



The PRAIRIE PROMOTER

Igniting Relationships with the Land

Fall 2026

Signs of Promise

Exciting results from a
year of restoration work
at Mukwonago River Oak
Barrens

Plus

The Interaction of Prairie Roots and
Drought

A Look Back on Avon Ridge

Artistic Botanical Collections

And More!





Long Roads and Many Hands A Look Back at Avon Ridge

Article by Reid Bartholomew, Mission Advancement Coordinator

In the town of Avon in the southwest corner of Rock County, there's a parking lot that rests just off W. Beloit Newark Road. Big enough for only a handful of cars, it's easy to miss among the broad swathes of farmland and Conservation Reserve Program fields. There I met Fred Faessler, one of the Site Stewards for Avon Ridge, a 22-acre preserve boasting a remnant prairie atop a limestone-capped ridge. Though Avon Ridge is a relatively small preserve, it's a site with a long history that shows just how patient of a game land protection can be.

From the parking lot, you make your way along a long, mowed strip just a few feet across that provides management access to the ridge itself, which is set off from the road and surrounded by private lands. The path stretches up this pitch in the landscape through a line of trees, and the site opens wide up to the ridgetop grassland, covered in a blanket of yellow and purple: compass plant (*Silphium laciniatum*), prairie sunflower (*Helianthus pauciflorus*), rough blazingstar (*Liatris*

aspera) and a showy population of prairie purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallidasimulata*). This coneflower population was long thought to be pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*), but in recent years close inspection of the plant's yellow pollen has revealed that this population and others throughout Illinois are actually some of the northernmost examples of this species once believed to have not existed this far north. The ridge runs east to west, with the remnants concentrated on the western end and downhill slope. There, among the millennia-old prairie communities, the view is clear to the west, and you can see the landscape gently roll away into the bare suggestion of the winding Sugar River.

It was a long, winding path to protecting this view, and many hands kept these ridgetop remnants intact. Prairie Enthusiasts Rob Baller and Brad Paulson first came across the site in the 1980s, and they, along with the other conservation-minded of their community, immediately recognized the value of these remnant ecosystems—that same blanket of prairie purple coneflower captivated the two—but it would be decades before the land would receive protection.

*Left: Brad Paulson enjoys the abundant pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallidasimulata*) and compass plant (*Silphium laciniatum*) at the Billimack Unit of Avon Ridge in 2000.*

Below: The gorgeous blooms remain abundant in 2013.

Both photos by Rob Baller.





Prairie Enthusiasts celebrating the Foslin addition to Avon Ridge in 2019. Photo by Jean Blum.

In the years following, Prairie Enthusiasts continued to have conversations with the neighbors, negotiating, sharing the importance of prairies and waiting for the right timing. With the property lines split between a few different landowners, it was an exercise in patience and building relationships of trust. Fortunately, although protection had to wait, management didn't always. These close relationships meant that employees of Applied Ecological Services, community members and Prairie Enthusiasts were allowed to work on the site over the years. Many hands came together to conduct prescribed burns, control brush, and collect seed from the remnant populations, keeping the site from degrading like so many other prairies across the Upper Midwest.

The first 16.5-acre portion of the site—of which one acre is remnant—was finally protected in 2015 after The Prairie Enthusiasts came together to fundraise upon seeing the property hit the market. In 2020, it was expanded with another 5.9-acres, creating the preserve that exists today. Since then, the

Prairie Bluff Chapter has been stewarding the site, working diligently to ensure the health of the remnants and keep a strong buffer zone around them. Walking the site with Fred Faessler, he points out a spot every few feet where volunteers have lovingly labored to remove trees and brush or non-native invasive herbaceous species, and in the way that one might excuse a mess in their house, he notes for me each of the projects that he still needs to do—as Prairie Enthusiasts know well, the work never ends. The Prairie Bluff Chapter's care has ensured that the remnants of Avon Ridge persist and flourish for future generations to enjoy, to stand amongst and look out over the landscape, imagining a time when that remnant stretched out as far as the eye could see.

Thank you to Fred Faessler and Rob Baller for sharing their time, knowledge and stories with me to create this article. ■



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Prairie Enthusiasts tour Avon Ridge. Photo by Rob Baller.



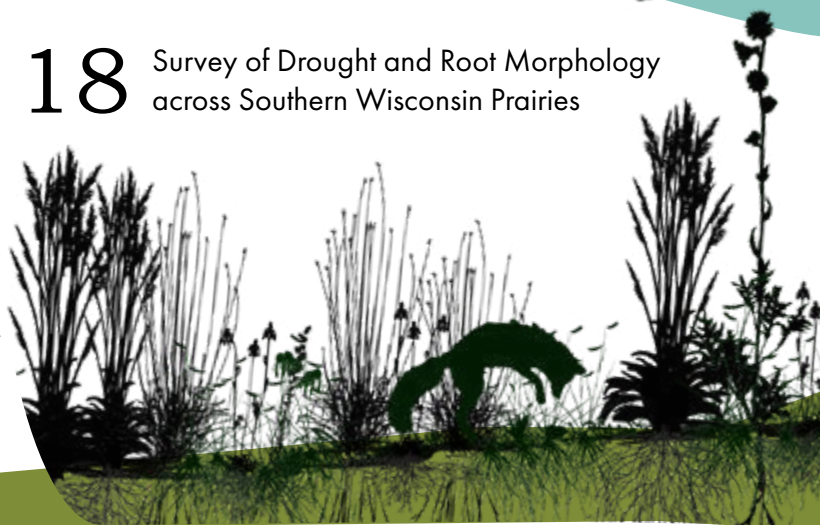
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Michigan
lily (*Lilium
michiganense*) at
Mukwonago River
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Photo by Dan
Carter.

Contributor deadlines for 2027 Issues of
THE PRAIRIE PROMOTER

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Submission details can be found on our website at:

ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org/Prairie-Promoter



Our Mission

The Prairie Enthusiasts seek to ensure the perpetuation and recovery of prairie, oak savanna and other associated ecosystems of the Upper Midwest through protection, management, restoration and education. In doing so, we strive to work openly and cooperatively with private landowners and other private and public conservation groups.

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Cover Photo: Thomas Wet Prairie, a site owned by
The Prairie Enthusiasts. Photo by Cassidy Coulson.



The accreditation seal is awarded
to land trusts meeting the highest
national standards for excellence
and conservation permanence.



President's Message

Our Super-Volunteers

Jim Rogala, President

The Prairie Enthusiasts could not be successful in managing lands without our volunteers. Some volunteers may only come for a workday or two in a year, and some come more frequently. It is super that these many volunteers help in our efforts. However, there are some volunteers who dedicate a large part of their life to working on fire-dependent ecosystems. Let's call them super-volunteers. Those who are active in their Chapters probably know some of these super-volunteers. I'm not going to try to name them all in this message but rather highlight a couple of them that I had the pleasure of spending time with this summer.

While making a visit to the Prairie Bluff Chapter, I scheduled some site visits. One of the sites I wanted to see was Dower Prairie, a privately owned site that people have raved about, and the Chapter has been managing. Steve Hubner is the Site Steward, and he agreed to show me the site with Jerry Newman tagging along for the conversation. As we walked the site, which was spectacular, Steve told me about his role in the discovery of this remnant and how he took the initiative to develop it into the gem it is. He mentioned that he pretty much singlehandedly manages the site (aside from the Chapter doing the prescribed burns), and he's been doing it for over 30 years! Out of curiosity, I asked Steve how often he's there working, thinking maybe weekly. His reply was 3-4 times a week. Now that's a super-volunteer!

The second super-volunteer I met this summer was at an Empire-Sauk Chapter event. One of the attendees was Pat Handrick, whom I knew about from our Handrick Grassland preserve. Pat continues to be the Site Steward for that preserve and also serves as the Site Steward at our Kalscheur Oak Savanna preserve. If that's not enough for him to do, he's been personally managing three very small, unprotected roadside sites. Pat also began his work over 30 years ago by collecting and planting seeds on his property that eventually became Handrick Grassland. The apparent need for work at Kalscheur Oak Savanna led him to volunteer as Site Steward there, where he leads a dedicated group of volunteers that are making a difference. Pat discovered the roadside sites as

he looked for seed sources and then he restored them to give back to the sites. Again, another super-volunteer in the upper echelon of volunteers managing lands.

Back to reality, not everyone desires or has the capacity to be a super-volunteer. We certainly hold these people in high esteem, but we value all volunteers who contribute what they can towards the stewardship part of our mission. I should also mention there are volunteer roles beyond land management, such as education and communication volunteerism and leadership volunteerism. We give a lot of attention to cultivating financial supporters, and rightly so, but we also need to acknowledge and thank people for their volunteerism. Who knows, maybe with a little cultivation, we will develop even more super-volunteers! ■



St. Croix Valley Chapter volunteers Heidi Kassenborg and Lucia Wroblewski girdling a tree. Photo by Evanne Hunt.



Executive Director's Message

Gratitude for Decades of Stewardship

Jessica Bizub, Executive Director

At our office in Viroqua, I frequently join the Chapter Support staff on walks through the park over our lunch breaks. It's a great opportunity to get some fresh air and connect with one another. The park has a paved trail bordered by dame's rocket, butterbur and other invasive species. Every once in a while, we get a glimpse of false sunflower or a few other hardy native species. But, like most public natural spaces in the Upper Midwest, the native habitat has mostly been destroyed.

It's something I think about often. Since seeing my first high-quality prairie, I'm always struck by how little is left of our original prairies and oak savannas. Particularly shocking are the natural areas that contain so few native plants, or preserves that are almost entirely overgrown by invasive species. Along with that shock, though, always comes the immense gratitude that I feel for all of the volunteers, staff and supporters of The Prairie Enthusiasts.

I remember driving around western Dane County and seeing a hillside prairie from a distance. The fact that I could discern that it was a prairie from afar is testament to the stewardship conducted at the site. Later, I discovered that location was West Dane Conservancy, which the Empire-Sauk Chapter actively helps manage. I've had this experience time and again throughout our region—our impact is real and visible.

The dedication of this community is what makes visiting a site cared for by The Prairie Enthusiasts so special. Without our volunteers actively stewarding

these rare places, we wouldn't still have a unique glimpse into how the Upper Midwest looked centuries ago.

Not only am I grateful for our long-time Prairie Enthusiasts, but I'm also excited by all of the new Prairie Enthusiasts who are joining our community or deepening their involvement. Across our Chapters, we've had a flock of new volunteers joining work parties, attending field trips and even taking on Chapter leader positions.

The work of caring for fire-dependent habitats is never-ending. That's why it invigorates me to see our long-time land stewards being joined by people discovering these rare places. The connections people make between the land and each other is what makes this community so vibrant and strong. And because of this unique community, prairies and oak savannas are getting the care they need.

As we wrap up 39 years of protecting, restoring and educating about fire-dependent habitats, I want to extend my gratitude to every Prairie Enthusiast out there. Whether you're contributing your time, expertise or with a donation, you are an important part of this community. Thank you for believing in this work. Thank you for prioritizing caring for these habitats. And thank you for connecting with The Prairie Enthusiasts community. I look forward to all that we'll continue to accomplish together.



Management Toolbox

By Jim Rogala, President



The purpose of this regular section of *The Prairie Promoter* is to keep proper management methods fresh in your mind. These short articles will sometimes reference past or future articles that contain details on the selected topic. Others will just be some food for thought. We try to schedule the articles to coincide with when planning for the practice occurs. We encourage others to write or provide ideas for articles. You can send those ideas to me at JRogala@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org.

