

# THE PRAIRIE PROMOTER

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*"We create landscapes according to our morality, humanity and culture, and these landscapes then determine our fate."*

## Sixth annual banquet a smashing success

The Prairie Enthusiasts held its eighth annual banquet March 11 at The Don Q Inn in Dodgeville. The number of attendees and the amount of funds raised for prairie and savanna communities vastly exceeded both our expectations and previous records. Imagine, if you can, the atmosphere generated by 200 prairie enthusiasts gathered under one roof! Over 135 items were donated for raffle and auction, raising nearly \$5,000 for biodiversity. We extend our heartfelt thanks to each and every donor and to those who opened their checkbooks.

Thank you's must also go to all of those who helped sell desserts, to those who served as "runners" for the raffle and auction, and to those who sold raffle tickets. Special thanks are extended to: Rich Henderson, who put a lot of "behind the scenes" effort into organizing the raffle and auction; Edie Goth for her considerable work in organizing the banquet itself; and Kathy Kirk and Rickie Vickery, who together with Edie, seemed to everywhere at once! Without this trio, the evening certainly wouldn't have gone so smoothly.

The banquet had some notable highlights. First, three chapters recognized persons who have made significant contributions to their chapters and to prairie preservation. George and Kay Barry (Prairie Bluff Chapter), Dan Weidert (South Central Chapter) and Sue Linder (Southwest Chapter) received this well deserved recognition. We extend both our congratulations and thanks to these individuals for their commitment!

Alice Mirk was recognized by TPE as Prairie Enthusiast of the Year. Alice, a founding member of the former Southwest Wisconsin Prairie Enthusiasts, made the transition to a growing and evolving organization and rose to the challenges these changes brought about, especially the significantly increased demands on her time as our treasurer. Congratulations, Alice, and thanks for a job well done.

Finally, Ron Gatti, Wildlife Biologist of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource's Bureau of Research, gave an interesting presentation about prairie duck ecology. Once again we were reminded that the prairie community is incredibly diverse and certainly consists of more than forbs and grasses. Thank you, Ron, for enhancing our appreciation of the diversity we're trying to save!

## President's message

Like everyone, I'm anxious for the arrival of spring, but if the spring and early summer weather is as unpredictable and erratic as that of 1994, I have some trepidations. It's often easy to forget about what the weather was like last week, last month or last year, but because I'm involved in collecting the seed of trees, shrubs and prairie plants, I've become keenly aware of weather conditions.

As an employee of the state tree nursery at Boscobel, one of my duties is to watch for trees which flower and produce seed. For example, the nursery usually needs 30 to 50 bushels of good quality hard maple seed. As 1993 was a non-seed producing year, I anticipated a good seed crop in 1994. Sure enough, in the spring of 1994, hard maple bloomed to a degree I hadn't seen in a long time. The hills of Crawford County were yellow with hard maple blossoms. A bumper crop of seed appeared likely, but then, instead of moist and warm conditions, we had an early and extended period of dry weather. As a result, nearly all the maples aborted attempts to produce seed and the rare tree that carried on produced seed which was hollow!

Naturally, I now began to pay particular attention to the prairie species which

(See PRESIDENT, page 2, col. 1)

## TPE members receive awards

The Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education (WAE) acknowledged two TPE members with awards in 1994.

The Educator of the Year K-8 Award was presented to Jean Blum (Prairie Bluff Chapter) for ongoing efforts in infusing environmental education into classroom teaching. Jean chairs the Monroe School District's environmental education committee, which has led Earth Day celebrations, district-wide road cleanups, poster contests and has organized Sandhill Crane counts.

Within her school, Jean has spearheaded the "Adopt a Wolf" program, raising funds to adopt a wolf pack. She has encouraged the restoration of a school site to native prairie through student involvement in collecting and planting seeds. Jean has also overseen the creation of a bluebird house trail at the school site.

The Aldo Leopold Award was presented to Ruth Bauer (Southwest Chapter) for long-term exemplary service to WAE and the field of environmental education. Ruth has contributed her time and talent to the WAE board and many committees, has helped plan several WAE conferences and has shared her knowledge with others. In her day-to-day work as a classroom art teacher, she has encouraged environmental education and motivated students through creative means and has worked toward infusing environmental education in all subject areas.

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were blooming, being concerned about how weather conditions might affect their ability to produce seed. As summer passed, and the time to collect seed approached, the situation didn't look good, especially for the early blooming prairie species. Our attempts to collect seed from them met with almost total failure! Much of the seed was either withered and dried up or was sterile, lacking an embryo inside the seed coat. I suspect that the weather was primarily responsible, creating conditions which drastically reduced or prevented pollination and inhibited embryo growth, development and viability.

One of the mildest winters in years, if not in decades, is about to pass into history, and most of us will have forgotten it the first time we mow the yard. With only two significant snowfalls here in Southwest Wisconsin and very few days of sub-zero temperatures, I can only wonder what's in store for us this year. At present, local conditions don't look good. The relative lack of moisture has already shown itself in the reduced flow of some local spring fed creeks.

Will prairie remnants have another year of poor seed production? If so, what impact would this have on these isolated and vulnerable islands of biological diversity? Will less seed mean less food for rare microorganisms, insects, birds and mammals? Will native plants become weaker or stronger, will some increase in number and others decrease or disappear altogether? There are no ready answers to these and many more questions. Are these concerns overblown or, as some might think, just a lot of "hogwash?"

Obviously, I believe these concerns are legitimate, and I'm thankful that as fellow prairie enthusiasts, you probably share them. I hope that by raising these concerns, you will increase your awareness of what's happening on your favorite prairie remnant and in the world around you. Meanwhile, I hope we all have a good spring season.

—Gary Eldred

As we go to press, the Associated Press reports that an iceberg the size of Rhode Island has broken free from the Antarctic Peninsula and that a 300-foot thick ice shelf has collapsed. Farther south, a chunk of ice 48 miles by 28 miles

## Butterfly surveying opportunities

For the third year, butterfly researcher Ann Swengel is leading classroom and field sessions to train volunteers to survey for these rare butterfly species: Frosted Elfin; Karner Blue; Regal Fritillary; Ottoo, Cobweb, Dusted and Leonard's Skippers; and, Phlox Moth.

