



www.theprairieenthusiasts.org

The PRAIRIE PROMOTER

VOL 21, NO.1 Spring 2008

Grassroots Conservation at Work

2008 Conference and Banquet

The Prairie Enthusiasts grew from the efforts of a few persistent individuals. Rich Henderson guided attendees at the 2008 Prairie Enthusiast Conference and Banquet on a tour through the organization's history. Jim Rogala created the presentation based on a history published in the Spring 2007 *Prairie Promoter*, enhanced by the input of some of the old-timers. The photo-enhanced trip down memory lane capped off TPE's annual celebration of prairie restoration and conservation.

Over 150 enthusiasts attended this year's conference and banquet in LaCrosse. They braved the cold of early March to learn about natural lands restoration and protection. The program planned by the Coulee Region Chapter included presentations on topics ranging from large-prairie-remnant management to small-mushroom identification.

"The presenters and exhibitors helped get our collective juices flowing in preparation for a new season of activities out on the prairie," said Don Nelson, conference committee member.

Keynote speaker Pauline Drobney kicked off the presentations with a discussion of prairies and oak savanna. She focused on the Iowa Prairie Network's work restoring the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge. She shared the barriers the Network encountered as well as their successes from her perspective as co-founder and past-president of the organization.

John Harrington, from UW-Madison, gave an update on the TPE Prairie Remnant database. The prototype has information on remnants in the Empire Sauk and Prairie Bluff regions, but TPE hopes to include the entire TPE region (see announcement in this *Promoter*). Each entry includes species lists, inventory visit dates, and soil

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Keynote speaker Pauline Drobney reflects on the challenges of restoring oak savanna and prairies. Photo by Richard Oberle.

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TPE was incorporated in Wisconsin in 1987 as a private nonprofit, tax exempt corporation under section [501(c) 3] of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible.

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The Prairie Promoter is a quarterly publication of The Prairie Enthusiasts. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without permission. We welcome submissions of articles, announcements, artwork and photographs that are relevant to prairie and savanna ecosystems. Mail to local chapter editorial volunteers or e-mail submissions to jesse@nasw.org. Use MS Word and do not format. Letters and articles may be edited for length or style. Computer disks, art, and photographs will be returned. Deadlines for submission of material are March 4 (Spring issue); May 23 (Summer issue); August 22 (Fall issue); and November 28 (Winter issue).

If you would prefer to receive electronic notification of the newsletter please email Victoria at TPE@TDS.net.

Spring Green Preserve Update

By Rich Henderson

In late November, The Prairie Enthusiasts (via the Empire-Sauk Chapter) partnered with The Nature Conservancy to purchase 144 acres of critical natural area habitat adjacent to the Conservancy's Spring Green East Preserve in southern Sauk County, Wisconsin. TPE purchased the land from Spring Green High Country, LLC, with grants from the state's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund Program (administered by the Wisconsin DNR) and donations from Tom and Kathie Brock and Rich and Kathy Henderson. At closing, TPE transferred title to the Conservancy as an addition to their Spring Green Preserve.

Protecting the High Country land was critical to the well-being and conservation viability of the Spring Green East Preserve. The Spring Green East Preserve is one of the most important natural areas in the Midwest. It includes a large, intact bluff prairie, a sand prairie, and oak woodlands. Together these provide habitat for dozens of endangered, threatened, and special concern species.

The newly protected lands include nearly half of the bluff prairie and much of the oak woodland. In the past, the steep 200-foot bluffs kept livestock from overgrazing the prairie. Consequently, the slopes still have a rich prairie flora including compass plant, wood lily, white camas lily, wood betony, Hill's thistle (Wisconsin threatened), rough white lettuce (Wisconsin endangered) and several special concern species such as poppy mallow, pomme-de-prairie, and Richardson sedge. Rare and endangered animals including race-runner lizards, bull snakes, hog-nose snakes, and timber rattlesnakes. Several rare, prairie-restricted insects also live on this land.

Prior to its purchase by TPE, the Evans family and then Spring Green High Country, LLC, owned the property. The Conservancy managed the bluff prairie on the private holdings in the late 1970s and 1980s under agreements with the owners but was unable to acquire the land when it came up for sale a number of years ago. The land seemed destined for sub-division.

The new owners decided to give the conservation community one more chance to protect the ridge top. But now, the Conservancy had commitments elsewhere in the state and could not act fast enough to meet the new owner's needs. Learning of the situation, TPE offered to help. TPE bought the land and transferred title to the Conservancy. In turn, the Conservancy raised the funds needed to create a land management endowment. TPE purchased the land using State Stewardship funds and accumulated State Stewardship credits generated by lands donated to TPE elsewhere.

TPE is pleased to have helped secure the permanent protection of this exceptional, high-quality bluff prairie and its adjacent oak woodlands. The acquisition by TPE was made possible by the donation of title and conservation easement at Pleasant Valley Conservancy, near Black Earth, by Tom and Kathie Brock to TPE in December 2006, and the bargain sale of Sugar River Savanna, near Verona, by Rich and Kathy Henderson to TPE in November 2007 (Story on page four).

A celebration of the new addition and those involved in its protection will be held at the preserve on May 17. Details can be found in the Announcements section.

