

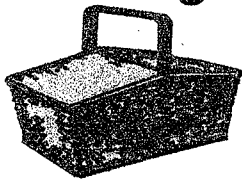


THE PRAIRIE PROMOTER

VOL 14, NO.2 Summer 2001

Celebrating thirteen years of prairie conservation in the Upper Midwest

Annual Potluck and Meeting of the Membership



Sunday, July 15. Don't miss this one! The scenic vistas will be great. Bring the family for a weekend of camping, swimming, biking, and hiking. This year's annual summer gathering is being hosted by the Empire-Sauk Chapter at **Brigham County Park**, next to Blue Mound State Park, which is 20 miles west of Madison, WI.

Board meeting: 10:30 am, July 15 (mandatory for board members, optional for all others)

Picnic: 12 noon (Bring a dish to pass and your own plates and utensils. Empire-Sauk will provide hamburgers, brats, and soft drinks)



Meeting of the membership: 1:00 pm

Prairie tours: 1:30 – 5:00 pm (or as long as you wish to stay)

Camping: Available at both Brigham County Park (first come, first served or by reservation at least 10 days in advance 608-246-3896) and Blue Mound State Park.

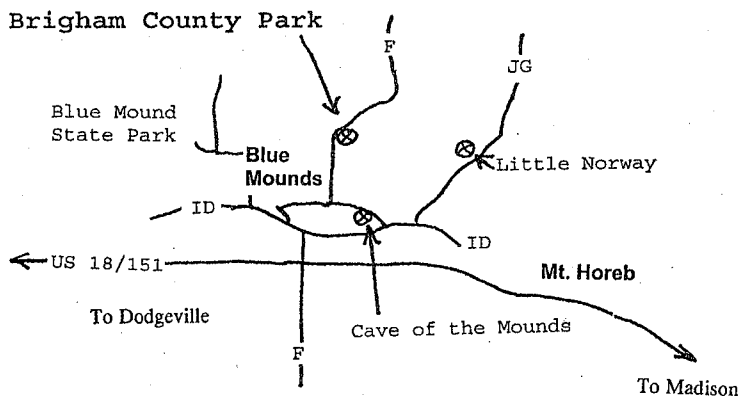
Swimming, biking, & other family activities: There is a large swimming pool at the State Park, and the Military Ridge State Bike Trail goes through the park as well. Little Norway and Cave of the Mounds are nearby.

Prairie Tours: Afternoon tours will visit the proposed Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area located south of Blue Mounds. This is a potential 40,000-acre landscape-scale management area that will have prairie communities and habitat for grassland birds as its focus. The project intent is for a cooperative effort to develop

among local governments, private landowners, and various public and private conservation groups, including TPE. We will be driving through a portion of the proposed area on a former prairie ridge and visiting (hiking) prairie remnants and restorations, including 180 acres owned by The Nature Conservancy, and a 60 acre project of the Empire-Sauk Chapter of TPE. This landscape harbors many areas of prairie vegetation, rare insects, and area dependent grassland birds. There is much to see. Be prepared for long hikes.

Directions: Off of US Hwy 18/151 west of Madison, take Co. Hwy F north through Blue Mounds. Brigham County Park is 0.5 miles north of town, on the right. There is no entrance fee to the County Park.

MAP



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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 2,000 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 can e-mail their submissions to aimtpe@mwt.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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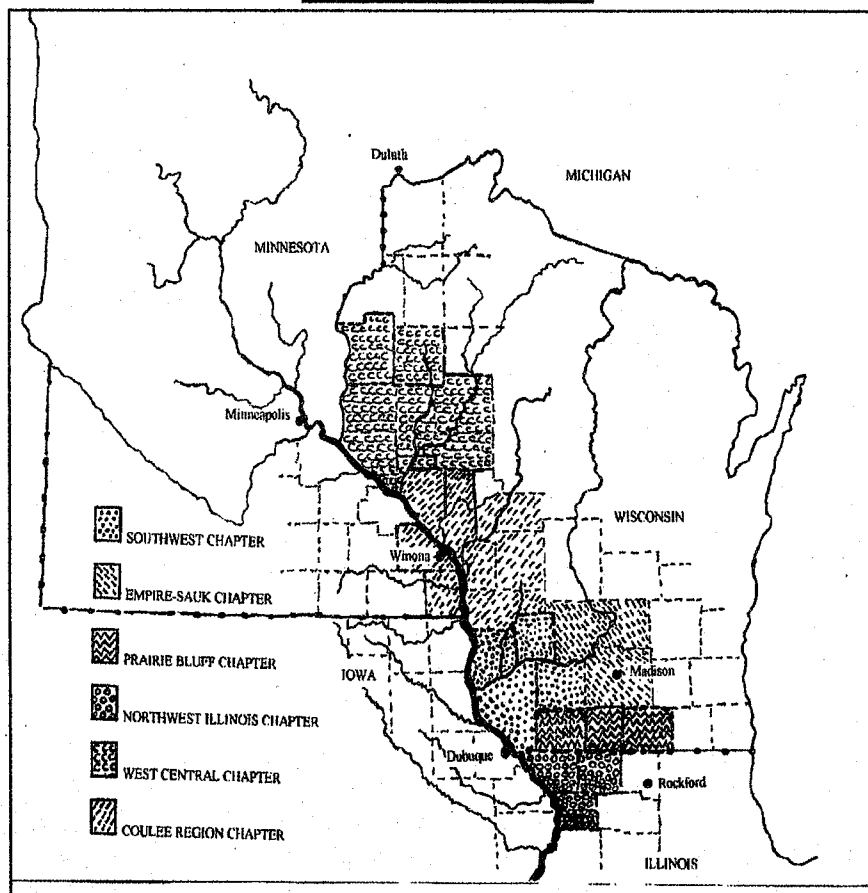
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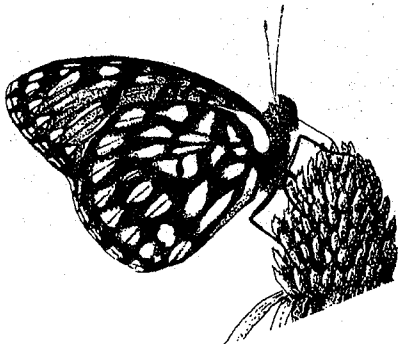


President's Message

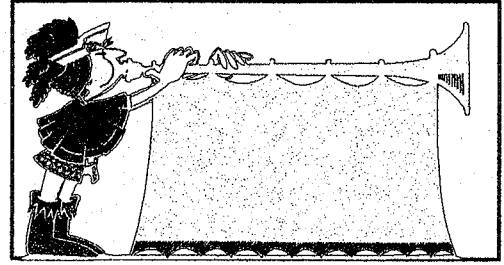
It was about four years ago that the U.S. Army decided to decommission the Badger Munitions plant near Baraboo. Since that time, The Prairie Enthusiasts has actively supported the idea that the land (7000+ acres) be used partly for prairie and savanna restoration. Over the years, a small group of mysteriously influential voices wanted a large area for industrial development. In spite of the fact townships, villages, and landowners favored conservation and restoration of the area for public use, these mysteriously influential voices managed to keep the idea of industrial development alive, and in the center of the debate.

