

# THE PRAIRIE PROMOTER

VOL. 9, NO. 2

SUMMER 1996

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

## Blue Mounds Community Conservation Project receives its first grant

The Blue Mounds Community Conservation Project was recently informed that it has been awarded a \$17,250 grant from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB). This grant, which becomes available in July, will allow me (Brian Pruksa) to be hired for one year as the "extension ecologist" for the Greater Blue Mounds Region.

The WEEB grant requires a matching fund of at least 25%. We have approached two other foundations for money to serve as our matching grant. If these foundations are unable to fund our project, we will be out working hard again to raise money.

A steering committee was formed last March for the project. Committee members are Merel Black of Perry Township, Rob Horwich of Gays Mills, David Long of York Township, Ursula Petersen of Madison, Brian Pruksa of Madison, Carroll Schaal of Mt. Horeb and Barbara Westfall of Mt. Horeb.

Our committee has set three goals for this spring and summer: 1) write a regular (weekly or bi-weekly) article for local newspapers (the Mt. Horeb Mail has already agreed to work with us on this); 2) prepare a display about the project and show it at local events this summer; 3) organize two or three "demonstration tours" where participants visit landowner's properties to see how they are managing their land for native plants and animals and why they are doing so.

If you want to contribute to our matching fund needs, you can make out a check to our parent organization, Community Conservation Consultants and send it to their address at RD1, Box 96, Gays Mills, WI 54631. Make sure to note that your donation is for the Blue Mounds Project.

Another way you can help us is to spread the word about what we're doing. There's no better advertisement than the endorsement of a friend.

For more information on the Blue Mounds Project, you can phone me, Brian Pruksa, at 608-255-6763, write me at 1805 Carver St., Madison, WI 53713-1109, or e-mail me at prukabw@wheel.datcp.state.wi.us.

## NIPES to host summer picnic and annual meeting

This year's annual Prairie Enthusiast summer meeting will be hosted by the Northwest Illinois (NIPES) Chapter on Saturday, July 13 and will be held at Apple River Canyon State Park. This area of limestone bluffs was cut deep by the Apple River and harbors some of the state's rarest flora such as the American yew (*Taxus canadensis*) and the birds-eye primrose (*Primula mistassinica*). It features 297 acres of fairly undeveloped parkland (no baseball diamonds), five hiking trails, primitive campsites (no showers) and trailer sites. The resort town of Galena is just 20 miles west and offers a host of hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts. (Galena is busy in the summer and reservations must be made early.) To reserve a campsite in the park call (815) 745-3302 or write to: Apple River Canyon State Park, 8763 E. Canyon Rd., Apple River, IL 61001. For reservations in Galena call the Galena-JoDaviess County Convention & Visitor's Bureau at (815) 777-3557.

To reach Apple River Canyon State Park from points north and east in Wisconsin: Take Hwy. 78 south to Warren, Illinois. Turn west onto East Stagecoach Trail to North Canyon Park Road. Turn south and follow road to the park.

To reach Apple River Canyon State Park from points west in Wisconsin: Take Hwy. 11 east through Shullsburg to County Hwy. P, turn south and follow P to County Hwy. W. Turn east on W to North Canyon Park Road. Turn south on North Canyon Park Road and follow road to the park.

We will meet at the concession stand which is on Canyon Park Road by the Apple River.

NIPES will meet at 9:45 AM for a brief business meeting and election of officers. All other prairie enthusiasts are encouraged to show up at 11 a.m. The board of directors will meet briefly at that time, after which the games begin. NIPES will be providing low fat, range fed, organically raised burgers and buns with condiments. P.E. members are asked to bring their beverage of choice, tableware and a dish to pass. We look forward to seeing you in the unglaciated hill country.

## Prairie Enthusiasts donate to WHA-TV Auction fund raiser

On behalf of The Prairie Enthusiasts, Rich Henderson donated consultation services on the establishment and maintenance of prairie landscaping to WHA-TV's fund raiser auction during the gardening portion of the event on May 28 from 9-10 p.m.

Some day, perhaps in the very process of our benefactions, perhaps in the fullness of geologic time, the last crane will trumpet his farewell and spiral skyward from the great marsh. High out of the clouds will fall the sound of hunting horns, the baying of the phantom pack, the tinkle of little bells, and then a silence never to be broken, unless perchance in some far pasture of the Milky Way.

—Aldo Leopold

## President's message

Prairie enthusiasts have been active all over southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois this spring and many prairie remnants have had a lot of desperately needed management. Many remnants were taking their last gasp when enthusiastic volunteers arrived with lots of effort, determination and tender loving care. You are truly unsung heroes and my hat is off to you! While we are gaining some ground in one direction, I'm saddened to say we've lost some in another. Three years of negotiations with a Green County landowner (involving hundreds of miles of travel, too many phone calls to keep track of and many hours of collateral contracts and coordination) to purchase 10 acres of prairie and an adjacent 60 acres of pristine wetlands adjacent to the prairie have resulted in failure! Our worst fears are coming true: the lands around these rare areas are being sold for development!

To make matters even worse, another prairie remnant near Monroe, Wisconsin has been sold for residential development. Skinner Diggings is not only valuable as a prairie remnant, but is also one of the first lead mining sites in southern Wisconsin. Lead was being dug there in the mid 1830's, well before statehood. Part of our cultural history as well as our natural history is being lost as these sites are "developed." Of the prairie remnants we have located and inventoried over the last 10 years, it appears we've lost far more than we've been able to save.

