St. Croix Valley Chapter

February 11, 2025 6pm—8pm
Location: Hudson Library and Zoom

Agenda

TPE Board recap

Peter Fritz gave us a recap of the TPE Board Retreat January 17-18 in Viroqua:

Link to Post 2025 Board Retreat Follow Up (hyperlinks in this document link to even more detail!)

Link to Marketing Communications Trend 2024_Board Presentation

Link to TPE Constant Contact email best practices

TPE Land Management recap

Alex Bouthilet reported there is nothing new since the last chapter meeting.

TPE Land Protection recap

Harvey Halvorsen did not attend.

Chapter treasurer report

Marti Piepgras, chapter treasurer, gave an overview of our financial position:
Link to 2024-225 Financial Overview for our chapter

Chapter land management activity

Work party schedule on website.

Alexander Savanna

- Alexander savanna parking lot may not satisfy our contract with Benson Excavating. Wayne to discuss with company a reduction in cost.
- Survey of Alexander savanna by Brandon King Land Surveying still planned.
- For budgeting purposes, Alex said we should plan to mow the Alexander ag field two times this year.
- Snow seeding is scheduled for March 1.

Discussed the chapter hands-on prescribed burn class workshop for newly trained crew members.

> Bill Ramsden offered to teach; Alex wants to assist. Date to be determined but before burn season starts (if possible). Plan on burning Evanne's planting.
>
> While practice with "live fire" is not required, everyone agreed that we do want to include it (if possible).

Coulee Region chapter is hosting a burn refresher class. Discussed whether we should.

> Alex reminded us that TPE Burn Policy requires a yearly refresher course, but does not specify details. We decided to provide links to articles and videos for experienced crew members to read and watch on their own.
>
> What is a burn refresher? Agenda includes basic elements of burning (i.e., PPE, weather prescription, crew communication, anatomy of a burn, etc.) and examples of things that can go wrong.

The Washington County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) is renewing partnerships with an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Evanne will sign the MOU and Peter offered to attend the meetings.

Link to MOU

Ramsey and Washington County CWMA Herbicide Lunch and Learn Series begins March 10. It is open to everyone. No charge. Learn about new herbicides, new techniques, what is working, species to watch out for, and more from industry herbicide professionals! There will be a Q&A session following each presentation.

Link to class schedule.

Old Business

Ginny G. will put together a mockup for the kiosk sign at the new parking lot for Alexander and bring it to a chapter meeting for review.

MN Prescribed Fire Council annual meeting – January 8, Shakopee

- Attended by Bill Ramsden. He is now on the steering committee.
- Reported the Council recognizes the need for burn boss and line boss training for the types of prescribed burns we do in our area.

WI Prescribed Fire Council annual meeting – February 21-22, Baraboo

- Attendees will be Alex and Jay. Chapter will pay their expenses. There will be many TPE members from other chapters in attendance
- Alex reported that early discussions indicate the Council recognizes the need for burn boss and line boss training for the types of prescribed burns we do in our area.

Chainsaw safety training and brush saw training has been rescheduled for the late fall. This ensures good practices will be fresh in everyone's mind.

Evanne reported First Aid training was a success. 14 people attended.

New Business

Grant opportunity from Tropical Wings is available. Ginny Gaynor asked for details: what would we spend the money on, etc.

- Mowing the newly seeded Alexander ag field to control invasives while seedlings establish ($950 for one mowing 3/23/2024)
- Seed collecting tools (collection bags, clippers, storage bins) (could cost >$500)
- Link to grant application.

Evanne reported the Promoter deadline was moved to January 30 from Jan 16. Besides the typical chapter updates, Bob drafted an article to recap the “How to Plant a Prairie” workshop.

Heidi Kassenborg contacted the City of Afton about their purchase of a 40 acre parcel between the Old Village and Afton State Park. She offered our expertise to determine whether it contains prairie and/or oak savanna remnants. The City responded:

> “Thanks for reaching out. We are planning to do native prairie restoration work on the land we recently acquired at the east end of 45th Street along the St. Croix River Bluff. We need to do some required historic preservation work in 2025 before we can do anything else on the land. I'll reconnect with you once that work is done.”

WI Annual Invasive Species Action Awards application is due February 16. Evanne offered to write an application describing our chapter’s volunteer effort to control invasive species on our project sites.

Link to nomination form.

> *Award recipients are Wisconsin residents and organizations who made significant contributions in 2024 to prevent, control or eradicate invasive species that harm Wisconsin's native lands and waters. Nominees can be individuals, groups or organizations who showed exemplary efforts to address issues surrounding invasive species.*

Team Knowles Nelson Update. Peter asked that everyone consider advocating for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. Opportunities include sending a postcard or calling your state representatives.

Link to letter explaining what you can do.

Chapter outreach events planned

Let Evanne know if there are more opportunities.

- Earth Fest. Saturday, April 26, 2025, from 12-4 pm at the UW-River Falls University Center
- Belwin Bison Release on May 17, 2025, from 10am – 2 pm
- Robust schedule of field trips is being planned.
  - “In progress” trips to prairie plantings as follow up to the “How to Plant a Prairie” workshop.
  - Guided field trips to our project sites; that is, Blueberry, Alexander, etc.
  - Butterfly survey and identification trips.
  - Bat monitoring at project sites.
- Monthly chapter social events: not a business meeting, scheduled around talk or educational presentation.