The Prairie Enthusiasts

Brand & Style Guide

September 18, 2026



Photo by Eric Preston

How to Use This Guide

Chapter Support can design materials and illustrations for the organization and Chapters, route material to be reviewed by the Education Committee, Scientific Advisory Group, provide guidance on AP writing style, write press releases and other external communication, and many other projects related to our marketing efforts.

Our Brand & Style Guide helps to ensure we have a unified look across the organization.

If you have a project that requires writing or design, please contact Chapter Support to assist you.

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Our Brand



Photo by Gary Shackelford

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.



Core Values

Reverence for the Land

All that we are, and everything we do is deeply rooted in our love and respect for the Land—the communities of soils, water, plants, animals, and other living things, of which we are all a part.

Long View

The origins of the land are ancient. We are stewards of the present—the legacy entrusted to our care. Our actions will shape what is possible for future generations.

Working Together

We are responsible for caring for the land. Everyone has a unique ability to contribute. By working together, we form bonds that make our community stronger than ourselves.

Sharing knowledge

We honor wisdom and experience, science, and the arts. We are seekers and teachers, sharing what we have learned and encouraging others to build on it.



Core Focus

Our Purpose

Igniting relationships with the land

Our Niche

Protecting and restoring endangered fire-dependent ecosystems of the Upper Midwest



Three Uniques



Protection and stewardship expertise



Grassroots approach



Community of learners



Voice & Personality

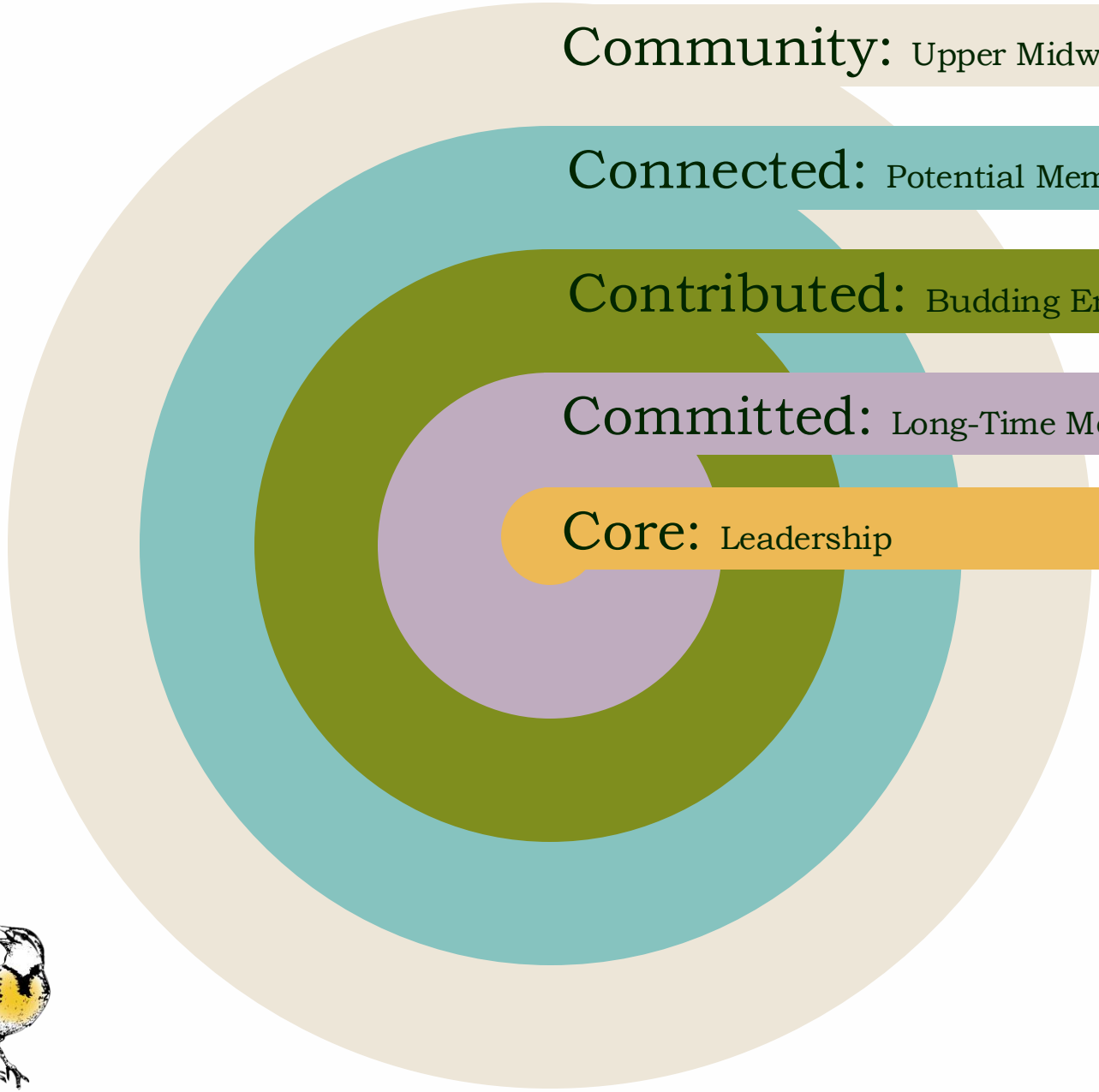
Down-to-Earth
Knowledgeable
Passionate
Devoted



