



Annual Membership Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2024 at Borah Creek Barn, Fennimore

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 pm by President Jack Kusmaul

Election of Directors (Jack): All Board members have agreed to serve another year. Jack explained his rationale for choosing term lengths by assigning them in alphabetical order as follows: Gary Adams, Bob Costanza & Lynnette Dornak - 1 year term; Gary Eldred, Becky Fernette & Jack Kusmaul - 2 year term; Shaun Murphy-Lopez, Debbie Pavick, Steve Querin-Schultz & Roger Smith - 3 year term. Lynnette motioned to accept the term lengths, Bob seconded. Motion carried.

Financial report (Jack): Current balances are

\$106,392.25 in unrestricted account - includes donation for tractor. Actual balance may be closer to 66K.

Endowments: Double Oak Savanna - \$94,140.59; Sylvan Rd- \$53,270.07; SW Chapter Land Management - \$330,551.71 (Allowed to draw down 4% of past 3 year averages)

Total: \$477,962.37

Tractor (Jack): Bobcat tractor purchased in August and has been used at Borah Creek and Eldred Prairies. Gary E spoke favorably about the purchase - the crew is making progress in the northern section and may expand restoration into brushlands. He stated that the tractor is providing an uplift of energy for the crew because they can more efficiently manage the invasives which opens up more opportunities to discover prairie plants. The tractor will be available for use on any of the chapter sites, as needed. After the meeting members can take a look at the tractor on the first floor of the barn. Jack expressed appreciation for Steve Querin-Schultz' effort to research and coordinate this purchase.

Grant (Jack): The Chapter received a \$10K grant to expand grassland bird habitat at Borah Creek Prairie and Eldred Prairie. More kudos to Steve for working with Chapter Support to prepare the application.

Site updates:

- Borah Creek (Gary E): Good news: tractor! Bad news - lost 2-3 acres of Heather's Prairie due to a re-survey of the land. Concerns re: landowner building a house on the site. One possibility is pursuing an easement to maintain the majority of the remnant. Neighbor Joe has been assisting with management. Plan to maintain mowed areas to encourage meadowlarks and bobolink. Lynnette shared her experience with grassland bird

management and offered to consult with the crew. Lynnette used her drone prior to this meeting to capture images of several areas at Borah to assist with management planning. This spring, Lynnette will be capturing images of other SW Chapter sites.

- Bush Clover (Gary E): Spot-spraying this summer. Hope to burn spring 2025. No news on status of sand quarry. One 20-year old Mead's milkweed has survived on this site.
- Eldred (Jack): Dan Carter from Chapter Support made a site visit to make recommendations for managing bracken fern which was to cut/mow twice a season for two years. This occurred in July and August. PDC prison crew worked on wild parsnip & sweet clover eradication.
- Sime Bald (Jack): Informed the members that this site is in the process of being transferred to Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC) within the next year or two, given that the site is surrounded on two sides by other MVC properties. Bob Costanza has been cutting black locust - the 2021 tornado opened up the canopy and led to an explosion of black locust. Dan Carter from Chapter Support recommended prescribed burns on the balds due to a build-up of thatch and to reduce gray dogwood.
- Iris Drive (Bob Retko): Invasive brush on ~1 acre of the SW corner was cut once, primarily with a clearing saw. Herbicide was applied to some cut stumps. Most work stopped due to heavy vegetation and heat. Exploring the possibility of writing a forestry management plan and pursuing NRCS EQIP funding. Harvested and cleaned showy tick trefoil seed to be dispersed at Borah Creek Prairie. Ongoing contact with Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists Britta Peterson and Luke Romance re: various programs and assistance.
- Feist (Becky): Four work parties so far this year - next dates are Friday, Sept 20 & Saturday, Oct. 12 from 9-12. Three members of the UW-P Reclamation Club cut down some smaller walnut trees, and plan to do this again this fall. Plan to contact local loggers to see if there's interest in harvesting some of the larger walnut trees. As a new site steward, the focus has been on getting to know the site and removing woody invasives. In the process of creating a path on the site to allow easier access for both visitors and work crews. Plan to establish fire breaks this fall and schedule a burn in spring 2025. May schedule a work party this winter to burn the brush piles and have a festive gathering.
- Double Oak Savanna (Jack): Burned this spring by Adaptive Restoration. Bob Costanza has been cutting and stacking downed wood. Site steward Walter Mirk has been working on the site regularly to manage woody invasives. Walter plans to burn 3 sections in spring 2025.
- Thomas Wet (Jack): - ½ of the site was burned in spring 2024 - a variety of forbs have emerged.
- Sylvan Road (Jack): Site steward Tom Hunt's efforts to create a burn break have met with some controversy due to habitat destruction. The concerned parties are in conversation with Tom to address the situation.

