



THE PRAIRIE PROMOTER

VOL 12, NO.1

Spring 1999

Celebrating twelve years of prairie conservation in the Upper Midwest

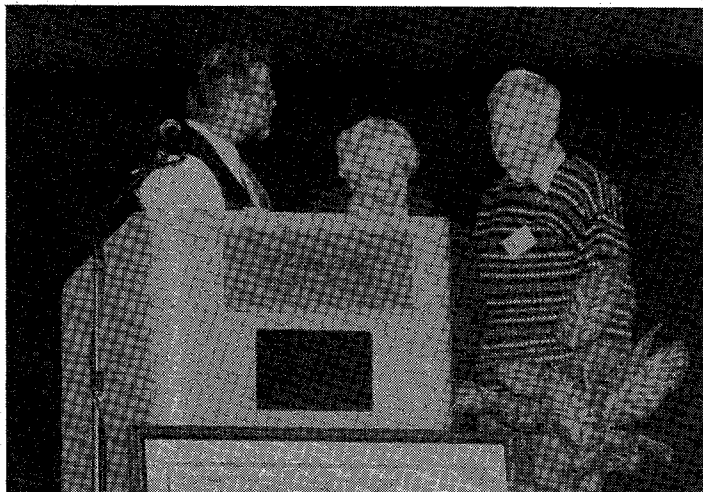
ANNUAL BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS!

Once again, The Prairie Enthusiasts' Annual Banquet was an unqualified success. Following the expanded format that proved so popular in 1998, TPE offered four workshops and several chapter presentations as well as the usual raffle, silent auction, and meal. The UW-Platteville facility and staff were outstanding, as was the plentiful buffet. Over 243 people attended this year's banquet, and workshop attendance more than doubled, when compared to last year, suggesting that people not only like the expanded format, but are willing to devote a whole day to learning more about prairie and savanna habitats. We are very grateful to the presenters for their time and effort: **Rich Henderson** (Identifying Plants of the Oak Savanna); **David Sample** (Grassland Birds and their Management); **Ron Panzer** (Status and Distribution of Prairie Insects and Other Animals); and, **Kelly Kearns** and **Kim Mello** (Controlling Exotic Species). All presenters received outstanding evaluations!

There were a variety of awards: The TPE Prairie Enthusiast of the Year award was presented to **Olive** and **John Thompson**, for a lifetime of dedication to prairie and savanna ecosystems. They received a well deserved standing ovation. The Southwest Chapter honored **Judy Lovaas** for her dedication to and hard work on her chapter's prairies; and, the NIPES honored **Jim Rachuy** for his many years of devotion to Illinois prairies and savannas (see NIPE chapter news). Both chapters made exceptional choices.

The TPE board wishes to thank the following volunteers for their help in making this years banquet such a success. A big thank you to **Rich Henderson** for organizing the raffle and silent auction; to **Gen Reed** for organizing the children's workshop; to **Jaye Maxfield** for helping with registration; to **Barbara Rutherford** and **Becky Spencely** for their extraordinary patience at the registration table as over two hundred people swooped in for the first workshops; and, to all the people who joined in to help on the many tasks, both large and small, which help to make the annual banquet such a success. A final, and special thanks goes to **Michael**

Sheean, who gave "upselling" a whole new definition with his relentless sale of raffle tickets (a total of 3,030 were sold). TPE also thanks the following businesses and organizations: **Adapt Plastics; Arnie's Ski and Garden; Cambridge Gallery; Chickadee Depot; Common Market Grocer; Eagle Optics; Fontana Sports Specialties; Friends of the Mines of Spain; Natural Area Guardians; Northern Vineyard; Oak Prairie Farm; Pet Food Plus; Prairie Restorations; Prairie Ridge Nursery; REI; Silver Bison Ranch; Sugar River trail, Inc.; The Garden Store; The Shoe Box; UW-Madison Arboretum, and; Willow River State Park.**



Left to right, Gary Eldred, Olive and John Thompson.

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The Prairie Enthusiasts is a grass roots organization of volunteers which is solely committed to the protection, management, and restoration of native prairies and savannas in the Upper Midwest. To date, The Prairie Enthusiasts has protected over 1,000 acres that harbor at least 5 state or federally protected species requisitions, easements, and management agreements. The Prairie Enthusiasts has a stewardship program which provides active management to ensure the ongoing health of protected sites.

The Prairie Enthusiasts is actively involved in planting prairie on it's properties and on other conservation lands and has assisted both public agencies and private groups in these efforts. Thus far, more than 150 acres have been planted with seeds of prairie plants from local sources.

In addition, The Prairie Enthusiasts develop educational materials and provide presentations on prairie and savanna ecology, conservation, and management for both children and adults.

The Prairie Enthusiasts was incorporated in Wisconsin in 1987 as a private nonprofit, tax exempt corporation under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible.

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The Prairie Promoter is a quarterly publication of The Prairie Enthusiasts. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without permission. We welcome submissions of letters, articles, announcements, art work, and photographs which are relevant to prairie and savanna ecosystems. Material should be typed. Writers who use computers should include a 3.5 inch disk (MS-Word or WordPerfect) as well as paper copies. Articles and letters may be edited for length or style. Computer disks, art, and photographs will be returned. Deadlines for submission of material are: February 25 (Spring issue); May 25 (Summer issue); August 25 (Fall issue); and November 25 (Winter issue).