Photo by Eric Preston

Target Audiences




Community: Upper Midwesterners who appreciate nature in the places they live
Connected: Potential Members
Contributed: Budding Enthusiasts
Committed: Long-Time Members
Core: Leadership



Our Story

For thousands of years, the Upper Midwest was abundant with prairies and oak savannas that evolved to depend on fires, most of which were ignited by Indigenous Peoples. With the arrival of Europeans, this once vast landscape was almost entirely lost to the plow, lack of fire, introduction of nonnative species and development pressures. Today, only a tiny fraction remains.

Threats to biodiversity globally have made these imperiled places, with the rare plants and wildlife they sustain, even more vital for our future. Yet few prairie remnants have been protected and more continue to slip away.

The Prairie Enthusiasts seek out, protect and restore fire-dependent ecosystems across the Upper Midwest. We celebrate their beauty and complexity and actively steward them by returning fire to the land. Our regional Chapters are reconstructing the prairie and contributing to landscape-scale conservation by working with landowners and collaborating with partners. We are a grassroots community of learners, sharing insights, practices and inspiration.



The Meadowlark



Photo of Gary Eldred

The Prairie Enthusiasts

Our singing meadowlark was created by founding member Gary Eldred. It represents the beauty and abundance of life on prairies and our commitment to grassroots action.