In the face of ever growing conflict, a land reuse committee was developed. It was comprised of local people from all walks of life who were very familiar with the differences in opinion about choices for use of the area. That committee has worked long and hard to develop recommendations for the property's future use. The committee has decided that it will recommend to the county board that the land be restored to prairie and savanna, as well as keeping some experimental agricultural activities in place. It is The Prairie Enthusiasts hope that the Sauk County Board of Supervisors vote in agreement with the committee's decision.

All of the people who have worked so long and so hard on this arduous project deserve our most heart felt thank you!



ANNOUNCEMENTS



HOLD YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

Mark your calendar for the 14th annual TPE banquet and conference, "**Prairie LaCrosse**", to be held March 8 and 9, 2002 at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse. The Coulee Region Chapter is looking forward to hosting a lively get together for all you passionate prairie people.

TPE WANTS YOU!

Rich Henderson, V.P.

It is no secret that our mission of perpetuating and recovering prairies, oak savannas, and related ecosystems depends upon volunteers taking action in many different ways. And, like so many organizations, much of the work seems to get done by a relatively small number of "hyper" volunteers. Unfortunately, we are at the stage where those individuals are starting to burn out. New "hyper" blood is needed. Better yet, just average blood, but much more of it to spread the burden around some, would be great.

Is what TPE does really important enough to deserve your limited free time? Think about this. Our big brother and big sister organizations like The Nature Conservancy and State Natural Areas Program can not do it all. But more importantly, they are not set up to work with private landowners like TPE has proven itself capable of doing. Consequently, many high quality sites are falling through the cracks, and being lost forever to houses and brush invasion. To say that it up to us, TPE volunteers, to keep this from happening is no exaggeration. We are the last chance for many biologically significant sites, and they are significant. The small sites that we save hold biological and genetic diversity, and species associations often missing from the large preserves and restorations that exist or are currently in planning. In addition, TPE volunteers frequently function as the on-the-ground contact or conduit that eventually leads to protection through other organizations.

I urge you to assess your commitment to these endangered gems of our natural heritage and pitch in

where your abilities and time allow. Ask not what The Prairie Enthusiasts can do for you, but what you can do for a globally endangered ecosystem right here in our own backyard. I also ask you to get out and enjoy these sites. After all, that is what it is all about: an opportunity for people to experience and enjoy a rare piece of our natural heritage.

Here are some examples of participation open to you and an estimate of annual time commitment involved:

- 1) Coordinate conservation easement monitoring 20 hrs
- 2) Coordinate field trips and the field trip flier 20 hrs
- 3) Serve on the chapter or central boards 45 hrs
- 4) Lead or participate in "work parties" open
- 5) Become a site steward 50-70 hrs

- 6) Chair a committee at central or chapter level 40 hrs
- 7) Serve on a committee 30 hrs
- 8) Lead field trips open
- 9) Locate and inventory site for plants, birds, insects, etc. open
- 10) Contact and visit with landowners open
- 11) Give presentations and staff displays open
- 12) Develop & maintain displays, brochures, and web sites open
- 13) Coordinate volunteers 80 hrs
- 14) Coordinate site inventory data 80 hrs

TALLGRASS PRAIRIES MAY PROVIDE EARLY WARNING OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Tallgrass prairies. One of America's most endangered ecosystems. While their size has diminished over the years — only an estimated 5 percent of the original tallgrass prairie in the United States exists today — their importance in the ability to predict climate changes has not, according to research conducted by two Kansas State University scientists. Long-term studies in tallgrass prairies may be able to predict and help researchers better understand how ecosystems across North America might respond to certain aspects of climate change, such as global warming, droughts, and changes in precipitation amounts, according to K-State biology professor Alan Knapp. His research, co-authored by Melinda Smith, a doctoral student in biology, is published in the January 19 issue of *Science*. Knapp and Smith compiled data from 11 long-term ecological research sites across North America, selecting only those sites that had the best and longest-term data on plant growth — known as production — and precipitation. One of their goals was to determine which biomes, among deserts, grasslands, and forests, had more variable production and which biomes responded most to precipitation variability. "In this study, we were particularly interested in how different ecosystems respond to variations in rainfall," Knapp said. "If rainfall patterns change and variability changes in the future — as predicted by climate models — how will that affect plant growth and which ecosystems will be the most responsive?"

Knapp and Smith made a simple prediction. If the greatest precipitation variability from year-to-year occurs in deserts, and deserts are the most water-limited biomes, then plant growth in deserts would be expected to change dramatically from year-to-year; grasslands would be less variable from year-to-year, and forests would be the least variable of all. Instead, the data indicated that their hypothesis wasn't supported at all. "It turns out that what we found instead was that grasslands — in the regions where we live — have the greater year-to-year variation in plant growth than in any other biome, even though rainfall variability isn't as high here as it is in deserts," Knapp said. That piqued Knapp and Smith's interest and led them to search for other explanations. "One of the important differences between grasslands and deserts is that grasslands have a higher density of plants, and these plants can grow faster than desert plants," Knapp said. "If you think about a desert environment, there's lots of bare ground between plants. Knapp said even though regions with tallgrass prairies have less rainfall variability, the ecosystem and its plants are well adapted to respond to that variability. "They grow very rapidly in wet years, yet can survive drought years as well," Knapp said. "So we see the greatest variation in year-to-year production in grasslands as opposed to deserts, and we see very little year-to-year variation in production in forest sites." According to both Knapp and Smith, they were intrigued that their analysis didn't fit their initial prediction. "We knew the plant growth and precipitation are strongly related as you move across North America," Knapp said. "We assumed that variability in precipitation and variability in production would also be strongly related across North America. It turns out they're not. One has to factor in the characteristics of the biome as well, the potential responses of the plants, how dense they are, how fast they can grow. You have to factor in these biological characteristics with rainfall patterns to explain these patterns of variation in production across North America." Knapp said although Kansans already have a strong affinity for the state's tallgrass prairies, this research gives the prairies "added value" in terms of their potential role in detecting changes in future climates.

Contact: Alan Knapp, Kansas State University.

aknapp@ksu.edu

785-532-7094

Napoli Aux Naturelle

By Jim and Rickie Rachuy

I like winter. It's cold, peaceful, and pretty. It's the way the world should be from November to March. But not according to my wife. To hear her, you'd think winter was downright dreary.

How she talked me into going to Florida for a Christmas vacation, I do not know. But having been informed we were going, I thought I'd make the best of it. My first stop was the World Wide Web in search of great restaurants and great natural areas to visit.

Of course, I was hoping to find some prairies—and I did. Before Columbus, most of the interior of Florida was dry prairie and savanna—wiregrass and saw palmetto with a scattering of cabbage palm. There's also that most famous of wet prairies, the Florida Everglades. Other interesting habitats include cypress swamp, scrub barrens, and coastal grasslands.