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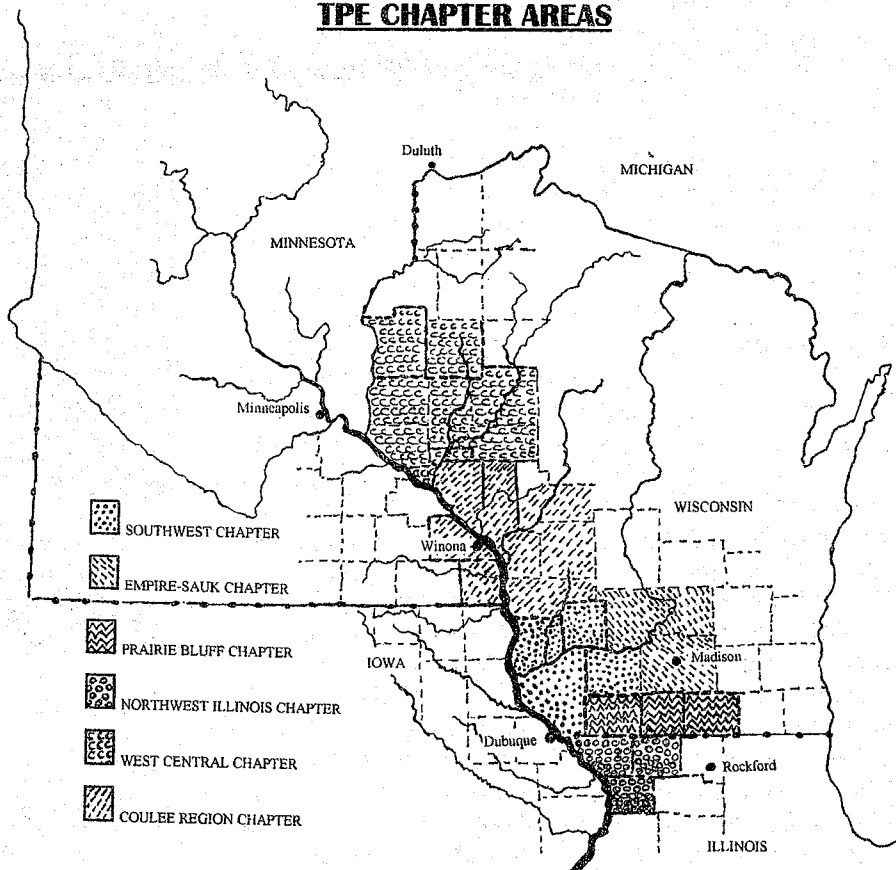
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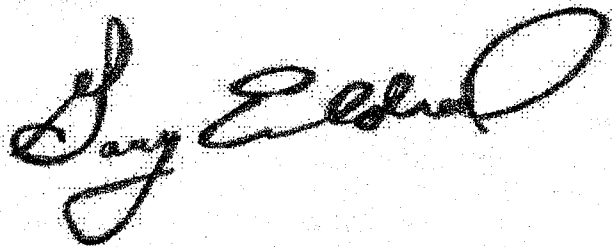


President's Message

For the past 18 years I've been fortunate to live in an old, small farmhouse set in a wooded, quiet valley in Southwest Wisconsin. This last winter I was finally able to purchase it and 18 acres. The house needs to be remodeled, rewired, and replumbed and it will take me years to do this. In late winter I made a modest start by taking the first steps to converting the attic to living space. It's truly amazing how much effort one can put into something without seeing progress. Tearing out old sloppy construction took days. Installing new floor joists also took days and days. Shimming out walls, framing in new windows, and strengthening old roof rafters all take lots of time and seem to progress very slowly.

The other day while I was thinking about all of this, I realized that that's just exactly how The Prairie Enthusiasts came to be: one meeting at a time, thousands of hours of meetings; one work party at a time, hundreds of thousands of brush stems and trees cut and countless weeds pulled, year after year; thousands of miles driven to talk with landowners about preserving and protecting prairie remnants, to talk with community groups and schools, and to help members and non-members alike with on-site consultations. These examples are only the most general descriptions of the time and effort that volunteers have given to protect and preserve our prairie heritage.

As I crawl around in the dust and bat droppings, I have to keep reminding myself that it's as my sixth grade teacher told me centuries ago, "tiny drops make the mighty seas" and "small strokes fell mighty oaks". Of course, he was referring to my study habits, not to remodeling a house! As I've reflected on where The Prairie Enthusiasts came from and where it is today, I truly am amazed. All those meetings, miles, and weeds have made for a tremendously diverse organization with a strong foundation built on hard work and perseverance against what has seemed like overwhelming difficulties on many occasions. These small strokes and tiny drops have forged a strength within The Prairie Enthusiasts that I believe will enable us to carry out expanded and increasingly effective restoration and protection of prairie and savanna ecosystems. My hat is off to each and every one of those who give for the cause. Thank you.



New State Natural Area

By Rich Henderson

One of the Empire-Sauk Chapter's projects in Dane County has recently become a new addition to the Empire Prairies State Natural Area. The site, known as Koch Prairie, had long been recognized, inventoried, and managed by the local TPE chapter through handshake agreements with the landowner. When the site became available for sale last year, the chapter played a key role in its purchase by the DNR's State Natural Areas Program. The purchase included 8 acres of prairie sod, 2 acres of cropland buffer, and the development rights on an adjacent 29 acres. Astride a low drumlin hill, the site supports dry and dry-mesic prairie with dense stands of prairie dropseed, rattlesnake master, rosinweed, and 60 other native prairie species. The site also supports what may be the largest colony in Wisconsin of the state endangered red-tailed leafhopper, which feeds exclusively on prairie dropseed. The site is not open to the public at this time. If you would like to visit, look in the newsletter for TPE field trips to the site this summer.

PRAIRIE RESTORATION AT BADGER ARMY PLANT IGNITES!

By Charlie Luthin

Thanks in part to the foresightedness and generosity of several chapters of TPE, restoration planning and implementation at the Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP) near Baraboo, Wisconsin, are proceeding at an accelerating rate. Last spring (1998), TPE provided a \$1500 grant to catalyze the planning process for approximately 1,300 acres of the 7,400-acre facility (about 18% of the land surface of the BAAP) targeted for ecological restoration. Subsequently, the Army contracted me to complete the development of a preliminary restoration plan for the 1,300 acres. A draft Plan has been completed and circulated to a variety of restoration ecologists for review and comment. The final Plan will be completed by the end of this month.

The Badger Plant lies at the base of the Baraboo Hills in what was once the 14,000-acre Sauk Prairie. The terminal moraine runs north-south through Badger and divides the BAAP into two distinct geographic regions: the broad flat outwash plain on the western side of the facility that is the heart of the original Sauk Prairie, and the rolling terrain in the east associated with the area behind the moraine. This topographically diverse area was dominated by a mixed savanna/prairie landscape pocked with kettle ponds at

the time of European settlement.

The Army has offered 1,300 acres of the north and northeastern portion of the BAAP for ecological restoration. This area was little used for the production of munitions, and in fact served as a "buffer area" to industrial activity. This site contains elements of the native Baraboo Bluff plant communities (oak woodland, bedrock glade, pine relict), several savanna remnants, and a few tiny dry-mesic prairie relicts. TNC found a number of rare plant species in a 1993 biological inventory of the site, including purple milkweed, woolly milkweed, round-stemmed false foxglove, tubercled orchid, drooping sedge, prairie bush clover, and others. Much of the site, unfortunately, has been severely degraded through past agricultural or construction activities.

The ecological restoration planned for the 1,300 acres will entail the restoration and recreation of oak woodland, oak savanna, wet-mesic, mesic, and dry-mesic prairie, as well as several ponds. The restoration project site is contiguous with the South Bluff of Devil's Lake State Park; the potential for collaborative management of the Park and the Badger facility are great.

