



COULEE CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2011

Coulee Region President's Message

Happy New Year fellow Prairie Enthusiasts! How are those New Year's resolutions going? Anyone decide they wanted to work more in their prairies this winter? Are you thinking you could use some help to keep that resolution? No problem! Winter isn't over yet – sorry to disappoint some of you – so there is still plenty of time for you to suggest worksites or for you to volunteer to lead a work party on a partner site or on your own prairie. Please let me know and I'll get it on the schedule.

Winter is a good time to reflect on the previous year, and a great time to enjoy the prairie via snowshoes or skis while it slumbers beneath a blanket of snow. Winter is also the perfect time to be thinking ahead to the spring and planning your prescribed burn. Burn season (and spring!) will be here before you know it.

I hope that everyone has had a wonderful and safe holiday season and I look forward to seeing you at our next chapter meeting or at the TPE Conference and Banquet – details inside!

Best Wishes, Jessica

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Coulee Chapter Meeting Saturday January 29, 2011 at UW-L.
- TPE Annual Conference and Banquet Saturday February 26th in Platteville.
- Coulee Chapter Meeting Saturday March 26th at UW-L.
- **Details concerning these upcoming events can be found in this newsletter.**

TPE Coulee Chapter Officers and Officials for 2011

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
Diane Hanson	Member-at-large	608-637-3735	nosnah@mwt.net
Don Nelson	Newsletter editor	608-435-6203	don094@centurytel.net
Jim Rogala	Membership		

Coulee Volunteers on TPE Corporate Board and Committees

Name	Office
Jim Rogala	Corporate Board and Land Management committee

Coulee Chapter Business Items

Coulee Chapter Meeting Minutes from 09/11/2010

Meeting Site: Norskedalen near Coon Valley.

Members Present: Jessica Bolwahn, Scott Cooper, Patrick Dayton, Greg Nessler, Jim Rogala, Aaron Salesman.

Meeting called to order at 10 a.m.

Discussion items...

1. Workday planned for Oct. 10th as part of national project. Most likely we will work at Decorah Mound. There are also opportunities for seed collection and sumac cutting at Holland Sand prairie.
2. Jim Rogala has bulk-sized 13% Garlon4 with dye that can be purchased if anyone needs a smaller amount.
3. There was discussion on how we might combine our meeting with other events. An example was a Wednesday Oct. 22nd program on bees at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Center.
4. A general discussion was had on the process of selecting worksites.
5. Meeting adjourned at 10:30.
6. A work party to clear brush on a goat prairie at Norskedalen followed.

Reminders...

- The next Field Trip Flier will cover dates April 9 – July 10, 2011. The deadline is usually in early March. Field trips are a good way to show off your own remnants or places you visit, and get ideas for management.
- The Coulee Chapter newsletter now available electronically.
- Prairie education outreach materials, displays and brochures, are available for check out.

TPE – Coulee Chapter Meetings: January 29th and March 26th, 2011

Date: **Saturday January 29**

Time: 10:00

Where: Room 301, Cowley Hall, UW-La Crosse

Directions: (www.uwlax.edu/campus-map/index.htm)

Agenda: Our chapter president, Jessica Bolwahn, will present “**Managing Smooth Brome for Prairie Restoration.**” This is a summary of her thesis work and will address some of the unanswered questions regarding successful prairie plantings on old brome fields. A general membership meeting will follow.

Date: **Saturday March 26**

Time: 10:00

Where: Room 301, Cowley Hall, UW-La Crosse

Directions: (www.uwlax.edu/campus-map/index.htm)

Agenda: The December 2010 meeting was canceled due to the snowstorm and so we have rescheduled Kathryn Perez for the March 26th meeting. Kathryn’s talk will be entitled “**Land Snail Diversity of the Driftless Hill Prairies.**” The membership meeting will follow the talk and will include a review of prescribed burn issues and workday development.

Workdays at Norskedalen

We have recently adopted a hill prairie remnant at Norskedalen near Coon Valley. We have already had two work parties there: one to girdle aspen and sumac, and one to cut and treat brush and small trees. Next on our schedule is to cut some larger trees and develop a trail to connect the site to the trail below.

We will try again to schedule a work party after the January meeting, but we would like to call work parties in a more impromptu manner. If you would like to be contacted to help at Norskedalen, please contact Jim Rogala. Whenever conditions and attendance permits, we will meet for a short workday. Duties could include use of a chainsaw, use of loppers, moving cut debris, or applying herbicide to cut stumps. Anyone with experience in developing trails would be most helpful.

Would You Like Your Coulee Newsletter Sent Electronically?

A number of Coulee Chapter members are already receiving the Chapter newsletter electronically. If you would like to join them, contact Jim Rogala or Don Nelson and ask to be placed on the newsletter email notification list. The newsletter will be posted on our Chapter website <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/chapter/coulee/goatprairie.htm>.