Thankfully there is a bit of good news to help offset some of the foregoing bad news. The new Western Central Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts has been formed, officers and directors have been installed, with Harvey Halvorsen as their new president. This assures that preservation and education in the Chippewa River Valley and surrounding area will now move ahead. I was asked to attend their first organizational meeting in April and was stunned to find well over 54 attendees. It was a very stimulating meeting that produced an abundance of enthusiasm. Many enthusiasts have been working with prairies in that area for years and there is a wealth of knowledge and experience to be found there. I know our new chapter won't be able to save all the remnants to be found in north-west Wisconsin, but I'm sure prairie conservation in that area now has a brighter future. Best wishes to all our new prairie enthusiasts!!

—Gary Eldred

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## Landowner Wetland and Grassland Restoration Field Day

On September 14, 1996 a field day is being held at Goose Pond Sanctuary located near Arlington in Columbia County and is for rural landowners interested in restoring wetlands and grasslands for wildlife on their property. Grassland restoration will focus on planting prairie grasses and wildflowers.

Topics include: field demonstrations, site selection, seed selection and collecting, planting and management.

This event is sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources, Madison Audubon Society, Pheasants Forever, The Prairie Enthusiasts, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UW-Extension and the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association.

Contact Mark or Sue Martin, Goose Pond Sanctuary, W7468 Prairie Lane, Arlington, WI 53911 or phone 608-635-4160 for a registration form.

## PE joins Teaming with Wildlife

How would Teaming with Wildlife affect The Prairie Enthusiasts' mission? Currently there are no state funding sources for (1) landscape scale prairie/grassland restorations as outlined in the WI DNR Biodiversity Report; (2) management of prairie and savanna remnants on state lands (other than designated Natural Areas) such as can be found on many state park, wildlife and fishery lands, nor (3) for the purchase of the hundreds of worthwhile prairie and savanna remnants that fall short of the high standards required for State Natural Areas. Current state DNR and conservation funds are rarely, if ever, spent on such projects. They are of very low priority when game species are not directly benefited.

Teaming With Wildlife has great potential to fill this funding void, but it needs political support to make it through the legislature. Affected recreation equipment companies need to come out in favor of it.

—Rich Henderson

## Teaming with Wildlife

Prairie enthusiasts and other wildlife conservationists now have an opportunity to help bring almost \$350 million annually to programs for protection of non-game wildlife in the U.S. This program, Teaming with Wildlife, is a grassroots movement, led by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, to support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Funding Initiative, now being considered by the U. S. Congress.

IAFWA and a coalition of more than 700 members ask that the Fish and Wildlife Funding Initiative be supported by means of a surcharge of up to five percent on the wholesale cost of outdoor recreational equipment and supplies, including hiking and camping gear, cameras and binoculars and birding supplies.

Although new taxes are an unpopular idea in the cur-

rent Congress, there is a powerful precedent for this kind of funding dating back to the 1930's, when sporting arms manufacturers and sportsmen backed a similar tax movement leading to the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act. During the 1950's the surcharge was extended to include fishing equipment, boats and motors. Still in effect, these taxes bring 10 percent of all expenditures on hunting and fishing equipment into conservation programs for game species and their habitats. Many of the hunting and fishing habitats, administered today by state Departments of Natural Resources, owe their existence to funds from this tax.

In Illinois alone, there are more than 1800 species of non-game wildlife today that have no direct funding support. If enacted, the Fish and Wildlife Diversity Fund proposed by Teaming with Wildlife would bring more than \$1-3 million annually to the conservation of non-game species in that state. Conservation programs might include habitat protection and management, monitoring of wildlife populations, and reintroduction of lost species, well as many kinds of recreational and educational programs,

Support for Teaming with Wildlife currently includes the expected organizations such as The National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, World Wildlife Fund and the Sierra Club, but it also includes the governors of Arkansas and Georgia, as well as 82 businesses related to recreational outdoor equipment, such as the very large Bass Pro Shops chain.

At this time our support is needed. As consumers of camping, birding and other recreational equipment of this kind, we can be influential in demonstrating to manufacturers our willingness to pay such additional costs.

Please write to the company heads listed below, telling them that: 1) you support for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Funding Initiative, also known as Teaming with Wildlife; 2) your willingness to pay small additional costs to support the program; 3) sustaining the natural environment promotes the use of their products, and 4) you hope to see their names on the list of coalition members. If you are able to include your letter with a mail order for their products, so much the better!

—Carol Ravner

### TOP 10 COMPANIES TO WRITE TO:

The goal is to let these companies know that you, as a consumer of their product(s), support paying a small user fee added to their product that will be dedicated to wildlife conservation, outdoor recreation, and conservation education. Please address your letters to the CEO of the company.

**Eastman Kodak Co.**  
343 State Street  
Rochester, NY 14650  
Attn: Mr. George M.C. Fisher,  
Chairman, CEO and President

**Nikon**  
1300 Walt Witman Rd.  
Melville, NY 11747  
Attn: Mr. H. Nakayama, CEO

**Pentax**  
35 Iverness Dr., East  
Englewood, CO 80112  
Attn: Mr. Masa Tanaka, CEO

**The Nature Company**  
750 Hearst Ave.  
Berkeley, CA 94710  
(510) 644-1337  
Attn: Mr. Ed Strobin, CEO

**Wild Birds Unlimited**  
3003 E. 96th St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46420  
Attn: Mr. Jim Carpenter, CEO

**L.L. Bean, Inc.**  
1 Casco Street  
Freeport, ME 04033  
Attn: Mr. Leon A. Gorman, President

**Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)**  
6750 South 228th Street  
Kent, WA 98031  
Attn: Mr. Wally Smith, President

