



THE PRAIRIE PROMOTER

VOL 13, NO.4 Winter 2000

Celebrating twelve years of prairie conservation in the Upper Midwest

TPE SPRING EVENTS

March 1,2, 2001

Plants Out of Place Conference

March 2, 2001

TPE Banquet at Ramada Inn

March 3, 2001

TPE Conference, 2001: A Prairie Odyssey

The **Plants Out of Place Conference** will be at the Ramada Inn, on Clairemont Avenue in Eau Claire. The **TPE Annual Banquet** will be the evening of Friday March 2 at the Ramada Inn, and the **TPE Conference 2001: A Space Odyssey** will be Saturday March 3 at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire. Register via your brochure through the mail, or via e-mail with registration forms at www.prairie.pressenter.com

Our 13th spring gathering will not only reflect on our past accomplishments and honor many TPE traditions, it will also feature several new elements.

First and foremost, you're probably wondering, "What's on the menu?" The Ramada Inn kitchens promise us a buffet with three entrées -- baked chicken and dressing, baked fish, and a veggie stir fry -- plus all the trimmings. We will also have a dessert buffet to enjoy. Children may opt for the kids menu (chicken fingers and fries) at a reduced price.

But the fun will start even before the buffet is open. Each chapter may submit up to three items for a special silent auction to be held during the banquet. The silent auction will be open for bids at 6:00 p.m., while you are finding your tables and catching up with old friends.

We'll start our program by highlighting prairies and savannas championed and honoring the heroes amongst us. Each chapter will describe one activity or accomplishment from the past year, or something special being planned for the coming year. While time will not allow a full report of our activities, we want to

celebrate the diversity of activity and impact which TPE has for our prairies and savannas.

Chapters and the TPE Corporate Board will also present awards acknowledging those special accomplishments and contributions. TPE is a volunteer organization, and while we may work "for the love of our prairies" and without pay, it is not without the reward of recognition for a job well done. Although we can acknowledge the effort of only a few, we know each one represents many others who champion the cause of prairie and savanna preservation.

Please notify Chuck Bomar who will be involved in your chapter presentations, so they may be given reserved seating near the podium.

After the chapter presentations and awards (but before our featured speaker), we will have one "last call" for silent auction bids and treks to the dessert buffet.

Our featured speaker is our own Harvey Halvorsen, past president of the West Central Chapter of TPE, who will focus our attention on "Birds of the Prairie." Illustrated with slides of individual species, and further supplemented with audio of the birds' calls, Harvey's presentation combines both his passion for birding and for prairies. A wildlife biologist for the DNR, Harvey will identify specific grassland habitats which serve as home for grassland birds. He will also help us determine which "little brown bird" is chirping merrily for us. Harvey will be assisted by Ray Forsgren, from the Beaver Creek Bird Club, who is supplying the audio input.

We are also looking for people to join Scott Weber on stage for "a prairie jam session" after the banquet. If you have an instrument, and want an opportunity to play, contact Chuck Bomar (715-232-8133 or bomarc@uwstout.edu <mailto:bomarc@uwstout.edu>).

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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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Coulee Region Chapter

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West Central Wisconsin Chapter Contact:
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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 can e-mail their submissions to aimtpe@mvt.net using MS word or text files. Please do not format. Letters and articles 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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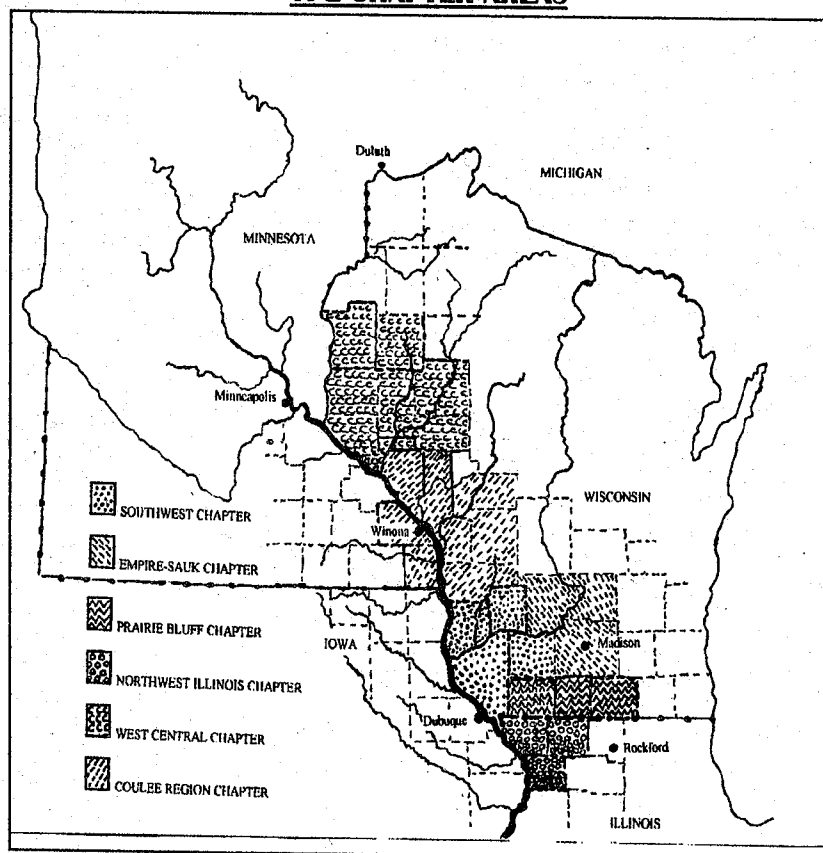
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TPE CHAPTER AREAS



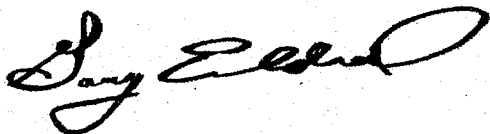
President's Message

As I reflect back on the 12 years I've served The Prairie Enthusiasts, I'm truly astonished at what we have done to preserve prairies and savannas and to educate people about their value.