The following are our notes on the trip. The wife wrote about birds and other critters. I wrote about plants and conservation.

Friday, December 1, 2000 — Off to Naples

After a long day of travel, we arrive at "The Villa," the winter home of friends. The neighborhood is upscale with large houses and lush, exotic vegetation. The Villa has a lanai (screened porch) complete with spa, pool, and palm trees. We settle into the "green room" and end the day with a leisurely supper at the rib joint down the road—complete with key lime (*Citrus aurantiifolia*) pie.

This country boy is amazed by Naples. Million-dollar homes stretch on for mile after mile. A bay front lot sells for over \$1 million. The average "faux imperial" house (denoted by scads of pastel pillars) goes for \$500,000 and the larger ones for as much as \$17 million. Amazing.

Saturday, December 2, 2000 — Estero Bay

Up early, blue skies and a balmy 78 degrees. First birds of the trip are anhinga, wood stork, common moorhen, little blue heron, and Eurasian collared dove—all right outside the window. We both get the idea that birding is going to be good.

After breakfast, we head north along the coast in search of beaches. We stop first at Johnson County Park on Lover's Key. We find a nice shelling beach right on the Gulf of Mexico and white ibis, little blue heron, great blue heron, great egret, snowy egret, brown pelican, double-crested cormorant, palm warbler, kestrel, black vultures, and one rather questionable pink flamingo.

Our reports say that Fort Meyers Beach is the "best birding spot in south Florida." Access is difficult, however, because of all the condos. The directions say to go to the Holiday Inn, park surreptitiously in the back

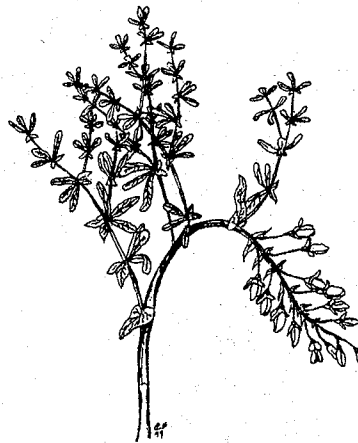
lot and slip through to the beach. Rickie is reticent, but I'm game.

Fifty paces from the car we find an endless sugary-white beach. Just off shore is a barrier island and in-between a shallow tidal pool. To Rickie's delight, the mangrove lining the pool are chock full of birds. There are reddish egret, cattle egret, ring-billed gull, tri-colored heron, glossy ibis, yellow-crowned night heron, green heron, osprey, black-bellied plover, belted kingfisher, and mockingbirds. Unfortunately, we're not prepared to wade the pool to the island, so we'll have to come back another day.

The road along Fort Meyers Beach is lined with houses and tourist traps, but very few tourists. We walk into the Barking Shark Bar for a beach-side lunch and find a fantasy menu of seafood delights. I go for a 'yellowtail' sandwich with my German brew. The wife has shrimp & chips. Boat-tailed grackles and mourning doves join us. Rickie lures the bold grackles right onto the table with tidbits of food and has a good look.

After lunch we scout out beaches farther north. Across Big Carlos Pass, at Bunche Beach, we see blue-gray gnatcatcher, sanderling, and semipalmated plover. On the Sanibel causeway, we see ruddy turnstone and laughing gulls. Finally, at the Sanibel lighthouse we see willet and two magnificent frigatebirds cruising the coastline. Osprey nesting platforms are common and many osprey couples are working to refurbish their nests for springtime use.

Total travel for the day is a leisurely 75 miles. The natural areas around Naples are not only world class, but also close at hand. We finish off the day with a light supper at The Villa.



Sunday, December 3, 2000 — Everglades

Today we're off to a different type of environment—the coastal mangrove swamps. In winter most insects are absent. Nonetheless, we stop to buy repellent because no-see-ums and skeeters still prowl the shady swamps. Now we understand the need for the lanai;

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

MEETINGS

Sat.,	Sep. 5	Chapter meeting at 10am, at Sugar Creek Bible Camp. Exit Hwy C at Ferryville, proceed 5 miles east.
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EVENTS

Sat.,	Jun. 23	Annual chapter picnic hosted by Tom Reb and CeCe Caron, DeSoto, WI. Call 608-648-3681 for details.
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EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER

WORK DAYS for information on ESC chapter work days and events see the chapter web site.

MEETINGS

Tues.,	Jul. 10	Potluck and annual meeting at the Faville Grove Preserve, Lake Mills. See story in chapter news.
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PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

MEETINGS

Tues.,	Jul. 3	Chapter meeting at 7pm at Montesian Gardens, Monticello. Parking at Motor Bank, 400 W. Coates Avenue or village lot off Main Street by the bridge.
Tues.,	Aug. 7	Chapter meeting at 7pm at Briggs Wetland in Rock County. Take Hwy 11 and 81 from Monroe, southeast on Highway 81, then left on the Beloit-Newark Road (east) until you reach Brosteum Road. Take a left (north) and before you come to Cleophas, Briggs Wetland is on the west side of Brosteum. Watch for signs.
		Note that there is no September meeting.

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER

MEETINGS

Sun.,	Jul. 15	Chapter meeting at 1pm at the home of Sue Linder, 206 Adams Street, Boscobel, WI 53805.
Sun.,	Aug. 19	Chapter meeting at 1pm at the home of Gary Eldred, 4192, Sleepy Hollow Rd, Boscobel, WI 53805.
Sun.,	Sep. 16	Chapter meeting at 1pm at the home of Sue Linder, 206 Adams Street, Boscobel, WI 53805.

EVENTS

Sat.,	Jul. 7	Work party at Vale Prairie starting at 10am.
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Sun.,	Jul. 22	Work party at Bush Clover Prairie starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Jul. 28	Work party at Heather's Prairie starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Aug. 11	Work party at Bush Clover Prairie starting at 10am.
Sun.,	Aug. 26	Work party at Heather's Prairie starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Sep. 1	Work party at Bush Clover Prairie starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Sep. 8	Brush cutting at Vale 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

Sun.,	Jul. 15	Annual TPE Meeting and pot-luck hosted by ESC. See story on front page.
Thu.,	Sep. 13	TPE Board Meeting by tele-conference. Phone Kathy Kirk at 608-527-2686 for details.

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

Site History for the Stry Prairie (Gillis) Gillis Prairie State Natural Area

The Stry or Gillis Prairie is a 40 acre project started by the Stry Foundation and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in 1995. The first acquisition occurred in August of 1995. The 5.3 acres cost \$90,000 with \$38,000 coming from the Stewardship program and the remainder from the foundation. In July of 1996 the 5.3 acres and an additional 1.5 acres from Mathy Construction Co. was donated to the city of La Crosse and is administered by the Park and Recreation Department. There is hope for connecting the property to the Hixon Forest Preserve.