The next few years are critical to the success of the restoration effort at BAAP. As long as the Army is owner and custodian of the property, they have committed to the restoration process. They have secured financial resources in 1999 to establish an extensive nursery, to begin site preparation (that will be considerable, as much of the area is dominated by exotic grasses and shrubs), and to begin some of the planting. In this year there will be a pine-thinning effort to begin clearing the land of old pine plantations. The Army will host a Wisconsin Conservation Corps (WCC) crew for four weeks in 1999-2000 to begin some of the brush clearing and site preparation work.

Much of the planning for this restoration has been done through the voluntary assistance of a team of advisors from the area-many of them being active TPE members. This group calls itself the "Sauk Prairie Restoration Council", and has provided guidance to the Army throughout the early stages of planning. A tremendous opportunity exists for voluntary assistance at Badger. We need to recruit able bodies to help collect seeds for planting into the nursery and on-site plantings. We want to facilitate the gathering of bur and white oak acorns late in the summer to plant onto the rolling landscape to begin the early stages of savanna restoration. We hope to have occasional brush-clearing "parties" to tackle some of the difficult invasive shrub problems. The more we can involve folks from the immediate area, the more sympathetic they will be to the restoration project.

The Badger Plant has been idle since 1973 and was declared "excess" by the Army last year--meaning it is to be shut down permanently. Many of us are hopeful

that, once the Army vacates Badger (in the next several years), the derelict buildings can be taken down and much of the land will be dedicated to ecological restoration. Imagine a 7,000-acre prairie/savanna extension to Devil's Lake, right in the heart of southern Wisconsin! The opportunities for education, recreation, and large-scale restoration would be great on a site of this magnitude.

Help needed at Badger:

- setting up and leading occasional tours of the site
- prairie and savanna seed and acorn collecting
- prairie/savanna nursery maintenance
- brush clearing

Anyone interested in helping at Badger can contact: Doug Rhead, Natural Resources Specialist, Badger Army Ammunition Plant (Baraboo) (608) 356-5525 or E-mail: drhead@ria-emh2.army.mil

COMMUNITY CONSENSUS NEEDED!

If you want to voice your interest in seeing much or all of Badger Plant converted to an extensive "prairie parkland", please express your opinion to our elected officials: Governor Tommy Thompson, Senators Russ Feingold and Herb Kohl, and Representative Tammy Baldwin. Sauk County residents are encouraged to contact the Sauk County Board and their Town Board to voice an opinion. Only through significant community support will these elected officials respond to this innovative idea for the use of the Badger land. Decisions for the future of Badger will be made in the coming months, so don't delay!

For more information, or for making a contribution to the "prairie vision" effort at Badger, contact: Community Conservation Coalition for the Sauk Prairie, PO Box 38, Prairie du Sac, WI 53578. Phone: (608) 245-1636.

(For a contribution of \$20, you will receive a handsome poster of the painting, "Sank Prairie Remembered" by Victor Bahktin. You will receive a signed, numbered, limited edition fine art print of the same painting for a contribution of \$200 or more.)

Here are the addresses to mail your letters to:

Russ Feingold, PO Box 620062, Middleton, WI 53562
Phone: 608-828-1200, or 202-224-5323

e-mail feingold@feingold.senate.gov.

Herb Kohl, 14, W. Mifflin St Suite 312, Madison, WI 53703. Phone: 608-264-5338 or 202-224-5653.

e-mail kohl@kohl.senate.com

Tammy Baldwin, 119, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, 4th Floor, Madison, WI 53703. Phone: 608-258-9800 or 202-225-2906.

PREScribed BURN SCHOOL

June 4-7, 1999

Sponsored by: Natural Area Guardians

SWCD 227 N. Main, Elizabeth, IL 61028 · (815) 594-2591

The JoDaviess County Natural Area Guardians are seeking volunteers to enlarge our pool of people interested in and adequately trained to participate in controlled burns. To help us in this effort we applied for and received a grant from the State DNR Conservation 2000 program to conduct a "Certified Prescribed Burn Training" course. The resultant four day course is scheduled for June 4 - 7, 1999 (Friday through Monday).

The course, which will be taught by Bob Stanton of Prescribed Fire Consulting, places heavy emphasis on wildfire suppression activities and strategies. Training will cover the required curriculum for awarding a National Wildfire Coordinating Group Certificate of Completion for courses: S-130 Firefighter Training, and S-190 Introduction to Fire Behavior. At least a half day will involve field work and Bob promises an exciting and information packed four days.

Thanks to the support of the Scales Mound Fire Protection District, classes will be held in the upstairs training room of the Galena Territory Fire Department. Thanks to the Conservation 2000 grant the course fee will be only \$25 which will include lunch all four days. If interested in participating, please complete the enrollment form below and return, with your check, to the Soil and Water Conservation District office at the address noted. Class size is limited so early applications are encouraged. If you have any questions, please call Randy Downing at 815-777-9659 or Jim Rachuy at 815-947-2287.

PREScribed BURN SCHOOL June 4-7, 1999

REGISTRATION FORM

Last Name _____	First Name _____
Street Address _____	
City _____	State _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____	Organization _____
Amount Enclosed \$ _____	
Please Return to: Natural Area Guardians at SWCD, 227 N Main, Elizabeth, IL 61028	

BILL WILL END POLITICAL CONTROL OF DNR

The daughters of famed Wisconsin conservationist Aldo Leopold came to the State Capitol in January. Estella Leopold and Nina Leopold-Bradley joined State Representative Spencer Black at a press conference at the Capitol to announce legislation to restore the independence of the Department of Natural Resources.

Black's legislation (Assembly Bill 82) will end political control of the Department of Natural Resources. Prior to 1995, a seven member citizen board appointed the DNR Secretary. In

1995, however, the Legislature and Governor eliminated the non-partisan status of the DNR. Now, the DNR Secretary is a political appointee who is hired and fired by the Governor.

Black's bill would return the DNR to its non-partisan, politically independent status. "Wisconsin's system of a politically independent conservation agency made our state a national leader in protecting our environment. That's because decisions about our outdoors were based on science, not politics. The recent change to a politically controlled DNR undermines our proud tradition of stewardship of our environment. The newly established political control of the DNR means that decisions about our environment are now subject to political

interference," said Representative Black.

Black pointed out that the law that had kept direct political influence out of conservation decisions dates all the way back to 1927 when the great Wisconsin conservationist Aldo Leopold led the fight to end political control and cronyism in our conservation agency. "That's why I am so glad that the heirs of Aldo Leopold, Nina Leopold Bradley and Estella Leopold - are here today to lend their support." Black said.