Keep Your Hand Pumps and Drip Torches Operating Properly

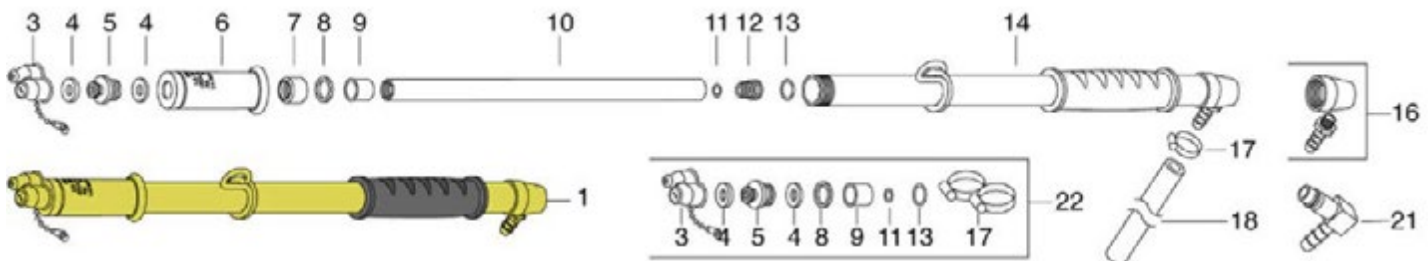
My encouragement for members to provide ideas for the Management Toolbox was fruitful. Laurel Bennett from the Prairie Sands Chapter suggested an article on maintaining and troubleshooting two very critical pieces of equipment for prescribed burning: backpack water pumps and drip torches. It can be very frustrating, if not dangerous, to have this equipment fail during a burn. Some basic understanding of the mechanics of the equipment and how they work (or why they aren't working) should be something all prescribed burners know. For those that maintain equipment, this should be known in detail.

Part of this topic was covered in a 2005 article in *The Prairie Promoter* by Jim Sime (one of the many wonderful things he did before his recent passing). I'll provide a summary of that here, but the full article can be found on our website's blog.

I'll start with the most challenging part of the equipment: the water pump. In very simple terms, the pump operates with a chamber (outer cylinder) filling

with water from a storage container (metal or plastic can or soft pack) connected with a hose when pulling out the inner cylinder. Once the chamber is loaded with water, pulling the inner cylinder back into the outer cylinder forces the water out of the nozzle at the tip. The movement of water through the cylinders relies on check valves, and there are O-rings to stop leakage. All of those can fail, but some fail more than others. Diagnosis of what has failed is pretty simple:

Symptom	Problem Area
Water flows out of the tip when not pumping	The check valve at the hose connection
Water leaking out of connection of the cylinders	Piston assembly and O-rings
No water is delivered to the chamber	Severe issues with either of the above
No water or little comes out of the nozzle	Holes in the nozzle



1. Complete Pump Assembly
3. Nozzle Assembly
4. Nozzle Gasket
5. Nozzle Adapter
6. Hand Grip
7. Cap Nut

8. Felt Wiping Ring
9. Shoulder Bearing Sleeve
10. Inner Cylinder
11. O-Ring
12. Piston Assembly
13. O-Ring

14. Outer Cylinder Assembly
16. Foot Valve Assembly
17. Hose Clamp
18. 3/8" Hose, 48"L
21. Hose Connector
22. Pump Service Kit with Nozzle

Jim provides descriptions of how to address most of these problems with the pump and describes routine maintenance to avoid the problems. One of the items not in the 2005 article of *The Prairie Promoter* is using a fine steel wool pad to buff the pump slides once or twice a season. There is also a concern of water freezing in the pumps. The O-rings and check valves can get damaged if water is still in the pumps and they freeze. Either keep pumps in heated areas when temperatures are below freezing or make sure the pumps are completely dry on the inside (might have to take them apart to achieve this).

The back cans are pretty trouble-free. Minor issues are with water coming out of the vent hole in the cap and with the pumps not staying on the holder. Jim mentions using an air bleeder to stop the leaks, but I use electrical tape to seal during transport and initial use. The tape needs to be removed after a little use to relieve air pressure in the can. To keep the pump on the can during transport, I secure it with wire and remove the wire when at the burn site. The soft packs, whether with replaceable bags or not, have been the cause for many crew members getting soaked. With periodic checking and replacing bags or patching bags, these can provide a comfortable option to the can, but that takes some diligence. There's also the issue of the seal on the hose connector, as well as the Quick connector failing. I've pretty much abandoned

the use of bladder bags, especially in cold weather when I prefer not to get wet. Some newer versions of soft packs (e.g., Smokechaser Pro) have gotten better reviews.

The other useful tool for burning that needs some maintenance is the drip torch. These similarly have O-rings that sometimes go bad. These cause undesired leaks, especially when the torch is closed when not in use, and pressure builds up as it warms. The other issue is the clogging of the filter screen. That can easily be cleaned out, but the cause might be debris in the fuel tank. This can be prevented by not putting a dirty wand back into the fuel after use. If debris accumulates in the tank, then pouring the fuel out and returning it through a screen funnel can help.

Not covered here are UTV and truck slide-in pumper units. Specific instructions are needed for maintenance and troubleshooting for each unique unit, and that is usually done by the Chapter. Maintenance can be done by a team after the fall and spring burn seasons. Doing it after the season rather than before allows time to order and replace parts as needed. Troubleshooting is part of the maintenance work, but it is also something each prescribed burner should have some skill at. Equipment operation is important enough to make the effort to get to know the equipment as best you can. ■

Amazing Prairie Tall Grasses

Poem and Painting by Jim Daubert, Empire-Sauk Chapter Member



Billowing ocean of breath-taking beauty

Illustrious prairie tall grasses undulate

Gorgeous tones of rust, burnt orange, deep reds, burgundy flood the fields

Blowing through rivers of amber, copper stalks and stems

Luminous silvers, whites, yellows lighten the landscape

Uplifting prairie scenery abounds

Enchanted by the beauty of autumn splendor to behold

Serene soothing walks along this healing landscape

Terrific show to behold—enticing, pleasing and enriching tour

Enraptured by spectacular images, colors, and the susurrus of tall grasses

Magnificent and delightful experience in Nature's Land of Wonderment

Sorry to leave this heavenly gift and wonderful land ■



Enthusiastic But Not on the Prairie?

Article by Kay Wienke, Southwest Wisconsin Chapter Board Representative

Southwest Wisconsin Workshop. Photo by Becky Fernet.

All Prairie Enthusiasts love prairies, but not all are interested or able to actually participate in invasive management or do prairie burns. So, how do we contribute to the mission of our organization: "We seek to ensure the perpetuation and recovery of prairie, oak savanna, and other associated ecosystems of the Upper Midwest through protection, management, restoration, and education?"

Enthusiasm is a strong, lively feeling of eager interest, excitement, or passion for a particular cause like prairies. Well, you can have this interest and excitement but not be able to actually work on the prairie itself. There are many ways for us as members to contribute to the mission and utilize our enthusiasm.

I serve on The Prairie Enthusiasts Board of Directors as the representative to our Southwest Wisconsin Chapter. In this position, I attend Board Meetings (which are mostly remote) and relay information from the Board to my Chapter and from my Chapter to the Board. I was elected to this position by our Chapter Leadership. This keeps me involved at the organizational level as well as the Chapter level. Each Chapter has a Chapter Representative on the Board of Directors so this is one method of targeting that enthusiasm.

Another way to contribute to The Prairie Enthusiasts' mission is to serve on a Chapter Board or Committee or serve the whole organization on one of its committees. The organization has several standing Committees which can always use new blood and new ideas in their midst. The Prairie Enthusiasts' Committees include: Land Protection, Land Management, Finance and Education, and all meet remotely. If you have skills or interest in any of these areas, one of these Committees

might be for you. You might also serve on one of your local Chapter Committees. It never hurts to reach out to offer your support and expertise.

I serve on a Task Force of the Board of Directors which is charged with developing a Succession Plan for our Board. I have experience of serving on non-profit boards and working on policies and procedures so this group is ideal for my skills. There may be a group within the organization that also matches your skills.

There are many ways to assist the organization for those who live near the main office in Viroqua. The Chapter Support Team working there could use volunteer help with the following: package and send out Parsnip Predators, data entry, or assist by folding and inserting items into pieces for bulk mailings. I live near Viroqua and have worked there for many hours sorting old records for saving or shredding. Now I work at home and scan old issues of *The Prairie Promoter* into the computer, so we have them in electronic form as well as the original paper format.

Working in the office is rewarding; sometimes there are snacks. Chapter Support staff are friendly and knowledgeable in many areas. When you work with a group to do mailings, it is an opportunity to meet other Prairie Enthusiasts who live nearby and share information and stories.

If you're interested in serving on the Executive Board, a Committee, Task Force or helping in the office by assisting with various administrative tasks or have skills that you would like to lend to office staff, reach out to us at Info@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org and someone will be in touch! ■



Member Spotlight: Gabriel Bertilson

Article by Ben Bullard, Minnesota Oak Savanna Chapter Board Member

Gabriel preparing to burn.
Photo by Evanne Hunt.

I first met Gabriel about two years ago in a dimly lit parking lot. Hardly the natural habitat of two botanical nerds. We had just finished attending a great presentation in Minneapolis by Heather Holm, the topic being oak ecosystems and restoration. We immediately bonded over this, and over our shared love for trying to understand these wonderful habitats, and moreover, what makes them tick. I think we might've stood there for at least an hour and a half, in the cold, because we had so many things we felt we had to cover before we had to call it quits.

I didn't know then that this conversation would be the beginning of a growing network of habitat stewards across the Twin Cities. A network of people like him and me, who cared most about the living habitat of the world around us above all else. Fast forward to now, and I am amazed at the progress the Minnesota Oak Savanna Chapter has made in the midst of this. People like Gabriel remind me of why I got involved with The Prairie Enthusiasts.

It's difficult to capture Gabriel's contributions and talents in a few paragraphs. To do so feels a bit like describing a high-quality remnant habitat simply as "diverse"—while not technically inaccurate, it fails to capture the true depth. His passion to help others and his interconnectedness with various land stewards and habitats may better be ascribed to being a part of a mycelial network. Like such a network, Gabriel's reach crosses political or geographical boundaries. He is constantly on the move, following the rhythms of the season and showing up wherever there is work to be done or something new to learn (and later teach to others).

In his immense botanical knowledge, Gabriel has many specialties. He ventures where most run away—including panic grasses (*Dicanthelium*), sedges (*Carex*), and various other groups that are oft overlooked for their diminutive size (Poverty Oats!). He has a particular talent for taking these daunting tasks of identification down to a few simple steps that everyone can understand.

Seed collection is another thing Gabriel has devoted much of his time to during the growing season.

This includes careful tracking of species phenology and locations—which is critical for collection for many of the desirable species that are usually missing from our restorations. He is also constantly thinking about how to translate native plant communities into new contexts, including local restorations in need and ways to implement these seed collected species into the everyday spaces we all inhabit.

Others may know Gabriel from the fire line. I would venture to say he has probably helped burn more individual sites over the course of the last year than just about anyone else across the various chapters of The Prairie Enthusiasts. Even on the fire line, he is keen on observing fire behavior and the effects on the various lifeforms dotted across the prairie—and looking for scorched sedge flowers!

Above all, he embodies ecological altruism—freely giving his time and energy in service of others and the living world. I'm giddy to know that the best for Gabriel and those in his orbit are yet to come. ■



Gabriel walking along a trail in River Falls.
Photo by Laura Baxley.

Gabriel observing wood betony.
Photo by Evanne Hunt.



