



Minutes for the Southwest WI Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts Board of Directors
May 30, 2026 at Gary Adam's home

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 p.m. by President Becky Fernette. All Board members present with the exception of Lynnette Dornak and Kay Wienke.

James Haas was unanimously elected to the Board - welcome James!

Becky shared information about the Iowa Prairie Network Conference, August 7-9, University of Dubuque - registration is \$50 with Dan Carter as keynote.

Becky asked for Board members' feedback re: vision for the Chapter. Jack expressed that we should continue to allow site stewards to continue to have autonomy in their site management (as opposed to being micromanaged). Ross countered that we should look at our sites as a whole, and then collectively decide how to prioritize management of our sites. Also mentioned was hiring a "roving" maintenance crew to work on our sites. James added that a site orientation might be helpful. Becky suggested that these ideas could be discussed further during Land Management Committee meetings. Roger added the need to get younger people involved. Steve stated that he didn't have anything to add to the vision statements that were drafted by Becky earlier this year. She agreed to review this discussion and make adjustments to the 3-year vision document, if needed.

The minutes for the March 18, 2026 meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Board members received a copy of the March 2026 Cash Balances and the 2026-27 budget. Several members expressed confusion about the financial reports. Becky and Steve shared their confusion and will continue to seek clarity. Steve requested that site stewards and committee chairs complete PRF forms before submitting expenses. If job code is unknown, Steve can fill it in. Reminded purchasers to present tax-exempt certificates prior to making purchases whenever possible. Becky asked that receipts be readable, especially when scanned.

Chapter Support Board Report: Kay's report was emailed to members prior to the meeting and is attached. Becky emphasized that 2027 is the 40th Anniversary of TPE, which is especially meaningful to our Chapter. She encouraged members to suggest ways to commemorate this event.

Land Management Committee: Jack's report was emailed to members prior to the meeting and is attached. Jack will follow up with Kristin re: her request for signage and fencing for Thomas Wet.

Site Steward Updates: Jack compiled a report and distributed it to Board members. No questions were raised.

Events: Becky updated the Board about the successful presentations at Kickapoo Area Elementary School. Thank you to the “prairie fairies” for volunteering for this activity. Reviews were mixed for the Birds & Nature Festival in Madison; Becky’s presentation was sparsely attended and competed with live music. Several participants visited our table, but unclear what effect this had on raising awareness about TPE and prairie restoration. Discussed upcoming events.

Scholarship Committee: Two applications have been received. The committee will review the applications and make a decision to award the scholarship this year or solicit more applications.

Barn Committee: Waiting on Droessler to fix the foundation. All other projects are on hold.

TPE Budget & Strategic Plan: Becky reviewed the information provided by Chapter Support re: the budget deficit and the strategic plan. Reviewed the reduced budget for land management. Encouraged site stewards to work together to make sure that our sites get burned within our budget. Chapter Support plans to protect 2-3 properties/year. Question was raised re: how funds are distributed to the Chapters.

Other business:

- a. Jack & Becky are meeting with potential treasurer on June 5
- b. Gays Mills Area Meet-Up at Beth & Niels Jensen’s home - 6/27
- c. Membership & Volunteer Recruitment/Retention: 175 Chapter members per last report with 5 new members - Becky encourages everyone to continue to recruit volunteers

New Business:

- a. Minor bylaw change - Chair/Vice Chair instead of President/Vice President was approved
- b. Jack agreed to pursue getting fire numbers for sites that don’t have them.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Ross Shrager with revisions by Becky Fernet

Attachments:

1. 2026-27 Budget
2. Chapter Representative Report
3. Land Management/Site Steward Report

Upcoming Board Meetings:

- July 11 - (Note date change) - Roger & Pat Smith, 17121 Kiwanis Rd, Boscobel - 1 p.m.
- Sept 20 - Annual Gathering & Board Meeting - Borah Creek Barn - Noon potluck with meetings to follow (10:30 a.m. prairie walk
- Nov 18 - via Teams at 6 p.m.
- Jan 20, 2027 - via Teams at 6 p.m.

Attachments

1. 2026-27 SWC Budget: [SWC Budget Overview FY2026-27.pdf](#)
2. CHAPTER BOARD REPRESENTATIVE REPORT OF TPE BOARD MEETING 3/31/26
 - a. Iris Drive Management Plan was approved.
 - b. This year will have an emphasis on Fund Raising for all. Reid & Jessica from Chapter Support are meeting with major donors this year. The entire Board is going to be responsible for fund raising. In the past several years, the projected fund raising was greatly over budgeted and spending reflected that. This is how our deficit came about. The projected fund raising for this coming fiscal year is more realistic and spending has been limited so we can move forward in the next few years to eliminate the deficit.
 - c. 2027 is the 40th Anniversary of The Prairie Enthusiasts.
 - d. Chapter level events need to focus on fundraising. Have a targeted Fundraising Event, Prairie Tours, etc. Talk about the impact gifts have on the Prairies. Every event is an opportunity to obtain donations.
 - e. Chapters are encouraged to use their Restricted Funds as much as possible in the coming years. Chapters are known to spend less than they budget but spending Restricted Funds for land management should be a focus.
 - f. Jim Rogala & Jessica Bizub (who is now our new Executive Director) will be meeting with Chapters this year to explain the deficit and the plan to emerge from that situation.
3. Land Management Committee/Site Steward Report: [LAND MANAGEMENT COMM. REPORT 5-28-26.pdf](#)