"From Aldo Leopold's point of view, the head of a regulatory agency that concerns land and wildlife management should take the long view. When decisions are made, they should not be by a political delegate, but

by a statesman trained in science representing the long view. That is why this bill is critically important," said Estella Bradley, who is a Professor of Botany.

Nina Leopold Bradley, who heads up the Aldo Leopold Foundation, added that her father saw the destructive influence that political control had on natural resource management in the early part of the century. She urged a return to her father's vision of long term conservation based on science and community values.

Black noted that while the greatest impact of political control is likely to be in the future, we've already seen some results of the political control of the DNR. "The DNR has increasingly gone from the role of independent regulator of the mining industry to a booster of mining," said Black. Black pointed to the DNR's role in lobbying against the mining moratorium bill and the refusal of the agency to pass rules to prevent pollution from mining.

Black noted that there has been a sharp decline in taking environmental lawbreakers to court since the DNR became political. He also pointed to a recent decision by the DNR to give the cranberry industry a special exemption from wetlands protection rules. Since 1991, the cranberry industry has contributed more than \$84,000 to Governor Thompson's campaign.

Concerns were also raised that the DNR Secretary has become a partisan political fundraiser. Black pointed to a recent solicitation of lobbyists for campaign funds by the DNR Secretary using his official title and agency name. "Having the regulator of the mining and landfill industries soliciting campaign contributions from mining and landfill lobbyists compromises enforcement of our anti-pollution laws," Black noted.

"It is time that we return to the Aldo Leopold system of

conservation that served our state so well for almost 70 years," said Representative Black.

Representative Spencer Black is the author of many environmental laws including the Stewardship Fund, the Mining Moratorium, and the Recycling Law.

Campions in Native Ecosystems

By Chris Matson

Two native species of campions can be found in Wisconsin: the starry campion, *Silene stellata* and the snowy campion, *Silene nivea*. These overlooked, yet wonderful species are sometimes confused with the bladder campion, *Silene cucubalus*, and the evening Lychnis, *Silene alba*, both alien, which are found frequenting disturbed areas. However, a close examination reveals that the natives are distinct from the aliens.

Easily noticed, the evening Lychnis is hairy, and contains a sticky, hairy, and rather inflated calyx sac at the rear of the flower. The bladder campion, likewise, contains the inflated calyx sac, which is heavily veined as well. Neither the snowy nor the starry campion have the inflated sac. This is the most distinctive, immediate difference. Other differences include fringed petals in the starry campion flower, slightly notched petals in the snowy campion flower, and deeply notched petals in both the evening Lychnis and the bladder campion.

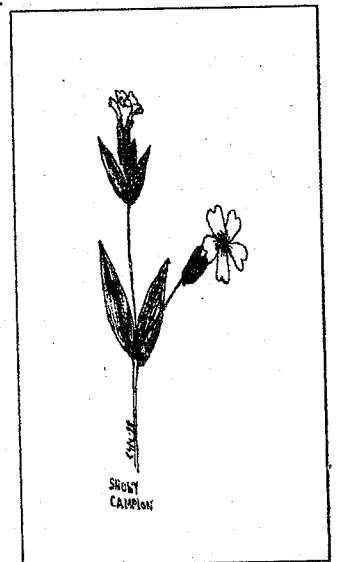
It would be possible, out of flower, to mistake the bladder campion for the snowy campion, as they both contain similar leaves and stems--smooth, opposite, entire leaves on smooth, round stems. The starry campion is much more distinctive--whorls of four leaves, with apparent, alternate, pinnate veins.

The starry campion is

chiefly found in southern Wisconsin, but is absent from the Coulee Region. It inhabits plum thickets, rock outcrops, oak savannas, and north sloped prairies which could pass for savannas without trees. It is rare and local, usually found on fine remnants.

The snowy campion, too often overlooked, is found throughout our range. In the Coulee Region, it is found in sumac thickets, hazelnut thickets, plum and hawthorne thickets, under oaks, in swales in mesic prairies, and in ditches and fencerows. It is locally common, but only found in or adjacent to recovering or intact native vegetation.

I find myself drawn to the campions. Perhaps it is from adolescent days in old fields, looking at all the odd, swollen sacs on the aliens, as the dog chased rabbits and imaginary gamebirds. Now, I have some spots to look for the natives in summers as I bask in the glory of my favorite savanna spots. The blooms of the snowy campion are as pure as whole milk. See for yourself some July or August.



Drawing by Chris Matson

Experience Exchange

Battling Buckthorn

By Chris Kaplan

My name is Chris Kaplan, and I work for a company called Midwest Prairies that operates out of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. In addition to prairie restoration, we also do a lot of invasive species control, particularly buckthorn. The following study was performed at Fair Meadows, a beautiful 400 acre plot of land owned by Gary and Penny Shackelford, whose intentions are to restore the entire property to "pre-settlement conditions". The following information, although not thoroughly conclusive, does show some promising results from a controlled burn targeting buckthorn performed in the spring of 1998.

We performed a controlled burn on approximately eight acres of predominantly oak and hickory forest with a dense buckthorn understory on April 27th, 1998. We revisited the site one month later to see the kill percentage on various sizes of buckthorn. For the first test plot we sectioned off a 4' x 4' area in which the buckthorn were young and very dense. We counted 48 buckthorn ranging in height from 12 inches to 48 inches, with the average being just under 36 inches. All of the buckthorn in the test plot were top-killed, and upon analyzing the base of each stem we found that only 15 had re-sprouted. This study performed on young buckthorn yielded a promising kill percentage of 69%.

The second test group consisted of random buckthorn selected from the contiguous area that ranged in height from 8' to 15' with an average basal stem diameter of 1 inch. We randomly picked 48 buckthorn in this size range and found that all were top-killed, but that 37 had resprouted from their base. The study of buckthorn in this size group yielded a kill percentage of 23%.

I hope our experiences using fire as a buckthorn control method can provide some hope for woodlands and other natural areas plagued with this "disease". Prescribed burning did show quite promising levels of control especially in younger, more vulnerable buckthorn. However the amount and type of fuel available undoubtedly affects the intensity of the fire and thus, the kill percentage. In addition, our weather permits us only a small window of opportunity to successfully complete a burn and some sites simply never dry out enough to carry a fire. So burning may not be the answer to buckthorn control in all types of habitat, but in most situations it remains a powerful management tool. The early successes we had with our study have encouraged us to continue our research at Fair Meadows. We plan to burn this area again next year and are very interested in seeing the cumulative effects of fire on buckthorn numbers. We feel the more we know about using controlled burning in the management of buckthorn, the more confident we will be in its use and effectiveness.