Logo Usage

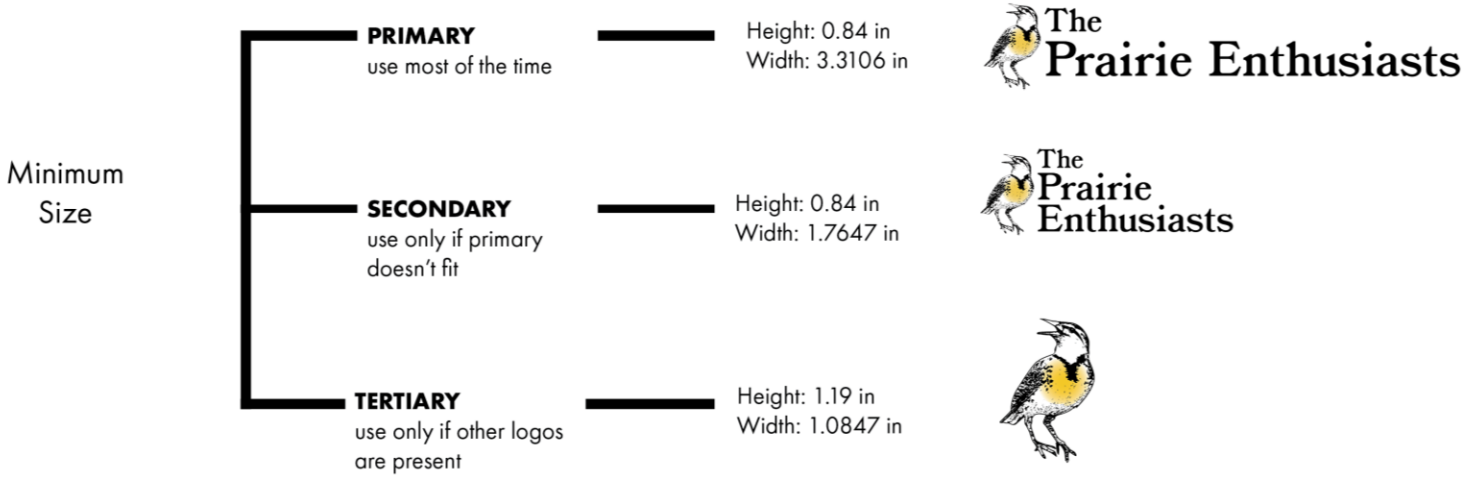


Photo by Jay Olson-Goude

Minimum Sizing & Spacing

The logo should be easy to see and read. Keep the logo legible and provide spacing. If using any other logo, this primary logo should be used above/first. JPG images are ideal for web; PNG or JPG can be used for print.

Use white text logo if using on a dark background.



Other Logos


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Chippewa Savannas Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Coulee Region Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Empire-Sauk Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Glacial Prairie Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Many Rivers Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Minnesota Driftless Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Minnesota Oak Savanna Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Northwest Illinois Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Prairie Bluff Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Prairie Sands Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Southwest Wisconsin Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
St. Croix Valley Chapter


The Prairie Enthusiasts
Sunrise Chapter

Other Logos

Our Land Trust Accreditation Commission seal can and should be used broadly. However, do not place the seal to the left or above our logo. The seal can be made black or white if design calls for it (must be all one color).

To see LTA's full style guide for the seal, click HERE









What *Not* To Do

Logos should not be squished or stretched, have the meadowlark removed, or color changed. Do not use the logo at an angle.









Brand Colors



Photo by Gary Shackelford

How to Use Branded Colors

The colors provided in the following slides are the only colors that should be used for our communications. They help our community easily identify us, no matter which Chapter they belong to.

We have primary, secondary and tertiary color swatches. The primary colors are how we will mostly be recognized (what color do you think of when Coca-Cola is mentioned). The primary, secondary, and tertiary colors should be used as 60/30/10 respectively in the total composition.

Primary

Meadowlark
Hex: #EDB955
CMYK: 7,28,78,0
RGB: 236,184,84
Pantone: 141 C

Black
Hex: #001B00
CMYK: 76,56,77,79
RGB: 0,27,0

White
Hex: #FEFEFE
CMYK: 0,0,0,0
RGB: 254,254,254

Sand
Hex: #EDE6D8
CMYK: 6,7,14,0
RBG: 237,230,216
Pantone: 3-9 C

Secondary

Leaf
Hex: #7F8E1E
CMYK: 54,29,100,9
RGB: 127,142,30
Pantone: 7496 C

Bloom
Hex: #BFACBF
CMYK: 25,31,13,0
RGB: 191,172,191
Pantone: 524 C

Sky
Hex: #86C3BF
CMYK: 47,6,27,0
RGB: 134,195,181
Pantone: 7464 C

Soil
Hex: #853C00
CMYK: 31,79,100,33
RGB: 133,60,0
Pantone: 1535 C



Tertiary

Seed
Hex: #ADA06B
CMYK: 34,31,67,2
RGB: 173,160,107
Pantone: 5845 C

Storm
Hex: #4E7560
CMYK: 71,36,65,18
RGB: 78,117,96
Pantone: 5545 C

Coneflower
Hex: #D98B9B
CMYK: 13,54,24,0
RGB: 217,139,155
Pantone: 197 C

Fire
Hex: #D98615
CMYK: 13,53,100,1
RGB: 217,134,21
Pantone: 7564 C



Typography



Photo by Eric Preston

How to Use Fonts

Only the following fonts should be used.