Management objectives are to preserve and protect the natural ecological values (20 acres dry prairie and 20 acres oak opening) by reestablishing the natural process of regular fire, and removal of invasive exotics and woody native species from the site. Management

acquisition program. For seven years they would collect 50¢ on every \$1,000 of taxable property. The program has been so successful there's already talk of an extension.

Lynda Riley, the Program Coordinator, says there are many such county programs in Florida. She works with a Conservation Lands Acquisition Committee, an appointed body that reviews potential purchases. Last year they received 46 applications from which they purchased 24 parcels for over \$14 million. Interestingly, back in 1996, the commissioners supported placing the "Conservation 2020" question on the ballot only because they expected voters to reject it.

Farther south in Collier County (Naples, Fort Meyers Beach) voters rejected a similar measure. Here development marches on, helter-skelter, with nothing to contain it. Zoning wars and lawsuits abound. The right way to set aside land is to buy it, rather than harass and bedevil owners into submission.

The evening is spent with Hal, June and the irrepressible Aunt Ida—the very same who has lent her name to a TPE prairie restoration back in JoDavie's County. We thoroughly enjoy talking with Ida about her prairie and later send her a picture of it. The Trader's Café on Sanibel is excellent.

Tuesday, December 5, 2000 — Big Cypress

Today we're off to another classic Florida landscape—pine savanna, cypress swamp, and prairie glade. All this, just 20 miles east of Naples, at a famous Audubon sanctuary named Corkscrew Swamp. Here we find a new visitor's center and a 2.2 mile boardwalk to take us right into the heart of the swamp. Rickie is fascinated by the 'high tech' composting flush toilets, complete with interpretive displays.

Florida was once covered by large expanses of longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) savanna. Native people burned these "pinelands" to improve hunting and to ensure a high population of coontie (*Zamia integrifolia*), a fern-like palm with a starchy root. The fire prevented succession to hardwood forest. In addition, hardpan soils and a general lack of elevation cause these "flatwoods" to often flood during the summer and fall.

At Corkscrew, the savanna trees are mostly slash pine (*Pinus elliotii*) and cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*). Both have thick bark to resist damage from fire. Also present are dwarf palmetto (*Sabal minor*), laurel oak (*Quercus laurifolia*), and live oak (*Quercus virginiana*).

Under the trees we see saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*), and running oak (*Quercus pumila*). On the ground is bushy bluestem (*Andropogon glomeratus*), purple lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*), little bluestem (*Andropogon scoparius*), lopsided Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum secundum*), yellow bachelor's button (*Polygala rugelii*), and star sedge (*Dichromena colorata*).

The cypress swamp is on slightly lower ground. This very old community occurs only where soil conditions

are just right. In mature stands, the dominant trees are pond cypress (*Taxodium distichum nutans*), bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), and strangler fig (*Ficus aurea*). Also present are hackberry (*Celtis laevigata*), water oak (*Auercus nigra*), royal palm (*Roystonea elata*), gumbo-limbo (*Bursera simaruba*), and white stopper (*Eugenia axilaris*).

Other interesting swamp plants include Spanish moss (*Tilandsia useneoides*), alligator flag (*Thalia geniculata*), swamp lily (*Crinum americanum*), leafless swallow wort (*Cynanchum scoparium*), many species of fern and lichen, and a dozen species of air plants (*Tilandsia*). The leather fern (*Acrostichum danaeifolium*) has fronds up to 16 feet and can reach a height of 10 feet.

The glades at Corkscrew are located on even lower ground where the water table is too high for trees. This is a complex of tall grass prairie, emergent marsh, and open water sloughs. On the prairie side, sand cordgrass (*Spartina bakerii*) is the dominant plant. Other wet prairie plants include buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), blue flag (*Iris hexagona*), and water dropwort (*Oxypolis filiformis*).

The marsh is dominated by sawgrass (*Mariscus jamaicensis*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), arrowhead (*Sagittaria lancifolia*), and coastal willow (*Salix caroliniana*). There is some wild rice (*Zizaniopsis miliacea*), gamagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*, here called "Fakahatcheegrass"), cattail (*Typha latifolia*), and common reed (*Phragmites australis*).

At Corkscrew, we heard (more than we saw) great-crested flycatcher, eastern phoebe (more yellow than our race), white-eyed vireo ("pick up the beer check—quick!"), yellow-rumped warbler, blue-gray gnatcatcher, pileated woodpecker, downy woodpecker, tufted titmouse, red-shouldered hawk, tree swallow, and a flock of female red-winged blackbirds. In a woodland clearing we sit on a bench and leisurely study the many waders that have gathered to fish in the shallow pool.

A screech owl (sleeping in a tree cavity) and a barred owl are conveniently on view through scopes set out by wandering docents. We miss seeing the American bittern, bobwhite quail, swallow-tailed kite, pine warbler, gray catbirds, or northern parulas that are often seen here.

Critters seen include redbelly turtle, southeastern five-lined skink, green anole, raccoon, alligator, gray squirrel, zebra longwing butterflies, white-tail deer, and luscious little green tree frogs. The latter are so small they can cling invisibly to the shady side of a culm of grass. We didn't see Florida panther, but this is where they live. Supper at The Villa—stone crab and fresh asparagus. Yum.

Wednesday, December 6, 2000 — A Day of Rest

We take a vacation from vacation. I catch up on the news. Rickie tries out the spa.

Thursday, December 7, 2000 — Rookery Bay

Today its back to the beaches. Our destination is Marco Island and points south. On the way, we stop at Eagle Lakes County Park, a birding hot spot off Tamiami Trail. It's an unimpressive collection of baseball diamonds, outbuildings and retention ponds, but the ponds are alive with birds. We see our first glossy ibis and mottled ducks, also coots, moorhens, grebes, palm warblers, and gators as well as the usual waders.

Next we stop at Briggs Nature Center on Rookery Bay. This area is an intertidal mangrove forest with an associated complex of shallow water estuaries. The mangrove forest is the pioneer community that turns tidal flats into islands.

The red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) is the first tree to establish itself along a break. Next, the black mangrove (*Avicenna germinans*) colonizes quieter, hypoxic or hypersaline water. Finally the white mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*), occupies a zone near high tide. Together these three form a tag team for stealing sand from the sea.

Other pioneer plants include salt cord grass (*Spartina alterniflora*), black rush (*Juncus roemerianus*), and saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*). Birds closely associated with mangroves include a golden race of the yellow warbler, the black-whiskered vireo, and the elusive mangrove cuckoo.

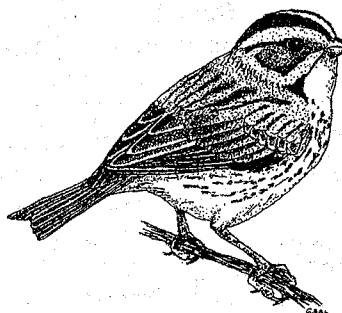
At the Briggs Nature Center the flatwoods are dominated by oak and an occasional slash pine. We're lucky to see an endangered Florida scrub jay. Obviously much studied, this guy has two bands on each leg. We may have seen an iridescent cowbird, but didn't get a good look.