Everyone is welcome at the free training sessions. You must complete one classroom session (or have equivalent training) and one field session to officially participate in this survey. Classes will be offered on Saturday, April 1, 1995 at the Middleton Library, 7425 Hubbard Avenue. Classes are scheduled as follows:

- 1:00 Frosted Elfin
- 1:20 Karner Blue
- 1:50 Phlox Moth
- 2:00 Cobweb, Dusted and Leonard's Skippers
- 2:30 Butterfly identification and surveying
- 3:15 Regal Fritillary
- 3:30 Ottoo Skipper

Preregistration is required for classroom sessions, and should be mailed to:

Tania Schusler  
c/o The Nature Conservancy  
330 W. Mifflin, Suite 107  
Madison, WI 53703

Preregistration must be completed at least three days prior to the classroom sessions.

Directions: from the junction of State Hwys. 12/14 (the beltline) just west of downtown Middleton, go east on University Avenue to Parmenter Avenue. Turn south on Parmenter Avenue, proceed two blocks and turn left onto Hubbard Avenue. The library is one block east on the south side of the street.

The field schedule will take place, whether rain or shine, unless weather conditions are hazardous. Bring bug spray, sunhat, walking shoes, long pants and sunscreen.

- May 20, 12-3 p.m., Jackson Co.

has broken off the Larsen Ice Shelf. These are the dramatic results of regional warming that has been taking place since the 1940's. However, David Peel, a glacier expert with the British Antarctic Survey, has commented: "We cannot say that the disintegration of the ice shelf is linked to global warming and with the building up of greenhouse gases."

## Native Landscaping Conference

The University of Wisconsin Arboretum's 5th Annual Native Landscaping Conference will be held Saturday, April 1, 1995 at the University's Memorial Union. The following sessions will be offered: design and species selection for native landscaping; planting, care and maintenance of woodland gardens; post-planting prairie management and Wisconsin weed laws; the selection of native woody plants in landscaping; growing unusual or difficult species; and, a panel of local native landscape gardeners.

The conference, which is cosponsored by the Madison Chapter of the National Audubon Society, will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will end at 3:30 p.m. Registration costs \$15 (\$12 for Friends of Arboretum), \$20 on the day of the conference. For registration information, call 608-263-7888 or 608-262-9925.

Forest: Frosted Elfin, Cobweb and Dusted Skippers, Karner Blue larvae. Meet in truck stop at junction of I-94 and Hwy. 54 east (exit 116) at orange moose statue near gas station.

- June 3, 1-3 p.m., Sandhill Wildlife Area (Wood Co.): Karner Blue. Meet at parking lot, about one mile west of Hwy. 80 on Co. Hwy. X.

- July 8, 1-3 p.m., Muralt Bluff Prairie (Green County): Regal Fritillary, Ottoo Skipper. Meet at prairie, about two miles west of Hwy. 59 on Hwy. 39 (or about eight miles 0.5 miles south of I-90/94 on Hwy. 12, or six miles north of Baraboo on Hwy. 12), then 1.5 miles west on Fern Dell Road. Park admission fee.

Please call Tania Schusler, The Nature Conservancy office, at 608-251-8140 for more information.

## Talk on Great Plains

Deborah and Frank Popper of Buffalo Commons, will speak at UW-Madison Wednesday, April 5, at 4:00 p.m. at 180 Science Hall, UW-Madison. Their presentation is entitled: "The Future of the Great Plains."

### The great envelope mystery

In case anyone is puzzled as to why I would send out a single green envelope flap with a member's label and a postage stamp on it, here is the explanation!

About a year ago TPE switched to a green renewal envelope that not only would help me distinguish new from renewing members but would also provide our members with the convenience of an envelope in which to return their renewals.

They worked fine until about three months ago when the Madison Central Post Office upgraded their machinery and went to new speed sorting machines—which apparently rip the renewal forms into two pieces somewhat prematurely. This week I received a fat envelope from Madison Post Office with a lot of empty green envelopes and an apology, together with a hint that I might want to redesign our system!

I am now armed with a glue stick and hopefully, more "sticky" will prevent the machine from doing its worst, but we will be looking for an envelope which can withstand the onslaught of progress. In the meantime—like the post office, I apologize for any inconvenience!

—Alice Mirk

## Help!

The Prairie Enthusiasts need your help. Due to steady membership growth over the last several years, we need a new computer (a 486 IBM compatible, 8MB) and a laser printer. You support TPE because you believe that what we're doing is important. We need the right tools to do the best job we can, and a new computer and printer are the tools we need. If you can help, please let us know.

—Gary Eldred

## Muralt Prairie anniversary— remembering "the one that got away"

Twenty years ago, a small group of enthusiastic but inexperienced prairie novices gathered on a wind blown ridgetop in Green County. The purpose of this gathering was to burn a small portion of the isolated prairie/pasture located there.

This gathering came about as a result of a rather serendipitous meeting the previous summer between Gary Eldred and me. I was driving down Tin Can Rd. west of Albany on a Sunday afternoon when I saw Gary's familiar yellow '65 Chevy convertible coming from the opposite direction trailing a huge cloud of dust on the gravel road. I



hadn't seen much of Gary since our high school days in Albany 10 years earlier. We both slowed down before coming to a stop next to each other, each curious what the other was up to.

After exchanging pleasantries (in this case, probably a few smart alecky remarks!), Gary informed me that he was on his way to look at a pasture on the Muralt farm west of Albany. He said he had recently become interested in prairie plants. It seems that he had noticed a different aspect to the vegetation in the Muralt pasture while hunting there years earlier and now believed that the area was remnant prairie.

I told him that I was living in a farmhouse adjacent to the Muralt farm and had noticed prairie plants in the very same pasture. I had spent the previous summer identifying prairie flowers on the nearby Oliver Prairie with my newly acquired Peterson Guide to Wildflowers. I had read about the increasing interest in prairies and decided to investigate them on my own.

Soon after our chance meeting on that summer day, Gary and I began to make frequent field trips to the Muralt pasture to identify prairie plants. We were aware of the role that fire played in prairie ecology. We got permission to burn a portion of the pasture in the spring of 1975.