This coming March we will take another step towards educating people about these special places, their value, and the threats they face. The annual TPE banquet will be the source of this education process, and the West Central Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts is working very hard to ensure that people who attend get as much enlightenment and enjoyment as possible. There will be much to see and do this year. As usual, you can bid on raffle and auction items such as jellies and jams, bird houses and feeders, original art, crafts, antiques, etc. We hope you will be generous. The money that's earned supports chapters' efforts at prairie conservation. There will also be displays and information about many topics related to prairie and savanna restoration and conservation. Talks and slide shows by experts on various subjects will provide attendees with an opportunity to learn about prairie and savanna ecology. Restoration professionals will be there to provide answers and to offer services to people who have prairie and savanna projects.

Another exciting element of next year's banquet will be the Plants Out of Place Conference sponsored by the Wisconsin DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources. This conference will address issues related to the threats of non-native plants to our prairies and savannas. This is a very important topic and I hope you will be able to attend.

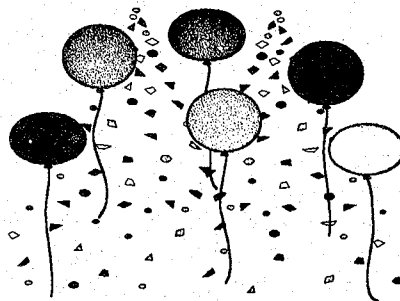
In closing, I would like to say that I hope you will attend next years banquet, and support us in our important goal of saving the rapidly disappearing plants, animals, insects, and micro-organisms that make up the prairie savanna community.



(cont. from page 1)

Finally, once again Gail and Gary Adams promise to supply their beautiful prairie centerpieces to grace our banquet tables. This is a continuation of a tradition that illustrates the many ways TPE members share their talents, and we thank the Adams' for bringing them up to Eau Claire.

It should be a lot of fun -- hope to see you there!



Banquet and Conference Silent Auction and Raffle Information for March 2001

By Carol Benish, Raffle & Silent Auction Coordinator

I thought since many of you have your holiday shopping done and are sitting back looking at all your wonderful decorations and reflecting on the year 2000, you are probably also looking forward to events in 2001 -- especially the Prairie Enthusiasts Banquet and Conference in March 2001 -- right?

Many chapters use the auction and raffle as a source for raising funds for the next year. It is our goal to make sure that each Chapter benefits as much as possible from this portion of the event.

This year there are a few additions and changes, especially for the silent auction.

- i. A small silent auction will be held Friday evening at the Banquet. Each chapter can have as many as 3 items to be auctioned off. The auction will start at 6:00 p.m. (set-up at 5:30), and winners will be announced after our program, with pick up by 10:00 p.m. (There will NOT be a raffle at the Banquet.) Any auction items which do not make their minimum bid may be submitted in the auction on Saturday at the Conference.
- ii. We are offering each chapter free publicity via the TPE Web Page at www.prairie.presenter.com for their auction and raffle items. Just submit a picture and description of the item as soon as possible to my address below.
- iii. Each chapter that wishes to have items in the silent auction and raffle on Saturday must provide at least one person to help set up their items and two people from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. to help with the drawing and disbursement of the auction and raffle items. This is a requirement for each chapter that has any items in the event.

iv. Each chapter will be allowed five silent auction items for Saturday and 20 items for the raffle. Set up for this part of the event will be at 7:00 a.m.

v. **Cut-off date for your list of items for both Friday and Saturday is February 7th so that it can be included in the banquet brochure. Please make sure any items you are willing to donate are communicated to your chapter raffle and auction coordinator prior to this date.** The chapter coordinators are as follows:

Coulee Region Chapter

Barb Christie
414-421-5928

Prairie Bluff Chapter

Ren Zeller
608-938-4848

Empire Sauk Chapter

Rich Henderson
608-845-7065

Southwest Chapter

Gary Eldred
608-375-5271

West Central Chapter and TPE general donations:

Carol Benish
See below.

vi. All winners **MUST** be present to win. Any unclaimed items will be returned to the Chapter that supplied it. Please provide a name of the designated person from your chapter to whom unclaimed items should be given.

We also want to list for those who may be new to this event a few items that have been favorites;

Food and baked goods
Handmade wooden items
Anything for birds
Prairie seed certificates
Books

Hats, t-shirts, and sweatshirts

This is just a partial list. Remember we do not accept credit cards -- cash or checks **ONLY** for purchasing your raffle tickets! (But there is an ATM just downstairs for those who forgot to bring enough with them.)

Start thinking!