July Cutting of Sumac as a Long Term Management Method.

By Chris Matson

In July, sumac has expended much of its stored energy, and will be weakened by cutting tops since it will have to use more energy to produce leaves again. So goes the theory. How does it work?

I have learned by observing my work and that of others on a local goat prairie for several years, that this technique can provide initial partial successes, such as excellent, spontaneous reestablishment of grasses and forbs into the cut area. If your goal is eradication of the sumac, though, you better try another method, as I have yet to see sumac succumb to actual death from cutting once a growing season. If you are vigilant and cut more than one time in a growing season, you may or may not experience more decline than I, but this is not yet substantiated through direct, long term observation. Perhaps another prairie enthusiast has tracked multiple cutting of sumac during each growing season for some time?

Swarming Locusts!

By Chris Matson

I would like to hear more about long term attempts to control black locust. Do it for the dozens of our members who have yet to experience why I recommend complete eradication ASAP, using cutting/girdling in combination with herbicide applications to entire stands of stumps/girdles! I only use herbicides as a last resort, but this is one problem that warrants aggressive attack.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER MEETINGS

Mon., May 10 Chapter board meeting at 7pm at Bluestem Farm, S5920 Lehman Rd. Baraboo. (Scott Weber, Muffy Barrett, 608-356-0179) Early bird at 6pm.)

PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER EVENTS

Sat., Apr. 3 Pasque Flower Hike on Muralt Bluff Prairie at 1pm. Meet at parking lot 1.5 miles east of Hwy 59 on Hwy 39. John Ochsner as guide.

Sat., May 8 Hike Abrahams Woods at 1pm. Meet at parking lot 0.5 miles west of Hwy 59 on Oliver Rd. Inventory garlic mustard with John Ochsner.

Sat., June 12 Parsnip pull workday at Honey Creek, 4th Ave West, Monroe. Hosts, George and Kay Barry, 608-325-6147.

MEETINGS

Tues., Apr. 6 Prairie Bluff Chapter meeting, Turner Hall Ratskellar, Monroe, at 7:00pm.

Tues., May 4 Kitten Tail Prairie Walk at 5:30pm, followed by pot luck at 6pm and meeting at 7pm at the Marshall Bluff Bowhunters Club, Monticello.

Tues., Jun. 1 Prairie Bluff Chapter Meeting at Monroe Honey Creek Park, 4th Ave. West, Monroe at 7pm.

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER EVENTS

Tues Mar.30 Work party Kalscheur's Savanna, 9am until noon.

Sun., Apr.11 Work party at Vale, from 10am to noon.

Thur. Apr.15 Work party at Kalscheur's Savanna, from 10am to ? for a burn.

Sat., Apr.24 Work party at Bush Clover Prairie, 10am to ? for a burn.

Sat., May 1 Work party at Thomas Wet Prairie, 10am to ? for a burn.

Sun., May 2 Work party at Heather's Prairie, 10am to noon.

Sat., May 6 Work party at Vale, from 10am to noon.

Sat., May 15 Work party at Bush Clover Prairie, 10am to noon.

Sat., Jun. 5 Work party at Heather's Prairie, 10am to noon.

Sun., Jun. 6 Work party at Vale, from 10am to noon.

Sat., Jun. 12 Thomas Wet Prairie site assessment, 10am to noon.
note: For directions or further information regarding any of the work parties listed above, see Southwest Chapter news.

MEETINGS

Sun., Apr. 18 Annual SWC meeting at Gary Eldred's home, 1492 Sleepy Hollow Rd, Boscobel at 1pm.

Sun., May 16 Chapter meeting at the home of Don Hagar, Richland Center. For directions, call 608-647-6628.

Sun., Jun.21 Chapter meeting at home of Sue Linder, 505 Airport Rd., Boscobel at 1pm.

COULEE REGION CHAPTER EVENTS

Sat., Apr. 17 Hixon Forest burn, 10am. See chapter news for details.

MEETINGS

Sat., Apr. 3 Chapter meeting at UW-LaCrosse, Cowley Hall room 3005, at 10am. See chapter news for directions.

Sat., May 1 Chapter meeting at UW-LaCrosse, Cowley Hall room 3005, at 10am. See chapter news for directions

Sat., Jun. 5 Chapter meeting at UW-LaCrosse, Cowley Hall room 3005, at 10am. See chapter news for directions

WEST CENTRAL CHAPTER EVENTS

Thur., Mar. 25 Prairie Plants Slide Show and Speakers Bureau Training, WITC, New Richmond, 6:30pm. See Chapter news for details.

Sat., Mar. 27 Burn School, coordinator Harvey Halvorsen. Details to be announced.

Thur., Apr. 22 Field Season Smorgasbord, Hudson, 7pm. See details in chapter news.

GENERAL CALENDAR

Sun., May 16 TPE Board Meeting, Dodgeville

EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER

New Project - School Section (Mazomanie) Bluff

By Rich Henderson

In January the Empire-Sauk Chapter finalized a formal agreement with the Village of Mazomanie to recover and manage a dry bluff prairie fringed in places with pre-settlement open-grown bur oaks. The site has over 12 acres of prairie, is home to one of the richest prairie leafhopper communities in the state, and the village property has a deed restriction to keep it in its natural state. We did not waste any time in getting to work on the site, which has become overgrown with red cedar and other woody plants in recent years. Three very successful work parties were held in January and February with 40 participants, 2/3 from the local community and the rest TPE members. These efforts cleared about 20 % of the red cedars, but the most rewarding accomplishment was the liberation of an old, but still very healthy, lone bur oak (see photo). This tree was already quite large in a 1911 photo of the bluff. If you would like to help out with the recovery and management of this bluff prairie and savanna, contact site steward Kay Bongers (767-3576).



April 6th Vote is Crucial for Future of Prairie Preservation in Dane County.

On April 6, Dane County voters will have a chance to vote YES on an advisory referendum which would add \$30 million over 10 years to the existing county parks budget in order to purchase and protect more natural resource areas, parks, and trails. Up to 20% of these funds could be used as grants to Dane County cities, villages, towns, and nonprofit conservation organizations, including The Prairie Enthusiasts, to protect environmental resources.

The New Conservation Fund money would be used to buy land to protect prairies, savannas, wetlands, and other natural resource and recreational areas identified in the *Dane County Parks and Open Space 2000 Plan*. The additional \$30 million would augment the existing county budget for parks, bringing the total

available in the coming decade for land acquisition, park land management, and grants to approximately \$40 million. County Executive Kathleen Falk, who supports the referendum, has suggested that funding for the \$30 million would come from either a one-twelfth cent addition to the sales tax or by a bond issue which is estimated to cost the owner of a median valued (\$135,000) home between \$14-\$22 annually, or about \$1.16 - \$1.83 a month.