That spring, on Sunday, April 13, a somewhat motley crew assembled on the south edge of the Muralt pasture. Armed with a variety of rakes, shovels, swatters and two ancient DNR Indian tanks supplied by Reynold Zeller, we proceeded to rake a two-foot wide firebreak around a 50-foot square area. At precisely 2:00 p.m., I proceeded to light the designated burn area on the UPWIND side, the plan being that the fire would stop when it reached the downwind firebreak. A critical miscalculation! The wind was probably a steady 8-10 m.p.h. from the south so our little headfire reached and JUMPED our sad little downwind firebreak in about 30 seconds flat.

At this point I clearly recall famous local skeptic Jonathon Wilde calmly saying "there it goes." I seem to recall that Jonathon had recommended against starting the fire on the upwind side of the designated burn area but I thought, "Hey, we've got plenty of help!"

Within a few minutes the fire reached the crest of the hill and was burning nicely—if uncontrollably—along the ridgetop. In the meantime the 10 of us were trying to beat out the smaller flanking fires with rakes, shovels, jackets and whatever else was available. Someone brought up

(See MURALT, page 4, col. 2)

## Come and enjoy the prairie experience

The Wisconsin Society of Ornithology is conducting a trip June 4-10, 1995, to Minnesota and North Dakota in search of prairie landscapes and prairie birds. On last year's trip, 171 bird species were sighted, including: Baird's and LeConte's Sparrows; Sprague's Pipits; Chestnut-Collared and McCown's Longspurs; Lark Buntings; Western Grebes and Clark's Grebes; Ferruginous Hawks; American Avocets, and Long-Billed Curlews.

For more information, contact Wild Horizons, 5756 Brunswick Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55429, or Kim Risen, 612-535-2472.

the two ancient Indian tanks but the pump on one wouldn't prime and the other one had a serious leak in the bottom.

After what seemed to be a medium length eternity the headfire reached the edge of the bluff and went out on its own. By this time we had extinguished the flanking fires also.

About half an hour after the last flames were extinguished, several fire trucks from the Monticello Fire Department came lumbering up the hill. A concerned neighbor had called them but they had trouble finding the fire since it was already out.

I suppose this was a fitting end to this first attempt at fire management. The experience inspired me to purchase three new Indian tanks in addition to obtaining more information on prescribed burning. Fortunately there are now prescribed burn clinics readily available for those interested in organizing or participating in such burn activity. One need not learn fire management by the "by guess and by gosh" method.

This first Muralt Prairie prescribed burn fiasco did prove to have a silver lining. In addition to providing a rudimentary beginning for what was to become The Prairie Enthusiasts, the resulting dazzling bloom of Rough Blazing Star on the burned portion convinced the Green County Board Parks Committee to recommend that the county purchase the 62.4 acre prairie pasture for the purpose of preserving it as prairie. The purchase was completed in 1976.

The inadvertently LARGE size of the burn provided a much more spectacular vista of blooming prairie flowers and grasses than the originally planned 50-foot square area would have produced. Sometimes it pays to overachieve.

A 20th-anniversary commemoration of the previously described auspicious event in Wisconsin prairie preservation history will take place on Saturday, April 15. The original cast of characters will gather for a reunion/picnic at 5:00 p.m. at the Muralt Prairie parking lot on Hwy. 39. The event is open to all Prairie Enthusiasts. Please bring your own picnic items. In case of bad weather, the event will be moved to an indoor location.

If conditions permit, we will hike to the top of the bluff to watch the full moon rise above the prairie.

—John Ocshner

## Savanna indicator species list

The following list was developed to help conservationists identify savanna and open oak woodland remnants that have recently become close-canopied forests due to lack of fire or other disturbances that control woody growth. The list consists of understory plants that require at least some direct sunlight each day in order to persist in a native plant community over a long time period. Thus the presence of these species in a close-canopied forest indicates that the canopy has only recently closed in. Wooded sites containing sufficient populations of these species have the highest potential for being recovered as savannas (10-15% canopy) and/or open oak woodlands (50-80% canopy), given appropriate management (i.e. prescribed fire, mechanical canopy thinning, etc.)

This list is for use in southern Wisconsin and in neighboring regions of southeastern Minnesota, northeastern Iowa and northern Illinois. It is a working list that will be updated as researchers gain more insight into each species' usefulness as an indicator of a recoverable savanna or open woodland.

This list in bold type includes all of the "Category 1" species that are considered to be the best indicators of former savannas/woodlands. These species tend to be strongly limited to partial canopy conditions. In more densely wooded sites, these species are usually in a state of declining vigor due to the ever-increasing canopy closure above them. Their ability to persist in densely-wooded

sites depends on being near a canopy opening such as a woodlot edge, roadside, brushed utility corridor, etc. The authors also compiled lists of three other categories of species considered to be lesser indicators. A complete list of all category species may be obtained from the authors.

**Yellow Giant Hyssop, Purple Giant Hyssop, Tall Anemone, Purple Milkweed, Flax-Leaved Aster, Canadian Milkvetch, Yellow False Foxglove, Clammy False Foxglove, White Wild Indigo, Cream Wild Indigo, Kittentails, Ohio Horsemint, Prairie Brome, Pale Indian Plantain, Great Indian Plantain, Wild Hyacinth, Indian Paintbrush, New Jersey Tea, Prairie Redroot, Woodland Thistle, Low Bindweed, Large Yellow Lady Slipper, Showy Tick Trefoil, Shooting Star, Silky Wild Rye, Virginia Wild Rye, Robin's Plantain, Woodland Boneset, Cream Gentian, Prairie Alum-Root.**

This is a preliminary list. It is anticipated that in the future this list will be refined to segregate among species that are indicative of oak openings versus those indicative of oak barrens, or species indicative of savannas versus those indicative of woodlands. For now, it is hoped that this initial working list will be used by field investigators to identify previously unknown sites with savanna/woodland restoration potential.

Direct inquiries to:  
Brian Pruksa  
632 S. Orchard  
Madison, WI 53715



*Camassia scilloides* - Wild Hyacinth

## Some thoughts on seedlings

Some plant species which ripen their seed in June have a short period after the seed is mature but before they go dormant when they will germinate as soon as they are planted. We have had success starting Lupine, Downy Phlox, Prairie Smoke and Pasque Flower immediately after collection. The Wild Indigos can be started this way, but it's hard to judge when the seed is ready but not yet dormant. In those species which will grow, germination is rapid. We haven't had consistent early germination with Puccoons, Wood Betony, Violets or Blue Phlox.