**Coleman Outdoor Products Inc.**  
250 N. St. Francis Ave.  
Wichita, KS 67202  
Attn: Mr. Michael Hammes, CEO

**Johnson Camping** (owns Eureka,  
Camp Trails, Old Town Canoes,  
Carlisle Paddles, Silva Compasses,  
etc.)

1326 Willow Road  
Sturtevant, WI 53177  
Attn: Mr. John Crabb, CEO

**Bausch & Lomb Sports Optics**  
(includes Bushnell and Jason Empire  
Products)  
9200 Cody  
Overland Park, KS 66214  
Attn: Mr. Joseph B. Messner,  
President

## **The Prairie Enthusiasts visit Illinois prairies**

On Saturday August 10 and Sunday August 11 the Prairie Enthusiasts will visit Goose Lake Prairie and Gensburg-Markham Prairie in Northeast Illinois. Both areas are Illinois Nature Preserves. Goose Lake is 1,500 acres and features dry, mesic, and wet prairies, marshes, and pothole ponds. It is the largest remnant of prairie in Illinois and contains a variety of prairie wildlife.

Gensburg-Markham Prairie includes dry-mesic and mesic sand prairie, mesic and wet-mesic prairie, and sedge meadow. The prairie is one of the few remaining on lake plain deposits and has a diverse composition reflecting variations in soil and moisture. There are a number of rare and unusual species.

Ron Panzer, manager of Gensburg-Markham, will be our guide. Ron is also conducting research on the effects of management on prairie insects. We will be leaving from Madison early on Saturday and returning late Sunday. We will stay in a motel on Saturday and travel by van. Contact Mark or Sue Martin for more information at W7468 Prairie Lane, Arlington, WI 53911 or call 608-635-4160. Sign up early to reserve a space.

## **Prairie Jubilee August 3**

Madison Audubon Society, The Prairie Enthusiasts and UW Environmental Farms are sponsoring Prairie Jubilee at Madison Audubon's Goose Pond Sanctuary and at the UW Arlington Experimental Farms.

There will be a wide variety of tours focusing on different aspects of the prairie and on sustainable agriculture practices. There will also be activities for kids and nurseries will be selling potted prairie plants.

For an informational brochure, write the Madison Audubon Society at 222 South Hamilton Suite 1, Madison 53703 or call 608-255-BIRD.

## **Subject: How I became a prairie buff**

Recently I was asked if I would like to share the story of how I became a prairie buff for the benefit of fellow prairie enthusiasts, and especially those who are starting out as I did.

It goes like this:

In April of 1973 my former wife and I purchased an irregularly shaped 81.8 acre parcel of vacant land located approximately 4 miles east of Sextonville on Co. Hwy. B in Richland County, Wisconsin. I had hunted this property so many times through the years, and to own it was like a dream come true.

The oak forest on the north side formed a dense canopy with mature timber. The south slope had very little mature timber, let alone desirable timber species. All of this property had been pastured for as long as I could remember, but the last 10 years saw no cattle using the land. Grazing had kept the woody vegetation at bay, but now black oak of varied sizes seemed to be growing everywhere. The soil was generally sandy, and especially so in the southwest corner. I was to find out later that this area was a "bluff prairie."

The first order of business was to sell and log off the marketable timber, which occurred from May through August. While the logging went on, I built a shooting range and cut black oak when I could to keep it from encroaching into the shooting lane. I also mowed the several small open areas of grass in August. I was to find that it is best to mow later in the fall to avoid conflicts with yellow jackets!

During the summer I applied for entry of the land into the Forest Management Program. Forester Richard LaValley did an evaluation and recommended acceptance. In his plan was a line that caught my attention every time I read it: "Wildflowers such as lead plant indicate this area was more prairie in appearance than it is today." This line stayed in my thoughts and I attribute it as the seed that would eventually grow into a plan to preserve what prairie I had.

In October my wife filled for divorce and suddenly my world was turned upside down. What would happen? My daughter? My house? My land - would I have to sell it? I didn't know the answers, but the process of getting through it one day at a time started. In my spare time I cleaned up the land, cut firewood, and cut and piled brush.

In May of 1994 I started burning brush piles after 6:00 p.m. The next day after burning some brush, a surviving coal came to life and started a grass fire the next morning. It burned about four acres before being discovered by a passing motorist and was brought under control by the Richland Center Fire Department. So there I was; looking at the blackened ground, answering questions from three different DNR persons (they were quite nice), wondering what the fire cost would be (in a time I could ill afford another expense), and feeling absolutely stupid for causing a fire. I felt so low the rest of the afternoon that I think I could have walked under a beetle. If the day hadn't already been bad enough, about 6:00 p.m. I got a call from the Sheriff's Department . . . was I burning brush again? No. The Lone Rock Fire Department was called this time to extinguish a small fire threatening a grove of large white and red pine at the edge of the property. Well, I just told you how I felt from the first fire call, so can you imagine how I felt then? Fortunately the fire stayed out and no one had gotten injured, so it became easy to deal with after sleeping on it that night. To this day I still get teased about my "burning," and I can share the laugh.

As the summer developed I began to see plants and grasses that I couldn't recall ever seeing before. Now there was no mistake, the growth of vegetation where the fire burned was noticeably different than the surrounding area adjacent to the burn site. I started watching for what a "lead plant" might be and found a logical specimen, although at the time I had no idea if I was right or not. The impression I got from observing the growth of the plants now had me hooked! I was very uninformed, but definitely curious about prairies now.

In November of 1994 the divorce was settled. It was a tremendous relief to have closure. Fortunately for me, I was able to afford to keep the land among other concerns. Now it was time to get on with life.