If you have any questions please contact:
Carol Benish

Conference Raffle and Silent Auction Coordinator
854 Wyldwood Lane
Hudson, WI. 54016
715-381-0441
cabenish@pressenter.com

BOOK REVIEW

The Last Prairie: A Sandhills Journal

Stephen R. Jones Ragged Mountain Press 212 pp,
\$19.95

Reviewed by Walter Mirk

While browsing in a bookshop last summer, my eyes were drawn to *The Last Prairie: A Sandhills Journal*. I believe that the Sandhills are one of the most hauntingly beautiful places between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, so I purchased a copy without reservation. I literally started reading as I left the shop and didn't stop until I finished.

Author Stephen Jones describes the Sandhills in a series of 20 essays with grace, sensitivity, and often with moving lyricism. This is no small feat, given that the area almost defies description. His description includes the pre- and post-settlement history of the region, and includes vivid portrayals of not only the lives of the Plains Indians, but also of their cosmology and of their futile attempts to resist Euro-american invasion.

I was completely taken with Jones' portrait of the Sandhills landscape and of its non-human inhabitants. Here I have only a minor quibble: his emphasis is on the avian fauna. This is not surprising, given that Jones is an environmental consultant specializing in breeding bird ecology. While the canvas on which he paints his portrait is vivid and dramatic, I would have wished for equal emphasis on the flora and non-avian fauna. Again this is a minor and very subjective quibble. Some people prefer Monet, while others prefer Watteau.

In his penultimate essay, "Transitions", Jones describes two current and serious threats to this special place: proposed dams and accompanying development on the Niobrara River, and corporate buyouts of family ranches. While Jones recognizes that some individual ranchers, pressed extremely hard to compete with agribusiness, continue to maintain irrigation ditches which drain prairie wetlands, and some have begun to plant exotic grasses to increase production of forage, (curiously, no mention is made of ongoing efforts to eradicate prairie dogs), his sympathies clearly lie with the ranchers. I can't help but wonder if his sympathies haven't clouded his analysis of how best to protect the Sandhills. That is the crux of my only serious criticism of this work. I was so troubled by my initial impressions of this essay that I read it not less than three times.

True, the negative impacts of management by some ranchers pales in comparison to those posed by dam builders and developers and to those practiced corporate operations: I've seen prairie cropped more

closely than any suburban lawn and have seen prairie hills bulldozed into flat, circular, and heavily irrigated cornfields; I've seen one of the largest cattle feedlots in the U.S. (150,000 head) and numerous large hog feedlots, the justification for growing corn where it was never meant to grow.

Jones seems to dismiss cavalierly Frank and Deborah Popper's 139,000-square-mile "Buffalo Commons" proposal as some pie-in-the-sky idea "concocted by urbanites" (the Poppers are Rutgers University professors). He also seems to write off Daniel Licht's 2 more modest proposal for a 5,409-square-mile reserve in the northwestern Sandhills. His preferred approach to protecting the Sandhills is public-private partnerships. He cites, for example, the laudable efforts of The Nature Conservancy and the Sandhills Task Force to do just that. While I would not disagree with the importance of and the need for such public-private agreements, solely relying on this approach seems to ignore some basic politico-economic realities.

First of all, there has been a steady decline in family owned farms and ranches and a corresponding increase in corporate operations for at least seventy years, and the pace of this transformation has been accelerating, encouraged by federal policy (let's hear it for the U.S. Department of Agribusiness!). Secondly, since 1980, there has been a marked trend towards even greater concentration of wealth. Since wealth translates into *real* political power, family ranchers truly are, as one rancher lamented to Jones, a "real endangered species." It appears as though their efforts to protect their livelihoods and homes are, ironically, as doomed as that of the Plains Indians, whom their forebears displaced. The prairie suffered to an unknown extent with the arrival of the 19th Century Euro-american onslaught and could well all but disappear with what is now lurking in the wings.

It seems to me, therefore, that while public-private partnerships are immediately necessary, but can only be a stop-gap measure. To rely on them as an ultimate solution seems foolhardy at best. We need to work for the future which is approaching with an ever-increasing speed. If we are to save any significant tracts of prairie, we need to set our sights on far-sighted proposals such as those developed by Daniel Licht and by Frank and Deborah Popper. If we fail to do so, we will need to maintain Jones' "habit of constantly glancing over your shoulder, flinching at any hint of a threat to the serenity of this prairie island" at least for a while. The day is rapidly approaching when we won't want to glance back.

I fear that perhaps I've put too fine a point on my only significant criticism of an otherwise charming collection of delightful essays. Allow me to put the whole of this work into perspective: this small house can't accommodate more than approximately 3,000 books. Many books arrive over the course of the year, and

many leave. Those which remain must be worthy of repeated reading. Don't look for my copy on the raffle table at the TPE spring banquet.

1. See *Wild Earth* Spring 1992, Fall 1995, and Winter 1999-2000,
2. See *Wild Earth*, Summer 1994 and Fall 1994.

THE REMNANTS WE SAVE

By Carmeen Johnston

Sugar Creek Bible Camp Goat Prairie

Location:

Sugar Creek Bible Camp is located in Crawford County near Ferryville, Wisconsin, on County Highway C, about five miles east of the Mississippi River.

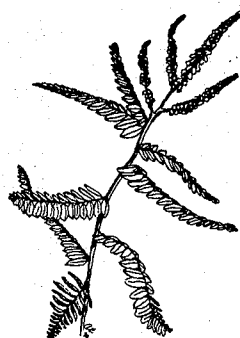
Description and Quality:

The Coulee Region Chapter (CRC) has allied with Sugar Creek Bible Camp in an effort to begin active management of a goat prairie bluff and its surrounding (former oak savanna and prairie) woodlands. The camp director states that the bluff was intentionally burned several years ago, and they are looking forward to help and guidance in its management.

