



COULEE CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2009

Chapter President's Message

Anyone else have spring fever? These few warm days here and there feel great, but seem to make it worse! I certainly can't wait until I see things green and growing again - but in the meantime, Rich King, Biologist at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, will be joining us at our next membership meeting on March 21st to talk about the prairies there. Hopefully, talk of green and growing things will tide us over for a few more weeks.

Yes, spring is just around the corner so please be planning your prescribed burns and thinking about getting your burn date on the chapter's master list. Also if anyone would like to get other workdays or hikes on members' calendars, please bring your ideas to the meeting or contact Jim or myself if you can't make it.

I hope to see you at the spring meeting!

Jessica

REMEMBER!!

The Coulee Chapter's Spring Members Meeting will be held Saturday March 21st at 301 Cowley Hall at UW-L. Meeting begins at 10:00 am. Please see inside for more details.

Name	Office	Phone	Email
Jessica Bolwahn	President	608-637-3753	Ja4bolwahn@hotmail.com
Jim Rogala	Past President	608-786-1855	jrogala@usgs.gov
Scott Cooper	Secretary	608-785-6983	cooper.scot@uwlax.edu
Ned Gatzke	Treasurer	608-269-2033	cngatzke@centurytel.net
Diane Hanson	Member-at-large	608-637-3735	nosnah@mwt.net
Don Nelson	Newsletter editor	608-435-6203	don094@centurytel.net
Jean Stramel	Membership	608-625-4069	jeanstr@mwt.net

Coulee Volunteers on TPE Corporate Board and Committees

Name	Office
Jim Rogala	Corporate Board
Carmeen Johnston	Fundraising and Endowment committee
George Johnston	Fundraising and Endowment committee
Jim Rogala	Land Management committee

Coulee Chapter Business Items

TPE – Coulee Chapter Fall Meeting November 1, 2008 University of Wisconsin – La Crosse Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Jessica Bolwahn, Jim Rogala, Scott Cooper, Jayne Collins, Pat Caffrey, Abbie Meyer, George Johnston, Andrea Benco, Gordy Powell, Don Nelson

Guests: Bob Lee, Randy Mell, Patrick Dayton

1. We hope to offer a chemical use workshop in February, possibly with Rick Schulte.
2. Randy Mell may be offering burn workshops in the spring. He is stationed at Black River Falls through the DNR forestry department. Course work could be completed online or at a training course for the following courses, and then the field work done in the spring.
 - a. **ICS-100, Introduction to ICS for Operational First Responders**
 - b. **S-130 Firefighter Training**
 - c. **S-190 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior**
3. There will be FISTA chainsaw training, levels 1 and 3 on November 14th and 15th at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.
4. Jim Rogala outlined a project to manage demonstration sites along the La Crosse River Bike trail. The proposed site is in Rockland, at the point Bob Lee starts his prairie walks. The area is about 1/3 of an acre. There are some quality prairie

- plants as well as some areas dominated by cool season grasses and invasives. Management would include spring mowing, inter-seeding, weeding and perhaps burning. A motion for our chapter of TPE to file for an “Adopt a Trail” agreement with the DNR to manage this site was approved by the members attending the meeting. Additional sites along the bike trail in Brice Prairie, West Salem, Bangor and Sparta may be future adoption opportunities. Jayne Collins will facilitate this activity with the WI-DNR.
5. Abbie Meyer outlined a project to manage the Juniper Partners site along the bluffs overlooking southern La Crosse. These 26 acres are currently owned by MVC, and it is being proposed that TPE manage the site. Management activities will begin with clearing cedars from the steep bluffs, probably two work parties per year. A motion for our chapter of TPE to create a formal management agreement with MVC to help manage the Juniper Partners site was approved by attending members.
 6. If members have any upcoming work party requests, they should contact Jim Rogala with the time, location and activity.
 7. Next chapter meetings will be in January and March 2009.
 8. Meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

TPE – Coulee Chapter Winter Meeting January 17, 2009
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse
Meeting Minutes