Tools and Techniques: Easing the Work Load

By Mary Lee Croatt

When we first acquired our land, we had younger, suppler bodies, minimal equipment, and abundant enthusiasm. The passing years have taken some of the wind out of our sails. Now in our seventh decade, land restoration on our steep bluffs seems overwhelming, if not impossible

Chris Matson, our former land consultant, recently breathed fresh life into our efforts by suggesting some less-aerobic ways to do our work. After leaving Wisconsin, Chris acquired extensive experience managing thousands of acres in Florida for The Nature Conservancy. He encouraged us to think at a scale beyond our property borders and inspired us to think outside the box.

1. Instead of burning the parts of the steep bluff that include our prairie remnant and oak savanna separately, why not burn the whole land peninsula at one time? Invertebrates will come back from our neighbors' adjacent unburned prairie and from the nearby bluffs.

2. Instead of physically hauling water bottles and packs up the steep incline, why not use an all terrain vehicle to carry water for spraying at the top of the bluff? A 15- to 35-gallon spray tank could be connected to the ATV battery and the vehicle could also carry the 20-gallon jugs of water. With our neighbor's permission we could even enter our land from the top of the bluff and work downhill!

3. Instead of hand raking on our steep slopes, why not use a gas powered leaf blower? This may be a piece of equipment that our Prairie Enthusiasts chapter might invest in for everyone's use.

We hope these alternative approaches to our formerly aerobic, exhausting work will help save our bodies, and yours, from a "death burn" after all!

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2008 Conference and Banquet, cont...

information, management needs, and comments on overall quality, all searchable and linked to a geographical information system (computer mapping).

Before sitting down for the Banquet and Auction and Raffle, attendees had a chance to visit exhibitors' booths. The exhibitors shared information about lands restoration and protection as well as enjoying the plants and critters of the prairie and savanna.

The Auction and Raffle included items to tempt everyone. Thanks to generous bidding, the raffle and silent auction brought in 1,318 dollars and 779 dollars respectively, for chapters and central operations.

Among other items of business, the Board of Directors announced the formation of a new chapter. The Prairie Sands Chapter encompasses Adams, Green Lake, Juneau, Marquette, Portage, Waupaca, and Waushara counties in Wisconsin. Officers include President Karen Wollenburg (Dalton, Wis.), Vice-president Shelley Hamel (Westfield, Wis.), Secretary Ann Woldt (Wautoma, Wis.), and Treasurer David Hamel (Westfield, Wis.). Look for a complete write up on the chapter in the next Prairie Promoter.

The Board of Directors also announced that TPE had doubled the land protected in 2007. With all the recent activity, including the formation of the Prairie Sands chapter and the nine members who bumped up their memberships during the conference, the board may make a similar announcement next year, in Madison.

Coulee Region Chapter members worked hard to make this conference a success. Volunteers included Scott Cooper, Don Nelson, and Jim Rogala (conference committee); Armund Bartz and Jessica Bolwahn (conference program); Barb Christie and Diane Hansen (raffle/auction); Diane and Roger Hansen (banquet centerpieces); and many others including Kathy Bibby, Andrea Benco, Rita Hoffmann, George and Carmeen Johnston, Betty Kruck, Anna Motivans, and Jean Stramel. Volunteers from other chapters helped make the raffle/auction a success, with Carol Benish and Evanne Hunt leading the way.

Our sponsors also helped make this event possible: Xcel Energy; Dairyland Power Cooperative; Michler and Brown, LLC; Swamp Lovers, Inc.; Integrated Restorations, LLC; Friends of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve; and Organic Valley Farms.

Evanne Hunt and Don Nelson contributed to this article

Bargain Sale Protects More than Sugar River Savanna

By Rich Henderson

In November, The Prairie Enthusiasts permanently protected a small natural area near Verona, Wisconsin. TPE purchased the diverse, nine-acre oak savanna from Rich and Kathy Henderson. Oak savanna is now so rare that even small sites, such as this, have significant conservation value.

TPE used a grant from the State of Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund to purchase the land. State

Stewardship grants pay up to half the price on properties that qualify as a natural area or important wildlife habitat. The

conservation group that receives the grant must fund the other half of the purchase, either with cash or through a donation by the seller. In this case, the Hendersons sold

the savanna to TPE at 70 percent below fair market value,

effectively donating 70 percent of the purchase price.

The State Stewardship Fund allows conservation groups to bank the difference between the actual purchase price of a property and half of the appraised value as credit toward another qualifying land conservation project. TPE used the credit from the bargain purchase of Sugar River Savanna to protect land at the Spring Green Prairie (see related article in this issue).

Sugar River Savanna started on the road to recovery in 1976, after 125 years of domestic livestock grazing. That year, the Hendersons applied the first prescribed burn ...without training, experience, or proper equipment. Not surprisingly, the fire got out of control for a period of time until the wind shifted back. After their trial by fire, the Hendersons gained more experience and equipment and have burned much of the site every year since then.

This frequent burning, coupled with inter-seeding over many years, and some weed control work, has

resulted in a very good, but still incomplete, recovery of the savanna vegetation. More than 400 native plant species now grow on the land, with great floral displays throughout the year.