A common belief is that plants normally found growing on dry sand love to dry out. Most do not—they adapt to potential drought conditions by early dormancy or by very deep roots. Very young seedlings haven't stored enough energy to go dormant, and they haven't grown deep roots so they are not able to withstand surface drought. Water is the single factor which makes or breaks most seedlings in cultivation. They can tolerate cramped quarters; they can (often) tolerate low fertility; they may even be able to tolerate crowding. But they cannot tolerate being overwatered, or drying out completely. On sunny days we try to check our seedlings three times daily, although they may need water only once or twice. Most seedlings—and I'm talking here of one or two-inch tall plants—will appreciate a light shade. Shade shows water use, and keeps the surface of the soil from baking.

The seedlings will probably grow fastest in the soil of your garden or prairie, although they may be difficult to establish if the soil gets crusty. Sprinkling some sand over the surface may keep the soil surface moist so that the seedlings can still push their way out. If growing the seedlings in flats, don't use soil. Soil in a pot never acts like it does in the ground. Perhaps because it is separated from the moles, voles, worms, ants and beetles that aerate it, it compacts in short order into something too dense for the roots to penetrate and breathe in. A fast draining soilless potting mix is what potted plants need. I don't know of any commercial sources. Two parts of standard potting mix (Pro-mix, Jiffy Mix or the like) with one part of perlite, vermiculite, or perlite and sand might be about right. This mixture drains fast so there is less danger of waterlogging the roots, but it still has plenty of peat moss to hold moisture. If you are growing the plants in pots or flats, try to outplant them by the first week in August. Overwintering in the ground is more reliable than trying to do it in pots. Every plant that you see on the prairie is the result of a seed germinating in a year when the growing conditions happened to be right; most years for most seeds they will not be perfect. Growing seedlings can be a way to give scarce seeds the more nearly perfect conditions for the period when they are the most vulnerable to the vagaries of sun, rain and drought. Good luck!

—Martha Barrett

## Camassia scilloides

*Camassia scilloides*, commonly known as Wild Hyacinth, has endangered status in Wisconsin, where it is found in only five counties along the state's border with Illinois. As this plant is found in approximately 80 to 90% of Illinois counties, extreme southern Wisconsin may form the northern extent of its range in this part of the Upper Midwest. The broader range of this species extends from mostly west of the Appalachian Mountains, west to Texas north to eastern Kansas to Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan and southern Ontario. All but one of the six North American species are found in the West. *C. scilloides* occurs on wet to mesic prairies and as this habitat is increasingly hard to find, roadsides and railroad right-of-ways are places where it is most likely to be found.

Like other members of the lily family, *C. scilloides* has a bulb. From the black or nearly black bulb a stem rises one to two feet. The stem is topped by approximately 10 or 12 pale blue, six petaled one-inch flowers which are attached by a short stalk. All leaves are basal, grasslike and 5 to 15 inches long. A cool season perennial, this plant flowers from April to June. It somewhat resembles the Grape Hyacinth (*Muscari botryoides*), an exotic plant which occasionally escapes into the wild.

The onion-like bulb was probably used as a food by Native Americans and early settlers in this area. The bulb is edible throughout the year and has a potato flower but is gummy and less mealy after cooking. It was probably harvested while the plant was in flower, since before and after blooming, it could be mistaken for Death Camass (*Zygadenus elegans*). In the case of mistaken identity, the results could be fatal.

A western species, *C. quamash*, ought to be familiar to those of us who have studied Euro-American history. It was a diet staple of Native Americans, trappers and settlers in the Northwest. Lewis and Clark used it extensively and, at times, relied on it entirely for food. It is said that the Nez Percés may have inadvertently precipitated the Chief Joseph War merely by hunting for this plant south of their reservation boundaries.

## A requiem for the prairie

### THIRD IN A THREE PART SERIES

We need a Berkeley on our agricultural campuses to force an intellectual change. I don't think agricultural schools will die, but they might just possibly fade away. And if we continue in the old tracks of *progress, production, and pounds per acre*, the decline of the agricultural schools will be well deserved. Farm boys can return home with a B.S. and little more knowledge about flowers or ecology than what 2-4D will do to the "weeds" on the back forty. Yes, good high yields per acre, assured by DDT, will outvote any prairie rose in need of living bumblebees for pollination.

Such is this cultural intensification of environmental ig-

(See REQUIEM, page 7, col. 1)



## REQUIEM (continued from page 6)

norance. It is very dangerous. For what American children and adults neglect to learn about American flowers or landscapes, or Russian or Chinese children about theirs, may bear strange and disastrous fruits in our country as well as in foreign lands. It is especially dangerous in the United States, since we, as the richest country in the world, have now the power of enforcing, on other peoples—economically or militarily—our economic ways, to change the face of the earth—which means destruction of biotic diversity. And in the tropics especially, which are ecologically so fragile, the results are catastrophic.

I could talk a great deal about the importance of diversity to natural and agricultural stability, but Charles Elton has explained it so well in his book, "The Ecology of Invasions by Plants and Animals," which should be required reading for all. The fate of this diversity represents the fate of life, of continuing evolution; and therefore very probably of man himself.

Must we destroy this diversity without heed to the other values, including often direct agricultural ones? By chainsaw or pesticides, by cow or plow, by sewer or chimney, we are exterminating thousands of species, whose roles in the web of life we cannot even guess at, whose uses for man we do not know, and will not know, for many years to come. *As a scientist, I cannot say when, or how, or how much; but again as a scientist, I can say: Without knowing, dare we take that risk?*

We have discussed elsewhere the scientific utility of the American Prairie and what it can teach us of evolution.

We have marveled at the beauty of its animals and plants, their bright colors and wondrous shapes, whose meaning often we cannot yet fathom. And we have mentioned the practical values in agriculture that this ancient and diverse biological community holds for the human species. It is clear that prairies have value to man far beyond their price tag in dollars.