Where the Prairie Leads: Former Sauk Prairie High School Monarch Interns Launch Scientific Careers

Article by Amy Chamberlin, Empire-Sauk Chapter Member

Nine years ago, a dedicated group of volunteer land managers began the long process of restoring Moely Prairie, the 23.5-acre, largest remaining remnant of the original 14,000-acre Sauk Prairie. The work continues today, with each season bringing new challenges and new signs of progress as native grasses, wildflowers and pollinators reclaim the landscape. But the restoration has produced another remarkable success story, one that can't be measured by blooming plants or returning butterflies.

It has helped cultivate the next generation of scientists.

Two former Sauk Prairie High School interns, Avery Leigh and Madeline Ganshert, recently graduated from college and are now pursuing advanced scientific careers that trace their roots to summers spent monitoring monarch butterflies on Moely Prairie.

As part of the Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program (IMMP), a nationwide community science initiative, the students conducted research that contributes to monarch conservation across North America. They surveyed milkweed and flowering plants, searched for monarch eggs and caterpillars, documented adult butterfly behavior, assessed habitat quality, and even investigated parasites that affect monarch survival.

Moely Prairie became more than a restoration site. For the last eight years, Moely Prairie has become an outdoor laboratory where students learn that science isn't confined to textbooks or classrooms; it happens in

the field through careful observation, thoughtful questions, and long-term commitment. For Avery and Madeline, those summers provided the foundation for careers that are now taking them far beyond Sauk Prairie.

For Avery, who joined the inaugural monarch monitoring class as a 15-year-old after her freshman year, the experience confirmed her passion for environmental science.

"I had already kind of known that I wanted to pursue environmental science," she said. "Being part of monarch monitoring confirmed my suspicions by giving me the opportunity to directly experience field research and data collection."

But the experience shaped more than her career choice.

"My experience at Moely spoiled me," she said. "After joining other research projects in college, I was almost disappointed by the lack of connection to the surrounding community."

She realized she wanted to pursue research that serves the communities where it is conducted.

Avery recently earned an undergraduate degree from Knox College in environmental science with minors in statistics and chemistry. She will begin a Master's program at Trent University studying biogeochemistry in agricultural aquatic systems. Even as her research has expanded into water quality and ecosystem resilience, she continues to incorporate prairie ecology into her work.

Her favorite memory isn't a scientific discovery but a summer thunderstorm.

As the interns hurried to finish counting whorled milkweed before the rain arrived, they ended up sprinting across the prairie together as the storm broke overhead.



Avery researching habitat preferences of Sambar deer across seasons in Bhutan while attending Knox College. Photo courtesy of Avery Leigh.



Avery Leigh (second from the left) with her fellow monarch monitors on Moely Prairie. Photo by Amy Chamberlin.

"It reminds me how much I love this work and being able to share it with people that I really enjoy," she said.

For Madeline, who joined the project in the summer of 2020 at age 17 as the community emerged from COVID-19 shutdowns, one unexpected discovery would shape her entire scientific future.

While rearing monarch caterpillars collected on the prairie, she watched what appeared to be healthy caterpillars fail to pupate. Instead, tachinid fly larvae emerged from inside them.

"It was both unsettling and fascinating," she recalled.



Madeline researching the tachinid fly parasitism rates on Moely Prairie. Photo courtesy of Madeline Ganshert.

volunteers can help answer complex questions about species declines and conservation."

That early exposure to parasites sparked an unexpected career path.

After undergraduate research at Loyola University Chicago and an internship studying cancer therapies in Puerto Rico, Ganshert is now entering her second year as a PhD student in the Biological Sciences in Public Health program at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Her research focuses on *Plasmodium falciparum*, the parasite responsible for the deadliest form of malaria, with the goal of improving future treatments.

"The monarch monitoring project opened doors I didn't even know existed," she said. "It showed me that following my scientific curiosity could become a career."

Although their careers have taken different directions, both women point to the same mentors who encouraged their curiosity and helped create opportunities.

Both credit Sauk Prairie High School teacher

Patrick Leigh for introducing them to the project and encouraging them to pursue authentic scientific research. They also recognize project coordinator Amy Chamberlin for creating an environment where curiosity was welcomed, questions were encouraged, and every student was treated as a scientist.

Both women also emphasize that the greatest lessons weren't learned inside a classroom.

"Working on Moely Prairie gave me opportunities at such an early point in my career," Avery said. "Being able to problem solve, work in teams, and spend long hours outdoors are skills that I could not have learned by just working in a classroom."

Madeline agrees. "Moely Prairie enabled me to move from learning about science to actually doing science," she said. "Collecting data, troubleshooting protocols in real weather and field conditions, and seeing my observations feed into national databases made the scientific process tangible."

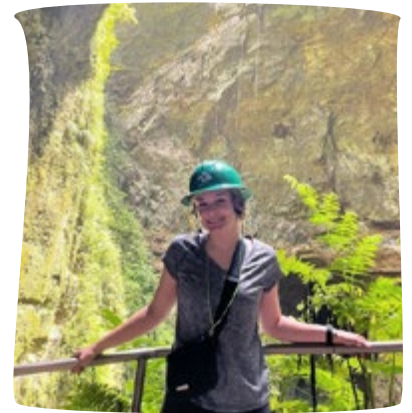
Today, monarch butterflies continue to face significant challenges across North America, making long-term monitoring more important than ever. Madeline believes everyone can contribute by planting native milkweed and nectar plants, participating in community science, and supporting conservation efforts.

Looking back, both women offer remarkably similar advice to today's students.

Avery encourages students to embrace every opportunity and stay open to experiences that may shape unexpected careers.

Madeline offers a simple reminder: "Ask questions, even if you think they are simple, and allow yourself to be genuinely curious about what you are seeing."

Sometimes the most enduring legacy of restoration isn't only what grows from the soil. Moely Prairie continues to recover; its success is measured not only by blooming prairie flowers or returning monarch butterflies but also by the young scientists it has helped inspire. It's what grows in the people who spend time there. ■



Madeline as she researches cancer therapies in Puerto Rico while attending Loyola University Chicago. Photo courtesy of Madeline Ganshert.

Wild Beauty: The Botanical Art of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden Florilegium

Article by Michelle Cochran, Minnesota Driftless Chapter Member



Sweet scented Joe-pye weed, *Eutrochium purpureum* – Michelle Cochran

An inscription above the gate leading to The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary, the country's oldest wildflower garden, offers timeless advice, "Let Nature Be Your Teacher." In 1907, four botany teachers who used Glenwood Park as a classroom to study plants and collect specimens with their students successfully petitioned the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners to set aside a portion of the park as a sanctuary for plants native to Minnesota. One of those early advocates, Eloise Butler, explained their intention:

"On account of the rapid growth of the city—spreading out like a spider's web for miles in all directions—and the consequent disappearance of the wild lands and their indigenous vegetation—making it necessary for students to go farther and farther afield for specimens, it occurred to the writer, some years ago, that means should be taken to establish a plant preserve, within which to maintain representatives of the flora of our state; to serve also as a depot of supplies for the schools; as a resort for the lovers of wild nature; and to afford an opportunity to study botanical problems at first hand."

Eloise Butler became one of the garden's most enthusiastic protectors and caretakers. Upon her retirement from teaching in 1911, Eloise Butler was appointed the garden's first curator. In recognition of Eloise Butler's devotion to preserving the garden and its native plants, the garden was renamed the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary (EBWG) in 1929.

Seven decades later in 2001, Marilyn Garber, an accomplished botanical artist and educator, founded the Minnesota School of Botanical Art (MSBA). Marilyn Garber described her vision for the new school:

"...a vision of serving both science and art by teaching how to observe, reproduce and paint true images of living objects, all based on a firm understanding of their life and limb, their structure, their place in the plant kingdom, and their place in the larger environmental scene."

Engaging artists, scientists and lovers of the natural world, the MSBA flourished, cultivating an active community of botanical artists and teachers. In harmony with the school's vision, in 2010, the MSBA entered a partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to create the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary Florilegium project. The word florilegium refers to a tradition dating back to the Middle Ages of using botanical illustrations to document, catalog and preserve the scientific and historical significance of a



A work in progress. Display of Michelle's artistic process.

specific garden. Susan Wilkins, curator of the garden, compiled a list of plants to represent ecosystems in the garden, and included plants that were important to Eloise Butler. The MSBA artists set out to paint these plants—but it was more complicated than just "painting the plant!"

When I enrolled in my first class, Beginning Watercolor, at the MSBA in 2016, the florilegium project was making steady progress. After studying botanical art for two years as a student at the school, I chose the *Eutrochium purpureum*, or sweet-scented Joe pye weed, from Wilkins' list to paint for the florilegium collection. When finished, my painting would be assessed by experts under three categories: Accuracy, Aesthetics, and Technical Quality, and be juried before becoming part of the collection.

Creation of a scientifically accurate painting entailed visiting the garden to locate, observe, sketch, study and render the details of this native prairie plant as it changed through the seasons. Creation of an aesthetically pleasing painting drew upon my years-long practice of drawing color pencil compositions of plants that I had photographed while hiking prairies and woodlands of Minnesota and Wisconsin. Applying the traditional botanical painting techniques that I was learning presented a new and welcome, but sometimes daunting, challenge.

Although I had cultivated sweet scented Joe-pye weed in my yard for years, there was much to learn about this plant. Drawing plants from photographs gave me a wealth of experience, but observing and drawing a living plant was a different experience. Looking closely at the plant's structure and intricate details deepened my appreciation and understanding of the sweet scented Joe pye weed. Art critic Martin Gayford captured this idea in *A Bigger Message: Conversations with David*

Hockney, quoting Hockney's reflection: "After I'd drawn the grasses, I started seeing them. Whereas if you'd just photographed them, you wouldn't be looking as intently as you do when you are drawing, so it wouldn't affect you that much." As I drew from life, I found the same to be true: drawing taught me to see.

Some plants included in the florilegium list, for instance, *Jeffersonia diphylla*, or twinleaf, have small windows of time to observe changes such as bloom time. EBWG Curator Susan Wilkins, garden staff and volunteers were especially helpful in monitoring the life cycles of certain plants making it possible for artists observe and document changes.

Established guidelines for the florilegium included submission of a hardcopy file to document the artist's work throughout the process of studying the plant and creating a finished painting, and to preserve information the artist had collected about the species. Artists' files included photographs, drawings, paint color samples, description of the substrate or paper and the artists' research into the plant species.

Although I knew it was common for an artist to spend a year or more creating a botanical painting from start to finish, the process consumed far more time than I had anticipated. I drew, re-drew, painted and started over, did more research, dissected parts of an off-site plant and put the painting aside time and again—pretty sure that a finished painting was a lost cause. However, after committing to paint the sweet-scented Joe pye weed in 2018, I submitted my painting accompanied by my hard copy file almost six years later. The impetus for taking my painting off the shelf time after time came from encouragement, inspiration from other MSBA artists' work and the growing body of finished florilegium paintings.

As I learn about Eloise's dedication to preserving and caring for native plants over one hundred years ago, the story of the Minnesota School of Botanical Art and the creation of the EBWG Florilegium, I am especially honored to have had the chance to be a part of this work as a botanical artist and as a Prairie Enthusiast.