Initial surveys of the parcel have CRC members excited: purple milkweed and two rare snake species have been found here. A large colony of Seneca snakeroot and significant patches of yellow pimpernel have been noted. In addition, interesting tiger beetles were found inhabiting the leadplant. Goat prairies along the Mississippi River and several of its tributaries have many such habitats, with some characteristics of semidesert present in particularly steep, sandy and southwesterly facing locations.

Needs and Management:

Overall, this is an impressive project for CRC to undertake. Do you like snakes and lizards? Have you watched a six line race runner perform pushups on a sunny sandstone outcrop amid starved panicgrass, leadplant, and short green milkweed? We are actively seeking a core group of volunteers to help with this project. Tasks include pulling and monitoring a small to medium patch of sweet clover, aiding in invertebrate inventory, herptile monitoring, and coordinating burn crews and brush clearers. We will likely have the aid of church groups and staff from the camp from time to time. Join the fun! You might see your first Wisconsin lizard along the way! If interested in volunteering, please contact Barb Christie (414-421-5928).



**Prelude to The Land Ethic
by Aldo Leopold**

A review and excerpt. (appears by permission of *Orion*, 195 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230)

Review

Prelude to The Land Ethic – previously unpublished writings by Aldo Leopold.

Perhaps Aldo Leopold's greatest gift was his ability to reexamine his beliefs and his work. Early in his game management career, for example, Leopold believed in the then-standard principle of "predator control": that "fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean a hunter's paradise." He changed his mind, when, as he writes in his essay, "Thinking like a Mountain", he watched "a fierce green fire dying" in the eyes of the wolf he had shot. "I was young then," he writes, "and full of trigger itch," but "there was something new to me in her eyes." What Leopold saw in that green fire would steer his new profession toward approaching game species as members of larger biotic communities.

His posthumously published essay, "The Land Ethic," is another product of Leopold's ongoing questioning of his own work and the work of his profession. The passages below, drawn from the new collection of his work edited by J. Baird Callicott and Eric T. Freyfogle (Island Press/Shearwater Books), illustrate the process of self-examination that would culminate in what has become the credo for the environmental movement.

The first two selections, on cliff swallows and "roadside prairies", were part of a series of short pieces Leopold wrote for the *Wisconsin Agriculturist and Farmer Journal* between 1938 and 1942, some of which he would later recast for *A Sand County*

Almanac. The essays contained "how to" instructions for farmers and pointers on natural history to encourage farmers to recognize and take delight in the natural biotic interactions around them.

In their original form, the essays belong to the genre of nature study made popular by Liberty Hyde Bailey and Anna Botsford Comstock at Cornell Extension, whose pedagogy is imbued with faith that people will act to conserve nature once they learn to appreciate and love it. Yet, even as Leopold was writing some of the finest examples of this genre, he was also questioning its assumptions, wondering whether merely teaching an understanding of and love for nature is enough, whether it will take more than appreciation to preserve nature.



In other writing during this period, Leopold expresses these misgivings. In "The Farmer as Conservationist", which appeared in 1939 in *American Forests*, he addresses "the puzzling questions of conservation economics," and the widely held cultural values that are so inimical to the "human qualities requisite to better land

use." And in a section on "esthetics," from "The Land-Health Concept and Conservation," an unpublished essay written in pencil draft shortly before his death, he describes the dilemma of conservation education in a culture that separates the practical from the beautiful – a division that lies at the core of the philosophical dilemma of environmentalism today.

These two selections can be read as preludes to the radical assessment of conservation education that will appear in "The Land Ethic". As taught, he says, conservation asks only that one "practice what conservation is profitable on your own land; the government will do the rest." Is not this a formula too easy to accomplish anything worthwhile? It defines no right or wrong, assigns no obligation, calls for no sacrifice, implies no change in the current philosophy of values. – *Peter Sauer*

Essay excerpt

Roadside Prairies 1942

by Aldo Leopold

A good test of "education" would be to ask a hundred people what is meant by prairie. Most, I fear, would answer that a prairie is a flat monotonous place good for sixty miles an hour. A few, I hope, would know.

Tall corn and fat Herefords are prairie symbols. They symbolize the greatest mass effort in human history to extract a rich life from a rich soil..... Yet how many farms possess, or cherish, a remnant of them? Just as the barbarians burned the libraries which explained the origins of human culture, so have we plowed under the prairie plants which explain the origin of our prairie empire.

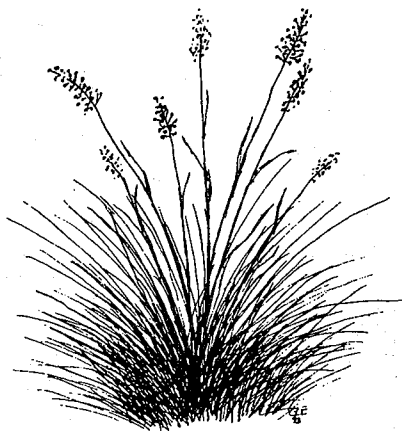
Any prairie farm can have a library of prairie plants, for they are drought-proof and fire-proof, and are content with any roadside, rocky knoll, or sandy hillside not

needed for cow or plow. Unlike books, which divulge their meaning only when you dig for it, the prairie plants yearly repeat their story, in technicolor, from the first pale blooms of pasque flowers in April, to the wine-red plumes of bluestem in the fall. All but the blind may read, and gather from the reading new lessons in the meaning of America.