There is, however, one additional and overriding urgency to prevent the permanent extinction and subjugation

of the living landscape. Taine, the French historian, has said that "the body of man in every country is deeply rooted in the soil of nature." "Give the philosopher a handful of soil, the mean annual temperature and rainfall, and his analysis would enable him to predict with absolute certainty the characteristic of the nation." We, in this overly rich country have forgotten this basic truth. We have worshipped the high standard of living, but have forgotten that ultimately it flows from the land. Until 30 years ago, as a people we identified closely with the pioneers, their hardships and devotion, their environment of hostile Indians, of cattle and cowboys, of stars over the boundless oceans of waving grass. *The prairie was their garden in more than one way.* The marvel of six feet of top soil, the magnificence of millions of buffalo, the sweat of the breaking of sod and the harvest of vast yellow fields of wheat are part and parcel of our cultural history. Without the prairie, we, the American people of today, cannot understand where we came from, what we are, and where we are going.

When you professors were young, there were still virgin prairies in abundance, even in Illinois and Wisconsin. When you were young, you were still part of the tradition that made your life. Today, in the whole prairie state of Illinois, there are hardly 40 acres of deep-soil prairie left! Here, the "landscape," which to all people of all lands, and not only to the poet, was "a mother that never dies," has become subjugated and killed.

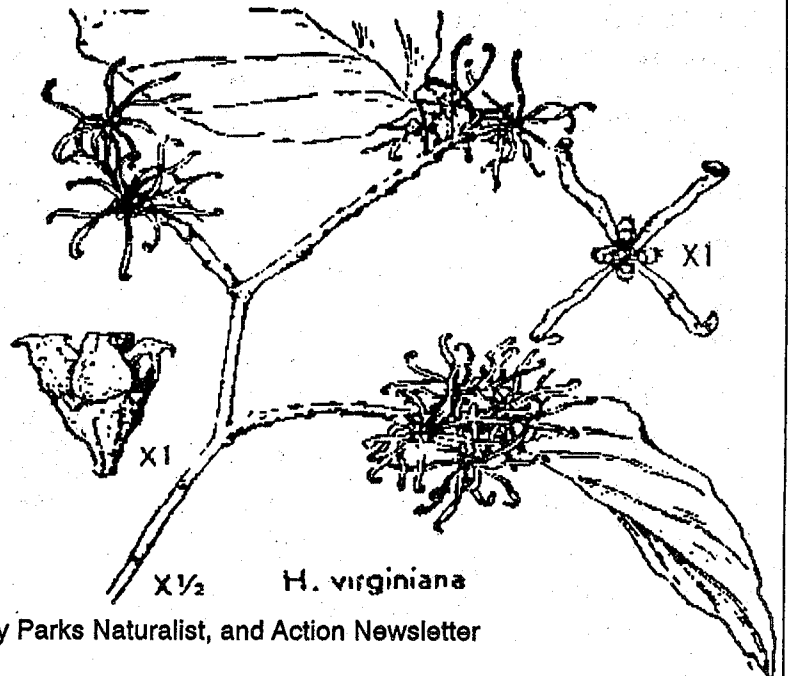
Yet the landscape as it was when the settlers came is still vitally important to our educational process, to our culture. By our avarice, we are losing touch with what made the Midwest what it is today, not only with our land resources which made us wealthy, but which also made our culture, our life. What is to satisfy the simple unspoken needs of humanity to keep in touch with its ancestry? We need landscape, fenceless wild lands, to know how they, our forefathers, lived and worked. We need wilderness to know where we, the human species, came from. We are rapidly becoming cultural and evolutionary orphans, a people without a cultural past, a species with meaning-  
(See REQUIEM, page 8, col. 1)

## Prairie Folklore

By Wayne Pauley

### WITCHHAZEL (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

This small tree is well remembered for the bottles of witch hazel antiseptic once found in every medicine cabinet. My favorite memory, though, concerns how witch hazel branches contributed to a light hearted practical joke. The seed pods along the stem, an attractive light tan with a surface texture similar to suede, are a neat addition to any dried flower arrangement. These bouquets were given to friends for display in their family room. The fun began when the pods dried and fired their seeds at the unsuspecting family, filling the parlor with unexpected volleys of light artillery.



—Wayne Pauley, Dane County Parks Naturalist, and Action Newsletter

## REQUIEM (continued from page 7)

less adaptations.

Let it be said of the prairie states, of its many universities, that they led the way to save for America and the world one of the richest biotic communities, and for humanity, one of its grandest sights. *Let it never be said that the prairie states let the prairie die.*

Let us plan for at least four big national parks. A shortgrass park in the Dakotas, a Sandhills Park in Nebraska, each over one million acres, a Llano Estacado National Park near Lubbock, Texas, and a tallgrass prairie park of over 300,000 acres in the Flint Hills near Manhattan, Kansas. I have a dream of a Prairie Research Institute (an institute of advanced ecological studies) to train students in the ecology and taxonomy of the prairies and Great Plains. I have a dream of a system of prairie hiking trails, of school prairie preserves, and of a rich and enriching, landscape.

Until we have preserved for our children the biotic wealth of the prairies, we cannot, in truth, sing a hallelujah to civilization, for the vast prairie is close to death. We have come here instead for a solemn requiem. The word requiem comes from the mass for the peaceful repose of departed souls in a new life, "*Requiem aeternam dona eis, domine,*" "give them eternal peace, oh Lord." Let us remember that in singing a requiem for the prairie, we hope yet to rejoice in its future!

We, who understand that the basis of human culture lies in the past, we who believe that man does not live by bread alone, must pledge our conservational ideals with concrete action. That magnificent Prairie National Parks shall thrive is our responsibility. That wild prairie, in a series of parks from Canada to Texas, shall live and bloom for 10,000 years to come, is our dedication to our culture and our legacy to our children, so that they, on a warm spring day, can feel peace in a sea of grass, watch a bee, visit a Shooting Star, hear a Sandpiper call in the sky, and marvel at the incomprehensible symphony of life.

—Address presented to the Agricultural Convocation, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, by Hugh Iltis, April 6, 1967

## A dream come true

My dream to preserve land unfolded softly and sweetly, although it seemed consciously like an unreachable goal. It was something that other people with more money or business savvy than I could do.