Although two-thirds of these species grew on the Sugar River Savanna in 1976, most were present in very low numbers. Native species were re-seeded from native populations in western and central Dane County. The site now boasts good populations of state-listed species, such as prairie parsley, wild hyacinth, pale purple coneflower, wild quinine, and cream gentian. A couple of insect

species not found anywhere else in the state live there as do bluebirds, flickers, wood pewees and other savanna birds.

TPE's Empire-Sauk Chapter will continue to manage the site. The chapter will put up new signs this year and plans to establish a couple of new trails to accommodate increased use due to the site's new status. Given the small size of the preserve, visitors

are asked to stay on the trails. As in the past, two to

three guided hikes will be offered each year. Hike details to come in the TPE field trip flier or on the web site.



Lupine covers a hillside at the Sugar River Savanna. Photo by Rich Henderson

Enthusiasts Receive Rock County Easement

By Rich Henderson

Last year, Peter and Tracy Layton, who own Tallgrass Farms, donated a conservation easement to The Prairie Enthusiasts. The easement covers 163 acres near Lake Koshkonong in northern Rock County, Wisconsin. Tallgrass Restoration is restoring the gently rolling glacial till back to its original prairie, savanna and wetland habitats (see photo, page 15).

The easement protects important habitat for grassland birds such as bobolinks and meadowlarks. It also includes

sedge meadow vegetation, fen seeps, a spring creek and several prairie pothole wetlands with standing water used by many types of wetland birds. The site's size makes it a significant wildlife habitat in its own right. Its close proximity to the new 438-acre Fair Meadows State Natural Area only enhances its conservation significance. Fair Meadows includes permanently protected wetland, grassland, and oak savanna on the Van Altena and Shackelford properties and has, among other conservation values, a large population of the federally-threatened eastern prairie white-fringed orchid.

The Prairie Bluff Chapter will tend to the Layton easement while Tallgrass Restoration continues the land management and ongoing restoration work. There will be opportunities in the future to attend guided hikes at this site.

Many thanks go to Peter and Tracy Layton and Tallgrass Restoration for their commitment to endangered ecosystem conservation.

Orchid Growers Guild Commends Prairie Enthusiast

By Mark Martin

Scott Weber has devoted himself to restoring and preserving prairies for the benefit of generations to come. On December 16, 2007, he received a commendation, signed by Governor Doyle, recognizing his twenty-plus years of work conserving, protecting, and propagating wild orchids. Weber, who serves on The Prairie Enthusiasts' Empire Sauk Chapter Board of Directors, accepted the commendation at a monthly meeting of the Madison Orchid Growers Guild.

Weber has been very involved with the eastern prairie fringed orchid. He has conducted many counts, is experimenting with propagation from seeds and is helping coordinate planting seeds into suitable locations to expand the number of populations in Wisconsin.

He has identified nine orchid species on his Bluestem Farm south of Baraboo, has successfully raised eight native species from seed to bloom, and has germinated five species that are either still in flasks or not yet blooming. He has also been instrumental in re-introducing three species into wild areas from which they had disappeared.

Weber has inspired and educated countless individuals about our responsibility to preserve and protect the living world.

Muffy Barrett, Weber's wife, has greatly assisted in his work with orchids.

Rare Oak Savanna Protected

By Rich Henderson

For the past twenty years, The Prairie Enthusiasts and the Aldo Leopold Foundation have worked together to restore the Foxglove Savanna in southern Sauk County, Wisc. Last year, TPE permanently protected ten acres of this natural area. The newly protected land, located in Troy Township, adjoins other areas that may be added to the preserve in the future.

TPE (via the Empire-Sauk Chapter) acquired the land from Charles Russell and Jeb and Barb Barzen. The Barzens donated five acres to TPE directly. This donation enabled TPE to use a State of Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund grant to purchase an additional five acres from Charles Russell.

Mr. Russell and the Barzens are pleased to see the land, located within the Lower Wisconsin Riverway project boundary, conserved as habitat for rare and declining species and as a place where people can experience a rare piece of natural history.

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Scott Weber, a Prairie Enthusiast, receives recognition for more than twenty years of work with wild orchids. Judy Stevenson presents the commendation. Photo by Russ Mackie.

(Continued from page 5)

Oak Savanna, cont...

Oak Savannas like this one *Cream gentian*. Photo by Barb Barzen

once dominated southern Wisconsin. Very few examples of this native plant community exist today. The preserve harbors more than 200 native plant species, including several state-endangered, threatened and special concern species such as purple milkweed, cream gentian, one-flowered cancer-root and woodland boneset (*Eupatorium sessilifolium*). Many other species closely associated with oak savanna, such as giant false foxglove, which gives the site its name, woodland milkweed, Canada milkvetch, New Jersey tea, Canada hawkweed and alumroot also occur on the property.

“Foxglove Savanna is a rich example of a now rare native ecosystem. We are extremely grateful



to the Barzens and Charlie Russell for recognizing the significance of this natural treasure and for facilitating its restoration and protection. We are also grateful to the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund program for supporting this

conservation effort,” says Rich Henderson, vice president of TPE

The Prairie Enthusiasts and the Aldo Leopold Foundation, working through the Blufflands Project, have been restoring Foxglove Savanna over the last 20 years. The Blufflands Project marshalls volunteers and grant money to help private landowners restore remnant native prairie, oak savanna and oak woodland on the bluffs of the Wisconsin River in Sauk, Dane and Iowa counties.