Before long, 1994 turned into 1995. By now I knew I wanted to promote the growth and development of the prairie remnant I had. It was a no-brainer that I would have to clear the brush and black oak, so I started cutting. Some friends needed firewood and I was glad to let them cut, too. By the time I quit cutting for the summer, I had something like 43 small to huge piles of brush and tree tops! At a forestry seminar I learned of The Prairie Enthusiasts through one of their

## PRAIRIE BUFF (continued from page 4)

brochures. I decided to join as a member of the Southwest Chapter. I indicated I would like some advice on my intended project when I sent in the form. A short time later, I got a membership card and a newsletter, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Perhaps two or three weeks later Gary Eldred called me to look at my project. While looking over the site he offered tips: on burning in general, protecting the insect world from a total burn, and on controlling the regrowth of black oak. He also stressed that I record what plants I could identify as the growing season came on. I asked his opinion on a scale on one to five of my prairie. His reply was a three. I was pleased to hear about that rating as I expected less to be honest with you. I really felt good about Gary taking the time to visit my site.

All I had left to do before the growing season began was to do an approximately two acre burn. With several friends to help, this was done in the first week of May. It was much later than when I really wanted to do it, but it did get accomplished. Best of all, it went off as planned with NO PROBLEMS. When plants started to bloom, I began my list of plant species I found growing. I had purchased several books for the purpose of identification.

It was a lot of fun keying out the plants and identifying them. In most cases it was easy, but a few instances required my best guess as to what they really were. This was to be an ongoing process all through spring, summer, and fall. I feel that one of the neatest things about a prairie is that at any given time some plants are always in bloom. I am particularly impressed by a cluster of flowers in full bloom that form a blanket of color—wow!

By midsummer, I had burned most of the brush piles to clean up the landscape. With last summer's heat, was this a task! Then another problem needed a solution: regrowth of black oak on the stumps of the trees I had cut stood to negate all that I had done. To my advantage was the fact that as I had cut the trees and brush at ground level. It would be easy to mow over the stumps, but that would have to wait until fall so this year's growth of plants could develop and ripen. I bought a corn knife to cut the new shoots, but I had waited too long into the growing season. The new shoots were woody instead of being soft and pulpy as they were in May and early June, so I was only able to cut a small amount of regrowth.

I had planned to steer clear of chemical use, but the idea of seeing all of those trees making a comeback really perturbed me. I bought a five-gallon backpack sprayer and some 2-4-D. I started spraying a tank full when I could. I only did the areas where I wouldn't easily be able to mow, or where other plants might be killed. This seemed to work well, but now I will do any spraying earlier in the season.

Several times as I sprayed, I noticed something scooting through the grass in front of me causing the grass to move. I thought it was a snake, so I started carrying a walking stick. Snakes give me the creeps! One especially hot August afternoon the grasses again moved in front of me. This time the movement stopped, and about six feet in front of me was a lizard. We had a short staredown, during which I noticed it had two green stripes along each side of its

body. Then it was gone, and I mean fast! I was quite pleased at having what I thought was a very unique animal to my prairie. Gary Eldred told me the "lizard" was indeed a "six lined race runner."

As the growing season ended, I focused on mowing grasses and brush where I did not plan to burn the following spring. I also put a lot of effort into gathering seeds from plants I did not have. I planted as many seeds as I could before it snowed by scratching a light covering of soil over them, or by broadcasting them over the frozen ground. Hopefully, they'll take root in the coming season.

As I completed my list of identified plants from the year I was surprised at a count of 119. I know there are more to identify.

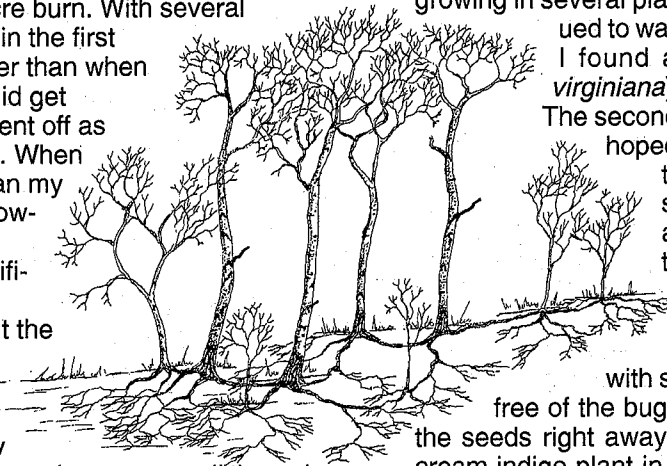
I'd like to share two pleasant surprises during the past season. The first started in May when I noticed this plant growing in several places. I couldn't identify it, so I continued to watch it to catch it in bloom. About July I found a mass of goat's rue (*Tephrosia virginiana*) in full bloom—quite a pretty sight!

The second was more of a wish . . . somehow I hoped to find cream indigo growing on the property. I didn't find any all summer. In October I was walking in an area I had never paid much attention to and there in front of me were the telltale black leaves of the plant. I walked up to it and checked it over. I found three stalks all loaded

with seed pods, All the pods were full and free of the bug that likes to inhabit them. I planted the seeds right away. A few days later I found another cream indigo plant in another location, but no seed pods this time. Both plants were found in the burn area of the previous year. I still wonder how I missed seeing them.

It was an interesting year. I was a beginner. I've learned a considerable amount and know I have only scratched the surface. As I write this I'm busy cutting brush, getting ready for another growing season. I want to interseed a grassy area, after doing a burn and lightly discing the surface. My anticipation is high for this season—who knows what it will bring?

—Marty Grell



## Smoke on the horizon

Ever since I can remember I've been curious. I wanted to know what made that sound I couldn't identify. I would stop while on a walk to sniff the flowers or foliage to find out where a particular fragrance was coming from. While trout fishing, I was always curious about what broke the water for a mayfly.