I had preserved land before, living in a deeply wooded two-acre lot for 13 years. Our neighbor, Maxine Franz, then introduced us to her love of native plants. When I met Deb Harewell, who was president of Wild Ones, my mind was opened to introducing prairie plants to our now "perfect" city yard in Whitefish Bay, a suburb of Milwaukee. At the same time, Kate Jolin was establishing a prairie on her hand and would blissfully walk us through her lovely project.

Retirement allowed us to winter in Florida and Texas, traveling to campgrounds. I was saddened and appalled to see how land development and agriculture would destroy the earth's beauty. I realized in contrast how my heart would sing whenever I was in touch with wilderness. In congested areas it was only through the foresight of individuals or groups that land was preserved. I resolved to be a preservationist.

Through Wild Ones we rescued plants that would be

bulldozed by developers. We transplanted them to our backyard, shared them with friends and gave them to a grade school that developed a native garden to introduce children to Wisconsin plants. Our own native area was alive with butterflies, bees and birds, bringing delight to our lives.

At the Wisconsin State Fair, we joined other Wild Ones and DNR staff to present a natural garden exhibit and to hand out brochures about it. We met others in our county who are buying land to preserve it. What a novel idea! Recently our neighbors Rick and Mickey Kazmierski acquired 11 beautiful wooded acres of high land overlooking the Pecatonica River. If they could do it, so could I! Dick Franz then told me about Don and Helen Hagar, who purchased 80 acres near Richland Center and are restoring prairie. I telephoned Don to learn about The Prairie Enthusiasts. He sent me his latest issue of The Prairie Promoter. I immediately applied for membership with a note stating my desire to acquire land for land for preservation.

I took as many workshops on prairie plants and related subjects as I could at nearby nature centers. I said a prayer to the Great Spirit and now Saint Maxine Franz, my naturalist "in the sky." My big challenge was to share my dream with my husband, Lloyd, to convince him of my intention to make this dream a reality. This definitely involved his participation. When I shared my passion for wilderness in terms of his passion for his genealogy and Luxembourg roots, he understood. He also heard my fierce determination when I shared my intention to actively search for land next summer when our schedule would allow this.

I did not need to wait. Gary Eldred phoned me on November 13 to tell me that Greg Nessler had inventoried a 17-acre bluff that included a prairie remnant with at least 40 species of wildflowers. I phoned Greg, who had made an offer to purchase to save the land. There was another bidder who wanted to buy it, put a road through the prairie and build a house that would overlook a valley where the west branch of the Kickapoo River flowed. I told Greg I would think, talk with Lloyd and call him back.

The land was located on Highway S between Avalanche and Bloomingdale, east of Westby, Wisconsin. My mind flashed back to a road trip along the river where an otter crossed our path. How thrilling it had been to see that creature on one of our many biannual trips to stay at the Serendipity Farm Bed and Breakfast, 10 miles south on the same highway. Could it be that same place? Later a wise friend said, "There is no coincidence; there is only what we believe to be coincidence."

On November 14, I phoned Greg to tell him this all seemed so complicated and it felt too rushed. Greg challenged my commitment, a challenge for which I now am grateful. Lloyd appeased me and said that if Greg bought it we could buy it from him later. I wondered about Greg being outbid. I prayed to know what to do.

On November 15, I made some phone calls to a realtor friend to gather information and then called the realtor who listed the land. I phoned Laura Nessler, who was very encouraging about the beauty of the land. I decided to look at the property. Lloyd didn't want to miss out on any fun. Minimally it would be a beautiful 3½ hour ride on a gloriously sunny autumn day. We pulled out of our driveway at 12:45. Except for refueling, we drove nonstop. We laughed about our rare impulsiveness regarding such a

(See DREAM, page 9, col. 1)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(After each work party announcement is a reference word. Please check individual stories for more information about other events.)

### NORTHWEST ILLINOIS CHAPTER

- Tuesday, Mar. 28** Audubon dinner, Freeport (see story, page 10)  
**Saturday, April 22** Burn School, Nancy Winter's farm, 8:30 a.m. 815-947-2287

### SOUTHWEST CHAPTER

- Sunday, Mar. 26** SW Chapter meeting, Linder residence, 1 p.m., 375-2668  
**Sunday, April 23** SW Chapter regular meeting and annual meeting Boscobel City clubrooms (former city hall) 1:00 p.m., potluck following meetings, 375-5271  
**Sunday, May 21** SW Chapter meeting, Eldred residence, 1 p.m., 375-5271  
**Sunday, June 18** SW Chapter meeting, Linder residence, 1 p.m. newsletter, potluck following, 357-2668

### SOUTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

- Tuesday, Apr. 4** Slide presentation about SCC/DNR restoration at Gov. Nelson State Park (see story, page 11), 7 p.m.  
**Saturday, Apr. 29** Prairie and wetland restoration field day. By reservation only (see story, page 11)  
**Saturday, May 6** SC Chapter work party, aspen girdling, Mt. Pleasant Savanna, 12:30-4 p.m. (MT. PLEASANT)  
**Tuesday, May 9** Drumlin prairie tour (see story, page. 11), 5:30 p.m.  
**Saturday, May 20** Prairie flower transplant at Lake Farm County Park, Madison (see story, page 11)  
**Monday, May 22** Sugar River Oak savanna tour, 5:30 p.m. (see story page 11)  
**Monday, May 29** Baraboo Hills savanna tour and potluck (see page 11), 4:30 p.m.  
**Tuesday, May 30** SC Chapter work party, pulling parsnip and sweet clover, Koltés, Prairie, 5:30 p.m. (KOLTES)  
**Thursday, June 8** SC Chapter work party, aspen girdling, Koch Prairie, 5:30 p.m. (KOCH)  
**Tuesday, June 13** SC Chapter work party, pulling parsnip and sweet clover, Koltés Prairie, 5:30 p.m. (KOLTES)  
**Sunday, June 25** SC Chapter work party, pulling parsnip and clover, Koltés Prairie, 10 a.m. (KOLTES)

**Saturday, Apr. 8**

**Saturday, Apr. 8**

**Tuesday, Apr. 18**

**Saturday, May 6**

**Tuesday, May 16**

**Saturday, June 17**

**Tuesday, June 20**

**Saturday, June 21**

### PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

PB Chapter Benefit Breakfast, Golden Corral, Monroe, 8 to 11 a.m. Proceeds go toward Briggs purchase

Pasque Flower hike at Skinner Diggings (see SKINNER), 1:00 p.m.