Committee Reports

- Barn: Current members: Becky Fernette, interim Chair; Roger Smith; Shaun Murphy-Lopez; Martha Querin-Schultz; James Haas & Mark Leonhart. Our major accomplishment since last September was replacing the fascia, gutters, and soffits on the roof. Shaun has been replacing windows on the first floor and donated and installed a sheet of tin on the south exterior wall to cover a damaged area. Roger added more outlets/conduits in the kitchen. The floor in the main area was cleaned in June and again last week. Our goals for next year are to add support to the floor in the SW corner and install panels in the kitchen to decrease the amount of dust and debris in this area. James Haas secured a donation of wall panels to use in the kitchen. After sending out a wish list, we've received a microwave oven, a coffee maker, and an electric teapot. Thanks to Steve Querin-Schultz for the microwave and Resha Wyan for the coffee maker and teapot. Clarifications will be provided on the number and sizes of lumber that is needed. Gary Eldred has been dispersing seed south of the barn to create a pollinator habitat and enhance the aesthetic appearance of our event space.

The Barn committee welcomes new members! Contact Becky Fernette at bspence@tds.net or 608.379.0781 if interested.

- Events: Current members: Debbie Pavick, Lynnette Dornak & Martha Querin-Schultz. Lynnette reported on the events held in the past year: a successful snake workshop in October attended by 30 people; Level 1 chainsaw training with Luke Saunders, Blue Heron Stewardship in June with 10 attendees. Because the committee decided to set the fee lower than other trainings in the area, the Chapter made a little money on the event; and a butterfly workshop by Donna Richter with local school children in July. The committee hopes to have Donna offer a workshop for adults in 2025. A stargazing workshop with John Heasley, local astronomy expert is scheduled for Friday, 10/4 (rain date 10/5) - limited to 20 participants. Can register online <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/kdtkqet/lp/72235b55-9945-40a6-bceb-b9773a355315> or by contacting Debbie Pavick dpavick@me.com

The Events committee welcomes new members - please join the fun!

- Scholarship: Current members: Debbie Pavick, Dan Fisher, Lynnette Dornak, and Shaun Murphy-Lopez. Debbie reported that due to a scholarship being rescinded in 2023, the Chapter awarded scholarships to James Haas and Isaac Reichmann. Recipients need to be students in conservation-related studies/activities. Notices will be sent out to local schools and colleges in spring 2025.
- Land Management: Jack Kussmaul, Chair; Bob Costanza; Bob Retko; and Steve Querin-Schultz. Jack reported that this committee meets at year's end to prioritize projects and make budget decisions. Major accomplishment was acquiring the tractor.

Other business

- Jack announced that 3 items of NOMAX clothing were donated by a friend of Gary Eldred and were offered to chapter members.

- Kay Wienke circulated a sign-up sheet to volunteer to provide information about the SW Chapter at two upcoming event: Gays Mills Apple Fest on Sept. 27 and the Savanna Institute's Open House on October 5 in Spring Green.
- James Haas donated a parsnip predator for use at Borah Creek Prairie. Also provided culver's root seed for use by site stewards.
- Michael Nee announced that The Three Eagles Foundation, Inc. (<https://3-eagles.org>) is hosting a fall equinox event at the effigy mounds near Muscoda on Sept. 21 & 22. Brian McGraw is leading the effort to establish prairie on the site. Michael and Phil Jennings have been working on Button Prairie Bluff located 1.5 miles east of Gotham on JJ. Mike has been putting in plugs of plants that aren't typically found in catalogs.

Motion to adjourn by Lynnette, seconded by Debbie. Adjournment at 2:09 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Becky Fernette, Secretary

September 16, 2024