One thing that always aroused my curiosity was smoke. The sight of a billowing cloud of smoke on the horizon never failed to raise my interest. Early on I learned that a fire with dark to black smoke was probably a trash pile or a building being burned. Smoke that was light brown to dark brown usually indicated a brush pile on fire. But light brown to white smoke usually meant there was a grass fire somewhere.

As a kid, I sometimes would ride my bike several miles to see what the source of the smoke was. Later when I was old enough to drive, I would often travel out of my way to check out what was burning, especially if the smoke was white.

Sometimes I would get out and help fight a grass fire in (See **SMOKE**, page 6, col. 1)

## SMOKE (continued from page 5)

a fence row if it looked out of control and some farmer was trying to beat back the flames before they got to a dry cornfield or tobacco shed. After a rain and a couple of weeks time I would be curious enough to drive by the burn site to see how it had greened up.

As I learned more about native prairies and how they often thrived after a fire my curiosity grew to fascination. I was hooked on burning and craved all the aspects a grass fire had to offer: the way the flames rose as the wind pushed them across the tall bluestem and Indian grass; the snap and crackle of the flower stems as they succumbed to the flames; and, of course, the smoke, sometimes spinning in a whirlwind as it shot up and out and dispersed into the blue sky. The smells of prairie fire smoke varies from sweet to bitter as the flames consume the dry foliage. The fragrant smell of Bergamot may drift by your nose in the smoke.

I'm sure the native peoples of the prairies could read the smoke signs as no one ever has. They could tell whether the smoke in the distance was that of a grass fire or campfire. They could tell how far away it was and what direction it was heading. They respected and paid homage to the prairie fires. To burn the dead grass brought a new lush green pasture of fresh food for the elk, buffalo and antelope.

The native peoples also knew the importance of the prairie plants and used most of them for medicinal remedies and for ceremony. They could identify the different plants by their aroma as they burned. Many prairie plants were used in the daily ritual because of their enchanting smells.

Certain kinds of native plants were cherished for the way they smoked in a pipe. When several people sat to talk around the fire at night, they would often pass the pipe of goodwill and togetherness and again the aromas of the prairie would fill the air. These same people were no doubt experts at burning grass. They knew where to run the fires to bring the buffalo near to them: I'm sure they were aware that a prairie fire would not mix with their encampment and precaution was the norm.

When the plains people left so did their ancient art of using smoke to enrich their lives. Soon after they left the smoke from the prairie fires also disappeared.

Smoke played a big role in the lives of the native peoples. The smoke was a provider and a vessel of delivery. To them, white smoke meant a promise of prosperity and a life of harmony and happiness on the land.

Today, smoke plays little, if any, part in most of our lives. For most of us, smoke is generally a bad thing, like garbage burning, a chemical laden cigarette, or even worse, a pile of burning tires, plastic or an oil tanker. We tend to fear the sight of smoke and cover our faces from the synthetic smells and fumes that often come with modern day smoke.

There is more to a prairie fire than just burning some grass. Prairie enthusiasts would do well to pay attention to the variety of aromas which emanate from a burning prairie. With time and concentration, you should begin to sort them out. It's one way we can begin to make a connection with the early ones' knowledge of the ways of the prairie, the ways of life.

—Dan Hazlett

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

### SOUTHWEST CHAPTER WORK PARTIES

- Saturday, June 22** Work party, Bush Clover, 10:00 a.m. Cutting and herbiciding saplings, 608-375-5271.
- Sunday, June 30** Work party, Vale. Cut brush and collect seed, 10:00 a.m., 608-375-5271
- Sun., July 7** Work party at Kalscheur, 10:00 a.m., 608-375-5271
- Sun., July 14** Work party at Kalscheur, 1:00 a.m., 608-375-5271
- Sat., July 27** Work party at Bush Clover, 10:00 a.m., 608-375-5271
- Sat., Aug. 3** Work party at Vale, 10:00 a.m., 608-375-5271
- Sun., Aug. 11** Work party at Vale, 10:00 a.m., 608-375-5271
- Sat., Aug. 31** Work party at Bush Clover, 10:00 a.m., 608-375-5271
- Sat., Sept. 7** Work party at Kalscheur, 10:00 a.m., 608-375-5271

### MEETINGS

- Sunday, Aug. 18** SW Chapter meeting, Leys residence, 7:00 p.m. 608-872-2547
- Sun., Sept. 15** SW Chapter meeting, Linder residence, 6:00 p.m., 608-375-2668

### PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

- Tuesday, July 16** Chapter meeting, 7:00 p.m., Turner Hall Rathskeller, Monroe
- Tuesday, Aug. 20** Chapter meeting, 7:00 p.m. at Honey Creek Park shelter house, Monroe
- Sat., Sept. 28** Record Tree Tour of Green County (see story, page 9)
- Tuesday, Sept. 17** Chapter meeting, 7:00 p.m., Turner Hall Rathskeller, Monroe

### WEST CENTRAL CHAPTER

Monthly meetings are held in the Menomonie area, usually at the Agricultural Service Center, where UW-Extension is housed. Call 715-684-2914 for information on dates.

### VALE

Drive to Albany. Rt. 59 crosses Sugar River. One or two blocks w. of Sugar River, go right on Sugar River Hwy. Go one block. Left onto Mineral. Follow Mineral for .1 mile to North Taylor. Go straight on Purington Rd. for 3.7 miles. Right on Schneeberger for .2 miles. Go left on farm lane w/trees on left and cropland on right. Farm lane swings right behind row of trees—park on left after this corner.

### KALSCHEUR

From Hollandale (SW Iowa Co.) go south from Hwy. 39 on Co. Rd. K about 2 miles south. Site is on left (east) side of road. Look for parked cars along road.

### EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER MEETINGS

- Tuesday, July 9** ES Chapter Annual Meeting and Picnic, 5:00 p.m., Bluestem Farm, Baraboo (see story, page 7).
- Tuesday, Sept. 10** ES Chapter Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. Martin residence (Goose Pond Sanctuary) 608-635-4160.

### WORK PARTIES

- Thursday, June 27** ES Chapter work party, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., parsnip removal at Koltes Prairie. Bring shovels and loppers and wear long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and gloves.
- Tuesday, July 16** Tour of prairie and savanna restorations at Gov. Nelson State Park, 6:00 p.m. (see story, page 7).
- Wednesday, July 17** ES Chapter work party, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., brush cutting at Koltes Prairie. Bring loppers and bow saws.
- Tuesday, July 30** ES Chapter work party, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., brush cutting at Koch Prairie. Bring loppers and bow saws.
- Saturday, Aug. 3** Prairie Jubilee at Goose Pond (see story, page 4).
- Saturday, Aug. 10** Small mammals field trip at Schluckebier Sand Prairie, 9:00 a.m. to noon, (see story, page 7).
- Sat., Aug. 10 & Sun. Aug. 11** Field trip to Illinois Prairies (see story, page 4)
- Saturday, Sept. 14** Landowner Wetland and Grassland Restoration Field Day (see story, page 2).
- Sunday, Sept. 15** Field identification of grasses and sedges at The Nature Conservancy's Spring Green Preserve, 2:00 p.m. (see story, page 7).

(If you need more information about locations, contact John Mecikalski at 608/849-8358).

### BUSH CLOVER

Drive north from Lancaster on Hwy. 61. Go left on Co. K. About 4 miles up Co. K, go left on Badger Rd. Follow Badger Rd. around one curve and prairie is on right.

### KOEBCH

Meet on Hwy. K, ¼ mile west of the intersection of K and Hwy. 12 outside of Ashton Corners. Leader: Paul West, 233-5807.

### KOLTES

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

# CHAPTER NEWS

## EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER

### South Central now Empire-Sauk

At its May 14 meeting, the South Central Chapter board voted to change its name to the Empire-Sauk Chapter. The name is a biogeographical nod to two historic prairie regions in Columbia, Dane, and Sauk counties.

### Cross Plains inventory

As they drive Highway 14 near Cross Plains, many prairie enthusiasts have noticed the possible prairie openings on the surrounding bluffs. In recent years these "goat prairies" have been slowly giving way to a carpet of red cedar. The Prairie Enthusiasts now have the opportunity to inventory some of these openings and work for protection of those that still maintain some quality. Cross Plains is interested in developing a green space network adjacent to the village and has asked the Empire-Sauk Chapter for assistance with inventories of the surrounding bluffs. Along with the inventories will come management recommendations for areas that are particularly of high natural quality. In exchange, the village will contact land owners of area bluffs long targeted for inventory by the Empire-Sauk Chapter to request access permission. As these contacts are made, the Empire-Sauk Chapter will schedule inventories. If you are interested in inventorying one or more of these bluffs either on your own or with a group, please contact John Harrington at (608) 233-2483 evenings. If you would like to join other inventory efforts call the above number as well.

### Empire-Sauk Chapter's annual meeting and picnic

The annual meeting and potluck picnic of the Empire-Sauk Chapter membership will be held Tuesday, July 9th at Bluestem Farm (Scott Weber's & Muffy Barrett's) in Sauk County at S5920 Lehman Rd. (head west on Lehman Rd. off of Hwy. 12 approximately 3 miles south of Baraboo). Savanna restoration tour at 5:00, potluck dinner at 6:00. The meeting will take place over dinner. Bring a dish to pass, plus your own eating utensils. Drinks will be provided. Officers up for election are vice-president and treasurer. Also up for election is one of our chapter's two representative slots on The Prairie Enthusiasts' board.

The meeting will be very short. Please try to attend.

### Nominations for Empire-Sauk officers

Nominations are sought for Empire-Sauk Chapter officer positions of vice-president and treasurer. These are two year terms. Elections will be made by the general membership at the upcoming annual meeting on July 9th.

### Field identification of grasses and sedges at Spring Green

An informational field trip focusing on the field identification of upland grasses and sedges will be held at The Nature Conservancy's Spring Green Preserve on Sunday, September 15 at 2:00 p.m. Habitats at the preserve include sand barrens, sand prairie, bluff prairie, dry savanna (oak barrens), and oak woodlands. Rich Henderson (608/845-7065) will lead this trip and he suggests that you bring along the books *Grasses of Wisconsin* and *Spring Flora of Wisconsin* if you have copies. Directions: from the intersection of U.S. Hwy. 14 and State Hwy. 23 near Spring Green, travel north on 23 for ½ miles to intersection with Jones Rd. on the right (east); travel east on Jones Rd. for ¾ mile and turn left on dirt driveway (Angelo's Lane) leading to preserve entrance.

### Governor Nelson prairie and savanna tour

Dan Weidert will lead a tour of the prairie and savanna restorations at Governor Nelson State Park on Tuesday, July 16th. More than 60 acres are in various stages of development and offer an educational look at these evolving plant communities. We will also be looking for bobolinks, grasshopper and savanna sparrows, orchard orioles, and other grassland birds that are taking advantage of the restorations. Meet at 6:00 p.m. at the park office (2 miles east of Middleton on Hwy. M). A state park admission sticker is required and can be purchased that day. The tour will be canceled if it rains. Call Dan at 233-5658 for more information, otherwise, bring your binoculars and cameras for a nice evening of hiking and a great sunset!