Any prairie is a model cooperative commonwealth. Unlike agricultural plants, which "hog" water at random, and devil take the hindmost, each prairie species draws its sustenance from a different subterranean level, so that feast and famine are shared by all species alike. The leguminous members of the community (such as prairie clover, trefoil, Baptisia, vetch, lupine, and leadplant) manufacture nitrogen for the rest, and at such a rate as to exceed the annual loss by prairie fires. The prairie community collectively enhances the flocculation of soils, whereas agricultural plants deplete it. From these two characters, nitrogen fixation-rate and flocculating capacity, stems that vast savings-bank of fertility which made us a rich nation. How many "educated" Americans know this?

The best way to start a library of prairie plants is to find the spot which contains a remnant, and then build up other species around it. Prairie dock and bluestem grass are commonly the last survivors. Most of the prairie species can be grown in the garden from seed and later transplanted to the wild; the University Arboretum has thus established some thirty of them. Planting stock can also be obtained where highway construction is destroying wild remnants. It is wasteful to dig wild stock without expert advice, for the roots of some species go down fifteen feet. It is a sad commentary on our Americanism that the

prairie flowers are ignored by commercial seed dealers and nurseries, and there is no literature on how to grow them. He who learns how, is truly a pioneer.



We have thousands of miles of roadside, the outside edges of which are often too steep or rough to mow, already fenced against cows, and kept clear of brush to prevent snowdrifts. Most of this potential prairie garden is being faithfully stirred up by road-building machinery, after which it goes over, for keeps, to quack grass and sweet clover. Why not let these edges alone and replant them to prairie?

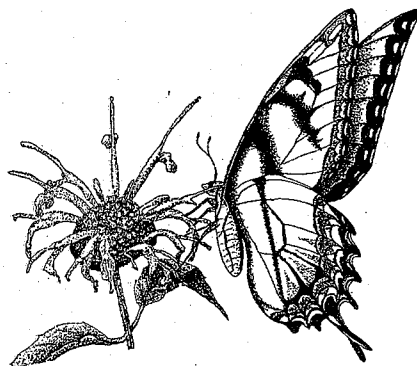
(For the Health of the Land: Previously Unpublished Essays and Other Writings, by Aldo Leopold. Edited by J. Baird Callicott and Eric T. Freyfogle. Foreword by Scott Russell Sander. Afterword by Stanley Temple. Island Press/Shearwater Books, 1999)

Missing Drip Torch

Does anyone know the whereabouts of an old, dirty, drip torch with the name "Henderson" faintly written on it? If so, please call Rich at 608-845-7065.

Conservation Easement Volunteers Needed

The Prairie Enthusiasts needs someone to oversee and coordinate the monitoring of the conservation easements that we hold. The coordinator will not necessarily do the monitoring, but will help locate other volunteers to do the fieldwork and provide them with guidance and assistance. The coordinator will keep track of the easements and make certain that the necessary annual monitoring and documentation is completed. For conservation easements to hold up to legal challenges in the long-term, proper monitoring and documentation is critical. TPE now holds two easements and we anticipate acquiring more in the near future. Contact TPE president Gary Eldred (608-375-5271)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

MEETINGS

Sat.,	Feb. 3	Chapter meeting at 10am at La Crosse main library. Guest speaker will be Bill Carter of Prairie Moon Nursery.
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EVENTS

Sun.,	Jan. 7	Chapter pot luck at 1pm at S3786 County Hwy. S, Avalanche WI.
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EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER

WINTER WORK DAYS (See article and special instructions in ESC chapter news.)

Thur.,	Dec. 21	Red Cedar removal and Winter Solstice at Savanna Hill Farm (north of Cross Plains) from 9am to 1pm. Call Scott Sauer at 273-0904 for details and directions.
Sat.,	Dec. 30	Brush and tree removal at Underwood and Nittany Knoll Prairie (south of Blue Mounds) from 9am to 1pm. Call Rich Henderson at 845-7065 for details.
Sat.,	Jan. 6	Red cedar removal at Walking Iron Co. Park (Mazomanie) from 9am to 1pm. Call Rich Henderson at 845-7065 for details.
Sun.,	Jan. 14	Red cedar removal at Ripp (Madigan Rd) prairies (north of Waunakee) from 9am to 1pm. Call Rich Henderson at 845-7065 for details.
Sat.,	Jan. 20	Red Cedar removal at Indian Lake Co. Park (north of Cross Plains) from 9am to 1pm. Call Scott Sauer at 273-0904 for details.
Sun.,	Jan. 21	Red cedar removal at Ripp (Madigan) Rd prairies (north of Waunakee) from 9am to 1pm. Call Rich Henderson at 845-7065 for details.
Sat.,	Jan. 27	Red cedar removal at Mazomanie (School Section) Bluff (Mazomanie). Call Kay Bongers at 767-3576 for details.
Sat.,	Feb. 3	Red cedar removal at Ripp (Madigan) Rd prairies (north of Waunakee) from 9am to 1pm. Call Rich Henderson at 845-7065 for details.
Sun.,	Feb. 4	Red Cedar removal at Indian Lake Co. Park (north of Cross Plains)

from 9am to 1pm. Call Scott Sauer at 273-0904 for details.