With the continued pace of growth and development the only way to protect the remaining scenic, geologic, and biotic features of Dane County for our children to enjoy is to purchase them. Although Dane County has appropriated more than \$1 million each year over the past several years to protect critical natural resource lands, land prices are increasing faster than the current level of funding allows these lands to be purchased. Each year opportunities to buy critical prairie, savanna, and woodlands for wildlife and park and recreation lands from willing sellers are missed. The additional \$30 million approved by a YES vote on April 6th will give Dane County the ability to protect these invaluable resources along the Ice Age Trail, Nine Springs E-Way, Black Earth Creek, and other parks and resource areas in time.

Support for the referendum is diverse and non-partisan: those urging a YES vote include the Madison Area Builders Association, the Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation, Realtors Association of South Central Wisconsin, Madison Audubon Society, the Ice Age Park & Trail Foundation, Capital Community Citizens, Urban Open Space Foundation, and Lake Waubesa Conservation Association, among others.

Please help assure consistent funding for preservation of prairies, savannas, and other extensive natural resource areas in Dane County by voting YES on April 6th for the Conservation Funding referendum. Please volunteer to help spread the word about this important conservation opportunity by calling Margaret McEntire at 249-0062. Contributions to help pass the referendum can be mailed to: Citizens for the Conservation Fund, P.O. Box 3434, Madison 53704-0434. -- Gary Werner, Citizens for the Conservation Fund.

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

Coulee Region Chapter to form "partnership" with Fort McCoy

By Chris Matson

On July 1, 1998, I stood on a towering sand foothill, looking out over the "Badger Impact Area", a grassland laced with four wheel drive vehicle trails, spreading out over a couple square miles of former weapons training area. The rising and falling call of upland sandpipers was heard every few seconds, and

we spotted several of these birds flying hither and thither as we discussed exotic plant management. Kim Mello, Director of Fort McCoy's Fish and Wildlife Division, showed me a map of the leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) distribution documented in the area. The open grassland habitat of the area was impressive. Still, you would be likely jerked to attention by the urgent need to remove these exotic perennials from the fort's otherwise highly intact grasslands. The problem is that leafy spurge is not negatively impacted by traditional management, such as burning, cutting, or outcompeting. Herbicides, a last resort, are applied at strategic times to attempt eradication. Lately, flea beetles have been introduced to biologically control the "spurge scourge."

Kim took me to another area, known as the "brome site". Smooth brome has overtaken a portion of this site's vegetation. In addition, other impacts such as spoil dumping of soils from other sites creates unusual mounds of dirt vegetated with exotics. At this point, I volunteered to develop a written plan to mitigate this site over several years. Then Kim and I set up a meeting between his crew and a couple of TPE members who thought we could assist with his brome quandary.

Kim's crew and I met in Westby and traveled to two places on July 10. We stopped to see progress on a formerly quackgrass dominated site along the west fork of the Kickapoo River. In its third growing season since reintroduction of native grasses and forbs, the site is readily establishing into native grassland and the exotics are decreasing in dominance. What may startle the reader is that NO TILLING or HERBICIDE application was used to prepare the site: interseeding was employed. This method works well in quackgrass, smooth brome, redtop, bluegrass and appears to be initially successful in tall fescue on light soil. Basically, seed is scattered or drilled following removal of the litter and thatch buildup by either burning or grazing the target area. This is followed by mowing the first growing season, mowing or burning the second growing season, and burning thereafter.

After examining the quackgrass site, we moved on to another property nearby. The owner, Greg Nessler, showed us interseeded plantings in their fifth, fourth, third, second, and first growing seasons. The fifth year interseeding is a wonderful facsimile of late season remnant prairie vegetation.

The Fort McCoy crew expressed enthusiasm at the idea of simple site preparation through a well timed prescribed burn. They liked the idea of not opening the sod, especially with huge populations of exotics in the vicinity (sweetclover, knapweed, and leafy spurge). They also voiced enthusiasm for methods that can defeat a few exotics through direct competition and alteration of conditions using prescribed burns. Greg uses herbicides on his land ONLY AS A LAST RESORT, as there are desirable natives present which are as important as the introduced natives we use in our

seed mixes. Because Greg did not spray his brome, he has discovered turk's cap lilies and bottle gentian, cupplant, and Canada anemone which he did not introduce.

We envision that our contribution to the partnership will include two workdays each year at the fort. This would involve the gathering of information on plant and animal populations, seed collection, removing spoil material, mapping populations of plants of special interest for seed collection, and general "pitching in" on odd projects related to the prairie and oak ecosystem on the grounds.

Let us help with the wild lupine and Karner blue butterfly population's future. To find out more, or to help, call Kim Mello at the fort at (608) 388-5459.

Change in Meeting Location

The Coulee Region Chapter has met each of the first few months of 1999, and a growing membership is overwhelming the old meeting location. We will now be meeting at Cowley Hall at UW-LaCrosse, Room 3005, which is a biology conference room on the third floor. Cowley Hall is on the corner of Pine street and East Avenue on the southwestern part of campus. We are still meeting on the first Saturday of the month at 10:00 a.m. Although this is being written prior to the creation of a workday schedule, one will be created by the publication date. Contact Chris Matson to obtain information on local events. One event in which you can participate is the Hixon Forest burn on the upper Bluff Prairie/Thompson Prairie area, behind the FA weather station, scheduled for Saturday, April 17 at 10:00 a.m. Call (608) 784-0303 for more information or directions.

CRC's Historian

Anna Motivans has successfully competed for the chapter historian role! Send any pictures, slides, or historical information on our chapter or on prairies in our chapter area to Anna Motivans, 1246 Cliffwood Lane, La Crosse, WI 54601.

CRC's Communications Coordinator

Byron Annis has accepted responsibility for managing coordination of e-mail addresses and electronic communication for the Coulee Region Chapter.

Transforming a Landfill to Prairie

The Town of Onalaska landfill, a 7 acre superfund site, is being replanted to over 60 species of prairie plants using interseeding as the planting method. Plans include the future creation of walking paths with educational points of interest. Among others, Jim Nissen (USFWS), Chris Matson (TPE, Corvus Land Restorations) and Raymond Hubley (American Fisheries Society) have donated seed and time towards this project's coordination. A sign will be built, including mention of The Prairie Enthusiasts as contributing towards this worthy project.