Marco Island lays south of Rookery Bay and northwest of the 10,000 Islands. Like Fort Meyers Beach, it is highly developed with many tall buildings right along the shoreline. Public access is afforded at famous Tigertail Beach. The barrier islands here are mere sandbars, no mangrove or palmetto. Consequently, there are few waders, but thousands of shorebirds.

We see sanderlings, dunlin, least sandpipers, reddish egret 'dancing' in the shallows (a unique series of twirls, hops and wing-lifts used for fishing), snowy and great egrets, white ibis, piping, semipalmated, and black-bellied plovers, willets, ruddy turnstones, red knots, and a great white heron (a white form of the great blue found only in south Florida).

At our feet are sea oats, sand dollars, horseshoe crabs and lots of interesting shells. Soaring overhead, the dinosaur-like frigate birds complete the prehistoric scene.

For supper we dine elegantly at 'Bha Bha-A Persian Bistro' in Naples. I go for the shrimp kabobs. Rickie has the curried lamb.



Friday, December 8, 2000 — Myakka River

Today we head north to Myakka State Park near Sarasota. Our reports say this 45 square mile site contains a wide variety of environments and hundreds of plants, including 96 species of grass. The dry prairie can support 40 or more species of vascular plants per square meter.

Large areas of dry prairie can still be found here thanks to intense restoration efforts. Field practices include prescribed fire to control brush, roller chopping to reduce shrubs to their original height and density, and the trapping and removal of feral hogs.

Characteristic grasses of Florida dry prairie are wiregrass (*Aristida beyrichiana*), Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), chalky bluestem (*Andropogon glomeratus*), creeping bluestem (*Schizachryium stoloniferum*), and pineywoods dropseed (*Sporobolus junceus*).

Important prairie forbs include bear grass (*Yucca flaccida*), winged sumac (*Rhus copallina*), rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccafolium*), large-flowered milkweed (*Asclepias connivens*), bushy aster (*Aster dumosus*), blazingstar (*Liatrix gracilis*), flatwoods sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*), golden aster (*Chrysopsis mariana*), slender goldenrod (*Solidago stricta*), prickly pear (*Opuntia humifusa*), and white tassels (*Dalea carnea*).

Several isolated bird populations occur here, including a non-migratory race of the sandhill crane and the Florida scrub jay, recently split from the western scrub jay due to differences in social behavior. The crested caracara, burrowing owl, grasshopper sparrow, indigo snake, and hispid cotton rat are all characteristic.

The prairie grades into "flatwoods" (*Florida-ese for savanna*) with scattered cabbage palm (*Sabal palmetto*), longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) or slash pine (*Pinus*

elliottii), and an understory of fetterbush (*Lyonia fruticosa*), gallberry (*Ilex glabra*), saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), laurel oak (*Quercus laurifolia*), redbay (*Persea borbonia*), pawpaw (*Asimina reticulata*), sparkleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*), and the invasive melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) punk tree or cajepu.

Interesting flatwoods forbs include button snakeroot (*Eryngium aromaricum*), tickseed (*Coreopsis leavenworthii*), Elephant's foot (*Elephantopus elatus*), hollow goldenrod (*Solidago fistulosa*), poinsettia (*Poinsettia cyathophora*), twinflower (*Dyschoriste oblongifolia*), sweet shaggytuft (*Stenandrium dulce*), alligator lily (*Hymenocallis palmeri*), Florida milkweed (*Asclepias feayi*), and, of course, Spanish moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*).

Here live gopher tortoise, gopher frog, and indigo snakes. Out in the savanna I see grasshopper sparrow, hairy woodpecker, and northern parula. The hoped for crested caracara does not materialize.

Lake Myakka has a boardwalk extending out into the shallows. Of special interest are the sandhill cranes, lesser yellowlegs, and many killdeer. Among the rafts of blue-winged and green-winged teals, we spy one muscovy duck. Rickie sees dozens of tree swallows cruising over the water and hears a Carolina wren (tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea-kettle) calling from the nearby flatwood. The savanna also hosts blue-gray gnatcatchers, yellow-rumped warblers, palm warblers, and fish crows. Turkey and black vultures hang out in the parking lot like so many juvenile delinquents. Savvy fishermen drape tarps over their parked cars while away. The highlight of the day is a limpkin wading in the stream below the dam.

On the way home we stop at Oscar Scherer State Park—more flatwoods and scrub hosting over 30 families of Florida scrub jays. We find one (wearing jewelry, of course) and some yellow-rumped warblers.

Later, Rickie spies an inconspicuous little seafood restaurant off Tamiami Trail. "Grouper and Chips" is an instant hit with us and, judging from the crowds waiting for a table, is a local favorite. The lemon sauce they use on fish is heavenly.



Saturday, December 9, 2000 — Back to the Beaches

This morning we head west two miles to Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Recreation Area. In close proximity we see least terns, Forster's terns, sandwich terns, and royal terns. Snowy egrets, a group of 38 skimmers, brown pelicans, laughing gulls, and cormorants also share the beach. All are busy fishing or lingering

hopefully near a fisherman's bait bucket at the water's edge. Sanderlings, willets, and black-bellied plovers abound in the surf while red-bellied woodpeckers, downy woodpeckers, red-shouldered hawks, and loggerhead shrikes hang out in the parking lot vegetation.

We head north to revisit Fort Meyers Beach. This time we traverse the tidal pool to investigate the barrier islands. What we find is a beautiful little coastal prairie lying just inland from the beach dunes and between the dune ridges in intertidal grassy swales. The swales are low-lying and evidently flood.

Grasses here include bushy bluestem (*Andropogon glomeratus*), hairgrass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris trichopodes*), sandspur (*Cenchrus incertus*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), bitter panicum (*Panicum amarum*), and sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*). Sea oats are important dune builders, are federally endangered, and are protected throughout Florida.

Forbs include marsh pink (*Sabatia stellaris*), sea purslane (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*), pennywort (*Hydrocotyle bonariensis*), railroad vine (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*), beach sunflower (*Helianthus debilis*), marsh elder (*Iva frutescens*), seaside goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*), glasswort (*Salicornia perennis*), and sea blite (*Suaeda linearis*).

In places where the grass gives way to scrub, there is seagrape (*Coccoloba uvifera*), yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*), bay cedar (*Suriana maritima*), saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), prickly pear (*Opuntia stricta*) and snake cactus (*Selenicereus pteranthus*).

Dinner is a delight at the Swan River Seafood Market & Grill in Naples—Crab cakes, fish and chips.

Sunday, December 10, 2000 — Rain Day

This day spent listening to the election boondoggle on television. The local supermarket provides an abundance of seafood for, what else, a shrimp boil.