Fonts weight (bold, italic, regular), height and size can be adjusted as much as makes sense for the design of the piece. Color can also be used as long as it's within the branded color palette.



HEADER:

Bookman Old Style Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890

CALL TO ACTION:

Bookman Old Style Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890

SUBHEADING:

Futura Book Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

BODY:

Futura PT Book Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

CAPTION:

Futura Light Oblique (Futura Book Italic)

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890



When those fonts are not available, use…

HEADER:

Merriweather or Book Antiqua

2nd Choice Georgia

CALL TO ACTION:

Merriweather

2nd Choice Georgia

SUBHEADING:

Tahoma

BODY:

Tahoma

CAPTION:

Tahoma

Needed for Constant Contact, Bloomerang and potential other applications



Photography



Photo by Ginny Gaynor

Approach

Photography is what connects people to place. We love to share the wonder and beauty of fire-dependent ecosystems and the life they support.

Our best photographs show smiling faces of people connecting to the land.



Jim Rogala and Laurie Arzaga removing brush.
Photo by Sarah Barron.

Things to Avoid

Photos that look staged; active photos are more captivating.

People wearing sunglasses; we want to connect with their eyes.

Backsides or back of heads. These can be useful occasionally, but it's best to connect with faces.

People looking at things that we can't see; connect the viewer with what's causing the excitement.

Hats create shadows on faces. Instead, either take photos with no hats or expose the photo to show faces.

Low-quality, blurry photos.

For photos of prescribed fire, chainsaw work or pesticide use, don't show images of incorrect use or improper personal protective equipment.

Wherever possible, try to show seasonally appropriate blooms.

Note: Always include a photo credit if able.





Photos by Sarah Barron

Photo Taking Tip

Before events, tell people you will be taking photos. Ask attendees to let you know if they don't want their photo taken and respect that.

This can help any awkwardness that may be felt about capturing the moment.

An easy way to achieve this is by putting a photo release form into event registrations. To do this, request assistance from Chapter Support.



Icons & Illustration



Photo by Eric Preston

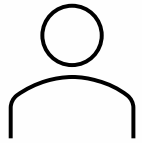
Icons

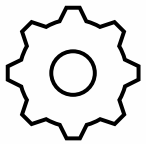
Icons should be common societal symbols that help users navigate content. They are often used on websites, emails and other online platforms. Icons should be simple and use brand colors.

When using icons, accompany the descriptive tag (e.g., Profile, Menu).

Icons should be no smaller than 20 pixels.

Our Icons

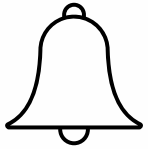
Profile 

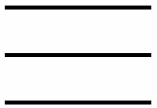
Settings 

Comment 

Share 

Delete 

Notifications 

Menu 

Home 



Illustrations

Photography should be the primary imagery. Sometimes, we don't have new photos, photos of a specific thing, or choose to entice an audience in a different way. Illustrations can be used in those instances.

Illustrations can bring personality to written material. They can be used to fill empty spaces or draw readers to a specific area.

Illustrations should relate to the environments that we steward (e.g., no houseplants). They should only be used in the brand colors and have high to moderate detail.

Do not use cartoons, abstract or overly stylized illustrations, or inaccurate representations. **Do not** mix and match illustration styles within the same piece.