Hixon Forest is Changing It's Appearance

Hixon Forest Nature Center continues to expand its prairie and savanna projects. Burns include prairie-woodland burns, rather than just prairie burns. This is leading to hopes of recovering savanna areas becoming available for examination. These burns are being conducted using topographic firebreaks, rather than arbitrary fireline choice. The whole possibility for a more natural "Hixon ecosystem" in Hixon "Forest" seems to be increasing. Wanted: Someone who likes lots of black locust wood for whatever they wish. Contact Barb Voelker (608) 784-0303 to discuss black locust removal at Hixon Forest, or call Chris Matson.

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS

Chapter Honors Jim Rachuy at Banquet

The officers of NIPE decided to honor Jim, the NIPE Chapter President, for his unswerving devotion to conservation issues and unselfish dedication of his personal time and resources. Jim has the following achievements to his credit:

- Jim has been a Prairie Enthusiast since 1989;
- He was instrumental in starting the NIPE chapter in 1993;
- He made the first contact which secured TPE ownership of Elmoville Prairie;
- He organizes yearly seed collecting and prairie restorations on NIPE members' acreage;
- He has dedicated 65 private acres of ongoing prairie restorations to a conservation easement;
- He served on the local Redevelopment Authority for the decommissioned Savanna Army Depot and worked to keep sensitive prairie remnants from being developed;
- He started the Driftless Area Partnership in 1997 and secured NIPE grants totaling \$51,000 for three projects.

In recognition of all these outstanding achievements, the chapter presented him with a \$100 gift certificate from Barnes and Noble at the banquet and thanked him for his good works on behalf of NIPES, TPE, and the environment.

SOUTHWEST WI CHAPTER

Southwest Chapter Winter Work Parties

Vale Prairie. This Green County remnant was purchased in 1992 and the 12 ½ acre buffer zone surrounding the 3 ½ acre remnant is being gradually returned to prairie. We have scheduled three work parties to remove the woody vegetation: April 11, from 10am to noon; May 6, from 10am to noon and June 6, from 10am to noon. Of course, volunteers are welcome to stay longer! Bring a lunch and we'll provide the beverages. If in doubt about weather or site conditions, call Gary Eldred at 608-375-5271.

Directions: From Hwy 69, turn east onto Hwy 39. At Purinton Rd turn east. Proceed to Schneeberger Rd and

turn north 0.2 miles, take the farm lane west (trees are on south side of lane, and crop land is on north side).

Kalscheur Savanna. This 20 acre Iowa County remnant was donated to TPE in 1994. Much work has been done to decrease the canopy on the wooded portion of the site. We have scheduled a work party and a burn day: the work party will be March 30, from 10am to noon, the burn will be April 15 starting at 10am. Bring your own lunch and we will provide the beverages. If in doubt about weather or site conditions, call David Lowe at 608-935-9586.

Directions: from Hollandale Co. Rd K south about 2 miles from Hwy 39. Site is on left, (east side of road). Look for parked cars along road.

Bush Clover Prairie. This three acre Grant County remnant was purchased in 1989. Although it is the smallest property we own, it is home to wild quinine, Hill's thistle, marbleseed, pale purple coneflower, and prairie bush clover. We have scheduled a work party and a burn for Bush Clover. The burn day is April 24, starting at 10am, and the work party is May 15, from 10am to noon. Bring a lunch and we'll provide the beverages. If in doubt about site or weather conditions, call Walter Mirk at 608-988-4760.

Directions: take Hwy 61 north of Lancaster, and turn left on Co.Rd K. Proceed about four miles and turn left (west) on Badger Rd. Go around curve and prairie is on the right.

Heather's Prairie. Heather's Prairie is a 15 to 20 acre prairie pasture in Grant County. The Southwest Chapter has a management agreement with the owners and has intensified its efforts to restore the site in recent years. Two work parties are scheduled to remove woody vegetation: May 2 and June 5, from 10am to noon. Bring lunch and we'll provide the beverages. If in doubt about site or weather conditions, call Gary Adams at 608-624-5797.

Directions: from Fennimore, take Hwy 18 west to Pine Rd. Turn left (east) on Graham Rd., then right (south) on Mt. Ridge Rd. to fire number 12109.

Thomas Wet Prairie. This 13.66 acre remnant was TPE's first purchase. In 1988 we paid a mere \$4,700 for this wet prairie, one of the rarest of prairie communities. A site assessment will be conducted from 10am to noon on Saturday, June 12. This remnant is located along Grant County Hwy G, 7.5 miles south of Muscoda, and 8 miles north of Hwy 18 (Hwy G intersects Hwy 18 2.0 miles west of Montfort).

Heartfelt Thanks

By Gary Eldred

As president of the SW chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts, I meet and talk with a lot of people each year. About a year ago, I had the privilege of meeting a gentleman from Madison by the name of Bill Graham, and what a nice fellow he is! Bill has a passion for growing prairie seedlings and planting hundreds of acres of seed production orchards and has been rewarded with

success. He has spent hours showing me his operations and I've been very impressed. Last year when our chapter asked for donations to help pay for our Truax drill, Bill made a big donation towards that effort. Thanks to Bill and others, our drill is now paid for and it will go on to plant hundreds, perhaps thousands of acres of native grasses and forbs to provide wildlife habitat.

More Thanks!

The Southwest Chapter would also like to thank Cheryl B Budack and the Stitzer Economic Development Committee for their kind gifts to the TPE funds.

Dodgeville Interchange Prairie Planting – A New SWC Project

By David Lowe

Last fall, Gary Eldred and I went to a Dodgeville City Council meeting with a proposal to plant prairie on the edge of town. We also proposed that the city officially adopt a threatened or endangered prairie plant (Gary suggested the pale purple coneflower – *Echinacea pallida*). The council unanimously voted to accept the proposals, and as far as we know, Dodgeville is the first city in the nation to adopt a rare prairie plant. The area we selected for the plantings is the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) owned interchange on the northeast side of Dodgeville. Much of the interchange is above the road level which will offer protection for the flyways of nesting grassland birds moving to and from the planted areas. The interchange has four parcels that in total contain over 24 acres. The largest parcel (9.9 acres) has a nice oak savanna, a small spring, and a historic tailing pile of stone from lead and zinc mining.

Gary and I met with Mark Martin (DNR), Dick Stark (DOT), and some Iowa County supervisors this winter and visited the site for assessment. All who attended the meeting thought the planting was a good idea, and pledged various types of support.