Monday, December 11, 2000 — Turner River Road

Blizzard conditions in Chicago delay our return (aww, shucks). We head southeast, past the turnoff to Everglades City and north on Turner River Road. This is a lazy birder's paradise. Mile after mile of river/canal/pond right beside the road and glades or swamp beyond. It's the 'dry season', so the wildlife tends to congregate at the water's edge.

The forest is an odd mixture of tropical and temperate plants. There is gumbo-limbo (*Bursera simaruba*) with its fancy maroon bark, tasty papaya (*Carica papaya*), exotic cocoplum (*Chrysobalanus icaco*), muscular strangler fig (*Ficus aurea*), stinky white stopper (*Eugenia axillaris*), and grocery store staples like coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*), cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum*), and lime (*Zanthoxylum fagara*). At the same time, you can find such familiarities as poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*), hackberry

(*Celtis laevigata*), groundnut (*Apios americana*), and red mulberry (*Morus rubra*).

Along the road we see wood stork, anhinga, pied-billed grebe, double-crested cormorant, kingfisher, turkey and black vulture, great blue, little blue, tri-colored and green heron, white and glossy ibis, yellow-crowned and black-crowned night heron, snowy, cattle and great egret, American coot, common moorhen, red shouldered hawk, fish crow, boat-tailed grackle, blue jay, blue-gray gnatcatcher, eastern phoebe, palm warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, common yellow-throat, great-crested flycatcher, robin, catbird, and, alas, no purple gallinule.

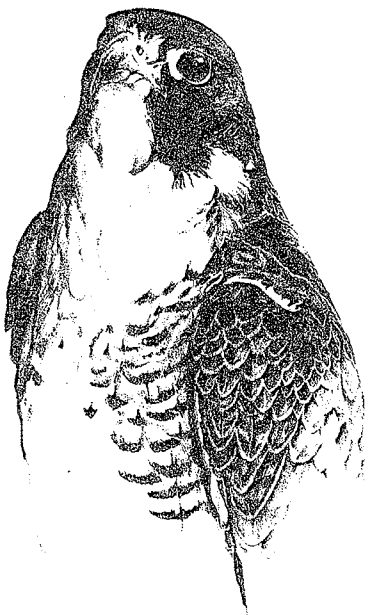
We also find lots of big gators and even bigger mosquitoes (be prepared).

On the way home we make a last run to Tigertail Beach. Rickie needs to dip her toes in the warm gulf waters one more time. Good thing, too, because we see two new species, a couple of American oystercatchers and a marbled godwit.

Our last meal in sunny Florida is at the Amigos Café. Somewhat dilapidated, but packed with Mexican gardeners and their families, this place is too real to pass up. And oh, those shrimp tostadas!

Tuesday, December 12 — Return Home

It was a great trip. I'm glad I went—and I'm glad to be back in the hills of JoDaviess County. Yes, it does seem colder back home. On the other hand, it is more peaceful and just as beautiful as sunny Naples. You can catch us at lonetree@mwci.net.



Prairies Receive Less Than 15 Minutes of Fame

By Mary Lee Croatt

Lloyd Croatt, charter member of the Coulee Region Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts, recently proselytized prairie salvation in New York City. Scavenging corrugated cardboard from his niece's Manhattan condominium basement, he had his sign. With her only marking pen he wrote in bold red letters: "Prairies Need Saving". Leaving his tour-exhausted wife in bed with the television remote within reach, he tucked his sign under his arm and rode the subway to join a crowd gathered outside ABC studios. His wife immediately fell asleep and can only report what she has been told at this point. Hopefully, this article will redeem her for not being a fully supportive, alert Prairie Enthusiast wife!

Anchors Charlie Gibson and Dianne Sawyer broadcast from the second floor above the outdoor audience on ground level. Studio people talked to the crowd. Lloyd held his sign proudly. A couple then asked, "prairies need saving?" Lloyd responded, "Yes. Less than 1/10th of 1% of our original prairies exist today." "Oh", was their response.

Substitute weather reporter, Rebecca Coles, is "into plants". She was to do a segment on spring gardening. Because it was a windy, cool day, a smaller audience of 15 stragglers gathered on a grassy area with a garden staged outside the studio. Lloyd got behind her and dutifully held up his sign. Rebecca gave him a thumbs up gesture. The cameras scanned the scene and Lloyd saw himself on the television monitor.

From ABC, Lloyd went to the NBC studios to join some of their audience that tagged on after most of the show had been broadcast. A blues band had previously performed on an outdoor stage. The cameras panned the crowd, but Lloyd was not sure if his sign was seen. He would have loved knowing that his sign was seen and read by millions. Being a man of action, he did what he had to do: spread the message that prairies need saving.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

COULEE REGION CHAPTER		
MEETINGS		
Sat.,	Sep. 5	Chapter meeting at 10am, at Sugar Creek Bible Camp. Exit Hwy C at Ferryville, proceed 5 miles east.
EVENTS		
Sat.,	Jun. 23	Annual chapter picnic hosted by Tom Reb and CeCe Caron, DeSoto, WI. Call 608-648-3681 for details.
EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER		
WORK DAYS for information on ESC chapter work days and events see the chapter web site.		
MEETINGS		
Tues.,	Jul. 10	Potluck and annual meeting at the Faville Grove Preserve, Lake Mills. See story in chapter news.
PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER		
MEETINGS		
Tues.,	Jul. 3	Chapter meeting at 7pm at Montesian Gardens, Monticello. Parking at Motor Bank, 400 W. Coates Avenue or village lot off Main Street by the bridge.
Tues.,	Aug. 7	Chapter meeting at 7pm at Briggs Wetland in Rock County. Take Hwy 11 and 81 from Monroe, southeast on Highway 81, then left on the Beloit-Newark Road (east) until you reach Brosteum Road. Take a left (north) and before you come to Cleophas, Briggs Wetland is on the west side of Brosteum. Watch for signs.
		Note that there is no September meeting.
SOUTHWEST CHAPTER		
MEETINGS		
Sun.,	Jul. 15	Chapter meeting at 1pm at the home of Sue Linder, 206 Adams Street, Boscobel, WI 53805.
Sun.,	Aug. 19	Chapter meeting at 1pm at the home of Gary Eldred, 4192, Sleepy Hollow Rd, Boscobel, WI 53805.
Sun.,	Sep. 16	Chapter meeting at 1pm at the home of Sue Linder, 206 Adams Street, Boscobel, WI 53805.
EVENTS		
Sat.,	Jul. 7	Work party at Vale Prairie starting at 10am.

Sun.,	Jul. 22	Work party at Bush Clover Prairie starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Jul. 28	Work party at Heather's Prairie starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Aug. 11	Work party at Bush Clover Prairie starting at 10am.
Sun.,	Aug. 26	Work party at Heather's Prairie starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Sep. 1	Work party at Bush Clover Prairie starting at 10am.
Sat.,	Sep. 8	Brush cutting at Vale 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		
Sun.,	Jul. 15	Annual TPE Meeting and pot-luck hosted by ESC. See story on front page.
Thu.,	Sep. 13	TPE Board Meeting by tele-conference. Phone Kathy Kirk at 608-527-2686 for details.