Sat.,	Feb. 10	Red cedar removal at Mazomanie (School Section) Bluff (Mazomanie). Call Kay Bongers at 767-3576 for details.
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PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

MEETINGS

Sat.,	Jan. 20	Chapter meeting at the Richardson Auditorium, Morse-Ingersol Building, Beloit College at 1pm. This meeting is in conjunction with the Rock County Conservationists' Butterfly Garden Program.
Tues.,	Feb. 6	Chapter meeting at The Norseman, 213 E. Milwaukee, Argyle. Dinner will be at 6pm, followed by a meeting at 7:15pm.
Tues.,	Mar. 6	Chapter meeting at Turner Hall Ratskellar, 1217 17 th Ave., Monroe at 7pm.

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER

MEETINGS

Sun.,	Jan. 21	Chapter meeting at the home of Don Hagar at 1pm. Call 608-647-6628 for directions.
Sun.,	Feb. 18	Chapter Meeting at the home of Sue Linder at 1pm. Call 608-375-2668 for directions.
Sun.,	Mar. 18	Chapter Meeting at the home of Sue Linder at 1pm. Call 608-375-2668 for directions.
Sun.,	Apr. 15	Chapter Meeting at the home of Sue Linder at 1pm. Call 608-375-2668 for directions.

EVENTS

Sat.,	Jan. 13	Work party at Bush Clover Prairie, starting at 10am.
Sun.,	Jan. 28	Work party at Vale Prairie starting at 10am.
Sun.,	Feb. 18	Work party at Bush Clover Prairie, starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Mar. 10	Work party at Heather's Prairie starting at 10am.
Sun.,	Mar. 25	Work party at Kalscheurs Savanna starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Sep. 2	Work party at Heather's Prairie starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Sep. 9	Work party at Heather's Prairie starting at 10am.

Directions to Vale: For information call Gary Eldred at 608-375-5271. Directions to Heather's Prairie: For information call Gary Adams at 608-624-5797. Directions to Bush Clover Prairie: For information, Gary Eldred at 608-375-5271. Directions to Kalscheur's Savanna For information call David Lowe at 608-935-9586.		
GENERAL CALENDAR		
Sat.,	Feb. 3	Jordan Prairie Potluck. Host John Ochsner, W 2763 Hwy 59, Monroe. RSVP @ 608-862-3816.
Sat.,	Jan. 20	The Wild Ones conference "Towards Harmony with Nature", at Park Plaza Convention Center Oshkosh. (see back page for details).
Fri.,	Mar. 2	Plants Out of Place Conference in Eau Claire (see article front page for details).
Fri.,	Mar. 2	TPE Banquet (see front page for details).
Sat.,	Mar. 3	TPE conference, "2001: A Prairie Odyssey". (See front page for details).

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

Coulee Region Prairie Enthusiasts Summer and Fall 2000 Events Accomplished

In August and September, we met with a board representative of the Kickapoo Reserve and representatives from Sugar Creek Bible Camp to discuss restoration and management plans

On August 11 and 12, we hosted a booth at Viroqua Wild West Days to distribute information and to answer questions about prairie and oak savanna. On October 28, six chapter members met at the Mary Lee and Lloyd Croatt property to burn brush and prairie. On November 11 chapter members attempted a burn at a five acre restoration site on the Kickapoo Reserve. Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate. It was too wet.

My Prairie by Mary Lee Croatt

After writing about my "weed rage", the response I received from my friends was amazing to me. My roommate from college clearly questioned my sanity. "Is work all you do? And why?" I reiterated my passion for the earth and my aim in preserving wild spaces for future generations.

Even though it is hard work, we do love it. We stop to take in the scenery which is incredible. We have a 220 foot steep wooded ridge, a flat valley with a river running through it (a premium trout stream), a small oxbow pond, a very small vernal pond, two feeder streams, and a peninsula-shaped bluff with woods, prairie, and

savanna. The spring ephemerals in the forested land make you think you have died and gone to heaven. It is located in western Wisconsin, 25 miles from the Mississippi River and La Crosse, Wisconsin, as the crow flies.

We do other things, like brush cutting, burns, and seed collecting. We participate in the Coulee Region Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts and work together on land restoration. This week we will help on a burn in the Kickapoo Reserve and later burn brush on a chapter member's land. We also have interesting neighbors: Amish, artisits, and the locals, many of Norwegian descent. There are a lot of interesting activities always going on out there. For instance, Norskedalen is a nearby cultural and outdoor museum. In addition, there is an international ski jumping competition in February five miles from us.

I love being outdoors. It restores my soul and makes my heart sing. Yes, there really is fresh air! We have the fun of watching wildlife: a pair of great blue heron, the kingfishers, tree swallows that stealthily patrol the river, hawks circling and catching their prey, a visiting eagle, an occasional osprey, deer, wild turkey, beaver, otter, bats. The stars are really bright. The fireflies and dragonflies are awesome. We don't have mosquitoes. Amazing!

I do smell the clover and enjoy these pleasures of the earth as I work. That is especially what happens when I collect seeds from my prairie remnant and plantings throughout the summer and fall. Nothing is more heavenly than being outdoors on a beautiful day getting lost in the rhythm of seed collecting. In the background I hear a cricket chorus, delightful birdsongs, the gurgling of the river. I feel the sun warm my shoulders and breezes caress my face and hair. Clouds float above me in a vivid blue sky. I am at one with the colors, textures, sounds, and scents of my environment. Freeze this moment of serenity! Life doesn't get much better than this!