Gary and I thought that it would be a good idea to get some local groups involved in the project (collecting seed) to promote a broader base of community support and to provide us with more local seed to create more species diversity in the planting. In February, I spoke at the Uplands Garden Club, which then voted to lend it's name and support to the project (for which we are very grateful). Dick Stark supplied large maps of the site, which will help us plan the project. Thanks a million, Dick! A DOT permit is the next step, and after we receive that we can start management. We plan to burn the two smallest parcels in April, and the DOT will supply a flagman if we create too much smoke (which shouldn't be a problem). Mark Martin will supply some seed of local genotype that was raised by the DNR. Gary, Steve Hubner and I will augment DNR seed with various forb types we have collected from Iowa County. I will plant the seed in May

with the Truax drill that belongs to TPE's SW chapter. The Iowa County Highway Department has committed to mow the prairie planting until it becomes established. This summer and fall, we will collect seed for the two largest parcels which will be planted in the spring of 2000. I will be leading a seed collecting crew and will probably be actively collecting from June to November. Anyone who would like to participate in this project can call me at 608-935-9586. I will continue to report how the project is progressing.

PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

Area naturalist is against Walters Road development

by Ryan Amundsen *Daily News staff writer The Beloit Daily News 2/5/99*

A proposal to extend sewer lines down Walters Road in the Town of Beloit has one resident posing environmental concerns. Rob Baller, a devout environmentalist, addressed those concerns at a meeting held Monday night before the town Board of Supervisors. "Land in its natural state, clothed with native vegetation and free of contaminants or erosion, exerts no cost on the people. It sends no children to school, asks no snow removal, requires no street repair, or sewage treatment," said Baller in a written copy of the presentation. "It costs nothing to make and is self-maintaining. Natural land, undeveloped, is the least cost that can be possible of any land use, because there is nothing to build or maintain," Baller said. "Only after developing do costs to the public rise because we must now pay for and maintain the structural improvements and services for the people."

Baller said he received no response from the board, but, in a telephone interview, Town Administrator Tim Savage said they welcome the public's opinion. "We always welcome additional input," he said. The area in question involves a 20-acre parcel of land between Walters Road and the Rock River. The proposed sewer extension will allow for residential development. "The 20 acres proposed for development contain an old agricultural field and a remnant of rare oak savanna," said Baller.

The road was paved for the project in 1994, when 55 acres of land were subdivided. Thirty-five of those acres were purchased by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to remain natural. The other 20 acres were kept by the town and the DNR vowed not to interfere. Savage said the town has done a good job balancing prospects for development with environmental concerns.

"We achieved balance by setting aside the prairie," he said referring to the 35 acres sold to the state. Savage said the matter has been on the discussion table since the town's master plan was devised. Baller said there is much worth to leaving the 20 acres a prairie. "This stretch along the river, on the west bank from Big Hill (Park) all the way north to the railroad bridge is a scrap of native habitat. It is not pristine. Like

most places along the river it has sections degraded beyond native recognition," he said.

The town dump has a wetland buried under tons of waste. But in other places, like the DNR land, and like the savanna about to be developed, the habitat still bears remnants of the original ecology, it contains the cogs and wheels of nature as they were for thousands of years until we arrived and improved it all," he said. Some people believe the land in question is prime for real estate, Baller said. "Those in favor of this development will say this land is prime real estate, it is valuable to the town and should be developed to offset taxes. But I must disagree." Baller also mentioned the loss of many economic functions provided by nature. "I would even argue that development cripples or destroys many economic functions formerly provided for free: filtering water and air, creating oxygen, providing habitat for wildlife and peace of mind where none can be found elsewhere," he said. Baller said his goal is to inform and find out what's in the best interest of the community -- not to force his agenda on the townspeople. "I want to find out if this is what the town residents want," he said.

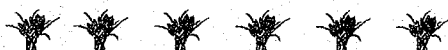
WEST CENTRAL CHAPTER

The West Central Chapter are planning a whole year of educational programs for their members. Most programs occur on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7pm. The schedules may change from the published list in the newsletter, so refer to the Chapter newsletter, or the website for details and updates.

(www.prairie.presenter.com)

On March 25, there will be a presentation at WITC, New Richmond entitled Prairie Plants Slide Show and Speakers' Bureau training. The speakers will be Deb Konkel, WI DNR and the education committee members. This is the new TPE slide show. Whether you have no knowledge of prairie plants or can identify hundreds, you're bound to learn something this evening. Deb Konkel will take the audience on a visual trip through the prairie including a close look at which plants have adapted to dry, mesic, or wet prairie sites. After Deb's presentation, TPE members who want to use this slide show in their community will convene for Speakers' Bureau training. Everyone is welcome to come for the slide show (about one hour) or for the whole evening.

On April 22, there will be a Field-Season Smorgasbord at Hudson at 7pm. This evening offers three to five short talks to help members get ready for the season in the field. We hope to include topics such as: 1) using a botanical key; 2) pressing plant specimens; 3) photographing the prairie; and 4) collecting insects.



THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____ County _____ Phone _____
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SELECT CHAPTER OR GENERAL MEMBERSHIP: MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

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Vernon, & Winona Counties.

☐ Empire Sauk Chapter
Sauk, Columbia & Dane Counties.

☐ Northwest Illinois Chapter
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The Prairie Enthusiasts
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Boscobel WI 53805

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- ☐ SITE INVENTORIES
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- ☐ DEVELOPING EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS
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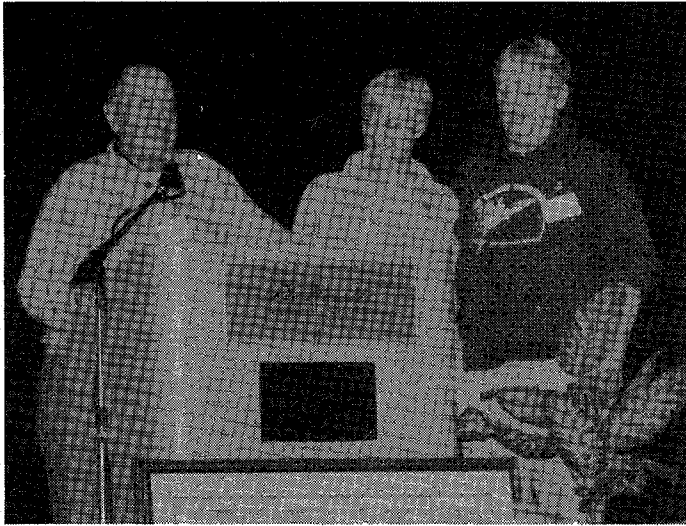
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Can we provide your name and address to:

Other environmental organizations Y N

Other Prairie Enthusiasts in your area Y N

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



Left to right, John Rutherford, Rickie and Jim Rachuy



Left to right, Gary Eldred, Judy Lovaas

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