



COULEE CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010

Editor's Message

We give too much credit for an individual's accomplishments when we forget that those who achieve great things do so by standing on the shoulders of giants. As prairie enthusiasts, we lost one of our giants with the recent passing of Dorothy "Dot" Wade. The Prairie Garden (Smith & Smith) was my most valued resource when the "prairie bug" bit me thirty years ago. The photograph in that book of the landscaping at Doug and Dot Wade's home was my earliest prairie fantasy. I was already somewhat aware of the Wades as my brother Gary had been a student of theirs in Northern Illinois University's outdoor education program. However, I didn't know much about their pioneering work as prairie advocates until my own interest in prairies had been sparked. Later, the Wade's Windrift Prairie Nursery supplied seed that went into my initial postage-stamp prairie planting. In the late 1980's, I had an opportunity to work with Dot as a volunteer at Nachusa Grasslands near Dixon, Illinois. Dot was in her seventies then but showed no signs that she had lost any of her enthusiasm for prairies. After twenty years and several address changes, Carol and I retired to Wisconsin. Now, once again, our prairie restoration includes seed from a Wade nursery. This time it's Prairie Moon Nursery, started by the Wade's son, Alan. So, please join me in saying *Thank You* to Dot and Doug and all those other "giants" who planted and nurtured today's growing prairie movement. You can learn more about Dot and Doug Wade and their legacy by going to www.prairiemoon.com/blog/prairie-moon-happenings/dorothy-r-wade-1914-2010/2010/02.

Best wishes for a productive spring, Don

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Coulee Region Chapter Meeting Saturday March 20th at 10:00 a.m. in Room 301 in Cowley Hall, UW-L.

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	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
Jim Rogala	Land Management committee

Coulee Chapter Business Items

TPE – Coulee Chapter Spring Meeting March 20, 2010 at UW-L

Spring is in the air, which means the sun is melting snow on the prairies and we will soon be out and about, anticipating the return of the season's coming wildflowers and creatures! Spring also means an opportunity to fundraise for the great conservation/restoration work that we do. With Dani Stolley our new Development Director in place, we are ready to put her to the task!

Dani presented her draft version of The Compass Plan--a fundraising and development plan for TPE for the next five or so years--at our recent banquet and conference in Monroe. While the plan itself is still very much in draft form, we invite you to come to our next chapter meeting to learn how we can better work with Dani to effectively fundraise for our chapter's goals, objectives and 2010 priorities.

Please join us if you can on March 20th at 10:00 a.m. in Cowley Hall 301.

We Need Your Input on Chapter Meetings

Our chapter has recently discussed ways to make the chapter membership meetings more conducive to attendance. Although members attending the meetings have voiced some of their thoughts, we'd like to open up the discussion to any CRC member. Here are some of the options we've already considered:

- * Have the meetings on a weekday evening;
- * Find alternate locations (we primarily meet at UW-L, which is somewhat central for our geographical region, but perhaps not for the membership);
- * 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 Bolwahn by phone (608-637-3753) or email (Ja4bolwahn@hotmail.com).

How About Hosting a Field Trip?

The TPE spring field trip flier will be going out soon. There is still time to submit trips that you may want to host. The hikes can be an opportunity to show off your favorite prairie, show off work on your own prairie, or provide an opportunity to get input from guest hikers. Please submit ideas for field trips to Jim Rogala (therogues@charter.net), or contact Jim with questions.

Prescribed Burn Classes

As you may already know, TPE will soon be asking TPE members to have some level of training when assisting on TPE burns. Many training courses offered by other organizations/agencies will fulfill our requirements, and TPE will eventually have curriculum for classes we sponsor to meet our needs. There is currently a 2-day class being offered in La Crosse in March, and again in April. Details can be found on the Myrick Hixon EcoPark website:

http://www.myrickecopark.com/_mgxroot/page_events_eventsprograms.html.

In all likelihood, this course would meet requirements within the TPE burn policy.