### Small mammals field trip at Schluckebier Sand Prairie

This Nature Conservancy field trip on Saturday, August 10 from 9:00 a.m. to noon is a chance to learn more about some of the small mammals that live in an isolated sand prairie. You'll observe a few close up and help trip leaders with an inventory of these animals. For more information contact Steve Richter at 608/251-8140. Directions: From U.S. Hwy. 12 between Sauk City and Baraboo, travel west on County PF for 1.5 miles. Just past a row of pine trees, turn south (left) onto a dirt road that runs along the east side of the preserve. Park in the grass between the dirt road and the prairie.

### Summer seed collectors needed

Your help is needed collecting prairie and savanna seeds in early summer. The date that these seeds become mature ranges from early June to early July. Call Dan Weidert at 233-5658 if you know of seed sources for spring flowering species or would like to help collect them in various locations that Dan knows.

## EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER CONTINUED

### PE volunteers assist elementary school

On May 3 TPE volunteers burned off West Middleton Elementary School's prairie restoration, which is about an acre in size and 15 years old. The burn was begun just as youth soccer games on adjacent fields were ending. The burn brought many questions from the departing players and spectators. There was a number of interested observers for a while: one family even stayed for most of the show. The burned turned out to be a great educational opportunity. Thanks go to Jim and Rose Sime, Rich Henderson, Sue Bridson, and Nancy Dott.



## PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

### Chronicle of the Briggs Wetland, Chapter 10, etc.

This chapter comes to you live from the banks of the Briggs Wetland, Monday, May 13, 1996. We are here in the presence of holy water, water that rained upon the nearby earth a few days ago and is now boiling from the sands of the spring pond, ricocheting off the glacial erratic field boulders and spongy hummocks, and attempting to join with the purgatorial waters of the Raccoon Creek several hundred yards to the west. The field on the north side of this artesian stream is wearing a vesture of brilliant green, a consequence of our splendid prescribed burn this March. The other side wears green mixed with straw brown. The contrast is marvelous. Let us publicly applaud those dedicated pyro-technicians who made this color scheme possible: Pat Daniels, Fred Faessler, John Larsen, Chuck Johnson, John Ochsner, Rob Baller and the anonymous little yellow cat who lives next door, who came and rubbed against our legs after we finished.

In addition to the emerald green field before us, we have, on this May day, a fabulous excess of marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), whose golden flowers bloom copiously from every vantage in the marsh. Equally inescapable is the elegant edible valerian (*Valeriana edulis*), poking its white-bordered leaves and white-green spires from every other silly hummock and bend in the stream. The emerald grass with yellow lance tips is spearing half a foot skyward

now, and the leaves of wild strawberry, meadow rue, goldenrod, aster, thistle, toadflax, Golden Alexander, and those unspeakable sedges are knitting a mosaic even more lovely, it seems, than the year before. And sprinkled throughout the marsh are partially cooked trees and shrubs, most of them charcoal black at the base, the smaller ones charcoal to the top, the larger ones brown and erupting into little green buds.

All about us can be heard the delightful musical lyrics of the Briggsian avifauna: the eastern meadow lark, the sedge wren, the yellow warbler, the robin, the redwing, the domestic barn turkey. Choirs of American toads are trilling in harmonic convergence, and the omnipotent Canada geese are vociferously guarding their toll booth beaver dam in the distance across the creek.

Of special delight today is the small dogwood barrens cleared by the stream last winter. This scene is the usual big cottonwood tree formerly surrounded by a sea of finer stemmed lackeys, namely grey dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*), buckthorn, and black cherry. These pesky woodies were laboriously clipped from the stream edge during the frozen months of January. Their bodies were tossed far to one side. No herbicide was applied to any stumps. Since that time this liberated patch of black dirt, maybe 20 ft. by 10 ft., has remained naked and obvious for all visitors to admire. And now that spring has arrived, what new growth is this that emerges first from the bare earth? Can this be? It is! It is none other than a semi-monoculture of Turk's cap lily (*Lilium michiganense subsp. cochranense*); about 200 of them. Most are seedlings, a few appear to be teenagers. It is the most remarkable emergence we have ever seen. If they live to flowering adulthood, and if the woodies do not return with a vengeance, the future lily grove should be spectacular.

(At this point we must interject an unfortunate secondary report into the middle of our live broadcast. Three days after the initial observation of the lily babes it was discovered that about one half of them were turning pastel yellow. We can only surmise that a farmer neighbor, at least two hundred yards to the south or west, applied some chemical to his [or her] freshly tilled field. The pastel lilies appear to be in line with a small opening in the row of buckthorn that divides the unplowed Briggs Wetland from the alfalfa field, hence the herbicide drift. We do not believe it could be the neighbors to the north who are renting the tilled portion of Briggs: they are growing alfalfa, planted last year, and use no chemicals. Let us hope the holy stream water will rinse away this pestilence, and the lilies will be uncursed. Now back to our live broadcast.)

May the Briggs supporters know that a new contract for purchase is being drafted. Mr. Goff Thompson, Attorney, Bank of Now Glarus, is generously donating his time to advise us on the sale. He is preparing an *Offer to Purchase Vacant Land* to serve as our contract. Once in the hands of the capable Prairie Bluffers, the *Offer* will be forwarded to the Natural Land Institute for their approval, signage, and the handing over of our check. Thanks to you, and the annual banquet this last March, we have enough funds to pay off the Wetland.

Now, with sincerest apologies to the Natural Land Institute for one last final delay, we must announce that we have recently become aware of a grant offer from the American  
(See **BRIGGS**, page 9, col. 1)

## BRIGGS (continued from page 8)

can Wetlands Conservation Council, whose office is in Arlington, Virginia. I believe the notification came to us via the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Our brilliant Prairie Bluff drip torch veteran Kathy Kirkhas quickly and expertly prepared an extensive grant proposal requesting \$7,000 from the AMCC for the purchase of Briggs. She submitted it in April. A letter of acknowledgement she received states that recipients will be chosen in July. By that time we should have the contract in hand, and if the grant is not awarded to us by then, we will no doubt make up the balance for the marsh with our hard earned gifts. If the grant does come, we will have money left over to spend on more prairie land. Won't that be a switch?