Present: Jessica Bolwahn, Jim Rogala, Andrea Benco, Gordy Powell, John McMullen, Jayne Collins, Armund Bartz

1. Jessica attended the January TPE Board of Directors meeting and they discussed the option of providing honorary memberships to land owners who donate land or sign conservation easements. There was no objection to this proposal from our chapter. A TPE Central ad hoc committee is working on membership guidelines that will cover this and other related topics.
2. A question for each chapter from the TPE Board of Directors was whether we want to accept any advertisements in *The Prairie Promoter*. We discussed it, and there was no opposition to the proposal. The membership was also not opposed to accepting advertisements in our chapter newsletter.
3. Members brainstormed about how to make the public more aware of TPE and our activities. Suggestions included (with volunteers to lead in parentheses);
 - a. develop a demonstration exhibit at the new Eco Park (Jim),

- b. add signage to some of the areas being maintained by TPE and/or outdoor interpretive boards either along Bliss road or the marsh trail (Jim),
 - c. advertise field trips through the local media (open),
 - d. develop common informational / educational materials. (Scott, Andrea),
 - e. identify places to give presentations such as parks, schools or conservation groups (open).
4. Randy Mell has not responded about conducting fire training and so it is unlikely such training will occur this spring. Discussion focused on the best way to get chapter members trained locally. Those present suggested that a classroom-based course would be preferable to an online course.
5. Jim explained how TPE Central is discussing whether we should advertise properties to conservation minded buyers. We would not be a seller or buyer, but act as an intermediary.
6. Discussed sharing city and township comprehensive plans that contain restrictions on developing bluffs and grasslands. We could work with other conservation groups in these efforts.
7. We need to put together a list of 2008 accomplishments for an annual report.
8. We need to submit field trips for 2009.
9. We need to report volunteer hours. These forms are online.
10. Jim went through the chapter website <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/chapter/coulee/coulee.htm> and the TPE website <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/> demonstrating the new business link with the minutes from the Board of Directors meetings, forms, policies and procedures. Since TPE has corporate level bylaws, it was decided that we rename our chapter bylaws following those guidelines. Jim will continue to rewrite the bylaws into guidelines, and propose changes as needed.
11. The next meeting will be in mid-March

Coulee Chapter Spring Meeting – March 21, 2009

The next meeting of the Coulee Chapter will be Saturday March 21st at 10 am in room 301 Cowley Hall on the campus of UW La Crosse. A presentation by Rich King of the

US Fish and Wildlife Necedah office will be followed by discussion on various topics and planning for the upcoming burn season. If you have items you would like included on the agenda, please contact Jessica Bolwahn at (608) 637-3753 or ja4_bolwahn@hotmail.com. *Your participation is crucial to TPE and our chapter. Hope to see you at the meeting!*

Important Reminders to TPE Coulee Chapter Members

Volunteer Hours Report

Please provide your TPE volunteer hours to Jim Rogala. The preferred method of reporting is by email (jrogala@usgs.gov). However, if you prefer to report via the US Postal Service, you can download a form, fill it out, and mail it to: Jim Rogala, 450 N. Leonard St., West Salem, WI 54669 is to respond to this email.

The general categories are as follows...

I. Land Management & Protection	Total hours: _____
II. Education and Outreach	Total hours: _____
III. Development/Promotion	Total hours: _____
IV. Administration	Total hours: _____

The details of the categories are on the volunteer hours form that is available on our website under the heading of *TPE Business*.

Prairie Education and Outreach

Works Begins on the Rockland Showcase Prairie submitted by Jim Rogala

After a presentation by Jayne Collins (WI-DNR; TPE member) at our 2008 September Coulee Region Chapter meeting, we agreed to pursue the possibility of creating a “showcase” prairie in Rockland. The site is located where Bob Lee begins his railroad remnant hikes along the La Crosse River State Trail. The area is about a third of an acre but could be expanded as needed. Jim Rogala worked with Jayne to develop a possible plan to do this, and the plan was presented at the November chapter meeting. The idea is to have a single location with a lot of plant diversity where examples of plant species found over the miles of the bike trail could be easily viewed. Along with the prairie itself, we could have educational materials and information about TPE available. There is already a kiosk at the site that could be used to some extent. The general plan was presented at the chapter meeting was accepted by the members attending the meeting.