After fifteen years of work, *Wild Beauty: The Botanical Art of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden Florilegium* will be on display at the Bell Museum of Natural History from September 26, 2026, through January 3, 2027. The exhibition features 111 finished botanical paintings by 43 artists, celebrating the diversity and beauty of the plants found in the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden. ■





Left page top: *Prairie Sundrops, Oenothera pilosella* – Howard Goltz

Left page bottom: *Blue Vervain, Verbena hastata* – Shelly Bowman

Top left: *Red Elderberry, Sambucus racemosa* watercolor - illustrated by Marilyn Garber, the project's founder

Top right: *Nodding Trillium, Trillium cernuum* - Janet Goltz

Bottom: *White Oak, Quercus alba* – Rhonda Dick

Gifted by the artists, the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden Florilegium collection is owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Photos provided by Susan Wilkins.

Exhibition Showing
September 26, 2026-January 3, 2027
at the Bell Museum of Natural History
bellmuseum.umn.edu/wild-beauty-exhibit



Survey of Drought and Root Morphology Across Southern Wisconsin Prairies

Article by Lucille J. Wineberg, Department of Botany, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Senior Thesis, Dr. Sara Hotchkiss and Christian Villanueva, May 6, 2026

As early as 1830, Wisconsin was home to 971,000 hectares of prairie. From 1830-1994, prairie loss accelerated, with the majority of the loss caused by European settlements and later urban and agricultural development, reducing prairie cover by 99.9% and leaving the state with roughly 4000 hectares (Samson and Knopf, 1994; Askins et al., 2007). Despite their decline/degradation, prairies remain extremely important in supporting local biodiversity and the environment. Protected and managed ecosystems, such as reconstructed prairies, have positive effects on biodiversity, which then provide ecosystem services by keeping water clean, producing food and regulating the climate (Woodley et al., 2015).

Since 2021, Wisconsin has endured an abnormal increase in level of drought severity throughout the state. At points during the summer of 2023, 81% of the state was experiencing drought, with 12.2% in extreme drought (level D3). Moreover, much of the drought was concentrated in southern Wisconsin, where prairies are prevalent (National Integrated Drought Information System, 2017) (Figure 1).

One of the primary ways drought affects grassland ecosystems is by lowering the nutrient availability within the soil. When soil is re-moistened after a prolonged dry period, microbes are killed and carbon and nitrogen mineralization increases, making nutrient uptake more difficult (Vries et al., 2016).

Nutrient absorption is mainly controlled by the underground architecture of the plant, specifically their root systems. Plant root structure is divided into two broad categories: taproot systems and fibrous root systems (Figure 2). While fibrous roots tend to spread and stay closer to the surface, taproots probe deeper into the soil. Typically, taproots serve to gain more water access for the plant, and fibrous roots increase nutrient uptake (Anbarasan and Ramesh, 2021). We expect that taproots will be more prevalent in dry prairies, and fibrous roots will be more prevalent in wet prairies, but given climatic shifts, changes in taproot and fibrous root dominance are still unknown.

To track these potential underground shifts on a broader scale, we are exploring aboveground remote sensing technologies. Advances in satellite and aerial imagery quality and availability have allowed for additional opportunities to monitor landscape conditions, especially with the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), a remote sensing derived vegetation index which measures an ecosystem’s health based on the difference between the red and near-infrared light being reflected from the ground (NASA Earthdata, 2024). The NDVI scale ranges from -1 to 1, with the healthier photosynthesizing plants receiving a higher score. Previous studies have found that NDVI varies based on wetland type and condition but is typically lower because the water interferes with the signal (Taddeo et

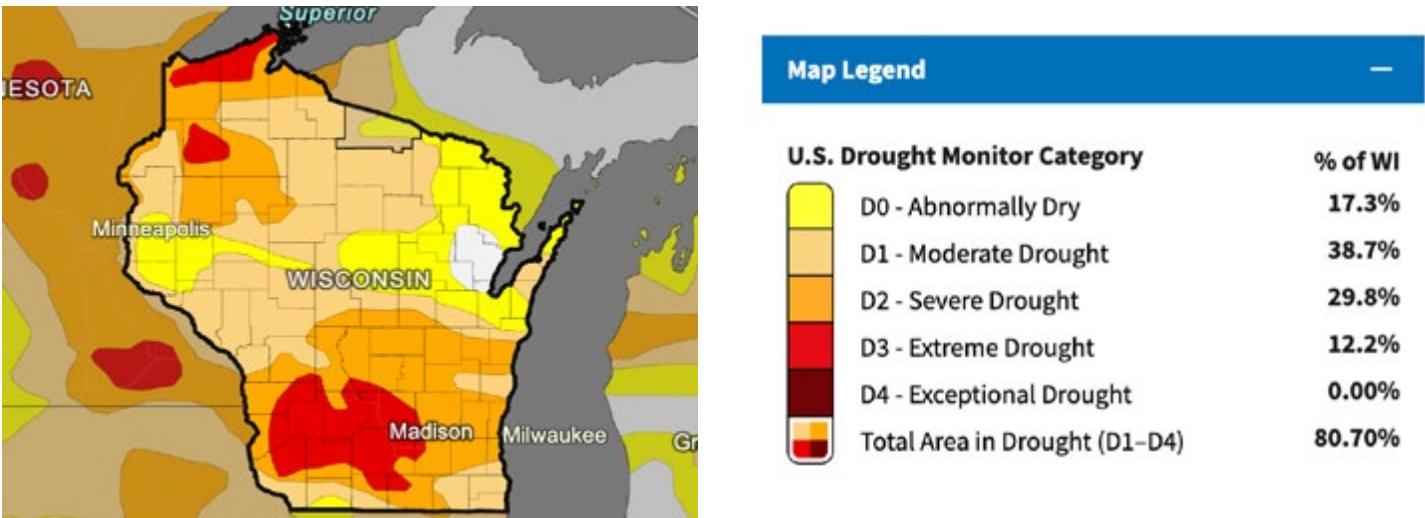


Figure 1. Wisconsin drought levels on August 1st, 2023 (National Integrated Drought Information System, 2017).

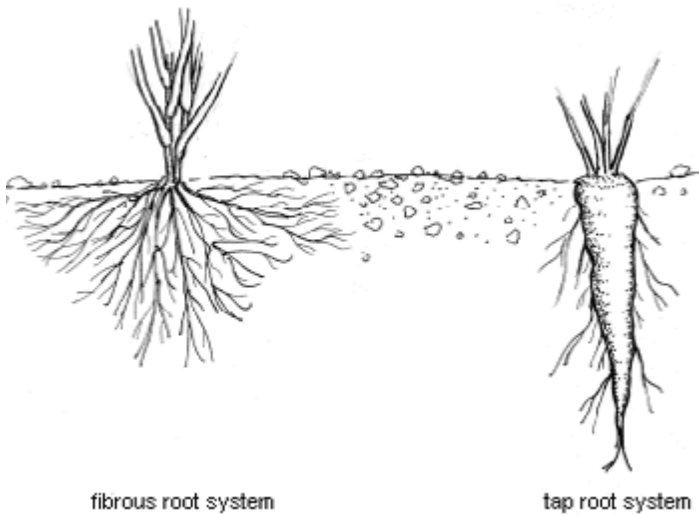


Figure 2. Illustration of root morphology types (National Garden Association, n.d.).

al., 2019). But, in a drought with limited water resources, these wet prairie areas may have a healthier NDVI value due to more access to water and less visible water, while dry prairies will hold a lower value.

This study examines plant species composition within the different types of prairies of southern Wisconsin, comparing root morphology to understand how environmental changes have affected relative frequency

of plant morphology types in prairies. We hypothesize that wet prairies will exhibit a higher ratio of fibrous roots to taproots, while dry prairies will show the opposite pattern. We further expect reconstructed prairies to have higher NDVI due to active management, along with wet prairies because of higher moisture.

Methods

The data collection portion of this study was conducted from June 2025 to November 2025, surveying 11 sites in southern Wisconsin (Figure 3). Four of the sites sampled were characterized as "dry prairies" based on their historic soil and species composition (UW-Madison Arboretum pers. com.; Lakeshore Nature Preserve, n.d.; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, n.d.), with another four labeled as "wet prairies," one "mixed reconstructed"—a reconstructed site with intermediate soil—and two "dry reconstructed." At each site, 0.5 meter by 0.5 meter quadrats were taken at randomized points throughout the selected area, with between 10–30 quadrats per site, predetermined depending on site size.

Within each quadrat, we measured the percent cover of each species, including a separate category for any bare ground or foliage. We also noted soil moisture,

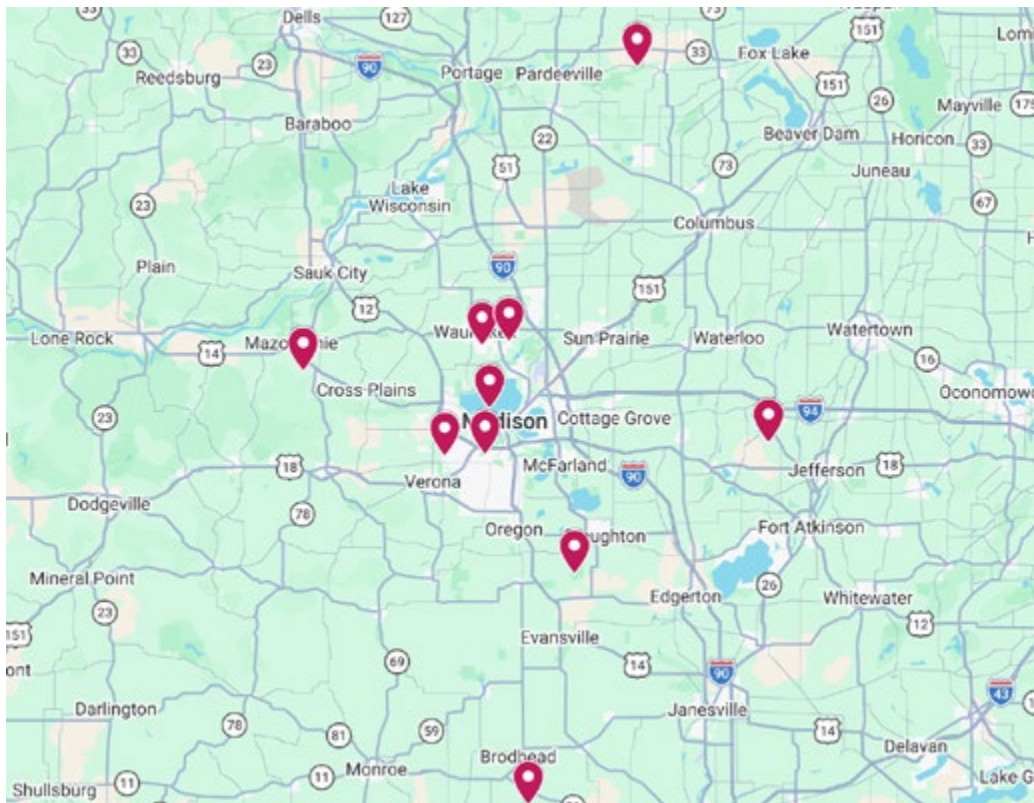


Figure 3. Map of the 11 field sites surveyed. Bolz prairie had two separate sites, on one point.

composition, and if there was a slope within each quadrat. We categorized each species into their root types by gathering information from Illinois Wildflowers (Hilty, 2017), and then comparing that information to photographed specimens found on the Wisconsin State Herbarium Database (Wisconsin State Herbarium, n.d.), and divided the species into taproot or fibrous root.

Later, we obtained the 2025 precipitation data for each site from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA, 2025). We also gathered surface reflectance values from the most recent USDA National Agriculture Imagery Program survey in 2022 (USDA, 2022) and used QGIS to calculate the NDVI for each site. To analyze the data, we used an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to compare NDVI to site type and root type to site type.

