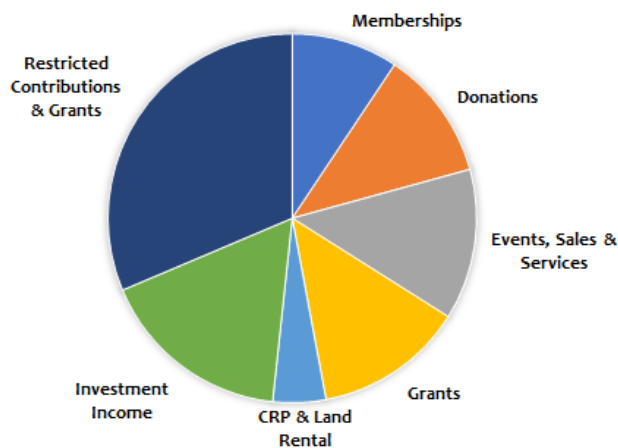
**12 Other events and activities**

# Statement of Activities

# Statement of Position

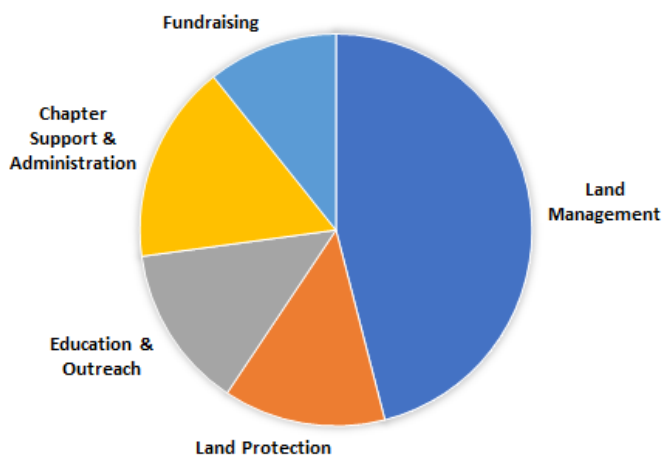
## Revenues, Gains & Other Support

Memberships	\$	141,423	9%
Donations	\$	171,333	11%
Events, Sales & Services	\$	199,297	13%
Grants	\$	197,702	13%
CRP & Land Rental	\$	70,095	5%
Investment Income	\$	255,355	17%
Restricted Contributions & Grants	\$	472,950	31%
	\$	1,508,155	100%



## Expenses

Land Management	\$	429,151	46%
Land Protection	\$	124,919	13%
Education & Outreach	\$	125,773	13%
Chapter Support & Administration	\$	153,141	16%
Fundraising	\$	100,146	11%
	\$	933,130	100%



## Assets

<b>Current Assets</b>	
Cash & equivalents	\$ 578,860
Receivables	\$ 70,848
Other	\$ 29,836
	\$ 679,544
<b>Property &amp; Equipment (net of depreciation)</b>	
Land & improvements	\$ 9,434,344
Equipment	\$ 13,615
	\$ 9,447,959
<b>Investments &amp; Restricted Cash</b>	\$ 2,662,740
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	\$ 12,790,243

## Liabilities & Net Assets

<b>Liabilities</b>	
Accounts payable	\$ 23,806
Deferred revenue	\$ 6,465
Accrued salaries & expenses	\$ 37,485
	\$ 67,756
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Unrestricted	\$ 753,188
With donor restrictions	\$ 11,969,299
	\$ 12,722,487
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	\$ 12,790,243

## Notes

1. Financial statement as of Dec. 31, 2019, audited by Johnson Block & Company.
2. Includes both The Prairie Enthusiasts, Inc. and The Prairie Enthusiasts Trust.
3. Donated land and easements totalling \$737,400 not included in Restricted Contributions.