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

Site History for the Stry Prairie (Gillis) Gillis Prairie State Natural Area

The Stry or Gillis Prairie is a 40 acre project started by the Stry Foundation and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in 1995. The first acquisition occurred in August of 1995. The 5.3 acres cost \$90,000 with \$38,000 coming from the Stewardship program and the remainder from the foundation. In July of 1996 the 5.3 acres and an additional 1.5 acres from Mathy Construction Co. was donated to the city of La Crosse and is administered by the Park and Recreation Department. There is hope for connecting the property to the Hixon Forest Preserve.

Management objectives are to preserve and protect the natural ecological values (20 acres dry prairie and 20 acres oak opening) by reestablishing the natural process of regular fire, and removal of invasive exotics and woody native species from the site. Management

started in the winter of 1995 with some removal of red cedar from the dry prairie and a prescribed burn proposed for the spring of 2001. This site contains nearly a complete complement of dry prairie species for this region and species of concern are cliff goldenrod and a rare sage.

The Coulee Region chapter received a \$2000 grant from the Stry Foundation to purchase burn equipment.

Nature's Recipe/Bangor Tree Walk: Bringing School and Community Together.

By Kristin Gonja-Larken

For the past six years students, teachers, parents, and community members have been developing an outdoor school site in Bangor, three miles east of West Salem, along I-90. The goals of the site were to create an outdoor classroom where students could learn concepts that would normally be taught indoors. This site, a one-half acre piece of land adjacent to the elementary building, is proving to be an effective way to teach K-5 students the importance of our outdoor world and their role in its protection.

As prairie enthusiasts, all of you know about and have an appreciation of our natural surroundings. If we are to succeed with our children, we need to construct experiences for this appreciation to be developed. From the very beginning of this project, students were involved. They have been involved in the planning, development, fundraising, celebrations, and in spreading the word! Because of this involvement and sense of ownership, vandalism has NOT occurred, and high school students are coming back for visits to check in on what they helped to create.

Each grade level has its own area to develop and nurture, however, several grades use the entire site for curriculum purposes: Kindergarten – Sunflower Garden; 1st grade – Butterfly Garden; 2nd grade – Soil Windows and Pumpkin Patch; 3rd grade – Tulip/Daffodil Area; 4th grade – Prairie Area and Fruit Tree Area; 5th grade – Compost Area. The site also has a Wetland Area, an Amish-built shed for tools and supplies, a Goat Prairie, beginning Woodland Area, and a Teaching Station. The Bangor Tree Walk extends from one end of the site for approximately 170 yards and began as a result of a sixth grade business that was run in 1996. Throughout both sites there are over 40 trees that have been donated by families, individuals, organizations, and local businesses in honor of or in memory of an individual. Fall and Spring Picnic/Work days have helped to facilitate the development, with 40-80 people coming to each event. The Bangor School Board originally gave permission to develop the land and some members have also been involved with the development.

The areas have been developed with the help of organizations such as Bangor Garden Club, Lutheran Brotherhood, Helping Hands Ecology Club, and

Webster Lumber Company. Our Prairie Area started slowly, as the unwanted plant growth needed to be controlled. We divided our area into three sections for better management, and two sections have been planted. Our third area will be planted this fall. Bill Carter from Prairie Moon Nursery has been a wonderful resource for this area of our site. Fourth grade students, in their study of Wisconsin history, have been able to actually collect native prairie seed from an original remnant along the bike trail. These seeds, along with those purchased from Prairie Moon, have been planted in our Prairie Area. Several blossoms were seen already in our first season, and students were impressed with the growth.

This method of connecting kids with the natural world has been priceless. I truly believe the connection that students have developed with this site will carry into their larger natural world. Other districts have come to learn how to create a site of their own as well. Classes through UWSP have been held on site to spread the development of outdoor school sites. These classes were taught by Dennis Yockers, Associate Professor of Environmental Education, Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education at UW Stevens Point. Photos and further information can be found on our district web site, www.bangor.k12.wi.us

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve Cooperative Project

The year 2000 marked the initiation of a new cooperative effort between the Coulee Region Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts, and the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve is an 8,569 acre tract in Vernon County that was slated to become a flood control dam and recreational lake. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers bought private lands, removed buildings, and began erecting a large earthen dam across the valley floor. In 1975, the project was halted because of economic and environmental concerns. In 1996, Congress directed the Corps to return the land to the Ho Chunk Nation and the State of Wisconsin. The Kickapoo Reserve Management Board now oversees the state's portion. Both groups manage the K.V.R. for low impact tourism and education.

The Coulee Region Chapter, under the leadership member of Greg Nessler, is working to develop a prairie demonstration site. The target site, a designated hiking trail, is near the concrete dam tower and is bounded by what used to be the earthen dam. As one might suspect, the site was "disturbed" and compacted by heavy construction activity. The site is about 4 acres in size. It includes an upper plateau and a lower area which includes a small pit that seasonally holds water. Reserve staff report that the site had been seeded with a roadside prairie mix of grasses and forbs.

In autumn 2000, TPE volunteers assisted with a prescribed burn. The chapter also collected seed from members' prairies to donate to the project. In late winter Greg Nessler sowed 11 different types of seed on the site. On March 17, 2001, 11 Coulee Region PE volunteers completed a brush removal project. They also sowed seed collected from members' prairies and donated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to interplant the site. A mesic mix was used on the upper section and wet mesic mix on the lower section. Seventeen forb species and seven grasses were planted.

The chapter is currently working with Kickapoo staff to identify other potential project sites. Future reports will follow as our collaboration with K.V.R. develops.

Spring Projects

A spring burn was again accomplished at the Dairyland Power Plant prairie site in Genoa, Wisconsin, under the leadership of member George Johnston.

The membership also worked on private lands. Brush removal work parties spent effort on Christie's and Croatt's properties in March.

Prescribed burns were done on Helen Davis' Tamarack Farm and the Croatt's planted valley field in April. Garlic mustard was the targeted weed for removal on Peggy Backup's land in May.

EMPIRE SAUK CHAPTER

Another burn season well done

Even though the weather was less than cooperative at times, the Empire-Sauk Chapter still managed have a productive spring burn season. The Blufflands Project (a joint effort between our Chapter and the Aldo Leopold Foundation) managed to burn a total of 200 acres on property of 14 landowners cooperating in the Blufflands Project. Over 30 volunteers were involved in this effort. Other Chapter efforts included another 17 burns totaling 142 acres. These were accomplished with the help of 13 phone-tree volunteers and 54 field volunteers. The latter put in 149 person/burn events. This effort totaled 350 volunteer hours. Thank you to all who helped. One of the burns was a cooperative effort at Walking Iron County Park with Wayne Pauly and Dane County Parks volunteers. We also helped the Verona Area High School burn their prairie restoration.

If the weather cooperates, there will be opportunities to help with burns this fall. The list of spring burn volunteers will be used in contacting people for this activity.