Results

Over the six months of data collection, we surveyed 11 prairie sites, including four wet prairies, four dry prairies, two dry reconstructed prairies and one mixed reconstructed prairie, observing 164 plant species across all sites. The difference in root-morphology-type percentage was significant (p-value < 0.000001, f statistic of 13.496825), with the highest percent of taproot species in dry reconstructed prairies, closely followed by dry prairies (Figure 4), supporting our hypothesis that we would observe higher fibrous to taproot ratios in wet

prairie environments. While we initially expected wet and reconstructed prairies to have higher NDVI values, there was no significant difference in the NDVI between different site types (p = 0.7816, f = 0.0879), but overall dry reconstructed, mixed reconstructed, and wet prairies held higher values compared to dry prairies (Figure 5).

Discussion

To determine whether or not prairies respond differently to drought, we tested the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) and percent of individuals with taproot/fibrous root systems at each site. We found no statistically significant difference in NDVI between the different site types, however a marginal difference was noted between sites, specifically the reconstructed prairies (both dry and mixed) held the highest NDVI, closely followed by wet prairies, while dry prairies had the lowest. While wet prairies were deemed “healthier” according to the higher 2022 NDVI value, they had a significantly larger percentage of invasive species, meaning that while these ecosystems have a high biomass, they are functionally less resilient. A large number of the wet prairie sites were covered with *Phalaris arundinacea* (Reed Canary Grass), a common invasive plant throughout North America (Martina and von Ende, 2013). From observation, *P. arundinacea* had almost completely overwhelmed any native flora within several

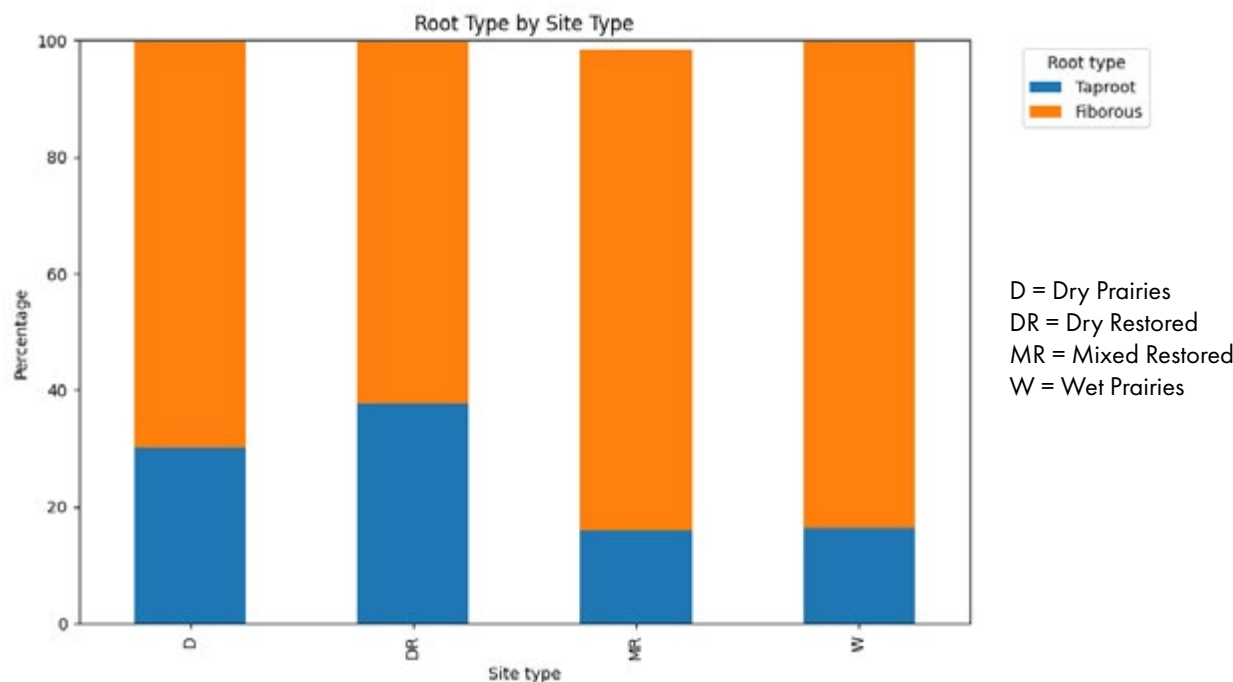


Figure 4. Stacked bar chart of root morphology type by site type classification.

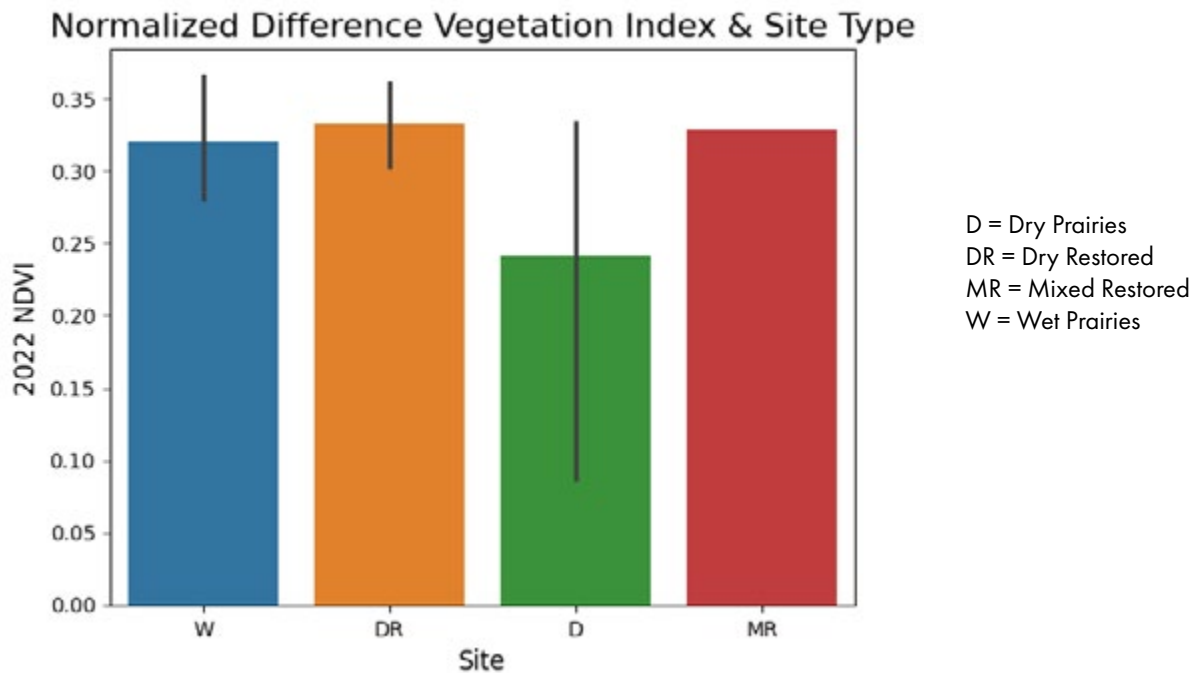


Figure 5. Bar chart of NDVI compared to site type

individual quadrats.

The root type overall was dominated by fibrous roots, with taproots reaching their maximum share at dry and dry reconstructed prairies (Figure 4), which agrees with the initial hypothesis. However, *P. arundinacea* has fibrous roots, likely largely influencing the root type percentage.

In comparing the prairie types, Wisconsin's wet prairies had a high amount of biomass, but were highly infiltrated by *P. arundinacea*, indicating a lower functional resilience. In the dry prairies, there was a higher species richness and a higher percentage of species with taproots. In reconstructed prairies, there was a higher NDVI and species richness, suggesting success in restoration efforts. In flooded conditions, *P. arundinacea* is known to do well, explaining why its presence in wet prairies was so apparent. *P. arundinacea* has been reported to stay relatively healthy in drought conditions, so long as its roots have some sort of contact with water (Kemp & Culvenor, 1994).

Our findings demonstrate the importance of understanding how shifts in the climate affect ecosystem health, even if not entirely apparent at first, which is especially important considering the anticipated climate changes southern Wisconsin is expected to face. However, there is much more to be done to grasp a full understanding of changes within prairie ecosystem remnants in Wisconsin. Considering the varied lifespans of prairie plants and climatic shifts in Wisconsin, long

term studies could analyze the species' turnover in different types of prairies. This would help us understand how these prairies have changed, and apply that to learn how they are expected to change. While we now understand where taproots are more prominent, further research in the depth of the roots could help researchers know what species may be more sensitive to droughts of particular magnitudes, and which are more likely to withstand dry conditions. Overall, the information gained from this study will enhance our understanding on how drought impacts different types of prairie ecosystems, vegetative health, and overall biodiversity, helping us protect these sensitive ecosystems.

Acknowledgements

This project was supported and funded by the UW-Madison Botany Department. I would like to thank Christian Villanueva, Dr. Sara Hotchkiss and Mark Connolly for the consistent support, mentorship, and insightful feedback through this process.

References

Vist [The Prairie Enthusiasts Blog](#) to see all references. ■





Mukwonago River Oak Barrens Update

Article and Photos by Dan Carter

The Prairie Enthusiasts acquired the Mukwonago River Oak Barrens (MROB) a little over one year ago. The site features recovering oak barrens (sandy savanna), moist savanna; and small areas of wet to wet-mesic prairie, sedge meadow and calcareous fen. It has become a big part of my life and a place of community for dozens of people.

In the first year following acquisition, volunteers spent 1500 hours conducting burns, removing brush, collecting and spreading seeds and staging and burning piles. We've also taken time to enjoy the flowers and the birds. We continue to be encouraged by good surprises. Since the spring of 2025 the list of known native vascular plants indigenous to the site has grown from a little over 200 to 320. The new finds include species like yellow stargrass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*), prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*), velvet-leaf blueberry (*Vaccinium myrtilloides*), Swan's sedge (*Carex swanii*) and a Wisconsin threatened plant, which jumped out at me while leading a tour along a route I had passed by dozens of times before. In March, we potlucked around a dusk campfire and then sat in silence as an abundant American woodcock

Volunteers collect seed from Great Plains frostweed (Crocianthemum bicknellii), Canada frostweed (Crocianthemum canadense) and prairie pinweed (Lechea stricta) in late summer.

display occurred overhead and in all directions. I have been struck by how long it takes to learn even a fraction of what there is to know about a place through luck and deliberate inspection.

I was nervous about the project in the beginning. I wondered how many people would get involved. I wondered if the property had enough nucleus of persisting native flora, fauna and microbes to continue to heal. Brush was and still is extensive. There were and are thousands of trees to remove. There was and is so much spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*). The property had been a Christmas tree farm. Before that it had been a cut flower farm. Before that, much of it was cultivated. And before that, an old herbarium specimen from the vicinity of the property described the land as sheep pasture. Still, small areas avoided the plow. Other areas that were cultivated but had subsequently remained at least partially open into the present seemed well on their way

towards recovery. Species like false toadflax (*Comandra umbellata*), hairy puccoon (*Lithospermum caroliniense*), clasping leaf milkweed (*Asclepias amplexicaulis*), short green milkweed (*Asclepias viridiflora*), rough blazingstar (*Liatris aspera*) and hairy hawkweed (*Hieracium longipilum*) had presumably recolonized the sand from uncultivated areas near the wetland edge, fencerows and adjacent road rights of way. Seeing this spontaneous recovery and hoping to amplify it, we made the commitment to join its process.