Documenting Your Prescribed Burn Experience

One of the aspects of the new burn policy may be to keep records on the experience of TPE members participating on burns. Whether this becomes a requirement or not, it is probably a good idea for each of us to keep some “database” on our experience. Experience can come in two general forms, training and participating on burns. Information for each might look like:

Training - course name; training organization/agency and date(s) of training.

Participation - total number of burns; number of burns in the last 5 years; number of burns as a line boss and number of burns as a burn boss.

If you have not started compiling this information, please start doing so for the upcoming burn season. If you do have this information already available, you can provide it to Jim Rogala at upcoming chapter meetings, by mail (450 N. Leonard Street, West Salem, WI 54669) or email (therogues@charter.net). Thanks.

Prairie Education and Outreach

2010 TPE Conference: A Look at Our Roots, and a Preview of Our Future

The TPE conference was held in Monroe, WI. on February 27, 2010. The location of the events was just miles from sites first visited by some colorful characters that were the original “prairie enthusiasts.” Those beginnings eventually lead to creation of The Prairie Enthusiasts organization. We all enjoyed the presentation by some of the original renegades as they discussed what really happened in those early years.

Another presentation considered history from another angle, that being the work of John Curtis at UW and the publication of “Vegetation of Wisconsin.” Fast-forwarding to the future, Rich Henderson updated the conference attendees on the revisions proposed under the TPE burn policy. Life was much easier back in the early days, but the current need for good prescribed burning guidelines is very prudent given our success as a land trust.

The event is never complete without the silent auction and raffle. Our chapter was again able to add to our financial resources through the generosity of chapter members that donated to the silent auction and raffle. This year’s donors include Barb Christie, Vance Baker, Jessica Bolwahn, Don Nelson, and Jim Rogala. Thanks!

Information about Prairies and Oak Savannas

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

Editor’s Note: Professor Rogala has decided its time for a “pop quiz.” (Now, quit your whining. Jim assures me that the exams will be graded on the curve or is it curb?).

I began writing these little snippets about various hill prairie plants not long after becoming a TPE member. After spending time with TPE members out on hikes, burns, or brush cuttings, I realized that the very basic identification skills of some folks could use some enhancement. My intent was to highlight a few species in a nontechnical manner to make the onerous task of prairie plant identification a bit less overwhelming.

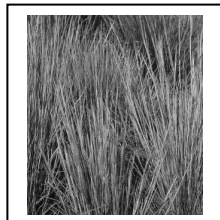
This is the twentieth “Taxonomy 101” write-up to appear in Coulee Region Chapter newsletters. The previous short narratives included the introduction to 57 species. Even though some of the species were just merely mentioned, there was still a lot of information to remember. Below is a short quiz that might help indicate what you have retained. Here goes...

1. What hill prairie “grass” is really an iris?

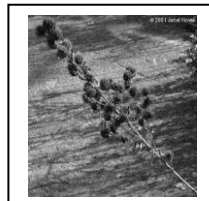
2. Name that Plant



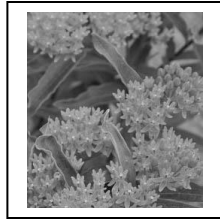
3. Name that Plant



4. Name that Plant



5. Which blue asters are the best indicators of a hill prairie?
6. What large yellow flowered species is partially parasitic on oaks?
7. Which hill prairie legume can be identified by the seedpods stuck to your pants found later that day?
8. What hill prairie “aster” is really a goldenrod?
9. Name that Plant
10. Name that Plant
- Extra Credit - Name that Plant



OK, now check your answers by digging out your old Coulee Chapter newsletters. Did you pass the quiz? Are you ready to move on to additional species? For new members and those that have not archived their Coulee Region Chapter newsletters, I've decided to compile these little narratives into a living publication that I will maintain on our website. Look for the compilation on our chapter website in the near future.

There are other options for those who felt they “failed” the quiz. One viable option is to simply decide that plant identification is not important to you. In reality, there are plenty of prairie conservation tasks that do not require knowledge of hill prairie flora. However, we should all consider knowing at least some of the basics so that we can best share our interest in hill prairies with others in the Coulee Region.

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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