Holland Sand Prairie Interseeding Project

Our chapter has begun working with The Mississippi Valley Conservancy to enhance the sixty-acre Holland Sand Prairie by interseeding into some degraded portions of the prairie. This rare river terrace prairie located near Holmen has some spectacular areas, but several portions are in need of restoration. The interseeding will be done with seed collected exclusively at the site. Seed collection will be strictly controlled, so collectors need to understand the guidelines before starting. Seeds will be hand-broadcasted in selected areas after spring burns.

We began collecting seed late last summer and continued into late fall. We collected a number of different species for planting next spring. The collection and interseeding will continue over the next few years, so opportunities still exist to volunteer on this project. Upcoming work will include sowing seed this spring (a large crew will be needed for this), collecting seed from early bloomers in early summer, and then continue collecting through the fall. 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 unique site. If you are interested in assisting on this project, please contact Jim Rogala.

Prairie Education and Outreach

2011 Annual TPE Conference and Banquet In Platteville on February 26th

Saturday, February 26, 2011 will be the date and Ullsvik Hall on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville will be the place for this year's conference and banquet. This year's conference title is *Conservation in a Working Landscape* with a special emphasis on conservation and restoration of prairie ecosystems within working landscapes. As always, there will be a number of presentations on topics of interest to prairie enthusiasts. The banquet will begin at 6:00 p.m. and noted conservation photographer, Michael Forsberg, will be featured as the after dinner speaker.

In addition to our traditional raffle, auction, sales, vendor and chapter displays, this year's conference will feature the Second Annual TPE Photo Contest.

For complete information on the coming conference and banquet, see the insert in the most recent *Prairie Promoter* (Winter 2010) or go to TPE's website at www.ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org. Early Bird Registration saves you \$10 (before Jan. 25th).

2011 TPE Banquet Raffle/Auction

If anyone from our chapter wishes to donate items for the raffle or silent auction, please contact Jessica Bolwahn at (608) 637-3753 or ja4_bolwahn@hotmail.com. Items need to be registered in advance so that they can be published in the banquet's printed program. Please give Jessica a description of the item you will be donating, as well as its estimated value, by noon on February 1st at the latest. The item can be dropped off or picked up closer to the banquet date.

Coulee Region Member Profile: Don and Donna Justin

The Coulee Region Member Profile is a new feature for our chapter newsletter. It is our intent to focus on both new and veteran members to illustrate the commonality, and the diversity, of our Chapter's membership. It is our hope that these Profiles will help to forge stronger connections between our members and to advance our individual and collective efforts to enhance prairies and savannahs in our region.

Don and Donna Justin are recent additions to TPE's Coulee Region Chapter. While they are new to TPE, they are neither new to the region nor to an interest in enlightened land management.

Don's grandparents established the Justin farm southwest of Leon in 1918. After many years making their living on the farm, Don and Donna opened the Justin Trails Resort in 1986. Justin Trails offers bed and breakfast accommodations as well as a variety of recreational activities for their guests on the 208 acre property.

An interest in prairies and savannahs is a natural outgrowth of the Justin's commitment to their natural lands and to sustainable agriculture. They have already established a small demonstration prairie and are preparing to do a large-scale savannah restoration. They are looking forward to hearing whether they will receive funding assistance on their savannah restoration project through Wisconsin's Landowner Incentive Program.



Donna & Don

The Justin's are excited about working with others in the area that share their interest in the natural world, land stewardship and outdoors recreation. It sounds like they're ready to be active and engaged members in the Coulee Region Chapter.

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 the displays or brochures, contact Jim Rogala. The hill prairie materials are also online at our Chapter website <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 the *Taxonomy 101 for Plants of the Coulee Goat Prairies* articles is now on our chapter webpage <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/chapter/coulee/goatprairie.htm>. This collection of articles is intended as a “working document”, with newer ones added periodically.

The “Other” Paintbrush

I’ve been doing some late season seed collection this January on my hill prairie remnants (there’s a long story behind this) for use in an old-field planting. In among the species that I was looking for, I found one that I hadn’t considered collecting. The species that I’m referring to is the downy yellow painted-cup or downy paintbrush (*Castilleja sessiliflora*). It is lesser known than its showy scarlet relative, the Indian paintbrush, and is commonly found on hill prairies. The reason for not collecting was not the amount of seed, but rather the plant’s narrow range of suitable habitat. It is one of many western species that is adapted to the dry harsh conditions found on our hill prairies. In fact, it would be rare to see this species in Wisconsin other than on a hill prairie.



Castilleja sessiliflora

The downy yellow painted-cup is one of those forbs that display colorful bracts. These bracts look similar to the three-lobed leaves, but tend to be yellowish. The one-to-two inch long petals are also yellow, and protrude out past the bracts. Perhaps the most distinguishing trait of this species is the arrangement of leaves, bracts, and flowers in a “paintbrush” shape. The stems are typically less than a foot tall and clustered. Each paintbrush stem is unbranched, with leaves, bracts and flowers along most of the stem. The plant is hairy, thus the common name “downy.” The flowers develop rather prominent seed capsules in late summer that persist on the plant through the winter. This latter characteristic provides plenty of opportunity to find this “other” paintbrush throughout the year, even in the snows of January.

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 Don Nelson, Chapter Newsletter Editor, with your items for our newsletter!