We have steadily added to the area we are actively managing. Our goal is to bring three to five acres under integrated management each year, first connecting relatively open areas in the central and western part of the property, the open wetlands riparian to the Mukwonago River, and pockets of remnant vegetation in the uncultivated area that runs along the wetland edge in the southern part of the property. By 'integrated' I mean that we are removing unwanted vegetation, burning, seeding and continuing to follow up and look for problems in a coordinated way within the areas we have opened up.

We started in the partially open center of the property, removing patches of buckthorn and honeysuckle, cutting smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*) and quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) suckers twice during the growing season, girdling aspen trees, removing remaining conifers and burning about four acres in the fall of 2023. In the fall of 2024, we burned that area again, another similar area immediately to the southwest, and a small area around a concentration of remnant savanna vegetation in a distant corner of the property for a total of just over seven acres. Between October of 2025 and March of 2026, we burned all of those areas again and newly



MROB Map: The property boundary is highlighted. Areas within the property boundary outlined and shaded in blue were under our active management at the time of closing in June 2025. Areas outlined and shaded in red have been opened up and added to the management footprint between June 2025 and June 2026. Contract work funded by grantors and donors had completed significant amounts of the clearing within the areas outlined in black as of June 2026.

opened areas adjacent to them for a total of just over twelve acres. Having capacity among regular volunteers to burn small areas on short notice has been very helpful. During the 2025-2026 dormant burn season we were able to burn eight small areas after we conducted the main burns of the larger open units. That means we were ready and able to put down seed and give recovery a head start. Productivity over much of the site is quite low, which means that if we apply annual ignitions, there is only enough fuel to carry fire over 70 to 80 percent of the area within burn units.

As of this fall, we've connected open areas in the central and western part of the property with a strip of remnant prairie and the adjacent sedge meadow in the southwest corner of the property. We have also expanded our management footprint to incorporate much of the other uncultivated parts of the property, some of the sedge meadow in the south-central and southeastern part of the property, as well as a savanna vernal pond, which was discovered by following the calls of chorus frogs into the brush in 2024. This upcoming dormant burn season, we should increase our burn footprint from 12 to between 17 and 19 acres.

Short green milkweed (Asclepias viridiflora) occurs in a few scattered areas in the western part of the property.



Fall 2026

Conifer plantations are a challenge. Most of the material isn't marketable in southeastern Wisconsin, and there are parts of the property where we would rather avoid the use of heavy machinery. We have found that we can cut, pile, and burn about an acre of conifers each year.

One of the biggest challenges so far has been untimely flash droughts in the sandy soils. After April deluges this spring, the site went six weeks from late April into early June with only a quarter inch of rain spread across several inconsequential sprinkles. A similar dry period occurred last June. Seeds broadcast in fall and germinated in April and early May withered and died in the open areas. We have also spent a lot of time watering transplants (plugs, roots, and divisions). Still, local wood betony (*Pedicularis canadensis*) sown in the summer of 2024 flowered for the first time this year in several areas. Prairie blazingstar (*Liatriis pycnostachya*) sown in moist areas in late fall of 2024 also flowered for the first time. It joins a solitary plant that established after cultivation was abandoned from a population nearby that presumably was lost to brush or land use. More things are coming, even in the drier areas, but especially in lower areas closer to the water table or under the shade of oaks. We'll get better returns on our seed collecting and sowing efforts if and when we get a wet period during May and early June. We plan to collect and sow what we can every year within our management footprint. We will probably shift as much plug/root/transplant planting as possible in drier areas to autumn to maximize the period of adequate moisture for establishment.



Volunteers burn conifer material on a wet late winter day. White firs (*Abies concolor*) remaining in the background were left temporarily so volunteers can take the tops for holiday trees later this fall.

Support from the Kettle Moraine Chapter of Wild Ones, the Natural Resources Foundation (NRF) C.D. Besadny Conservation and Rare Plant Preservation Funds, Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium Assistance Program, WE Energies Foundation and individual donors has supported our

Vernal pool that has been cleared of buckthorn and is now contiguous with open savanna habitat after filling with water in April. Marsh fern (*Thelypteris palustris*) and blue flag iris (*Iris virginica*) persisted and are recovering. Many other species known from vernal pools in the area have been introduced where the ground was bare.





Wood betony (*Pedicularis canadensis*) emerging in bud in early April, 2026 in an area where it was seeded in the summer of 2024 after brush removal (prior to acquisition of the property).

work by helping purchase supplies, seeds, and plugs; and by funding contract work to clear brush and trees on about two acres (so far) to augment our volunteer work. The NRF Rare Plant Preservation Fund is supporting clearing brush to create more suitable habitat for Swan's sedge (*Carex swanii*, WI Special Concern) and fescue sedge (*Carex festucacea*, WI Special Concern) and the contract growing plugs from Swan's sedge seed collected at MROB, a nearby Waukesha County Land Conservancy preserve, and another neighboring property. Plants will be shared between Waukesha County Land Conservancy and The Prairie Enthusiasts.

There is still much to do, and that will always be the case. Our role is to expand and maintain the openness needed for recovery. The land responds with flowers, birds and ornate insects. It provides an honest, transparent and deep sanctuary. Midwestern savannas and prairies exist only from mutually constructive relationships between people and land. If there are to be savannas and prairies, there can be no end to that relationship, and we celebrate that every week. Join us some time, consider leading an element of stewardship, or simply take a walk and listen to the meadow katydids and field sparrows. ■

Hairy puccoon (*Lithospermum carolinense*) flowering profusely in May.



Claspingleaf milkweed (*Asclepias amplexicaulis*) is abundant at the site. Hundreds of stems are scattered throughout the open areas.



Seven purple milkweed (*Asclepias purpurascens*) plants flowered in June 2026 in a moist area where it had been planted in 2023 (prior to acquisition of the property).



Sustained Enthusiasm!

Member Profile: Evanne Hunt, St. Croix Valley Chapter

Article by Melinda Knutson, Coulee Region Chapter Chair

Prairie conservation takes many kinds of dedication: the knowledge to guide good management, the hands-on energy to care for the land, and the steady behind-the-scenes service that keeps an organization moving forward. Evanne Hunt has offered that kind of steady service for more than two decades, supporting The Prairie Enthusiasts through leadership, outreach and a genuine commitment to community. She has served as Chair of the St. Croix Valley Chapter since 2001 or 2002, though the exact year is uncertain. This includes Pierce, Polk and St. Croix counties in Wisconsin, along with Washington County in Minnesota. This year, it celebrated its 30-year anniversary. Under Evanne's leadership, the Chapter has grown to about 140 members and now manages seven properties with remnant prairies and savannas. Over 80 people attended the anniversary celebration in June.

Evanne did not grow up on a farm nor did she have a memorable childhood experience in nature that drew many people into natural resources. Instead, she was a "townie," raised in the small town of Milaca, Minnesota. Her interest in prairies began in 1991, when she and her husband, Greg Korman, moved onto two acres near Hudson, Wisconsin. Tasked with mowing the lawn, Hunt started looking for ways to reduce the work. She ordered a stack of garden catalogs, and the Prairie Nursery catalog caught her attention.

"I wanted those beautiful prairie flowers instead of a lawn, but I didn't know anything about prairies," she said. "We started with one acre, and we made some mistakes by planting too many tall grasses. Still...that started my passion for prairies. I just love attending work parties, prairie walks and field days. Everyone mentors me; I don't mentor anyone," said Hunt when I asked her about her leadership role. "I don't have the expertise to identify all the prairie plants or know how to manage them. There are many other people with more expertise than I have. But that's okay! The Prairie Enthusiasts is a big organization now; we need lots of different skills. We need experts in finance, education and many other areas, as well as botany."

How can we attract more people to engage in prairie restoration? Why do people choose to do work that can be difficult or sometimes unpleasant? Why spend a cold day in the fall cutting buckthorn, treating stumps



Evanne Hunt among grey-headed coneflower (Ratibida pinnata). Photo by Greg Korman.

with herbicide, hauling trees and shrubs into piles and tackling the other routine, sometimes unpleasant tasks of prairie restoration?

"It's the camaraderie that attracts them," answered Evanne. "We get a lot of people coming out for work parties that may never join The Prairie Enthusiasts, but they still love learning about the prairie, collecting seeds, and feeling the camaraderie of doing something useful outdoors. Notice that we don't call them 'work days,' we call them 'work parties' because we have fun while we work. We always stop for lunch, tell stories, or learn new plants."

"People love a bonfire!" Evanne stated. "Burning wood piles and fall seed collecting are great times to get new people to join us. We encourage people to bring friends. Most people won't come if they don't know at least one other person who is attending. That's just human nature."

Why has Evanne been willing to serve in a leadership role for her Chapter for so many years? "It's difficult to get people to take on leadership roles and attend meetings; most Prairie Enthusiasts would rather work outdoors than go to a meeting," Evanne remarked. "My work as a technical writer for a computer company was indoors. It was natural for me to go to meetings. Actually, I don't like meetings that well either; but taking on a leadership role is something I can do to support the organization."

Evanne's other major role with The Prairie Enthusiasts is outreach. "I show up at every event in the area with my table and brochures," Evanne said. "I emphasize the fun involved in helping nature and the

satisfaction of making a difference. We also have students from UW-River Falls who help with seed collecting and cleaning and professors who encourage them. We're lucky to have those connections."

"I'm very encouraged by the rising public interest in pollinators, butterflies and birds," expressed Evanne. "I think the schools, government agencies and non-profits have been successful in raising public awareness about what a prairie is and why it is important. Back in the 1990s

I had to repeatedly explain to people what a prairie was; most people today have some basic understanding that prairies are important for pollinators and even for birds."

When I contacted Evanne, she worried her story might be too ordinary to interest readers. I don't agree! Her story is a reminder that there are many ways to make a difference, and not all of them are flashy. Often, it is the people who stay committed over time—those with sustained enthusiasm—who provide the steady foundation that helps everyone succeed. ■

Chapter, Chapter... Which Chapter Fits Me?

Article by Kay Wienke, Southwest Wisconsin Chapter Board Representative

Do you live in one Chapter and own a prairie in another Chapter? Do you live in Iowa and are an unaffiliated member of The Prairie Enthusiasts? How is the Chapter to which you are a member determined?

The answer to these questions are twofold. When you fill in a form to donate to The Prairie Enthusiasts, Chapter Support (the main office) assigns new members to the Chapter nearest their residence or to General Member if there is no Chapter covering the area of your residence. This is the best that can be done, based on the information on the donation form.

However, every member can determine which Chapter to which they want to be assigned. You just need to notify Chapter Support of your preference.

Example 1: You live near Chicago but have a cabin property in Dane County, Wisconsin. You may be assigned by Chapter Support as an Unaffiliated Member since we do not have a Chapter in the Chicago area. That means you would receive general organizational communications but no information directly from the Empire-Sauk Chapter, which includes Dane County. In this instance, you may want to request that Chapter Support designate you as a member of the Empire-Sauk Chapter in order to receive general organizational communications plus those directly from the Empire-Sauk Chapter.

Example 2: You live in Minneapolis but have a recreational property in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin. You would be assigned by Chapter Support to the Minnesota Oak Savanna Chapter based on your address, but you would prefer to be a member of the Coulee Region Chapter which is the Chapter that includes your recreational property. You would contact Chapter



Southwest Wisconsin Chapter volunteers burning at Prairie Bush Clover Prairie. Photo by Jack Kussmaul.

Support and ask to have your membership assigned to the Coulee Region Chapter.