Foxglove Savanna will be open for public hiking and birdwatching. There will also be opportunities to hunt turkey and deer by reservation. Periodic guided hikes will also be offered to the public.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Spring Green Prairie Celebration and Hike

Saturday, May 17, 2008

This joint Prairie Enthusiasts and Nature Conservancy field trip will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a celebration to acknowledge TPE’s recent donation of 144 acres located just north of the existing preserve to the Conservancy. The donation, made possible in part by the generosity of Tom and Kathie Brock, Rich and Kathy Henderson, and the Savanna Oak Foundation, increases the area owned and managed by the Conservancy at Spring Green Preserve to more than 1,000 acres.

Leaders Rich Henderson and Steve Richter will share information about the rare plant communities at Spring Green Preserve including sand prairie, dry bluff prairie and black oak barrens that are home to plants like prickly pear cactus, compass plant, leadplant and little bluestem. Participants will look for migratory birds such as

meadowlarks, vesper and lark sparrows, dickcissels and bobolinks. Other interesting grassland species include the pocket gopher, lizards and several types of insects that are found few other places in the state. The leaders will also discuss stewardship activities, such as prescribed fire and removal of red cedars that help protect and restore this unique and important natural area.

What to Bring: We suggest that you wear sturdy footwear appropriate for walking among cacti, a hat, drinking water, trail snacks, insect repellent, guide books and binoculars.

Difficulty Level: Participants will have the option of an easy to moderate hike or a steeper, longer hike up the preserve hillside.

Directions: From the intersection of US Hwy. 14 and State Hwy. 23 near Spring Green, travel north on Hwy. 23 for 0.5 miles and turn right (east) on Jones Road. After 0.75 mile, turn left (north) on the dirt access road to the preserve parking lot just west of fire number E5196A.

Limit is 20 people. To reserve your place for this field trip, please contact Maureen O’Brien by Monday, May 12 at mobrien@tnc.org or 608-316-6426.

3rd Fire in Eastern Oak Forests Conference: Learning from Experience

May 20-22, 2008

A meeting will be held for managers of oak and associated ecosystems at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Ill.

For more information or to become a sponsor, please contact Charles Ruffner (ruffner@siu.edu or 618 - 453-7469), John Groninger: (groninge@siu.edu or 618-453-7462), or Todd Hutchinson (thutchinson@fs.fed.us or 740-368-0090)

Pleasant Valley Conservancy Dedication!

Saturday, June 7, 2008

Pleasant Valley Conservancy State Natural Area #551 will be dedicated on Saturday, June 7, 2008. The program will begin at 1:00 p.m. Join other TPE members and the general public for a brief dedication ceremony followed by refreshments and hikes at the preserve.

Pleasant Valley Conservancy is located in western Dane County a few miles from the Village of Black Earth. This 140-acre preserve contains extensive prairie remnants, oak savannas, oak woods and wetlands.

For further details, contact Mark Martin at Mark.Martin@wisconsin.gov or Tom Brock at tdbrock@charter.net. For information on the preserve, see <http://www.savannaoak.org>.

Directions: Take US Highway 14 to the Village of Black Earth. Go south on County F through the village and follow F for nearly 3.7 miles. Turn east (left) on Pleasant Valley Road and go 0.5 mile to Fire Number 4609. Park on the right (south) side of the road.

Prairie Enthusiasts' Annual Picnic

Sunday, July 13, 2008

The Empire-Sauk Chapter will host this year's picnic. The location has not yet been determined. More information will be sent in the mail as the date for the picnic approaches.

21st North American Prairie Conference

August 4-8, 2008

A meeting for prairie enthusiasts, biologists, community members, botanists, and businesses specializing in prairie seeds and restoration will be held at Winona State University in Winona, Minn.

A link to the NAPC can be found on the TPE website: www.ThePrairieenthusiasts.org

Prairie Remnant Data and Data-Entry Wanted

We need information about Wisconsin prairie remnants for the TPE Prairie Remnant database. Please send any remnant inventory data to John Harrington via the post or email. John also needs help entering the data at UW-Madison. Please contact him if you have time and the desire to become more involved.

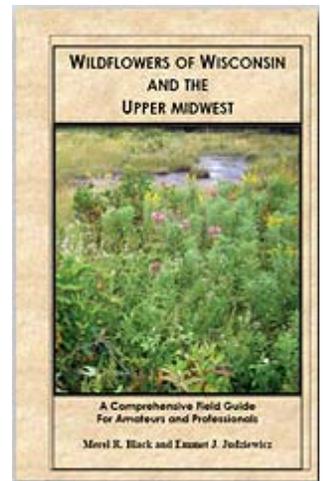
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New Wildflower Book Fundraiser Submitted by Jim Sime

Merel Black, a long-time Prairie Enthusiast, artisan, computer guru and naturalist has co-authored a new field guide.

Before the advent of computers, Black volunteered to mount plant specimens at the UW Madison Herbarium. Later, she donated the first computer to the herbarium, wrote programs to catalog the specimens, and developed a website to make the information available to professionals and amateurs alike. She also developed an expanded website at UW Stevens Point. The websites contain a treasure trove of information about the entire flora of Wisconsin, including plant descriptions, common names, photos, ethnobiology, distribution maps, and identification keys. You might like to check out the



websites www.botany.wisc.edu/herbarium and wisplants.uwsp.edu.