PB Chapter meeting at Turner Hall, Monroe, 7:30 p.m.

PB Chapter woodland wildflower hike at Abrahams Woods, 1 p.m., 608-325-6147

PB Chapter meeting, Marshall Bluff Bowhunter's Club. BYO picnic/Kittentail hike at 6 p.m., followed by meeting at 7 p.m. 608-938-4848

PB Chapter tour of York Twp. prairies (Green Co.). Meet at New Glarus bike trail HQ, 1 p.m., 608-523-1565

PB Chapter meeting at Green County Bank, Brodhead, 7:30 p.m.

PB Chapter work day at Honey Creek Park, Monroe, 9 p.m. Bring gloves—pull parsnip!

### KOLTES

Meet on Bong Road, ½ mile east of Hwy. 113 between Madison and Waunakee. Leader: Paul West, 233-5807.

### MT. PLEASANT

From Belleville, go west on STH 69/92 for 3 miles. Continue northwest on STH 92 for 2.5 miles to the junction with CTH A. Go west (left) on CTH A 1 mile to the junction with CTH U. Go south on CTH U for ¼ mile to Bowers Road. The site is on the east side of Bowers Road ¼ mile beyond the junction with CTH U. Leader: Jerry Dalen, 527-5807.

### KOCH

Meet on Hwy. K, ¼ mile west of the intersection of K and Hwy. 12 outside of Ashton Corners. Leader: Rich Henderson, 845-7065.

### SKINNER

See one of Green County's two 19th century lead mining sites which also happens to be one of the county's largest prairie remnants. Led by local historian Tom Fey of Monroe. Meet at the site located one mile west of Hwy. 69 on Center Rd. Center Rd. intersects Hwy. 69 5 miles south of Monticello and 3½ miles north of Monroe. A sign will be posted.

### DREAM (continued from page 8)

major endeavor.

At 4:10 we hiked up the bluff through dried autumn flowers, breathless from the effort and the intoxicating view of the valley below, and the wooded ridge directly across it. As we walked down to meet the realtor we heard a horse trot on the county road. An Amish couple waved from their carriage as they drove by.

We discovered there was no place to park our small camper van on the bluff. It was inaccessible to camping, which would be how we'd enjoy the land. It would be against our principles to level earth for this. This was a dilemma.

The owner and his wife joined us in the realtor's car. We explained how the prairie was so rare it should not be

(See DREAM, page 10, col. 1)

## DREAM (continued from page 9)

built on. The owner agreed, but said he had other interested parties and would sell to whoever would give him a good offer on the bluff plus 51 acres of valley below it. I gulped and said that we had driven out to see the 17 acres. This was more than I had bargained for.

It was now dark. We would need to come back in the morning to walk the valley. Before we got into our car we breathed in the cool night air. A full moon had risen over the ridge. In the silence we heard a coyote howling in the distance. This is better than a dream, I thought.

We woke up to another beautiful morning to explore the 51-acre parcel. We borrowed waterproof boots from the owners so we might ford the west branch of the Kickapoo River. We walked along about 1/2 mile of river.

Lloyd's boots were high enough to cross it and explore woods on the long ridge across from the prairie bluff. He also discovered a small creek and a little pond on a shared boundary. A hawk floated along the prairie bluff margin.

We could camp on this land . . . and fly fish . . . and have a firepit . . . and plant a prairie and a garden . . . and share it with friends who would appreciate it . . . and somehow save it for future generations.

We drove to the realtor's office. A half-hour later the owners arrived. I asked if they would feel comfortable negotiating on price, so we could all part knowing what would otherwise take time and more anxiety. We verbally reached a consensus. The owner's wife jumped up and shouted with glee. We think she wanted us to be the happy next door campers. We all signed papers and shook hands.

On our way out of the area we stopped to meet Greg and Laura Nessler, a possible nucleus of a new P.E. chapter in Vernon County. We thanked them for helping us in this process. They shared supper and encouraged us to think about how we will protect the land after we die. They told us of their intentions to help us manage the prairie. We feel we have friends here.

This whole process, except for my initial hesitation, flowed so easily. It all seemed to be a part of "Something Bigger" than what we are. There are no coincidences. It's even better than anything I could dream of.

—Mary Lee Croatt

### **NORTHWEST ILLINOIS CHAPTER**

*Serving JoDaviess, Carroll & Stephenson counties*

Please send newsletter articles to:

Rickie Vickery

9129 S. Hanover Hill Road

Hanover, IL 61041-9615

## **Audubon dinner**

Bill Volkert, Wildlife and Ice Age Naturalist with the Wisconsin DNR, will be the speaker at the annual Northwest Illinois Audubon Society's banquet on Tuesday, March 28. A delicious home cooked turkey dinner at 6 p.m. will be followed by a program at 7 p.m. on the breeding ecology of Canada geese with an overview of the fascinating sea animals and the native Inuit who inhabit the far reaches of the Arctic. Tickets are \$8.00 for the dinner and program and \$3.00 for the program only. The banquet will be held at Faith United Methodist Church in Freeport. Call Laura Dufford at 815-947-2720 for reservations and additional information.

## **Third annual burn school**

This spring, the burn team will hold its third annual burn school at Nancy Winter's farm near Stockton. The purpose of the school will be to train interested members in the wily craft of burning grass. This skill is in demand because many of our local ecosystems require prescribed burns in order to remain healthy—including all of our prairies, savannas and oak woodlands. Prescribed burns are also useful in managing prairie restorations, roadside plots and CRP lands.

Last year the burn school was for those who volunteered to serve on the burn team. This year it will also be open to persons simply interested in learning about burns. During the day-long session (bring lunch and chair), we will be learning how to plan and conduct a controlled burn (bring your burn manual) and getting experience using the fire equipment (no plastic clothing please). If the weather is right, we will conduct some practice burns. The action will begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. at Nancy Winter's farm.

If you would like to be a member of the 1995 burn team, please call me by April 1. I expect to field four squads (20 people) again this year. We will need a new equipment manager and squad leader, as Jim Quick has decided not to participate this year. Both he and Jim Burns, whom we lost to a heart attack last fall, will be difficult to replace.

