



COULEE CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

FALL 2010

Coulee Region President's Message

I can't believe where this summer has gone. Labor Day, and the start of school, is just around the corner. But our fabulous prairies have so much to offer us yet – don't forget to check out the hikes scheduled through October.

I had the opportunity to attend the annual Ecological Society of America meeting earlier this month. I attended sessions on a wide variety of topics, including prairies, during the week-long conference. The theme for this year's event was global warming. When I returned home, I noticed our 100 square feet of front yard prairie had obviously undergone a growth spurt. It looked - and still looks - absolutely beautiful. A week after that, I had the pleasure of watching our five year-old niece and nephew become transfixed with the flock of Monarch butterflies nectaring on the Blazingstar blooming in the back yard. They stood with their faces just inches away from the delicate insects.

So where am I going with this? The future of ecosystem conservation and management is uncertain. Scientists are doing their best to understand our natural world while it is constantly changing. Our preserves are static while the ecosystems we are trying to conserve are not. Regardless of what the future holds, we can make a difference now. As Prairie Enthusiasts, we are making a difference now. However, we need to do more. As Aldo Leopold suggested, "The first rule of an intelligent tinkerer is to keep all the pieces." Everything that we can do now to save unprotected remnants, to restore others and to educate the public will provide us with the "pieces" necessary to maintain the prairie ecosystem for future generations – both Monarch and Human. This is certainly a case where more is more.

Best Wishes, Jessica

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Next Coulee Region Chapter Meeting will be **Saturday September 11th at 10:00 a.m.** at the **Norskedalen Nature Center** outside of Coon Valley. See inside this newsletter for additional details.

TPE Coulee Chapter Officers and Officials for 2010

Name	Office	Phone	Email
Jessica Bolwahn	President	608-637-3753	Ja4bolwahn@hotmail.com
Jim Rogala	Past President	608-786-1855	therogues@charter.net
Scott Cooper	Secretary	608-785-6983	cooper.scot@uwlax.edu
Ned Gatzke	Treasurer	608-269-2033	cngatzke@centurytel.net
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Don Nelson	Newsletter editor	608-435-6203	don094@centurytel.net
Jim Rogala	Membership	608-786-1855	therogues@charter.net

Coulee Volunteers on TPE Corporate Board and Committees

Name	Office
Jim Rogala	Corporate Board and Land Management committee

Coulee Chapter Business Items

TPE – Coulee Chapter Fall Meeting September 11, 2010 at Norskedalen

The next Coulee Chapter meeting will be Saturday September 11 at 10:00 a.m. at the Norskedalen Nature Center. A chapter workday will follow the chapter meeting and we will continue our work on the remnants at Norskedalen. Our previous workday was used as a girdling demonstration. Now we can see the results! Hopefully there will be just a little clean-up of the clones we worked on, and we can begin on removing other woody growth. We will cut and treat shrubs and trees on the goat prairie. Bring work gloves and loppers or handsaws if you have them. Herbicide will be provided, but your favorite application tool and protective gloves can be brought if you want to treat cut stumps. Insect repellent may be needed!

To get to Norskedalen from the north, take HWY 162 south off HWY 33 east of La Crosse. Turn left on County Road PI and Norskedalen will be on the right after descending the bluff. If you're coming from the south, head north on County Road P off HWY 14/61 near Coon Valley. Turn left on County PI and the Center will be on the left.

Would You Like Your Coulee Newsletter Sent Electronically?

Several members have asked to receive an electronic version of our chapter newsletter in lieu of a hardcopy. We think this is a great idea as it would help reduce the chapter's expenses for printing and mailing. So if you would like to receive future newsletters electronically, please, contact Jim Rogala or Don Nelson and asked to be placed on the newsletter email notification list. We will then send you an email letting you know that the latest newsletter is available at our chapter website (<http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/chapter/coulee/crcnewsletters.htm>). If you do not specifically ask for the electronic option, you will continue to receive your newsletter through the mail.

We Need Your Input on Chapter Meetings

We have recently been discussing ways to encourage greater attendance at our Coulee Region Chapter meetings. We've talked it over among the members attending the meetings and now we'd like to open up the discussion to all of our CRC members. Here are some of the options we've already considered:

- * Have the meetings on a weekday evening (we typically meet on Saturday);
- * Find alternate locations (we primarily meet at UW-L);
- * Meet in conjunction with a hike or work party and
- * Continue to have guest presenters.