Drawing on her previous work, Black and Dr. Emmet Judziewicz, UW-Stevens Point, produced the 271-page field guide Wildflowers of Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest, which includes 1087 species and 2100 photographs. Though the photos are small you can see larger images of the plants at either website. Amateur botanists and flower lovers will go wild for the photos of virtually every non-woody plant species in Wisconsin, their common and scientific names, the counties where they have been found, descriptions of key identifiers (some with additional photos), and the very useful "Index of Conservancy." This index assigns each Wisconsin-native forb a number that reflects the plant's uniqueness and faithfulness to its habitat. These numbers can be used to compare sites or monitor changes at a single site over time. Book reviews can be read at wisplants.uwsp.edu.

Black and Judziewicz have donated 400 copies of the book at printer's cost to the SW Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts to be sold as a fundraiser. The book is available from The Prairie Enthusiasts website <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org> for \$30 for TPE members and \$35.00 for non-members, plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling.

Share Your Experiences

Your fellow enthusiasts want to hear from you. We want more articles about how to conserve and restore prairie land in *The Prairie Promoter*. Your experiences, tips, and ideas will be published in a semi-regular feature titled "Tools and Techniques." You can read the first installment in this issue of the newsletter (page 3).

Submit articles to your chapter newsletter editor (contact information on page 2) or directly to *the Prairie Promoter* editor (jesse@nasw.org).

TPE Merchandise Available on Website

Now you can order all of your TPE merchandise in one convenient location. Visit the TPE website to purchase Parsnip Predator and No Mow signs, as well as TPE hats, tote bags, and notepads.

www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/merchandise.htm

All proceeds will still go to the originating chapter, but now you can order any item using a single order form and payment. Some of these items previously were available only at selected TPE events.

Contact Evanne Hunt with ideas for additional products (eahunt@presenter.com).

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

Please check chapter newsletter for announcements.

EMPIRE – SAUK CHAPTER

Calendar of events

Thursday, May 8, 2008, 7:00 p.m.

Empire-Sauk Chapter board meeting: Location TBD. All members are welcome.

Saturday, May 17, 2008, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Joint TPE and The Nature Conservancy Celebration and Hike at Spring Green Prairie
(see related article in this issue)

Saturday, June 7, 2008, 1:00 p.m.

State Natural Area Dedication of Pleasant Valley Conservancy
(see announcement on the previous page)

Spring Burn Season

We have approximately 30 burns scheduled for this spring. If you wish to help on these and have not yet informed us of your interest, please contact Empire-Sauk Chapter volunteer coordinator, Lois Komai (608-238-2503 or lakomai@chorus.net). Experience and training is desired but is not a prerequisite at this time. Novices will be paired with experienced people. Personal fire-resistant protective clothing is highly recommended but not required at this time.

2007 Volunteer of the Year

The Empire-Sauk Chapter presented their 2007 volunteer of the year award to Erik Goplin. He was honored for his over 220 hours of volunteer work on weed control, tree-brush removal, and barn renovation at Schurch-Thomson Prairie and Erbe Grassland; helping on 23 prescribed burns; seed collecting; and contributing over 100 pounds of prairie seed from his seed orchard in 2007. Goplin received the award at the 2008 Annual TPE Banquet and Conference.

Seed Collecting, Cleaning and Planting Coordinator(s) Sought

The Empire-Sauk Chapter has a pressing need to scatter prairie (and savanna) seed over hundreds of acres during the next several years to recover degraded sites and expand critical habitat for many rare and endangered plants and animals. Unfortunately, our seed collection and planting has begun to slip and may be reduced to a trickle if we cannot find people to take leadership roles and get things moving. We very much need a person or two to get our seed collecting and processing program up and running in earnest. We could use an overall coordinator, as well as local leaders focused on specific sites. By next fall, we will have a great seed cleaning, processing and storage facility at the Schurch-Thomson barn in Iowa County. If you are interested, please contact Rich Henderson (608-845-7065 or tpe.rhenderson@tds.net).

Barn Renovation Progressing

Thanks to the Schurch-Thomson Prairie Trust, great progress is being made in renovating the barn at Schurch-Thomson Prairie (on Reilly Road, in SE Iowa County). A new ground floor has been poured and the foundation repaired. Work will be starting soon on replacing the loft floor and putting on new siding and doors.

We need volunteers to do interior carpentry and electrical work. If you wish to help, please contact Rich Henderson (tpe.rhenderson@tds.net or 608-845-7065).

We also need donations of cash or materials to match the trust fund's contributions towards the renovation.

Are You Mechanically Inclined?

The Empire-Sauk Chapter is looking for a volunteer or two to be in charge of the maintenance and repair of field equipment. This includes, but is not limited to, drip torches, water backpack cans, backpack herbicide sprayers, hand tools, brush-cutters, chainsaws, mowers, propane torches, fire-pump units and seeders. Plans are to eventually develop a workshop at the Schurch-Thomson barn, after its renovation, as this is where most equipment will likely be stored when not in active use. However, maintenance work may certainly be done at other locations. If you wish to help, please contact Rich Henderson (608-845-7065 or tpe.rhenderson@tds.net).