Annual Chapter Potluck Picnic & Membership Meeting

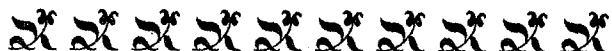
Our annual meeting and potluck picnic will take place on Tuesday evening, July 10, starting at 5:30 pm at the Faville Grove Sanctuary in western Jefferson County. The owners of this sanctuary, David Musolf and Roger Packard, donated a conservation easement to Madison Audubon on 67 acres. They are actively restoring the site's pre-settlement vegetation. Please try to make it. The meeting will be short, and consist primarily of the election of a chapter president, chapter secretary, and chapter representative to The Prairie Enthusiasts' main board. Bring a dish to pass and your own plates and utensils. Afterwards, you will have an opportunity to hike through prairie and savanna restorations and a high quality wetland complex. This site is worth the trip. (Directions: From the junction of I-94 and Hwy 89 in Lake Mills, go north on 89 for 2.5 miles to an old farm house [N7710] at North Shore Drive).

Henderson Not Running for Re-election - Nominations Sought

After serving as the Chapter's first and only president since its formation in 1991, Rich Henderson is stepping down to take on duties as chair of the Chapter's Land Stewardship Committee. Nominations are being sought to fill the president's position, as well as those of secretary and chapter representative to The Prairie Enthusiasts' main board. These are all two-year terms. Elections will be held at the general meeting of the membership on July 10 (see above). If you wish to serve or nominate someone, please attend the meeting or contact Rich Henderson, 608-845-7065. We need membership involvement to fulfill our mission.

Have a Field Trip Idea?

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 weekday evenings. They can be near or far. What do you wish to see and experience?



NORTHWEST IL CHAPTER

Two Field trips planned for the NIPES chapter.

The NIPES are planning a field trip on August 19 to the **Lost Mound Unit** of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge (formerly The Savanna Army Depot) off Hwy. 84, south of Hanover, IL. The trip will be lead by on-site restoration ecologist Amy Symstad.

Because of travel restrictions within the former Depot, registration on a first-come basis is a must. Meet

at the Welcome Center (former gated entrance) at 1pm. Please contact Amy by phone (815-273-3184) or e-mail (asymstad@inhs.uiuc.edu) no later than August 15 to make your reservation.

The second field trip will be to a hill prairie remnant and four year old prairie restoration at Joan and Dick Harmets home in rural Schapville. The trip is scheduled for Saturday, September 1 at 3pm, the tour will be followed by a pot-luck supper. Everyone is invited. Please e-mail Joan if you plan to attend, at: joandick@aeroinc.net or phone at 815-845-2390.

PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

An Environmentalist's Lament

By Ren Zeller

Endangered resources, public lands, our soil, air, water, and land use are very important to many of us. Policies to conserve, preserve, and protect are always being threatened at the federal and state levels, as well as at the local level.

Ronald Reagan's Secretary of the Interior, James Watt, proposed selling off public lands or opening some of those public lands to logging, mining, and drilling. Watt resigned before the U.S. Senate could kick him out. The Clinton Administration Interior staff were a bit more pro-environmental. The new Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton, a Bush appointee and a former supporter of Watt, is considered anti-environmental by many, and there are facts that indicate that might be true. In the past she acted as an attorney for logging and mining special interests, and in the 1990's, as Attorney General for the State of Colorado, she argued in court that the Endangered Species Act was unconstitutional. Unlike Watt, Norton is a smooth talker, and that is scary.

ATV's, off-road vehicles, and personal watercraft are a threat to public land and water, to the wildlife and plants that inhabit those special places and to their very survival. Mining companies continue to threaten streams and ground water in our beautiful northern counties with toxic pollutants. Perrier Group of America, Swiss-owned water bottler, has made attempts to bottle water from pristine springs that flow from public lands in the central counties of Wisconsin. As for now, they are stopped, but I am sure they will try again. There are also those who would consider piping water from the Great Lakes to states in the west, to help their farmers and ranchers compete against Wisconsin in the production of agricultural products. Developers are quick to fill wetlands when an opportunity comes about, such as the recent Supreme Court ruling, involving the Corp of Engineers, that for a short time made certain wetlands vulnerable. Our legislators were quick to approve a bill that will give DNR better control at the state level.

The Green County Board of Supervisors has done little to encourage a strong land use plan. We have now reached the point where we have auctions on many acres of platted housing lots on agricultural land. Some town boards have developed land use plans through a committee of town folks, but before the plans went into effect, hundreds of lots were "grandfathered". We have lost open space and are no longer an agricultural area, but more a widely scattered residential area. I realize it can be difficult to support proposals that limit what landowners can do with their property, but we must consider what will be left for future generations. Many of these farms not divided into lots have moved fence rows to accommodate the huge equipment, and herbicides and pesticides are used to an extreme. Mowing and spraying of county roadsides by town maintenance personnel destroys nesting habitat for ground and low brush-nesting species. Each new homeowner that builds in the country mows way more than necessary, including the roadside, uses lawn chemicals, and has a cat or two that destroys a nest, should a pair of thrushes or cardinals have been lucky enough to find habitat.

If you have built in the country, or are thinking about the idea, try to accommodate wildlife: develop a yard of prairie grasses, plant an area of shrubs that will provide food and nesting habitat, a water garden to provide for that need, and keep your pets inside. The better alternative would be to purchase a home in the village or city!



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

☐ \$30 CONTRIBUTOR

☐ \$75 SUSTAINING

☐ **Donation**

\$ _____

☐ \$30 FAMILY

☐ \$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

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER

News on the Mead's Milkweed

By Gary Eldred

In the fall 1997 newsletter we reported that eight Mead's milkweed seedlings, (propagated by Little Bluestem Farm near Baraboo from seed supplied by the Morton Arboretum) were planted on one of our dry mesic prairie remnants. Each year since then we've reported how these federally endangered plants have been doing. Last year all seven remaining plants were alive and well, although some were far from being ready to flower and produce seeds. In fact, most could only be found upon close inspection made on hands and knees!

We have great news for 2001! One individual planted as a two year old seedling is about to bloom. We will venture to guess that this may be the first Mead's milkweed to bloom in Wisconsin in over 100 years!

To add still more momentum to the restoration of Mead's milkweed to its native Wisconsin prairie lands, the Morton Arboretum has furnished several seedlings to several organizations this year, including The Prairie Enthusiasts. Rich Henderson and Gary Eldred spent one day in May planting nearly 70 seedlings on three prairie remnants in southern Wisconsin. These plantings will be closely monitored for years to come to determine

the best locations for replanting seedlings, their growth rate, survival rate, how long it takes to bloom, and other observations.

In closing, I'd like to say that its always been one of my dreams to help restore endangered species to their rightful places. I'm very proud to be a part of this effort. I would also like to point out that many such efforts are going on within The Prairie Enthusiasts all the time! If anyone has the impression that we don't do much, go to a chapter meeting and get involved. You will be surprised.



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