Our Illustrations



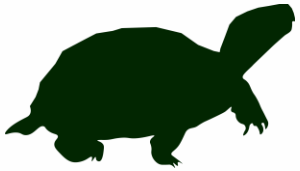
person with drip torch



rusty patched bumblebee



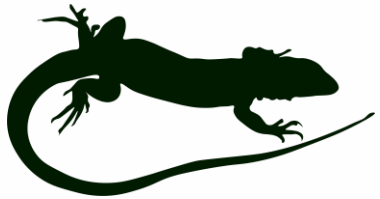
monarch butterfly



box turtle



meadow vole



six lined racerunner



grasshopper sparrow



Indian plantain





Indian grass



hairy grama grass



compass plant & leaf

Other Illustrations

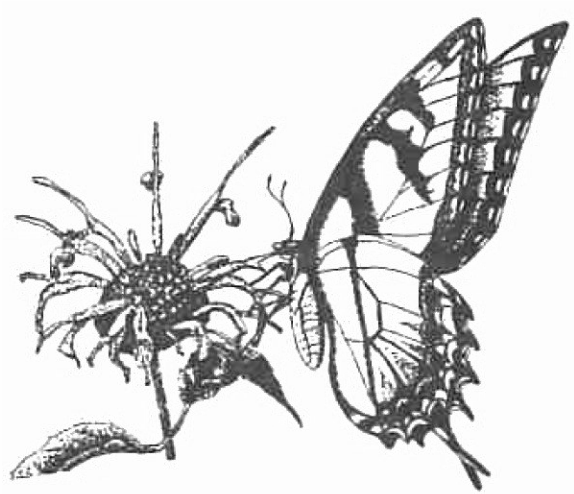
By Gary Eldred



bobolink



Various native plants



swallowtail on beebalm



oak savanna



Styles Like This Should NOT be Used









Editorial Guidelines



Photo by Kathleen Henning

Writing Tone – Print & Email

When we connect with others, we are communicating *with* our community, not *to* our community. We are both mentors and mentees. Our tone is respectful and curious.



Writing Tone - Social

Social media is the place where we can be a bit more casual. We're often celebrating interesting finds that people have on fire-dependent ecosystems.

We share exciting news from our organization and partner organizations that will get people interested in connecting with the land.



About The Prairie Enthusiasts

For Press Releases & Websites:

The Prairie Enthusiasts is an accredited land trust that seeks to ensure the perpetuation and recovery of prairie, oak savanna and other fire-dependent ecosystems of the Upper Midwest through protection, management, restoration and education. In doing so, they strive to work openly and cooperatively with private landowners and other private and public conservation groups. Their 13 regional grassroots Chapters of volunteers in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois lead projects in their local communities focused especially on high-quality remnants, which contain nearly all the components of endangered prairie communities. Find more information at: ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org



Writing Tips & Tricks

Be concise

Attention spans are short (an average of 8.25 seconds, which is shorter than a goldfish). Be brief but provide options for people to learn more.

Be correct

We care about the accuracy of what we're sharing, and all materials should be reviewed prior to publishing.

Be excited

We share the enthusiasm of our community's discoveries and celebrate their achievements.

Be clear

Avoid jargon and acronyms. Explain our work in a way that someone new to land stewardship would understand.

Be positive

Focus on what is possible because of the work we're doing together and inspire others to get involved.



Writing Tips & Tricks

We're an organization not a company or business

An organization works for the greater good and has a common shared purpose. The primary goal of a company or business is to make profit.

Use ecosystems or prairies and oak savannas

Ecosystems aligns most with our tone and is clear and comprehensive. Prairies and oak savannas is ideal for those unfamiliar with the ecosystems we steward. Places, habitats or areas can be used only if the former two have been used already. As a last resort consider landscapes or natural communities.

Ecosystem Adjectives

The preference is fire-dependent. Imperiled, threatened and rare should also be used in combination with fire-dependent.