In addition to the "weed of the week", I have a "seed of the week". When the seed is ripe, it's time to pick. I carry a few medium sized heavy plastic bags as I walk the land and pick seeds as they mature. Such profusion! Nature is generous in her insurance that the species will continue, if we don't intercept. I pick some seeds for my bag and spread some around the mother plant.

Nature's packaging of seeds is efficiently devised. There are so many clever ways in which it creatively wraps seeds. Monarda and evening primrose shake seed out of their pods like salt shakers. I collect the pods and shake out the seeds later. Rudbeckia seeds need to be rubbed off their core with thumb pressure. Prairie smoke has seeds like nits on fine hair. Aster and golden rod seeds are like fur patches gathered into tight little bundles.

In autumn I wear a pair of textured rubber palmed gloves to strip the seeds off grasses: big bluestem,

Indiangrass, little bluestem. I also wear these same gloves to clean seeds from their casings. Each day when finished, I transfer the collection of seeds into a brown paper bag which I label and date. When time allows, I clean the seeds from their chaff and sort them into three groups for future planting. One is for planting on dry land, another for mesic or medium damp soil, and the last is for wetter habitat. I hang the bags on a couple of clotheslines inside my shed to keep them away from hungry rodents. Here they dry and wait until the first snowfall. Then I sprinkle them on the appropriate ground: dry, medium, or wet. Winter works its magic of freezing to crack seed shells and force them into the soil. Spring will warm our seeds into new life. It is indeed an amazing miracle, this circle of life!

EMPIRE SAUK CHAPTER

Chapter's Brush Mower put to Work

This past summer was the trial period for our new walk-behind brush mower. The season got off to a slow start, but once we acquired a trailer in late June, activity picked up. Approximately 30 hours of operation were logged on the machine. It was used to mow new prairie plantings and fire breaks at the Koltes Prairies, to mow several acres of prairie planting and wild parsnip at Underwood Prairie, to mow areas of brush and sweet clover at Mazomanie School Section Bluff, to mow vehicle lanes and fire breaks at Underwood Prairie, and to mow brush and blackberry canes at Noll Valley Savanna Park. Scott Sauer also used the mower to help The Nature Conservancy by mowing weeds on a prairie planting at the Waubesa Wetlands Preserve. This first summer was definitely a learning experience, but with the advice of Dane County Naturalist, Wayne Pauly (Dane County Parks just started using the same make and model of machine this year), and much study of the owner's manual, I think we now know what we are doing.

The biggest lesson we learned is that the stumps resulting from tree and large shrub clearing should be cut as low to the ground as possible. Stumps over a couple inches in height make for very rough going when trying to mow the area at a later date. In addition, we should walk through sites shortly after they are burned to check for, and to remove, hazards to mowing such as rocks, stumps, and even pushed over metal fence posts (I can testify that hidden fence posts definitely stop the mower). If the hazards should not, or can not, be removed, their location should at least be marked.

Like any machine, the mower requires care and maintenance, but the work it accomplishes is well worth the effort. We hope to greatly increase the amount of hours logged on our brush mower next season. We are always looking for volunteer operators. Having a vehicle with a trailer hitch is helpful, but not a

requirement. Volunteers will be given on the job training as needed. Contact Rich Henderson for details (845-7065).

Our thanks go to Jeri and John Springstead, Julie Hayward and Donn D'Alessio, Kay Bongers, Willis Brown, and Todd Casanova for their recent contributions to our brush mower fund. We are within 10% of reaching our goal of raising the \$2,145 that the brush mower cost – we are just \$220 short. Please send your donation to the Prairie Enthusiasts c/o Jim Welsh, S5685 Old Lake Road, Baraboo, WI 53913.

Field Trip Ideas?

If you have ideas for field trip destinations, topics, leaders (including yourself), contact our chapter's field trip coordinator Mark Martin, (608-635-4160). Trips can be on weekends or in the evenings on weekdays. What would you like a guided tour of?

Do you have any TPE burn equipment?

Please check your garage, basement, and other storage areas for TPE burn equipment (e.g. backpack sprayers, flappers, and drip torches). The Empire-Sauk chapter is taking inventory and some items seem to be misplaced. Contact Paul West (280-8576) if you find anything. If you have equipment assigned to you, please check the item numbers and contact Paul to verify that you have the correct equipment. Also, an old drip torch is missing. It has the name "Henderson" faintly written on it. Does anyone know of its whereabouts?

Volunteers Needed for Landowner Contact

The Empire-Sauk Chapter needs one or more people to help with contacting landowners of likely prairie remnants in the Cross Plains area. We need people to help with compiling names, addresses, and telephone numbers of landowners, and help with writing letters and making phone calls to get permission for TPE volunteers to visit and inventory the sites. Contact Rich Henderson 845-7065.

Volunteers Needed to Serve on Empire-Sauk Chapter Board

Both the development and education chairs are open at this time. Contact chapter president Rich Henderson (845-7065).