Example 3: You live in Milwaukee but have a prairie property near Winona, Minnesota. You would have been assigned to the Glacial Prairie Chapter since that Chapter includes Milwaukee. Maybe you want to remain in that Chapter but also want to get information from the Minnesota Driftless Chapter, which includes Winona. In that case you just need to go to The Prairie Enthusiasts' website, Find My Chapter, click on Minnesota Driftless and at the bottom of that page is "Sign Up For Chapter Updates." Once you complete that form, you will receive general organizational communications, plus from Glacial Prairie and Minnesota Driftless Chapters.

The point is, you can be a member of whichever Prairie Enthusiast Chapter you determine is the best fit for you by notifying Chapter Support. You can also receive Chapter specific-communications (usually emails) from any or all Chapters that you choose by signing up for those "Chapter Updates" on The Prairie Enthusiasts' website. ■

Upcoming Events

Chapter work parties and events are a great way to learn about the habitats near you, connect with your community and feel a sense of accomplishment while stewarding the land. No matter your experience, all are encouraged to attend!

Find a full list of our events on our website at
ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org/Events



World of Seeds Workshop

Empire-Sauk

Saturday, October 10 – 9:00 a.m. to Noon

Schurch-Thomson Prairie, Barneveld, WI

This workshop is intended for people new to seed collecting. Learn about one of the most enjoyable and deeply satisfying volunteer activities.



Burn Preparation

Glacial Prairie

Sunday, October 11 – 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Shining Oaks, near Cambridge, WI

Help remove downed, woody material to prepare for a fall burn on this site that The Prairie Enthusiasts holds an easement on.



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Chapter Updates

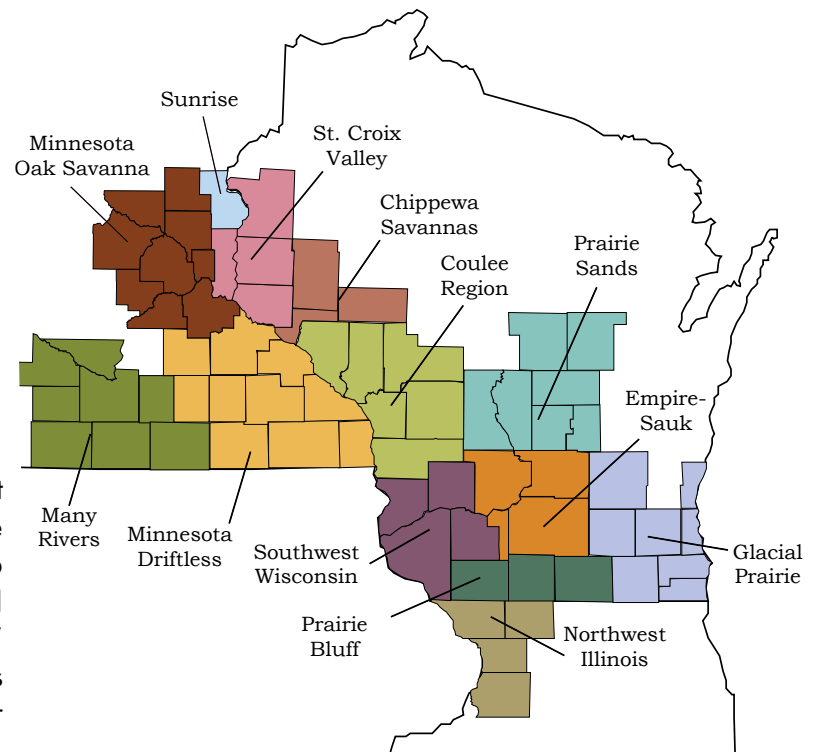
Sunrise

Update by Shawn Kadlec

Chapter Update

The Sunrise Chapter celebrated its establishment as the newest Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts and the completion of its first burn season with a membership kick-off meeting at Ki-Chi-Saga Park in Lindstrom, MN on June 21. The evening began with a "Plant ID Quiz," followed by remarks from members of the Chapter's Board highlighting the accomplishments of the Chapter since its formal inception in October 2025. This spring, Sunrise Chapter members safely completed seven burns ranging in size from about ½ acre to 22 acres. In the process, twelve members trained-up to become full Crew Members; and our crew now includes three qualified Burn Bosses, five Crew Leaders and 22 Crew Members. We also conducted outreach at two local events this spring, with more scheduled for the fall festival season.

As we prepare for the fall season, our Prescribed Fire Committee leaders are excited to be conducting property assessments with our members to determine which ones are good candidates for a fall burn and scheduling others for next spring. Our Chapter's Outreach



and Education Committee is busy coordinating a seed gathering event at the Franconia Sculpture Park (one of our spring burn sites) on October 10.

The entire Sunrise Chapter extends its heartfelt thanks to the The Prairie Enthusiasts Board of Directors for accepting us as the organization's newest Chapter; the Treasury Committee and Board for approving the "seed money" to jump-start our burn program with equipment purchases and everyone at Chapter Support for their time, effort and patience with us as we continue to get "up and running" as a Chapter. ■

St. Croix Valley

Update by Evanne Hunt

Celebrating 30 Years as a Chapter!

What a wonderful evening of celebration! On June 20, 81 members and guests gathered at the home of Mike Miller and Susan Goode to commemorate our Chapter's 30-year anniversary.

The evening featured a delicious catered dinner, live music and a relaxing walk through the savanna, giving everyone an opportunity to reconnect, reminisce and celebrate three decades of conservation and community.

The StumpGrinders band provided lively entertainment throughout the evening, setting the perfect



Miller/Goode Savanna tour during the St. Croix Valley Chapter 30 Year Anniversary. Photo by Greg Korman.



Above: Tropical Wings reception.
Photo by Evanne Hunt.



New Alexander Oak Savanna sign created with help from the St. Croix Valley Foundation. Photo by Heather Holm.

Right: The heat did not stop invasive plant management at our Alexander Oak Savanna and Dieperink sites.

Parsnip team from left to right: Dick Seebach, Alex Bouthilet, Evanne Hunt, Wayne Huhnke. Photo by Heidi Kassenborg.



tone with a mix of music that had guests tapping their feet and enjoying the celebration.

Following dinner, Chapter Chair Evanne Hunt, Executive Director Jessica Bizub and President Jim Rogala reflected on the Chapter's remarkable journey over the past 30 years. They celebrated the dedication of members, volunteers and supporters whose passion and commitment have made the Chapter's accomplishments possible, while also sharing an inspiring vision for the years ahead.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make this milestone celebration such a memorable success. Here's to the next 30 years!

Tropical Wings Collaboration: Grant Awarded

Tropical Wings awarded our Chapter \$500 in funding toward tree and brush removal at Foster Conservation Area.

Evanne attended the May 15 reception at the Phipps Center for the Arts in Hudson to receive the grant check. A tri-fold poster display detailed the planned project for event visitors to learn about the effort to help migratory birds.

Tropical Wings Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with the mission of promoting an awareness of Neotropical migratory birds and supporting habitat

conservation through building relationships within and between communities at both ends of the migration.

Tropical Wings Collaboration: Wings of Spring Migration Celebration

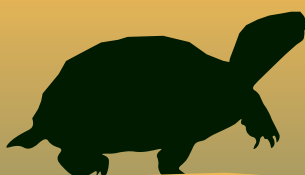
The Chapter was invited to the Tropical Wings event at the Carpenter Nature Center in Hudson on May 9.

Harvey Halvorsen, Mike Miller and Evanne talked to 30-40 people about the importance of native habitat and allowed them to test their knowledge of prairie flowers.

St. Croix Valley Foundation Grant

Thanks to the generous support of the St. Croix Valley Foundation, Alexander Oak Savanna now features a new interpretive sign that helps visitors learn about this unique natural area. Special thanks to Jay Arneson, Peter Fritz, and Wayne Huhnke for their work installing the sign.

The new sign was officially dedicated on August 8 during a community celebration. Following the dedication, participants enjoyed a butterfly hunt through the savanna, discovering the beauty and diversity of the habitat while celebrating this exciting addition. ■



Celebrating 30 Years!



Left to Right: Prescott Bergh, Mike Miller, Jim Rogala, Jessica Bizub, Evanne Hunt, Ginny Gaynor, Ruth Hilfiger, Peter Fritz, Harvey Halvorson.
Photo by Jed Hopp.



All photos by Greg Korman unless otherwise noted.



Minnesota Oak Savanna

Update by Regina M Flanagan

Prescribed Burn, Field Tours, Work Day and Hosting Ecologist Dan Carter

We welcomed three new Chapter Board members at our May 2026 meeting: Ben Bullard, Leah Snavelly and Rebecca Zerlin. Now we have eight members. We used the opportunity to reflect on how our Leadership Team functioned in its first 18 months and to consider what structure best serves us moving forward. Our goal in clarifying and refining our Chapter structure was to ensure each member's responsibilities aligned with their strengths and interests. This enabled our new Board members to take on roles that capitalize on their considerable strengths, interests and connections. We're very excited to have them on board!

Meantime, our Chapter's Prescribed Fire and Site Maintenance Work Group has established relationships with agencies, organizations and landowners who could use our help. On May 2, 2026, apprentices from last November's prescribed fire training session and others participated on a burn crew directed by Troy Mielke at the University of Minnesota's Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve. (Located 40 miles north of the Twin Cities, Cedar Creek is the University's renowned field station for research and training that is home to some of the longest-running ecological experiments in the world.) We hope to team with them on additional burns in the fall and potentially, future research endeavors.

On May 7, Caleb Ashling, Natural Resources

Ecologist Dan Carter explains the difference between canopy cover and canopy closure during the field tour of Cullen Nature Preserve, Minnetonka.

Photo by Regina M Flanagan.

staff with the City of Burnsville, led members on a field tour of Terrace Oaks Park, home to many towering bur and white oaks but heavily invaded by common buckthorn and weedy trees. We learned that in 2015, the City undertook its first large-scale restoration project on a 19-acre section of the park in partnership with Great River Greening and grant funds from the Minnesota Outdoor



Apprentices with field boss Troy Mielke (in cowboy hardhat) and burn bosses in red hats conducted a prescribed burn at the University's Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve. Photo by Lane Johnson.

Heritage Fund. In 2018, this effort was expanded to an additional 26-acre restoration area and expanded again in 2022. The park now has about 70 acres of oak savanna in various stages of restoration.

Chapter volunteers participated in a work day on May 26 to remove garlic mustard at Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi, a sacred Dakota site situated between the bluffs and the Mississippi River in downtown Saint Paul, readying the landscape for the grand opening of the Wakan Tipi Center that week. Later, on July 20, Environmental Restoration Manager Tierra Baird led four Board members on a tour of the site to observe its current condition and learn about management plans.

The weekend of July 18-19, we hosted The Prairie Enthusiasts' staff Ecologist Dan Carter. On a steamy Saturday afternoon, Dan led a guided walk through the Cullen Nature Preserve oak savanna, a 10-acre restoration project in Minnetonka. Attendees learned about the site's history and compared the sections undergoing active management with unrestored remnants. As the Preserve currently remains closed to the public, this was a unique chance for Chapter members to experience the site during its restoration phase and witness the remarkable transformation underway. We were inspired by how much progress has been made in a relatively short period of time.

Saturday evening, Dan offered a presentation for 45 attendees entitled Identifying and Caring for Oak Woodlands. Dan showed us what to look for and broadly how to care for and restore oak woodlands. He talked about how low-intensity surface fire is a core ecological process and emphasized that the characteristics of the non-woody vegetation are no less important than the oak trees. This understanding is critical for sustained improvement of oak woodlands.

On Sunday morning, Dan held a special two-hour field workshop co-sponsored with Dakota County Parks at Lebanon Hills Regional Park geared toward practitioners and conservation professionals. He provided participants with the tools to constructively evaluate and monitor an oak woodland. We examined an oak woodland in the park employing Dan's Oak Woodland Field Worksheet to assess and rank woodland composition and structure.