Our Favorite Platforms

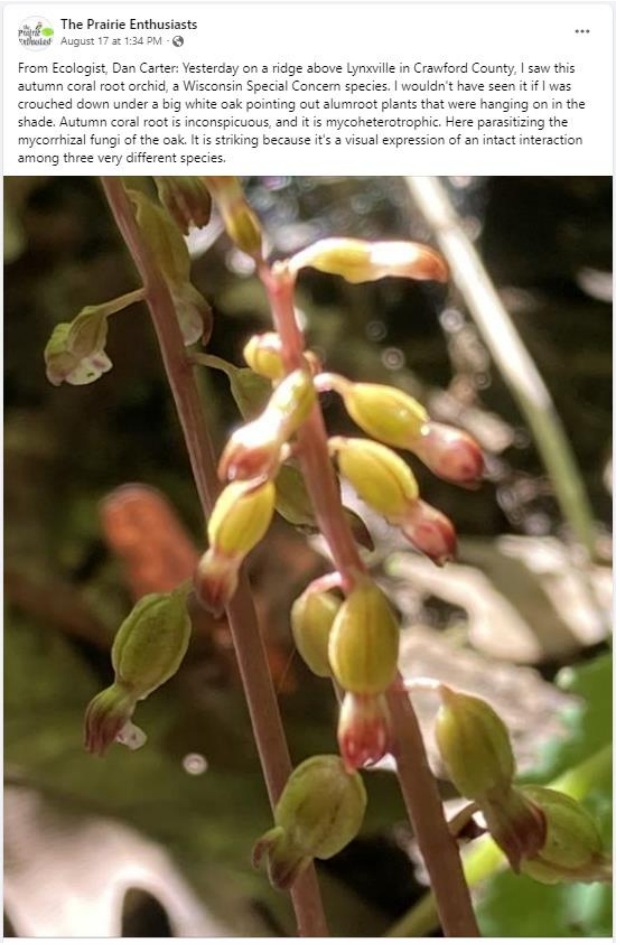
Our community is mostly on Facebook. We love inspiring them and having them inspire us. Remember that this is a two-way street!

Our second most popular way that people can find out what we're up to is on Instagram. It's where our younger audience resides, whom we're eager to connect with.

At this time, YouTube is more of a tool for us than a means of connection. We direct people to our videos posted here through other social networks.



Example Posts









The Prairie Enthusiasts

Brand Terminology

We follow AP Style. The following information is for language specific to The Prairie Enthusiast.



Photo by Danielle Bell

Brand Terminology

501(c)(3)

Federal charitable organization. Nonprofit can be used more informally.

biodiversity

The variety of life in a specific area

Chapters

Regional grassroots communities that provide the on-the-grounds land management, education and outreach programs of The Prairie Enthusiasts that is implemented in differently by each Chapter. This should be capitalized.

Chapter Support

Staff with The Prairie Enthusiasts responsible for maintaining the function of the organization as a whole, including accounting, fundraising, marketing, land protection, etc.

cut and treat

Also called "cut and dab," or "cut stump treatment." The process of cutting stems or trunks of invasive or out-of-place vegetation and then applying herbicide to the cut stump to prevent regrowth.

DNR

The DNR (Department of Natural Resources) should be noted as [state] DNR. Wisconsin DNR, Minnesota DNR, etc. If character count is a limiting factor, this formatting should be noted when first mentioned, and then WDNR, MDNR, etc. may be afterwards.

flora

Plants found in a specific area

fauna

Animals found in a specific area



Brand Terminology

herbicide

A chemical used to control undesirable plants

invasive or aggressive

Plants and other species that spread prolifically, displacing native vegetation. Don't just write "invasives." Write "invasive species."

land protected for generations to come

Used in relation to our owned properties and easements. It is not preferred to use the term "in perpetuity."

Land trust

A nonprofit organization that owns and manages land

Land Trust Alliance (LTA)

A national association for land trusts with a separate accrediting commission

makutu

Created by members, Walter and Alice Mirk. It's used to apply herbicide to cut stumps and controls application by containing the herbicide in a reservoir and dispensing it through a wick.

Member

Anyone who has made a donation (of any amount) to The Prairie Enthusiasts within the last year.



Brand Terminology Continued…

native vs. non-native species

Species that are considered native were found in the Upper Midwest ecosystems prior to the arrival of Europeans in the region. Non-native species arrived or were introduced after the arrival of Europeans in the region.

parsnip predator

A modified shovel created by the Prairie Bluff Chapter that slices the tap root of invasive wild parsnip and some other aggressive species

phenology

Seasonal cycles of natural patterns related to plants and animals

prescribed or controlled fire

To set fire intentionally as a means of land stewardship. The term "prescribed" is preferred, but "controlled" maybe used in situation where "prescribed" may be jargon.

restoration and reconstruction

Restoration begins with many elements of the historical ecosystem; reconstruction begins with few.

stewardship vs management

Our act of caring for the land. Used in reference to our various activities like prescribed fire, seed collecting, brush removal, etc. It is preferred that we use the word stewardship as opposed to management.