Likewise, if you are interested in having a burn on your property, please call me by April 1. The 1995 burn schedule will be finalized during the burn school. I hope we will be able to accommodate everyone this year, but it may not work out that way. Your chances of getting on the burn schedule will be greater if you attend the burn school and volunteer to help. As always, landowners are responsible for maintaining their own permanent fire breaks.

—Jim Rachuy

## **Adopt-An-Island**

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Savanna District is seeking volunteers to participate in the Refuge's Adopt-An-Island program. The Savanna District is located in pools 12, 13 and 14 of the Mississippi River and covers 90 river miles. There are several hundred islands available for adoption. This is an ideal volunteer opportunity for an individual, family or group and will aid the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in protecting public lands. The volunteer personally selects an island for adoption and agrees to clean up litter and to report to the refuge any unauthorized tree cutting, boundary sign vandalism, unauthorized structures or other violations. The volunteer acts as an extra set of eyes and ears for the refuge. The adoption is for the months of June, July and August. The volunteers are asked to visit their adopted island a minimum of once a month and are responsible for providing their own boat transportation to and from the island. The refuge will provide trash bags and litter can be disposed of in the refuge dumpster. Interested persons or groups should contact Linda Miller to sign up or to receive additional information.

—Rickie Vickery

## **PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER**

*Serving Rock, Green and Lafayette counties*  
Please send newsletter articles to:

**Robert Baller**  
Box 533  
Beloit, WI 53511-3753

## **SOUTH CENTRAL CHAPTER**

*Serving Sauk, Columbia and Dane counties*  
Please send newsletter articles to:

**Jim Welsh**  
1234 E. Dayton, #3  
Madison, WI 53703  
255-6314

## **Slide presentation about SCC restoration project**

It seems that in every issue of this newsletter, a certain person is pleading for your help with the South Central Chapter/DNR restoration efforts at Gov. Nelson State Park. Well, that's not going to happen in this issue! In this issue, I am inviting you to a slide presentation about that prairie and oak savanna restoration project. It is then that I will be pleading for your help!

The presentation will be given in the state park shop building on Tuesday, April 4 starting at 7:00 p.m. Turn into the park entrance (about 3 miles east of Middleton on CTH M), then turn immediately left onto a gravel road that leads to the shop building.

Here is your chance to find out about the plant communities being restored, the size and scope of the project, and the restoration techniques being used. An informational handout with maps and a description of the project will also be given out. Additional questions about the project, such as, "How can I help?" will be answered during the evening.

Please come even if you can't help with the project. This is an opportunity to find out about an ongoing, large-scale restoration project supported by The Prairie Enthusiasts. Anyone with questions or needing directions can call me at 608-233-5658.

—Dan Weidert

## **Prairie and wetland restoration field day**

The Prairie Enthusiasts are cosponsoring a field day at Goose Pond Sanctuary in Columbia County on Saturday, April 29. The focus will be how landowners of five or more acres can restore prairie and wetlands on their property. Cosponsors include the Dept. of Natural Resources, Madison Audubon Society, Pheasants Forever, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association. Preregistration is required since space will be limited. Contact Mark and Sue Martin, W7468 Prairie Lane, Arlington, WI 53911 for registration information.

## **Baraboo Hills savanna tour**

Scott Weber and Martha Barrett will lead a tour of their savanna restoration on Monday, May 29 (Memorial Day) at 4:00 p.m. Bring a dish to pass for a potluck dinner. This is a mesic savanna in the Baraboo Hills, with many interesting species, including the Showy Orchis, Purple Milkweed and many old (and new) oaks. Their farm is located at S5920 Lehman Rd. just southwest of Baraboo. Lehman Rd. intersects Hwy. 12 just south of Ski Hi Road, which has a big sign advertising the Ski Hi apple orchard. Their farm is located at the second 90-degree turn on Lehman Rd. from Hwy. 12. Call Scott or Martha at 608-356-0179 for directions or more information.

## **Drumlin Prairie tour**

Steve Richter will lead a tour of Phyllis Smith's Drumlin Prairie on Tuesday, May 9. This prairie is one of the most diverse prairies in eastern Dane County. Meet at 5:30 p.m. at the DNR building at 1350 Femrite Drive, one block north of Menards. You can also meet at the junction of Hwy. 73 and PQ at 5:45. Call Steve at 233-5209 for more information.

## **Sugar River oak savanna tour**

On Monday, May 22, at 5:30 p.m., Rich Henderson will lead a tour of the nine-acre Sugar River oak savanna that is being restored with frequent burning. Meet on Hwy. PD at the Oak Savanna sign just west of Timber Lane. The site is about 3 miles west of PD and M. Call Rich at 845-7065 for more information.

## **Ready to burn?**

If you are interested in helping to plan and/or burn with the South Central Chapter this spring, please contact Paul West at 233-5807.

## **Lake Farm County Park May Flower Day**

Dane County Parks is sponsoring a prairie flower transplant at Lake Farm County Park in Madison on Saturday, May 20, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. This activity is great for kids' groups. Contact Louise Goldstein at 246-5366 to sign up.

## **SOUTHWEST CHAPTER**

*Serving Grant, Crawford, Richland & Iowa counties*  
Please send newsletter articles to:

**Walter Mirk**  
10052 County Highway C  
Woodman, WI 53827  
988-4760

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1. Articles of general interest must be relevant to prairie/savanna ecosystems. Material received will be prioritized as follows: original material; essays, art, (poetry, photography, drawings); reprinted material.
2. Securing reprint rights is the responsibility of the individual who submits the material.
3. The calendar of events will be limited to items relevant to prairie/savanna ecosystems.
4. Deadlines for submission of material are as follows:  
March 1 - Spring Issue    June 1 - Summer Issue    September 1 - Fall Issue    December 1 - Winter Issue
5. Publication dates: April 1 - Spring Issue    July 1 - Summer Issue    October 1 - Fall Issue    January 1 - Winter Issue

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- Writing newsletter articles  
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 Prairie information - specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Develop educational material  
 Plan social activities (banquet, picnic, etc.)  
 Fund raiser  
 Restoration projects  
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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

For further information, contact:

Gary Eldred

4192 Sleepy Hollow Tr.

Boscobel, WI 53805



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Other prairie enthusiasts in your area \_\_\_\_\_