We worked with Chapter Support to sponsor a special supporter event on September 26, at the Richardson Nature Center in Bloomington, and we anticipate holding an annual meeting/homecoming event with the membership before the end of the year. ■



Tierra Baird Environmental Manager of Wakan Tipi Wanyankapi in Saint Paul with volunteers and buckets of garlic mustard. Photo by Regina M Flanagan.



Caleb Ashling, City of Burnsville, compares the unrestored buckthorn-choked oak forest (left) to the savanna (right) resulting from tree thinning, native plant seeding and controlled burns. Photo by Regina M Flanagan.



Ecologist Dan Carter shares his observations during a field tour of Cullen Nature Preserve, Minnetonka, undergoing restoration. Photo by Regina M Flanagan.



Minnesota Driftless

Update and Photos by Peter Hartman

Garvin Heights: A Work in Progress

Garvin Heights Park is loved by Winonans—for the view from the top, for the wild bluff land that surrounds it and for the beauty of the plants found there. But like many places, invasive shrubs like buckthorn and honeysuckle were choking the life out of the native prairie on Garvin Heights. Back in 2001, Winona State University Professor Carol Jefferson started a restoration process that is still going on today. For years, Jefferson led an effort with hundreds of volunteers to cut and treat invasive shrubs, remove shade-loving trees, seed the woodlands with native forbs, reintroduce fire to the site and experiment with goats to control the buckthorn.

Since 2024, the Minnesota Driftless Chapter has taken on the role of coordinating the ecological restoration efforts at Garvin Heights. Working with the City of Winona and Winona State University, the volunteers of the Chapter had many workdays to cut invasive shrubs and create fire breaks around three burn units. The site is large and we had to think strategically. We knew fire was the best way to deal with the invasive species and restore the site. Working with the University, the city and the fire department, we have been able to have three prescribed fires on the Upper Bluff Prairie Burn Unit in 2024, 2025 and 2026. With each successive fire, we saw improvements to the openness of the upper bluff prairie and an increased number of flowering prairie plants, especially greater Indian plantain. In the Open Oak woodland/savanna burn unit we have had two fires in 2025 and 2026. These early spring burns in the woodland were especially effective. The buckthorn was

Prescribed burning on the Upper Bluff Prairie Burn Unit of Garvin Heights.

set back and savanna forbs like hyssop (*Agastache* spp.), sweet Joe-pye weed (*Eutrochium purpureum*) and great Indian plantain (*Arnoglossum reniforme*) were gaining an upper hand, they were overtopping and starting to shade the burnt back buckthorn.

There still is much to do at Garvin Heights. We need to continue with the prescribed fires in the existing units. We have established a third burn unit on a lower portion of the bluff prairie and plan to burn that area this fall. We are continuing to have workdays to cut and treat buckthorn in all the burn units so that we can get more herbaceous ground cover to promote better burns. And over time we would like to expand existing burn units and create new ones. It is a work in progress. ■



Prescribed burning in the open oak woodland of Garvin Heights.



*Prairie Enthusiasts enjoying a tour of Grell Prairie.
Photo by Rob Baller.*

Southwest Wisconsin

Update by Becky Fernette

Building Connections

In addition to our land management activities at our sites, our Chapter's focus has been on building connections with our members and other Prairie Enthusiasts. In June, Marty Grell hosted a prairie walk at Grell Prairie in Bear Valley. Seventeen Prairie Enthusiasts hiked to his hilltop remnant; even Marty was surprised to discover several purple milkweeds (*Asclepias purpurascens*) that popped up after the spring burn. Marty regaled the group with many stories about his restoration journey over the past 30 years, which has included both expanding remnants and planting native seeds.

Also in June, Beth and Niels Jensen hosted a Gays Mills area meet-up at their home and property near Gays Mills. Several hardy souls climbed to the peak of their goat prairie and spied short green milkweed (*Asclepias viridiflora*). We are grateful to the Jensens for sharing their beautiful property with us and for being part of our Chapter! Members in the Richland/SE Vernon area met at the home of Debbie Pavick and Joe Block in July. Debbie led a prairie walk around their diverse property near Hillsboro that features a pond and a dam, in addition to acres and acres of prairie. Debbie shared many of her "lessons learned" in their 30+ years of prairie restoration, to which many of the group could relate. Despite the heat, it was a lovely morning for a prairie walk followed by a potluck salad lunch. These gatherings provide our members and friends the opportunity to connect and share their experiences with one another.

As Chapter Chair, I continue to build connections

with partner organizations and groups due to my affiliations with Mississippi Valley Conservancy, Driftless Area Land Conservancy, WI Master Naturalists, WI Women in Conservation, Blue River Sand Barrens SNA, and WI Prescribed Fire Council by attending meetings, work parties and tours. I'm inspired by the level of commitment to protecting and preserving natural areas demonstrated by so many individuals, and excited to collaborate with several of these organizations. Also, I was honored to attend the St. Croix Valley's 30-year Anniversary Celebration—congratulations to them for their three decades of stewardship!

Lastly, our Chapter Board welcomed two new members—James Haas who is an At-Large Board Member and Julie Pluemer who is our new Treasurer. We are thrilled to have you join us! Thank you to Steve Querin-Schultz for serving as treasurer for several years; we appreciate everything you've done (and hopefully will continue to do) for our Chapter. Minutes from our Board meetings are available on our Chapter webpage.

Gratitude

Our Site Stewards at Borah Creek Prairie, the Chapter Board and volunteers express their appreciation for the generous donation that allowed us to purchase a tractor. The crew of Steve Querin-Schultz, Gary Eldred and Gary Adams have been able to open up more acres to prairie restoration and mow wider and more effective burn breaks. We've been able to use the tractor on other sites too. Please know that we are grateful for every donation of any amount, and your support is substantially aiding our efforts to restore the land. ■



Coulee Region

Update by Melinda Knutson, Kathryn Hietbrink, Jon Rigden, Jim Rogala and Max Sorenson

Nature Journaling event leader Max Sorenson at Holland Sand Prairie. Photo by Reid Bartholomew.

Summer Hikes

Our Chapter partnered with The Nature Place in La Crosse for a Bioblitz on Stry Prairie on June 20. Several folks from the area joined The Prairie Enthusiasts members along with The Nature Place staff to venture out on the prairie using the iNaturalist app to identify the plants, insects and birds that we each took note of. Within an hour and a half, hundreds of observations were recorded. Currently, for the Stry Prairie iNaturalist project, 648 observations have been made, and 198 species have been identified. Observations will continue to be added by those using the app on Stry Prairie. This is a great form of citizen science that can help us survey the precious prairies in our The Prairie Enthusiasts area. It is also a fun way to get new folks involved and to help develop their ID skills and passion for protecting these unique ecosystems.

Members of our Chapter gathered for a Nature Journaling event at Holland Sand Prairie on Saturday, June 27. Attendees took in the gorgeous summer morning and received prompts meant to help guide their connection with this incredible relic of the immense sand prairie that once stretched from La Crosse to Galesville, east of a meandering Mississippi River. The group was made up of long-time Prairie Enthusiast volunteers as well as some attendees who have never before experienced a Wisconsin prairie! Attendees reflected on how journaling was a useful method by which to slow down one's body and mind, allowing newcomers and regulars alike a fresh

perspective on the incredible biodiversity of this very accessible site.

Many of us also participated in the Botanical Club of Wisconsin's Botanical Foray, which happened in the heart of the Coulee Region Chapter. Look for highlights from other late summer and fall events in the spring issue of *The Prairie Promoter*.

Collaboration Update

The collaboration with Friends of the Blufflands (FBL) remains strong, working on the restoration of City of La Crosse bluff prairies. We've continued to advertise FBL workdays, which occur most Mondays and Fridays. In addition to the BioBlitz in June, we had collaborative workdays to perform double-cutting of sumac on Stry, Mathy Bluff and Birch Point Prairies. Dan Carter visited three of the prairies managed by FBL that our Chapter helps on: Mathy Prairie, Lookout Prairie and Zoerb Prairies. Dan formally assessed them using a floristic quality assessment and will produce detailed management plans. This work was funded through a grant from the Stry Foundation, and we thank them for their support.

Restoring the Land

Even with the brutal heat this last summer, we spent many mornings working on our projects. In addition to the double-cutting of sumac on City of La Crosse lands,



we cut sumac around July 1 and August 1 at Holland Sand Prairie and Midway Prairie. On other sites we work on, including Marowski Bluff Prairie, we've gotten sumac under control. We spent time at Marowski working on blackberry lily and bramble control, and did some brush control by cutting and treating.

Under the guidance of Melinda Knutson, work parties were held almost weekly starting in May through July at Midway Railroad Prairie SNA, focusing mainly on removing common knapweed. We elected to pull the knapweed and many volunteers were needed. Most of the volunteers were affiliated with the Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge, Pools 7 & 8. We made good progress, but now that the knapweed is flowering, we see that it has invaded almost the entire prairie. The site may be too small for biocontrol, but that will be part of future conversations. We also removed sweet clover, honeysuckle shrubs and Siberian elm along the perimeter of the site, but much remains to be done. ■



*Top: Stry Prairie BioBlitz Group.
Photo by Cassidy Coulson.*

Middle: BioBlitz volunteers tracking their sightings on iNaturalist. Photo by Laurie Arzaga.

*Bottom: Dan Carter at Mathy Bluff Prairie.
Photo by Jon Rigden.*

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Header Image by RS Baller.



Prairie Enthusiasts Remembered

Memorial gifts dedicated between
May 14, 2026 and August 19, 2026

They will take me home
the spirits,
the thunders and wind,
They will take me home.

Excerpt from unattributed Indigenous
Peoples song recorded in the Bureau
of American Ethnology bulletins.

Photo by Jesse Bates.

In memory of:

W.A. Brandt

Remembered by George Brandt

Ray Clausen

Remembered by Tim Yanacheck

Rae Davis

Remembered by Linda Davis

Brennan Peter DeLap

Remembered by Russell DeLap & Bonnie Schlinder-DeLap

George D. Johnson

Remembered by Barbara Howard

Edith Lena

Remembered by Madeline Ura-neck

Anna Motivans

Remembered by
Judy Dwyer-Lyons
Judy & Dave Gunnarson
Laura & Gregory Nessler
Jeremy Phillips
Sue Tracy

Patty Neumueller

Remembered by Edward [Last Name Not Provided]

Marsha Rea

Remembered by Susan McAlister

Bill Reid

Remembered by Jonathan Littman & Lynne Strode

Bob Russell

Remembered by Virginia Russell

Paul Rode

Remembered by Kay Day

Jim Sime

Remembered by
Nancy & Steve Braker
Becky Fernette

Keith Solimar

Remembered by Karen Solimar

Kathy Widin

Remembered by Sheila Maybanks



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Dennis & Sharon Krumenauer
Rick Stewart
Sue Tracy
Karen Williamson

Empire-Sauk

Judy Dwyer-Lyons
Casey Jones
Ryan Mclane & Andrea Liptack
John Schmitz & Jean Tretow-Schmitz
Dean & Marcia Schwarz
Robert Streiffer
Susan Wulfsberg

Glacial Prairie

Gus Brunette
Bill Jones
Eric Collins Parker
Carol Tumey

Minnesota Driftless

Cate Ness
Savannah Swanson
Suzanne Tomek

Minnesota Oak Savanna

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Jeff Beck
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Leanna Forcier
Jerrold Gershone
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