The Prairie Promoter

Our publication that is released three times a year. This should always be italicized and always noted with its full name, never “Promoter,” or “Prairie Promoter.”

Work Party

Volunteer events like seed collecting, brush cutting, etc. This term is preferred over "work days."



Brand Terminology – Common Invasive Plants

Asian bittersweet

From East Asia, introduced as an ornamental. Highly invasive in a wide range of ecosystems. Spreads prolifically by seed. Adventitious sprouts from roots form dense, tangled thickets.

common buckthorn

From Europe, Asia, and North Africa, introduced as an ornamental and hedge row species. Spreads prolifically by fruits that are mildly toxic and cause laxative effects in birds and other animals. Chemicals in its litter harm larval amphibians and suppresses germination and growth of other plants.

crown vetch

From Central and Eastern Europe. Widely planted as ground cover and erosion control. It grows densely, overtaking and shading out other plants and uses chemicals to inhibit the growth of other plants (allelopathy).

garlic mustard

From Europe and Asia, brought in for herbal use and erosion control. Can quickly cover large areas and releases underground chemicals that suppress mycorrhizal fungi, which many plant species rely upon to absorb nutrients.

leafy spurge

From Eurasia. Each plant can produce large clumps of shoots from vast underground roots. They employ chemical inhibitors (allelopathy) to suppress or eliminate other plants.

multiflora rose

From Eastern Asia, brought in as an ornamental, erosion control and a living fence. High seed production and forms dense thorny thickets.



Brand Terminology – Common Invasive Plants

phragmites (common reed)

Invasive strains came from Europe. Eliminates native vegetation due its very tall, dense growth and production of large volumes of smothering duff or thatch.

reed canary grass

Particularly aggressive variety is from Europe and was planted for forage and erosion control. Forms dense stands in moist areas that outcompete native species when available nutrients are abundant.

spotted knapweed

From Eastern Europe. Quickly spreads and its roots exude a chemical that inhibits the growth of other vegetation (allelopathy).

sweet clover (yellow & white)

From Europe and Asia. Can grow up to six feet tall, outcompeting native plants, and they change nitrogen soil levels. Fire stimulates seed germination.

wild parsnip

From Europe for the edible root. Aggressively grows in open habitats. Has a sunlight-reactive substance, that, when in contact with skin, can cause burns.



Writing Style Guide

Based off AP Stylebook.

Contact us with questions.





Photo by Eric Preston

Style Guide

acronyms (Chapter names and TPE)

Do not use in writing. TPE is an acronym that isn't well-known beyond our long-time members. We lose the impact of our name by shortening it. The same is true of Chapter acronyms.

addresses

Address abbreviations should have the first letter capitalized and end with a period. Do not use all caps. Examples: St., Ave.

For households, use the word "and" as opposed to ampersand (&). Exceptions are made for this when space is limited such as the new member list in *The Prairie Promoter.*

amounts

Preference is to use "more than," rather than "over."

ampersands (&)

Don't use them, unless needed to conserve space, particularly online. Exceptions are made for this when space is limited such as the new member list in *The Prairie Promoter.*

apostrophe (')

If there are multiple items that are possessive or the possessive ends in s, place the apostrophe after the s. Examples: Enthusiasts' volunteers.

attributed to

Use this language for restricted gifts as opposed to designated for or allocated for.



Style Guide

capitalization—plants, animals, titles, internal documents, etc.

Plants, Animals, Insects: Common names should not be capitalized unless it references a place or name. Examples: tree frog, leaf hopper, blazing star, Doulgas fir, American robin. Scientific names of all species should be italicized. The genus (first) should be capitalized, the species should be lowercase. Examples: *Arnoglossum atriplicifolium, Sturnella neglecta.*

The only exception to italicized text is if the botanical name is within text already italicized, such as a photo caption.

