

**SOUTHWEST
WISCONSIN
PRAIRIE
ENTHUSIASTS
(S.W.W.P.E.)**

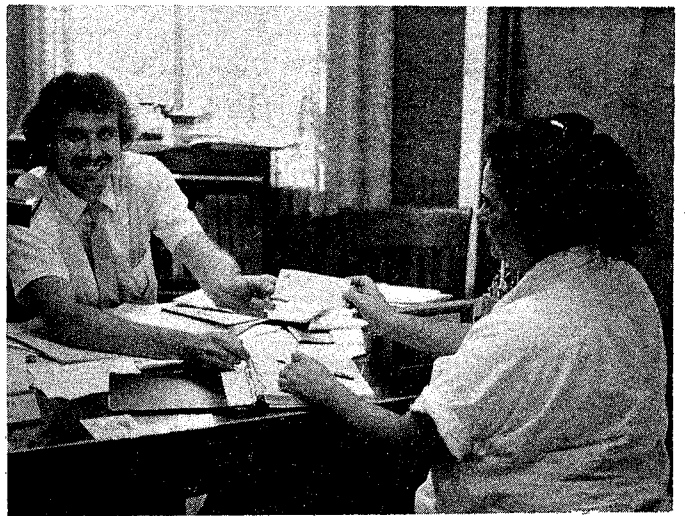
S.W.W.P.E. NEWSLETTER NO. 4

LATE FALL 1988

Our first but not our last!

An update on our first prairie purchase. The Thomas wet prairie, sedge meadow has finally been purchased! The site is located in Castle Rock Township, south of Muscoda on Co. Trk. "G." To get there, go south from Muscoda. When you reach the intersection of "G" and "M," continue south for 1½ miles. The site is on the west side of the road. There is an old red brick schoolhouse on the east side of the road. S.W.W.P.E. volunteers put in 80 rods of fence in early September, so the site is now protected permanently! The size of the property is 13-2/3 acres, at a cost of \$295 per acre. We would like to give a big thanks to Jonathan Wilde and John Oschner, both of Green County, for the generous donations to pay for the fencing. Sites are now being looked at and landowners being contacted so we can hopefully start the ball rolling on purchasing of another high quality prairie remnant by the end of 1989.

There are a number of very good sites around, but finding someone to sell presents a more complicated problem! Often the land is hopelessly tied up with debtors or owners do not want to sell such small, isolated parcels.



Secretary Gail Adams signs check to finalize the Thomas wet prairie purchase. At left is David Kerth, Fennimore attorney.

A logo for S.W.W.P.E.

We are announcing in this issue our Logo Competition. We need a suitable logo to use in our letterheads, newsletters and other official correspondence of the S.W.W.P.E. Details of the competition are as follows:

- (a) Designs are to be black and white, in ink and approximately 8 x 10 inches in size.
- (b) The central figure of our design is to incorporate our basic philosophy of education, preservation and restoration and illustrate the interdependency of a prairie ecosystem, i.e.: Animal/bud design on prairie background.
- (c) Design should be suitable for general use, (i.e.: T-shirts, promotional material, business material, etc.).
- (d) The accepted design becomes the property of the S.W.W.P.E., to be used freely by that organization as its logo and for other promotional purposes, without restriction.

DEADLINE: December 15, 1988. Submit design to: Alice Mirk, 10052 Co. Hwy. C, Woodman, WI 53827.

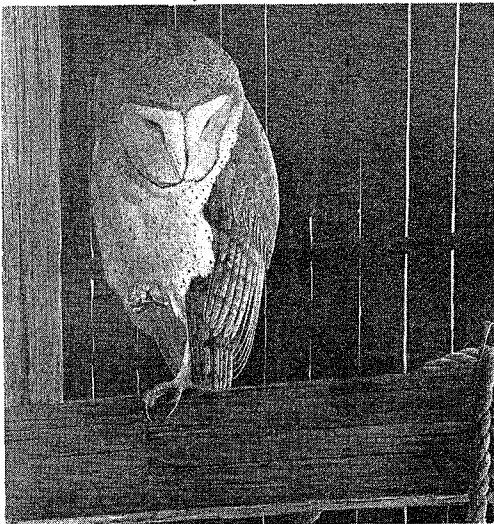
PRIZE: Limited Edition Wildlife Print by Michael Riddet, the internationally recognized wildlife artist. (Choice of 4).

A selection of semi-finalist designs will be displayed in public places in the area during December of 1988. A final decision will be made on December 15, 1988. For further information, contact Alice Mirk at 10052 Co. Hwy. C, Woodman, WI 53827.