Fall Work Party Accomplishments

In October and November, 33 TPE volunteers put in 149 hrs clearing trees and brush on 6 high quality prairie remnants. Thank you to volunteers Merel Black, Kay Bongers, Tom & Kathy Brock, Bob Canter, Guerdon Coombs, Dave Gjestson, Russ Hefty, Rich & Kathy Henderson, Linda Hinseth, Brandi Johnson, Trish Johnson, Tony Karls, Jan Ketelle, David Koehler, Etas Larria, Matt Lechmaier, Roger Mayer, Sarah Pakian, Colleen Reinke, Marietta Ripp, Velda Ripp, Theresa Ripp-Keichinger, Scott Sauer, Henry Spelter, Jason Sromovsky, Josh Sulman, Peggy Traver, Paul West, Kristin Westad, Tom Wise, and Meagan Yost. If you missed out, don't worry. It's not too late. See the work parties listed below. Come and experience the

satisfaction of rescuing prairie remnants from the jaws of death. Remember, in terms of plant and invertebrate diversity, one acre of remnant prairie is worth 100 to 1,000 acres of even the best planted prairie.

Winter Work Days

Your help is needed more than ever this year. We have a great deal of tree and brush removal planned on 7 sites that we manage under agreements, and we are helping Dane County Parks on two of their better quality natural areas as well.

What to bring: Wear appropriate clothing (old and of low flammability: burn piles throw off fire brands). Dress in layers; no matter how cold it is at the start, you'll get hot later. Bring leather work-gloves and **drinking water, water, water!** Long-handle pruners, clippers, bow-saws, and chainsaws are always welcome. However, chainsaw operators must wear leg chaps and head, eye, & ear protection. Of course, treats to share with other volunteers are always appreciated.

Please-Call leaders for directions and to confirm that the work party is still on. We need snow cover for red cedar work, and brush-herbicide work can not take place in rain.

SOUTHWEST WI CHAPTER

Illis Savanna update

Work on the Illis Savanna started this fall and has progressed nicely. Many trees have been removed and some areas are now open and ready for fire. David Lowe has reserved funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and is in charge of the restoration efforts there. Unfortunately, the funding is limited to two or three thousand dollars a year, so the restoration will take time.

The Southwest Chapter is very proud to have purchased this rare site, but we are disappointed in our fund raising efforts thus far. To date, we have received about \$1,200 in donations: that means we have to raise over \$30,000. That's a lot of money, and we sincerely hope you will give generously. If there is anyone willing to help us with our fundraising campaign, please contact Gary Eldred at 608-375-5271. We need your help to make our fund raising goal a reality.

THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____ County _____ Home Phone: _____ Work
Phone: _____ e-mail: _____
Address _____ Business
Title/Address: _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

SELECT CHAPTER OR GENERAL MEMBERSHIP:

☐ **Coulee Region Chapter**

Buffalo, , Houston , Jackson, LaCrosse,
Monroe, Trempealeau, Vernon, &
Winona Counties

☐ **Empire Sauk Chapter**

Columbia, Dane & Sauk Counties.

☐ **Northwest Illinois Chapter**

Carroll, JoDaviess & Stephenson
Counties

☐ **Prairie Bluff Chapter**

Green, Lafayette & Rock Counties

Can we provide your name and address to

Other environmental organizations Y/N

Other Prairie Enthusiasts in your area

Y/N

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

☐ **\$250 ANNUAL CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP**

☐ **\$10 STUDENT**

☐ **\$20 INDIVIDUAL**

☐ **Donation**

\$ _____

☐ **\$30 FAMILY**

☐ **\$30 CONTRIBUTOR**

☐ **\$75 SUSTAINING**

☐ **\$500 IND.LIFE**

☐ **Southeast WI Chapter (pending)**

Dodge, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Kenosha,
Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan,
Walworth, Washington, & Waukesha
Counties.

☐ **Southwest WI Chapter**

Crawford, Grant, Iowa & Richland Co.

☐ **West Central WI Chapter**

Barron, Chippewa, Dunn , Eau Claire,
Pepin, Pierce Polk & St Croix Counties

☐ **General Membership**

outside chapter areas

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

The Prairie Enthusiasts

PO Box 112

Boscobel, WI 53805

I Will Help With:

☐ Site Inventories

☐ Organizing/Leading Field Trips

☐ Developing Educational Materials

☐ Seed Collecting/Planting

☐ Planning Social Activities (banquet, picnics)

☐ Fund Raising/Grant Writing

☐ Stewardship (Burning, Brush Cutting)

☐ Communications (newsletter, articles)

☐ **\$200 BLAZING**

12/3/1999

STAR MEMBER

THANK YOU

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TOWARD HARMONY WITH NATURE V

The Wild Ones have organized a natural landscaping conference to take place at the Park Plaza Convention Center, One North Main Street, Oshkosh, on Saturday January 20, 2001. The conference is scheduled to begin at 8:30am (registration 7:45am to 8:30am) and end at 4:15pm.

The Keynote address "*Take the Opportunity to Pick Up the Shovel and Put Down the Ax*" will be given by Bret Rappaport, the Wild Ones National President. Other topics include concurrent workshops on: weed control; prairie and woodland restorations; wetland

plantings; urban prairie gardens; butterflies; and using natural greenways and natural vegetation to clean water.

The cost of the conference is \$20.00 if you register in advance. If you are a member of the Wild Ones the cost is reduced to \$18.00. At the door, the cost will be \$25.00.

For additional information on this conference or for registration materials, call (920) 233-4853 or e-mail: [**niendorf@northnet.net**](mailto:niendorf@northnet.net)