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS CHAPTER

Tumbledrum-Drum-Drum

NIPE has a 50 gallon Tumbledrum mixer that we are willing to part with. It is electric and can be used to mix and/or thrash seed. The original cost (in 2000) was \$1,125. But if you need the machine, we will consider any offer. To make an offer, contact Jim Rachuy (jr.TPE@verizon.net or 815-947-2287)



Prairie Bluffers and other Wisconsin DNR volunteers braved the snow to clear Stauffacher Unit, near Albany, Wisconsin (See article on page 10). Photo by Rob Baller

PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

Stauffacher Unit Cleared

Prairie Bluffers John Ochsner and Nick Faessler joined Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Natural Area crew leader Matt Zine at the long-awaited clearing of the Stauffacher prairie this February (see photo on page nine). The State purchased the approximately 30-acre addition in Greene County from Judy Pariseau and Dawn Shippert. Pariseau and Shippert requested that the new State Natural Area be named after their parents, who owned the property for decades.

Area conservationists have coveted the cedar-encrusted prairie for years. It lies tantalizingly adjacent to Abrahams Woods, a 40-acre SNA owned by the UW and managed by Arboretum staff. The new SNA displays a fine transition from dry, south-facing prairie, to hilltop oak savanna, to north facing, rich oak/maple forest. The Stauffacher unit also comes with some second growth hackberry with a whole lot of garlic mustard in places.

Workers cut red cedar from the prairie and dragged the branches through fourteen inches of snow to an old quarry/farm dump on site for burning. Although the temperatures remained mild at 15-25° F, the site received two to three inches of snow during that day. Rob Baller arrived late, due to work, and took some pictures. The crew was aided by other WDNR veterans such as Thomas Meyer and Janeen Laatsch. This event marked the birthday of an anticipated series that will radically restore the ecology of the bluff.

PRAIRIE SANDS CHAPTER

Interpretive hike at the Fox River National Wildlife Refuge

April 22, 2008

Celebrate John Muir's Birthday (April 21st) and Earth Day (April 22nd). The hike will focus on the history of the refuge, sandhill crane observation, and prairie/savanna restoration efforts. This is a joint activity with the Marquette Chapter of the Ice Age Trail.

Meet at John Muir Park south of Montello on Hwy F at 6 p.m. Return to the park for birthday cake after the hike. Wear boots, layers, and bring binoculars and your coffee/tea cup. Hike leader: Alan Bennett

For information or to RSVP contact:
wolenbrg@palacenet.net, (608) 429-4169.

Triple Interpretive Hikes in honor of National Trails Day

June 8, 2008

9:00 a.m. Hike Observatory Hill, a boyhood haunt of John Muir. View the remnant prairie at the base of the hill. Cathy Franks and Charlie Church, Prairie Enthusiasts who live at the base of the hill, will lead the hike.

11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Hike John Muir Park State Natural Area. Learn about the prairie restoration effort and participate in guided bird observations. John Muir Park is listed in the new Great Wisconsin Birding and Natural Trails booklet. Mark Martin, DNR, and Sue Foote Martin, Bureau of Endangered Wildlife and coordinator of the Great Wisconsin Birding and Nature Trail project, will lead this hike.

12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Picnic lunch at the park

1:30 p.m. -3:00 p.m. Hike the Fox River Refuge. Identify and learn about restoration efforts on the prairie. Sadie O'Dell of the Fish and Wildlife Service will lead this hike. Sadie will share information about Invasive Free Zones.

Location: Gather in the parking lot at John Muir Park 15 minutes prior to the listed time for each individual hike. The park is on Hwy F about 9 miles north of Portage and 7 miles south of Montello. Join us for all three or come for only one.

What to Bring: Dress for the weather; bring plenty of liquids, binoculars, sturdy shoes, lunch, snacks, sun block, picnic blanket, Frisbees, softball and bat, fishing poles, kayaks.

For information or to RSVP contact:
wolenbrg@palacenet.net, (608) 429-4169.

ST. CROIX VALLEY CHAPTER

2007 Work Parties

The St. Croix Valley chapter Land Manager, Wayne Huhnke, thanks the following volunteers who contributed 374.5 hours in 2007 working at Foster Cemetery, Rocky Branch, Covellii/Hansen/Ross Prairie, Alexander Prairie, and Blueberry Hill.

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN CHAPTER

2007 Highlights

Some of these hours contribute the 25% in-kind match to the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) grant that we received in 2006 and again in 2007. We encourage everyone to attend the work parties and to bring a friend. Work parties are fun and you are helping to make more room for the sun-loving prairie wildflowers that we all care for so much as Prairie Enthusiasts!!

Bill Ramsden
Doreen Lynch
Mike Miller
Evanne Hunt
Keith Relyea
Doug Lassen
Wayne Huhnke
Susan Goode
Rob McManus
Angie Sechler
Andy Ulrich
Joan Ulrich
John Arthur
Katherine Grant

Mike Perry
Keith Rodli
Mark Anderson
Neil Anderson
Joe Covellii
Pamela Deerwood
Burt Levy
Jan Levy
Dick Alexander
Carl Nelson
Buck Malick
Tory Christensen
Kurt Blanchette

Also, thank you to our March 2008 Work Party Volunteers

Tony Celley
Mary Putzier
Chelsea Huppert

Nicholas Myus
William Warner
Ben Bosman



Mary Putzier and Chelsea Huppert work at the Rocky Branch Goat Prairie in River Falls, WI. on March 1, 2008. Photo by Evanne Hunt.