Prior to the November meeting, Jim had gained written permission from the DNR to collect seeds at a few locations along the bike trail. Jim collected seed from compassplant, prairie cinquefoil, thimbleweed, rough blazingstar, white wild indigo, and stiff and showy goldenrod (Jim reports that much more seed would be available for collection if done earlier in the fall). The seed was then interseeded into the future site of the showcase prairie. Seed collection and planting will continue this next year, along with mowing in spring. Plans for adding materials to the kiosk will also continue. If you would like to help on this project, please contact Jim at 786-1855.

TPE and IPAW Team Up on Spring Conference submitted by Don Nelson

Even a heavy snowfall couldn't deter several hundred prairie enthusiasts from attending the annual conference held in Madison on February 21st. This year, TPE joined with the

Invasive Plant Association of Wisconsin (IPAW) to focus on invasive plants in Wisconsin's grasslands. The three tracts of the program: *species specific control information; techniques, equipment, tools and control strategies;* and *policy, funding, outreach, and prevention strategies* provided attendees with a variety of presentations to match their interests and needs. For me, learning more about the life cycles of some of the more troublesome invaders and how to reduce their impact on my prairie was of the greatest value. However, the presentations provided plenty of good information whether you were an individual landowner or a professional land manager. The Keynote Speech entitled Biofuel and Prairie Restoration was a joint presentation by Steve Bertjens from the Southwest Badger R.C. & D. and Bill Johnson from Alliant Energy. Steve and Bill provided updates concerning ongoing research in the use of prairie grasses as a source of biomass fuel. They also reminded the audience of the major challenges inherent in replacing fossil fuels in the generation of electricity. The conference program is available as a PDF at www.ipaw.org. Power Point presentations and handouts from selected presentations will also be posted on the website in the near future.

Information about Prairies and Oak Savannas

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

NOTE: This short narrative is provided to introduce you to some species likely found in bloom in specific settings or time frames. These narratives do not include taxonomic details on how to identify these plants, but may point you in the right direction. There are several excellent field guides and taxonomic texts for those interested in a more complete description of the species discussed below - J. R.

Bush Clover: A Plant to Look for in the Winter

While pasque flowers are the earliest spring bloomers on Wisconsin's goat prairies, there is still some showiness apparent on our winter prairies. Stems and seedheads that persist through the winter offer an opportunity to identify species even as snow covers the ground. Round-headed bush-clover (*Lepedeza cupitata*) is one of the most distinctive of these winter "leftovers." Displayed on four to five foot high stems, this bush-clover's large terminal seedheads stand tall well into the next growing season.



For all the showiness of the winter seedheads, the late summer flowers of the round-headed bush-clover are quite inconspicuous. The tiny white flowers are no more than a ¼ inch long and are well harbored within the clustered bracts. An observer can see further details in the flowering structure at very close inspection, but the structure of the seedheads is all that is needed for identification. The mostly unbranched

stems holding the seedheads come up from rhizomes and are most commonly found in clusters.

The round-headed bush-clover's three-part leaves identify it as one of the many prairie legumes. The seeds are singly contained within many pods on the seedheads. Birds love these seeds and bush-clover's sturdy stalks provide a perfect roost for hungry birds. Although this species is more common on mesic prairies, the round-headed bush-clover is often found among goat prairie species. Perhaps you will see a bird feasting on their seeds next fall or winter at your favorite goat prairie.

Having Trouble Remembering Your TPE Dues?

All you have to do is check the mail label on our latest *Prairie Promoter* newsletter. This new feature will help you keep current with your membership and make sure you don't miss an 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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