Positions, Internal Documents: Should be capitalized. Examples: Ecologist, 3-Year Picture.

Places: Capitalize regions and places. Examples: Upper Midwest, Earth, Driftless



Chapter Leader Titles

These titles should be capitalized (e.g., Board Representative, Chapter Chair).

commas

In following the AP guide, we do not use the Oxford comma. Example: prairies, savannas and other systems.

You should use the serial comma (last comma) if the list contains compound items. Example: Stewardship was done on fens and wetlands, prairie and savannas, and sand barrens.

contractions

We use contractions often. Examples: won't, can't

Style Guide

dashes (em, en and hyphen)

Hyphen (-) is for between words only. Example: work-related

En dash is only used for times and dates. Example: September 9–5

Em dash is used for an interjection in the sentence. Should not have spacing. Examples: Prairies—which are rare—…

Keyboard shortcut: windows and period, then symbols.

dates

Do not include st, th, or nd. Example Date: September 14, 2023.

dollar amounts

Use $ and numerals instead of writing out "dollars." Example: $35.

i.e. vs. e.g.

i.e. means "in other words." e.g. means "for example." i.e. is used to clarify or provide more precise information. e.g. is used to provide one or more possible examples.

Each letter needs a period followed by a comma (e.g., plants, animals). Do not include etc. since it is acknowledged you are providing partial information. Preference is to enclose each in parenthesis.

email

Don't hyphenate.

fire-dependent

Do hyphenate, and use this as the primary adjective for ecosystems.

fractions

Write them out with a hyphen if they are standard. Use numbers if they're not standard or mixed numbers Examples: one-quarter, 3 5/16.



Style Guide

Indigenous Peoples

When speaking of multiple tribes, capitalize and end with an s: "Indigenous Peoples." If speaking of one group, capitalize, but leave off the s, "Indigenous People."

initials

For names with middle initials, they should be capitalized with a period. Example: W.

numbers

Less than 10, spell it out. 10 and above should use numerals.

parentheses

Parentheses shouldn't be used often. If the parenthetical is a complete, independent sentence, place the period inside the parentheses; if not, the period goes outside. Example: Prairies are endangered (less than 1% remain).

Prairie Enthusiast

Capitalize. Example: As a Prairie Enthusiast, you know the value of prairies.



Style Guide

nonprofit

Don't hyphenate. Also don't use "not for profit."

quotation marks

Use commas to introduce the quote. At the end of the sentence, the period and comma always go within the quotation mark. Dashes, semicolons, colons, question marks and exclamation marks go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted matter only. They go outside when applied to the whole sentence.

Examples: The volunteer said, "I love saving prairies." Sam said she loves "land stewardship": prescribed burning and brush removal.

phone numbers

Should have parenthesis around the area code, and a dash elsewhere. There should be one space between the area code and the rest of the phone number. Example: (608) 676-0985.

times

Our preference is to use the word "to" instead of an en dash. We also use time of day abbreviations in lowercase and with periods. Provide the minutes unless it's Noon, then use the word. Examples: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., 9:00 a.m. to Noon.



Style Guide

seasons

Should never be capitalized. Examples: fall, winter, spring, summer.

Site Names

For any sites, whether owned by The Prairie Enthusiasts or another organization, the full name of the site should always be used and always capitalized (e.g., Alexander Oak Savanna, Giordano Oak Barrens and Sand Prairie).

spacing after sentences

There should be only one space between sentences.

titles of written work

The first word and major words should be capitalized; minor words should be lowercase. Major words include nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and all words four letters or more. Minor words are short (three words or less) including conjunctions, short prepositions, and all articles. Examples: Prairies and the Midwest.



website

When writing our website, leave off www. It's also best to capitalize each word in the URL, since our URL is a bit long: ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org

When sharing more detailed links in online media, simply state HERE, CLICK, DONATE, with that word being the hyperlink.

For questions contact:

Info@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org



The Prairie Enthusiasts

Photo by Eric Preston