If you have thoughts on any of the options above, or have other ideas, please submit them to Jessica Bolwhan by phone (608-637-3753) or email (Ja4bolwahn@hotmail.com).

Holland Sand Prairie Seed Collecting Opportunity

The Mississippi Valley Conservancy's current plans for management at the Holland Sand Prairie include interseeding into highly degraded areas. The seeds used for the interseeding are to be collected on-site. Our chapter has been asked to assist in this effort. Seed collection will be strictly controlled, so collectors need to understand the guidelines before they begin to gather seeds. If you are interested in assisting with seed collection this fall, please contact Jim Rogala. Our chapter's members have volunteered at the Holland site in the past, and this is another opportunity for us to contribute to the health of this rare sand prairie.

Prairie Education and Outreach

TPE Picnic at Borah Creek Prairie Highlights Partnerships

The 2010 TPE picnic and annual membership meeting was held at Borah Prairie near Fennimore, WI. on July 18, 2010. In addition to the normal social activities associated with our annual picnic, the gathering occasioned the official transfer of the title of the property to The Prairie Enthusiasts from the Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC). The Coulee Chapter is in the heart of the region where the Mississippi Valley Conservancy is most active, and we have been fortunate to benefit from their work. In the case of Borah Prairie, the negotiations to purchase the property were very complicated, and MVC stepped up to make it happen. The Driftless Area Conservancy was also a partner in making the land purchase and its eventual transfer.

The Borah property includes a wide variety of prairie species. During our tour of the prairie, we saw a substantial population of prairie bush-clover, a federally listed species, and many cream wild indigo. Unfortunately, there are also exotic invasives mixed in with the high quality native species. With the task of acquisition completed, the task of restoration can begin. Restoring and maintaining this prairie will require many willing hands. It is our hope that prairie enthusiasts will pitch in to fulfill the promise of the Borah Prairie partnership.

TPE and Goat Prairie Educational Materials Now Available

We've added to our collection of materials available for public education and outreach. A 4' x 6' tabletop foam-core display with general information on The Prairie Enthusiasts is now available for your use. This is an updated display that was originally created for the 2008 North American Prairie Conference in Winona, MN. These materials are both attractive and informative and a great way to help get the public engaged with prairies and TPE.

The list of materials available for outreach is now as follows:

- TPE tabletop display (4' x 6');
- Hill prairie tabletop display (4' x 6');
- Hill prairie brochures (3-fold) and
- TPE brochures (4-fold)

If you would like to use of the displays or brochures, contact Jim Rogala (email: therogues@charter.net; or phone: 608-786-1855). The hill prairie materials are also online at <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/chapter/coulee/goatprairie.htm>.

Information about Prairies and Oak Savannas

Taxonomy 101 for Plants of the Coulee Goat Prairies by Jim Rogala

Please Note: As promised, a compilation of previous *Taxonomy 101 for Plants of the Coulee Goat Prairies* articles is now on the Coulee Region Chapter webpage at <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/chapter/coulee/goatprairie.htm>. This may be a “working document”, with newer articles appended periodically.

False Boneset

After a short break, I'm back writing about hill prairie species. The species this time may look like a boneset, but as the name implies, it is not a boneset at all. The false boneset (*Kuhnia eupatorioides*) has the delicate non-showy flowers typified by the boneset genus (*Eupatorium*). Though the individual flowers are small, when clustered together they are quite showy. The flowers are most often a lovely cream color (in contrast, species in the boneset genus have white flowers). The clusters of flowers are on multiple stems up to 4 feet tall. The alternate toothed leaves are packed along the length of the stems.

This false boneset is another one of those hill species that is worth noticing even after its seeds are set. The bright white hair on the black seeds is quite distinctive. These often persist on the plant through fall and into the winter, leaving white clusters that are hard to miss. Look for the flowers this time of year, or the seed heads later this fall and winter, on the goat prairies you visit.

Reminder: Keeping Up with Your TPE Dues

To find out if you are current on your TPE dues, just check the mail label on our latest *Prairie Promoter* newsletter. Checking your “dues date” will help you keep up with your membership and make sure you don’t miss a single issue of *Promoter* or the Coulee Chapter newsletter.

Contact us with your items for our newsletter. We want to hear from you!!

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