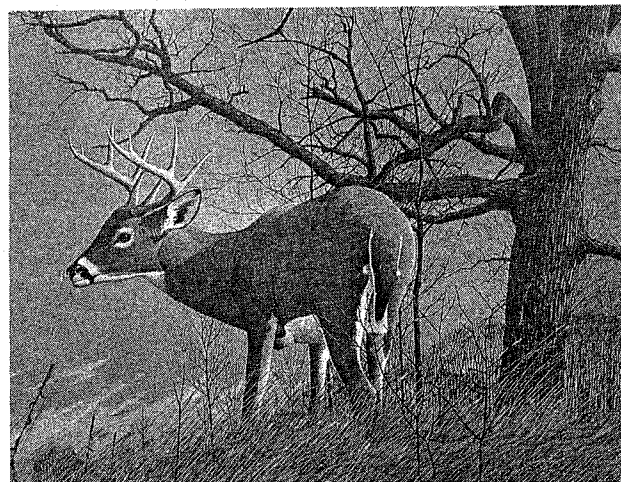
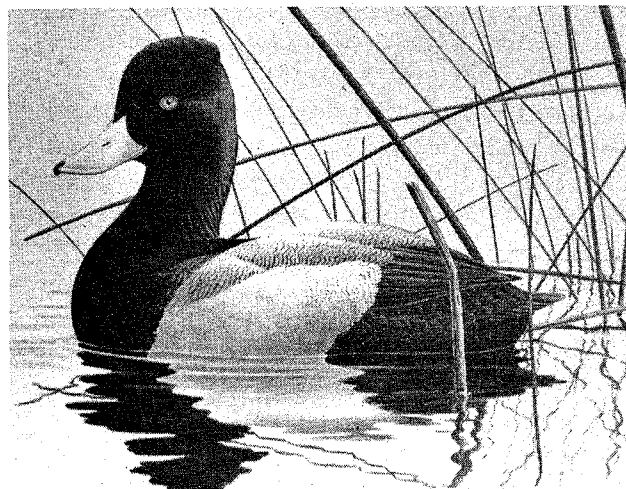


Free wildlife prints

We have received a very generous donation of 100 signed and numbered cardinal prints from internationally known wildlife artist Michael Riddet. These prints are valued at \$45 each and we are going to offer one free with every



\$50 donation to our organization. We are trying to organize a midwest-wide logo competition and Michael has also offered a choice of several different prints as first prize in the competition. Michael's paintings are superbly done and anyone who gets one of his prints will have a source of lasting beauty and enjoyment!



Help needed!

Although we have lots of projects and activities going on, one of the things we are in desperate need of is help with some of the less glamorous jobs. It would be wonderful if we could find someone to organize and direct field trip activities. Lots of people are interested in field trips, but an organizer is desperately needed. Of course, help is always needed on the newsletter, especially on the printing end of things, and mailing. We have an extensive mailing list of over 700, but need to have a computer program made so the names can be printed on pre-gummed labels. Please, if you have an interest but hesitate because you don't think you know enough about prairie plants or

Another great offer!

Speaking of nationally known wildlife artists, Jonathan Wilde of Dayton, Wis., has also offered his superb talents to help us on our mission to preserve the last fragment of prairie we have left. Jonathan has offered a very limited number of artist's proofs of the Aldo Leopold commemorative print for a \$100 donation. There are only two or three of these prints available, so don't spend too much time procrastinating. By the way, this print is signed by the artist and Nena Bradley, Leopold's daughter. The print is also numbered.

some of our members. They will tell you some of their most rewarding days have

Recipe of the month:

EAT AN ALIEN!

Plantain (also edible summer, autumn). *Plantago major*. Habitat: Yards, roadsides, disturbed sites; common weed introduced from Europe. Identification: Perennial herb with fibrous root system. Leaves basal, numerous, broadest near or below middle, 5-20 cm (2-8 in.) long, 2.5-12 cm (1-4.7 in.) wide, rounded to pointed at tip, toothed, entire or wavy along margin, rough on both surfaces, smooth or hairy. Flowers tiny, numerous along upper part of erect spike to 20 cm (8 in.) high, each flower with 4 translucent petals. Fruits are tiny capsules produced along spike; each capsule contains 10-18 seeds. Harvest: Pick young leaves before flower stalk appears or pick new leaves through summer; otherwise leaves develop stringy veins that are tough to chew. Strip ripe seeds from flower stalks from late spring through fall. Preparation: Use tenderest leaves in salads with other greens of season. For cooked vegetable, soak leaves in salt water for 5 min. Boil with little water in covered pot until tender but not overcooked. For beverage, steep handful of leaves in pint of boiling water for ½ hr. or longer. Dry seeds thoroughly and grind into flour. For pancakes, combine 2 cups plantain flour with 3 tsp. baking powder, ½ tsp. salt, 3 tbsp. sugar, 2 eggs, 3 tbsp. cooking oil, 1 cup milk. Mix thoroughly. Add more milk or flour for proper consistency; add fruit if desired. Cook on hot griddle. Related edible species: Species of the *Plantago* genus are found throughout North America; most are edible. Boil leaves of bitter species in sweetened water. Sea-side plantain (*P. juncooides*) is one of the best and is found only along East Coast. Poisonous look-alikes: none.

Conference report

The 11th North American Prairie Conference was held in Lincoln, Neb., the week of August 7-11. Two members of the Southwest Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts attended. They were Gary Eldred and Gail Adams. John Oschner and Fred Fasler, president of the Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts, also attended the conference. It was a very intense week with 105 papers presented in 2½ days. Each paper

Seed collecting for plantings!

