



Meeting date & location: July 13, 2024 at the home of Debbie Pavick & Joe Block, Hillsboro, WI

Board members - X indicates "present", O indicates "absent"

X	Jack Kussmaul	X	Gary Eldred	X	Steve Querin-Schultz
X	Gary Adams	X	Becky Fernette	X	Roger Smith
X	Bob Costanza	X	Shaun Murphy-Lopez	X	Kay Wienke
X	Lynnette Dornak	X	Debbie Pavick		

Meeting called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Chapter President Jack Kussmaul

Minutes of the May 11, 2024 meeting were presented. Question raised by Steve re: accuracy of number of acres burned at Double Oak. Jack clarified that the acreage included DNR land. Motion to accept the minutes by Steve. Seconded by Debbie. Motion carried.

Treasurer's report: Board reviewed submitted reports. Steve is working with Chapter Support to clarify budget items. Kay clarified that because Chapter Support has changed its accounting policy and changed the fiscal year, it may take some time to straighten out some of the way in which the information is being reported. Motion to accept by Becky, seconded by Shaun. Motion carried. [Reports are at the end of this document]

Report from Chapter Support Board meeting on June 11, 2024 (Kay/ Gary): 1st quarter \$130K surplus; however, Kay pointed out that it's typical to have a surplus at the beginning of the fiscal year. Operating expenses are \$102K/month. Kay is now in charge of developing a handbook for on-boarding new Board members/Chapter representatives. Jim Rogala acknowledged the need for a process to solicit Board members. She mentioned that Chapter Support plans to hire 3 FTEs Americorps employees (see discussion by Jack in "other business"). Kay explained that Form 990 filed with the IRS indicates that 62% of funds are spent on programming, 29% administration, and 9% fundraising. The Education Committee is submitting articles to the Prairie Promoter on prairie stewardship and posting blogs on the website. In lieu of the large annual gathering, two gatherings are scheduled - one by the Coulee Region Chapter at Prairie Haven in Buffalo Co. and the other by the Empire-Sauk Chapter, July 26-28. Chapter Support is developing brochures and exhibit materials specific to each chapter. Duncan Schultz is no longer with Chapter Support. Kay shared the organization chart. Inquiries should be submitted to info@theprairieenthusiasts.org. TPE Board created a matching fund of \$25K - Kay encourages members to make their contributions by the end of July.

Updates from Site Stewards

- Borah Creek (Steve): Mowing paths and spot spraying. Planted compass plants furnished by James Haas near the hydrant. Forestry mowing in the fall. Spring burn was successful in reducing woody invasives by 95%. Dispersed seed by barn to create pollinator habitat. Neighbor Joe Schwartz has been assisting with herbicide application. Jack will recognize Joe's volunteer support. Sign needs to be replaced - Kay will check with Chapter Support re: signage. Gary E. asks if we should reintroduce beetles to eradicate knapweed.

- Bush Clover (Gary E.): No information on decision re: reopening sand quarry. Spot spraying - pleased with the recovery of this parcel. Has concerns about agricultural drift.
- Double Oak: (Jack): No update. Walter Mirk is organizing a burn of the fields.
- Eldred (Jack): Two days spent removing crown vetch. Wild parsnip nearly eradicated on the front side. Lots of wild parsnip on the back side of the property. Met with Dan Carter re: removing bracken ferns. He recommended cutting it two times/year instead of applying herbicide. Seven volunteers used brush cutters for the first cutting. A second cutting to be scheduled in August. Prison crew worked on removing wild parsnip and sweet clover in July. Jack plans on using the crew to work on fire breaks in the fall and to increase the number of days that they work at Eldred Prairie in 2025.
- Feist (Becky) - 2 work parties in June canceled due to weather. Work party on July 9 with Jack and Ross Shrago - continue to cut honeysuckle and other invasives. Will schedule 2 work parties in August with additional work parties in the fall. Will burn brush piles during the winter months. Burn planned for spring 2025 with the UW-P crew.
- Iris Drive: (Bob R.): Since April's prescribed burn, work on clearing woody invasives on the SW corner of east unit. Bob is committing one day/week to manage the property. Asks for at least 1 volunteer with a clearing saw to assist. May schedule a work party to manage brush piles. Met with Dan Gallus, DNR re: assistance with burning - no go. Talked about acquiring signage to designate the boundaries. Contacted Levi Plath at MVC to introduce himself & discuss sharing work; however, MVC is focused on keeping up with their properties.
- Sime Bald (Bob C.): No update.
- Sylvan Road (Bob C.): Tom Hunt has engaged several consultants to study the parcel. Bob has removed downed trees. Burn planned for spring 2025.
- Thomas Wet (Jack): No update.