In addition to our usual field trips, work parties and celebrations (we urge you to check the website and join us in 2008) 2007 has been a year of collaboration, cooperation, consultation and joint efforts with other local, conservation-minded groups.

In 2007, We:

1) assisted the Bureau of Endangered Resources with the preliminary survey of eight goat prairies in a 500-plus-acre potential addition to the Snow Bottom State Natural Area.

2) collaborated with the Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Pheasants Forever to re-vegetate over a mile of the stream bank portion of their project to reconnect the Blue River and the Big Spring branch with their respective floodplains.

3) provided the impetus and the location information to the DNR and DOT for moving a snowmobile trail from a sensitive area containing two endangered and one threatened species on one of their joint Prairie Protection Projects.

4) partnered with the Driftless Area Land Conservancy, Bureau of Endangered Resources, Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection in an attempt to purchase a 400-acre farm with some 300 endangered Prairie Bush Clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*) and 125 additional native species. SWPE has monitored and managed portions of this site since 1989. The project has been reduced to a more manageable 170 acres by excluding the buildings and cropland while retaining all of the prairie area. We have picked up an additional partner, the Mississippi Valley Conservancy. The prospects look good that the site will be purchased by MVC, managed by Southwest Chapter with the title eventually transferred to The Prairie Enthusiasts.

Wilhelm in Plants of the Chicago Region 1994 indicates that: "Areas with I values <Floristic Quality Indices> higher than 35 possess sufficient conservation and richness to be of profound importance....areas registering in the 50's and higher are extremely rare and of paramount importance". The Floristic Quality Index for this site is 41.

5) educated participants on one of our joint field trips as to the identification and habitat of a rare and a not-so-rare prairie orchid. This resulted in one of the participants

finding a new population on his property of the endangered October Ladies Tresses (*Spiranthes ovalis* var. *erostellata*). This is the second new Wisconsin site for this orchid in two years. Previously, there was only one site known in the entire state.

and 6) facilitated the availability of the new standard for field guides of Wisconsin flora; Black and Judzewicz, Wildflowers of Wisconsin and The Upper Midwest.

Join Us!

Want to get more involved? Just want to see what we're up to or just hang out? Come to our May meeting which will be a pot luck picnic at Rose & Jim's "spaceship" near Montfort. See website for directions. We would love to have you share your skills and talents, possibly sit on the SW Board of Directors, work on a committee or anything else you think would help promote prairies.

Sundays, May 18th, June 15th at 4:00 p.m. at the Sime's Spaceship, 753 Snowbottom Road, Montfort. All members are welcome. No April Board meeting due to burning season.

Work Parties

For directions to sites, see TPE website or call the contact person

April – Please let us know if you would like to be included in April burns. We have no scheduled work parties and will email those who have contacted us. Email Rose Sime at jrsime@chorus.net to get on the burn list

May 10 (Saturday) - Sime Balds, Boscobel Cutting invasives and brush 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact Jim or Rose at 608 831-9297.

June 8 (Sunday) Bush Clover Prairie, Cutting brush and trees 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact Gary Eldred at 608 375-5271.

July 13 (Sunday) Eldred Prairie, fighting invasives 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Contact Jesse or Jay at 608 778-2832.

PRAIRIE SMOKE CHAPTER

No information submitted.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Welcome to those Enthusiasts who have joined since November 28, 2007.

Jim Burke, Saint Paul, MN
Peter & Marsha Cannon, Madison, WI
Margaret & Florian Chollet, France,
James Curtis, Madison, WI
Mike Engel & Hannah Spaul, Madison, WI
James & Kersten Falvey, La Crosse, WI
Pete Feils, Onalaska, WI
Thomas Ganfield, Whitewater, WI
Nathan Gingerich, Brodhead, WI
Tim & Peg Hamm, New Glarus, WI
Angela Hanson, Rochester, MN
Hank & Becky Hartman, Hinsdale, IL
Joe Henry, Seymour, WI
Melissa Keenan, Fennimore, WI

Brandon Mann, Madison, WI
Paul & Nancy McMenamin, Dekalb, IL
William Moore, Platteville, WI
Jerry & Terri Paukstat, Neshkoro, WI
Christine Regester, Lake Geneva, WI
Michael & Connie Schad, Zumbro Falls, MN
Martin & Myrna Schultz, Wautoma, WI
Sheryl Scott, Richland Center, WI
Donald & Mary Stirling, Gays Mills, WI
Steve Ventura & Margaret Krome, Madison, WI
Robert & Debra Welch, Waupaca, WI
Kent Wells, Brooklyn, WI
Karen & Fred Wollenburg, Dalton, WI

JOIN THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS!

Complete the following form to join The Prairie Enthusiasts.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Select a Membership Level:

\$15 Student \$25 Individual \$40 Family

\$100 Shooting Star \$200 Blazing Star \$500 Compass Plant

\$1,000 Monarch \$5000 Bur Oak Benefactor

To become a member of your local chapter, list your county: _____
otherwise, you will be designated a Member-at-Large.