Seed collection for the three-acre planting at the Cuba City High School has not been the best due to the severity of the drought this summer. Some seed was gathered this spring. They included prairie violet, pasque flower, prairie smoke, wood beteney, blue eye grass, needle grass, phlox and small amounts of sedges and grasses. With fall just around the corner, we are chomping at the bit to get out and do some more collecting, but getting 50 lbs. of seed for the project will be very difficult without the help of lots of volunteers. I sure hope you will consider helping us out, even if it is only a couple of handfuls of seed. It will all be greatly appreciated! Speaking of needing volunteers, a new and exciting project is coming up that some of you might be interested in. President Eldred has been in contact with the Department of Transportation asking about the possibility of planting native prairie plants on pre-selected sites along State Hwy. 61 south of Boscobel. Gary was told that these projects were very possible simply by getting a special permit! These sites probably wouldn't be extensive prairie restoration but rather the sites would be planted with a few showy species for public viewing and enlightenment. They would also serve as seed orchards for the S.W.W.P.E. The project would require people to help by propagating seedlings for transplanting and also simply planting seed directly into the sites and marking them for future reference. A project like this could be very exciting and rewarding, not to mention the public awareness that could be stimulated.

range of interests. Some subjects included: rare prairie orchid reproduction, effects of fire, range restoration, landscaping with prairie plants, prairie mammals, prairie insects and snakes, and much, much more. Field trips as far away as 125 miles from Lincoln and canoe trips on some of Nebraska's rivers were also part of the activities. Our return trip included a side trip into northern Nebraska to see the sand hills, 20,000 square miles of mid-grass prairie, and across northern Iowa to visit two of Iowa's most spectacular prairies, the Hayden Prairie and

Two prairies saved

In the summer of 1987, during a prairie remnant inventory of Grant County, group members located two prairie remnants in North Lancaster Township of extremely high quality. In checking the plat book, it was found that the property belonged to the M & I Bank of Lancaster. The president of the bank was contacted and the group was informed the FmHA actually owned the land. President Gary Eldred, in a casual conversation with a DNR employee, found out that the FmHA has a cooperative agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service for the preservation of rare and unique sites.

John Lyons, District Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was contacted in regard to the existence of these prairie remnants and the possibility of having these two parcels deleted from future sales of the surrounding land by FmHA. Gail and Gary Adams, along with Gary Eldred, inventoried the sites in the Spring of 1988 to fulfill the criteria established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in order to act on the cooperative agreement. Both sites contained state threatened species, which was a critical component in establishing the sites as suitable. At this point there were two possible options available for the future management of the sites: the State DNR would be contacted and offered the ownership and management, and failing that, it would have been offered to a private non-profit organization such as S.W.W.P.E. It was at this point that the DNR accepted ownership and Grant County has two brand new prairie remnants preserved.

Urgent: \$ needed

During the S.W.W.P.E. Prairie Remnant Inventory of Grant County in 1987, it was discovered that many of the threatened species sites were on roadsides which were routinely mowed and sprayed. This is a problem for perpetuation of species and seed collecting for species diversity. We need signs to post these areas to prevent further site degradation in a cooperative venture with owners. Badger State Industries will provide us with a metal custom sign 8" x 8" for \$1.84 per piece. We have estimated we need 100 of these signs at a total cost of \$184 plus shipping. If you



Rare species found

In September, members of the S.W.W.P.E. were collecting cream indigo seed (*baptisia leucophaea*) near Stitzer, in addition to collecting seed. An inventory was being conducted to determine how many plants were on the site. To our amazement, there were nearly 4,000. That would seem like a lot, but when you add another inventoried site with around 3,000 more, things start to be impressive. By adding three more sites, with an estimated 5,000 more plants, for a total of around 12,000 plants, that becomes mind boggling!

However, on that day in September, finding 4,000 *Baptisia* was not the highlight of the day. Finding a prairie plant that has never been recorded in Grant County was! The plant is (*Ratibida Columnifera*), or upright prairie cone flower. This plant is found mostly on the western prairies in Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Kansas and Oklahoma. According to Bill Tans, a skilled botanist with the DNR, the plant is found along some railroad tracks, probably carried east by trains, and also cultivated intentionally in scattered locations. To find it growing in native populations is very uncommon.

late fall.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____
Home Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Occupation _____
Work Address _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

- \$10 INDIVIDUAL \$15 FAMILY \$20 CONTRIBUTOR \$100 LIFE
 \$400 CORPORATE MEMBERS

*Memberships run from April 1 to April 1

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS AND RETURN WITH THIS FORM TO:

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS
Gail Adams
Box 63
Soldiers Grove, WI 54655

PLEASE CHECK ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS IN WHICH YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP S.W.W.P.E.:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seed Collection | <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in group visits to prairie sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing newsletter articles | <input type="checkbox"/> Help contact and solicit donations for S.W.W.P.E. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Other areas _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member of S.W.W.P.E. board | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with contacting members through mail or by phone | |

Please elaborate

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS (S.W.W.P.E.)
c/o GARY ELDRED
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Boscobel, WI 53805

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