Update from Committees

- Events (Debbie): The plans for the butterfly workshop have changed; the leader wants to offer this event to local children with children and the Chapter won't be involved in coordinating the event. However, it's hoped that she will offer a workshop in 2025 specifically for TPE members. The committee is in discussion re: offering a stargazing event in the fall. The Level 1 chainsaw class was successful - 10 trainees (7 were women). Did better than break even financially. May offer a level 2 workshop next year. Steve asks if our chapter wants to host a booth at Gays Mills Apple Fest on Saturday, Sept. 28 at the Lions Park. No charge. Kay expressed interest in working with local volunteers to handle this.
- Barn (Becky): Cleaned debris from barn floor on June 2 - thanks again to James Haas and Steve Q-S for helping! Shaun replaced windows and painted the trim. Becky will schedule a Barn committee meeting in the near future.
- Scholarship (Debbie): No activity except for dispersing funds to the 2 recipients.
- Land Management (Jack): Site stewards will be contacted to present stewardship plans for 2025.

Tractor update (Jack & Steve): An anonymous gift was received to support the purchase of a tractor which increased the tractor budget to \$46K. Steve presented information on 5 options [see options following the Treasurer's reports] Steve is willing to contribute his mower. Discussed availability of a trailer and access to servicing. Steve recommends purchasing the LS

or Bobcat. Bob inquired about purchasing used - Steve responded that he has been looking with no luck. Also discussed improving the machine shed at Borah Creek Prairie to protect the tractor from the elements. Lynette made the motion to approve purchase of the Bobcat with \$1K+ flexibility (depending on availability at the dealership). Roger seconded. Motion carried. Gary E. suggested an orientation for potential drivers. Becky suggested creating a policy for using the tractor. Thank you to Steve for researching the tractors!

Forestry mowing (Steve): Applied for \$10K grant with Duncan from Chapter Support. Funding will be announced in September. Steve has a list of local people who do forestry mowing; he will contact them for quotes.

Request to reallocate \$750 allowed for mowing at Eldred (Jack): Jack requested that the \$750 budgeted for mowing at Eldred Prairie be used to pay Bob Costanza for work at Eldred Prairie. Motion to reallocate funds made by Becky. Debbie seconded Motion carried.

Other business:

Americorps employees (Jack): 3 workers will be available from March 10-August 22, 2025. Questions re: training, coordination between chapters, work schedule, sick time, etc. to be addressed by the committee of which Jack is a member.

Digital files: Mike Nee has created a digital file of all species located on Eldred Prairie. Jack asks for where to store the files. Debbie suggests that Chapter Support be contacted. Jack will follow up.

Dan Wallace has contacted Jack re: burns. James Haas has offered to conduct a burn with UW-P students who have been trained. Jack suggests that the students burn Feist Prairie.

Lynette inquired whether we have a central log to record the number of acres burned on each site. She asked that stewards send her the information and she can digitize them with maps.

Gary A: He and Gary Eldred have copies of the Prairie Promoter from the beginning of TPE. Suggested that he contact Chapter Support to see if they want the copies. He donates a subscription of the PP to his local library, other members encouraged to do the same.

Jack will send out a request for nominations for Chapter Board positions to the membership prior to the annual meeting on September 14.

Adjournment: Steve motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:59 p.m., Shaun seconded.

Minutes recorded by Becky J. Fernette on 7/13/24; edited on 7/15/2024