—Rob Baller

chosen because the plant species list was similar to species found in association with Mead's milkweed on other sites.

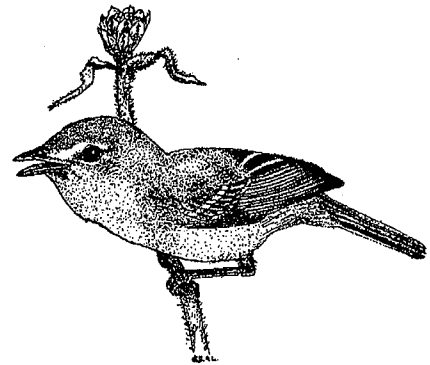
In hopes of establishing a healthy population, Little Bluestem Farm near Baraboo is also propagating several seeds sent from the Morton Arboretum. These seedlings will be planted with their brethren when they are about a year old. There's not much new about planting prairie plants when there are none, or putting species in places they were not known to exist, but putting an extirpated species back in its home range **and** on a protected high quality prairie remnant of monumental importance both in an aesthetic and a botanical sense. That's what we're all about!

—Gary Eldred

## Green County record tree tour

On Saturday, Sept. 28, a motorcoach tour of Green County's Wisconsin State Record Trees will be offered by the Prairie Bluff Chapter. Some of the trees we will be visiting include the current state champions for black oak, ironwood and European larch. We will also be visiting a number of near record trees and the famous Halfway Tree near Brodhead.

The cost for the tour will be \$20 and will include a picnic lunch. Proceeds will be used for prairie purchase and preservation. For further information call John Ochsner at 608-862-3816.



## WEST CENTRAL CHAPTER

## SOUTHWEST CHAPTER

## Mead's milkweed returns to Wisconsin

As we pressed our faces closer to the wire mesh, I said, "There it is, John. See the small green leaf protruding about one-half inch above the soil surface?" John Ochsner shook his head and exclaimed with a burst of enthusiasm, "Yup, I see it!" I'd been waiting for this day for weeks, the day a new and **very** rare prairie plant showed up in Grant County, Wisconsin, after being gone for over 120 years. The Mead's milkweed pushed its new and tender leaves toward the warm sunlight.

The whole project started when Dr. Robert Betz spoke at The Prairie Enthusiasts' banquet last winter. I had mentioned to him about finding a woolly milkweed with a pod and seeds. From that, an exchange of seed and seedlings between the SW Chapter and the Morton Arboretum took place. The Arboretum staff explained that they had propagated many seedlings of Mead's milkweed but had few places to reestablish it on native prairies. On April 30, 1996, a two-inch root of Mead's milkweed was planted on a protected prairie remnant in Southern Wisconsin. The site was

## Prairie preservation advances in Chippewa Valley

We've held two meetings so far, drawing interested people from the Hudson to the Eau Claire areas. On April 10th, Gary Eldred flew into Menomonie for our first meeting to address 54 people eager to learn of the new group. He sparked a lot of attention. We had 20 people submit their membership dues that evening! We all thank Gary (and the pilot who flew him here) for the time he spent with us. At last count, we have 22 new members, and are well on our way to officially form the newest chapter of TPE.

At our May 2nd meeting, 13 people attended to help hammer out our chapter name, guidelines, area, officers and potential board of directors. We also are in the process of setting up a prairie restoration project for Farm Progress Days, which will be held in Dunn County, by Menomonie, in September of 1998. This should prove to be an excellent educational event for attendees of the show, which usually draws up to 250,000 people!

Our third meeting, held on May 29th, again focused on preparing the needed documentation for official chapter recognition at the June meeting of TPE. We also had a presentation by local member Ned Gaulke on seed stratification and scarification. Attendees received a small sample of forb seed to prepare for spring planting following Ned's instructions. These forbs will eventually be transplanted to the Farm Progress Days prairie restoration project site.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

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:  
February 15 - Spring Issue    May 15 - Summer Issue    August 15 - Fall Issue    November 15 - Winter Issue
5. Publication dates: April 1 - Spring Issue    July 1 - Summer Issue    October 1 - Fall Issue    January 1 - Winter Issue

**THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS**  
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**PLEASE CHECK CHAPTER YOU WISH TO JOIN, OR GENERAL MEMBERSHIP:**

- Southwest Chapter  
Serving Grant, Crawford, Richland & Iowa Counties
- Northwest Illinois Chapter  
Serving Jo Daviess, Carroll & Stephenson Counties
- General Membership (outside of chapter areas)
  - Prairie Bluff  
Serving Green, Rock & Lafayette Counties

**MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:**

- \$10 STUDENT
- \$50 SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP
- \$15 INDIVIDUAL
- \$200 INDIVIDUAL LIFE
- \$25 CONTRIBUTOR

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:**

The Prairie Enthusiasts  
 c/o Alice Mirk  
 10052 County Hwy. C  
 Woodman, WI 53827  
 608-988-4760

Can we provide your name and address to:

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Other environmental organizations \_\_\_\_\_

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

**PLEASE CHECK AREAS OF INTEREST:**

- Writing newsletter articles
- Organize field trips
- Grant writing
- Seed collection
- Prairie information - specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Develop educational material
- Plan social activities (banquet, picnic, etc.)
- Fund raiser
- Restoration projects
- Site management activities (burning, brush cutting, etc.)

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**



For further information, contact:  
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