Please indicate your areas of interest:

Exhibits and booths (staffing)

Field trips (organizing or leading)

Fundraising

Plant and animal inventories

Contacting landowners

Chapter or board leadership

Management (burns, brush clearing, weed control, mowing, prairie nursery)

Newsletter

Seed collecting and planting

Special events (banquet, picnic, conference)

Technical support

Website

Other: _____

Please print this form and mail it, with your check, to

The Prairie Enthusiasts

P.O. Box 1148

Madison, WI 53701

Thank you!

THANK YOU, DONORS!

2007-2008 Donations*

We thank everyone who made a donation to the 2007 Annual Appeal and all those who made gifts throughout the year. These gifts above and beyond membership dues are truly generous and appreciated.

Under \$100

Karen & John Albright	Bonnie Weisel	Renae Prell Mitchell
Ronald Johannsen	Mary Eikens	Tony & Darlene Nowak
Scott & Donna Lewein	Pheasants Forever, Inc. CRC	Bill & Carol J. Owens
Laura & Greg Nessler	River Country RC & D Council, Inc.	Prairie Moon Nursery Inc.
Joe Stecker-Kochanski	Laura & Douglas Dufford	Jerome E. Simmons
Steve Ventura and Margaret Krome	Dan Flood and Sally Busemeyer-Flood	Rob & Barb Stanley
Dan & Deb Weidert	William Kuenzi	Paul & Judith Swenson
West Wisconsin Land Trust, Inc.	Craig Maier	Erik Thomson and Sarah Weiss
Kathryn Dejak	Paul Schultz and Mary Sack	Heather Thomson
Sharla Hanson	Diana Smith	William Walz
Robert & Lynne Lorenzen	Glenn Teschendorf and Mary Anne Derheimer	Robert Weihrouch and Pattie Haack
David & Mary Murn	Roger Williams	Paul Wotzka and Patricia Bailey
Stan Oxenreider	Laura Brown and Mark Shahan	Driftless Land Stewardship LLC
Carol & Bob Benish	William Bruins	Evanne Hunt
Rick Durbin	Gerry Clausen	Keith Relyea and Jeanne Kant
Hildy Feen	Glenda Denniston	Patricia Fahrenkrug and Mike Anderson
Tom Gianoli	Eddie Goplin	Rose Meinholz
Harriet Irwin	Roger & Diane Hanson	Sue Reindollar
Pamela Marshall-Neil	Brende Hofer and Dennis Steadman	Peter Van Beek
Dan & Calico Schmidt	Paul Kaarakka and Andrea Gargas	Tom Bernthal
Rick Stermer and Ellen Moore		Richard & Betty Delong
Pat Tabor		

\$100 - \$499

Jae Adams and Jon Sundby	Gerald Goth	Dennis Presser
Craig & Jean Anderson	Anne E. Griffiths	Peg Rasch and Dave Stute
David and Karen Bakken	Mrs. Connie Hardacre	Ronald Raymond
Dale Beske and Dorothy Gertsch	John & Cate Harrington	Integrated Restoration, LLC
Thomas Boos II and Amanda Schwoegler	Jim and Marci Hess	John Steinke
John Brennan and Regina Voss Brennan	Ron Johnson	Daniel Stohr
Kathryn Cartwright	Jan Ketelle	Swamp Lovers Fdn
Todd Casanova	Christine Lassa and Gary Konkel	Ann Thering
Dairyland Power Coop	Paul & Marilyn Lokken	Chester & Donna Thomas
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Jack & Jane Edson	Michler & Brown, LLC	Dean Whitley
Mike Engel and Hannah Spaul	Anna Motivans	Eugene Woehler
David Fisher	Tom & Molly Murray	Rosalind Woodward
Paul Francuch	Richard & Victoria Oberle	Telle Zoller
	Organic Valley	
	Jackie & Wayne Pauly	

\$500 - \$1000

Ken and Diane Ballweg
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Patrick Handrick

Jeff & Erin Huebschman
Inger Lamb
Judith & John Lovaas
Kevin Magee
Ron Panzer
Irv Sather

\$1001 - \$5000

Barb Barzen
Jim & Rose Sime

Over \$5000

Jack Kussmaul
Dave Marshall and Wendy Weisensel

**For the period November 30 – March 20.*

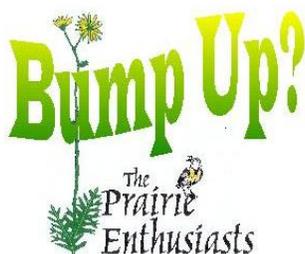


Wildflowers bloom at the Layton Easement. See story on page four. Photo by Peter Layton.

THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS
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The Prairie Enthusiasts needs you to bump up your membership to a higher level so we can enhance our member and volunteer services and continue our mission of protection, restoration and education.

We are asking that you pledge to continue at this new level for three years so we know we can count on your support!

Thank you, Your TPE Endowment & Fundraising committee

I/We name(s) _____ will bump up from a current membership level of _____ to the _____ level. Enclosed is a check for the difference of \$ _____ for 2008.

The Prairie Enthusiasts Membership Levels:

**\$15 Student, \$25 Individual, \$40 Family,
\$100 Shooting Star, \$200 Blazing Star, \$500 Compass Plant,
\$1,000 Monarch, \$5,000 Benefactor**

Please send form and check to:

The Prairie Enthusiasts, P.O. Box 1148, Madison, WI 53701