

The PRAIRIE PROMOTER

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Grassroots Conservation at Work

Protection Progress at Sylvan Road Conservation Area

By Linda Lynch

Progress is being made on the Sylvan Road Conservation Area project in Iowa County, WI, which lies within the Southwest Wisconsin Grassland and Stream Conservation Area. You may remember an article in late 2011 regarding our efforts to protect this property. The county has finally accepted the offer to purchase for \$212,000. An application for Knowles-Nelson Stewardship money has been submitted, and the project is expected to be approved for funding shortly. The stewardship fund will pay for 50% of the purchase, and we will need to raise the remaining funds in order to close on the property yet this year.

The property consists of 99 acres that contains oak woods, wet prairie and riparian scrub/young forest. The oak woods are highly restorable, with natural community structure and over 30 native species still present, including mature white oaks, red oak, basswood, poplar and box elder.

The prairie consists of wet mesic prairie, wet prairie and sedge meadow, which were spared heavy grazing. This

*Winter scene at Sylvan Road site
Iowa County, WI*

Photo by Kristin Westad



area is the gem of the parcel and contains over 50 native species, including a number of species rarely found in Wisconsin such as the threatened Prairie Indian plantain. Wet prairie systems are rare in Wisconsin's Driftless area, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has determined this particular example to be ecologically significant and of natural area quality.

The riparian scrub/young forest areas will require intensive management to restore them to a more native state. There are a few native species hanging on in these areas, but invasives such as prickly ash, multiflora rose, reed canary grass, aspen and box elder have established themselves.

Sylvan Road also includes the Dodge Branch of the Pecatonica River and Gribble Creek – two Class II trout streams, the deeper pools of which DNR fisheries staff believe may provide overwintering sites for trout. Protection of the stream banks, control of invasive species and control of non-point source pollution will be critical in maintaining the health of these waterways, and we are looking forward to working with Trout Unlimited on the restoration.

The Southwest Wisconsin Chapter has committed up to \$10,000 for funding this acquisition. As TPE continues to raise funds to protect this property, we will provide updates on the website and the chapter's Facebook page. I hope we can count on you to help protect this significant acquisition.

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Nurturing the Growth of TPE

Chris Kirkpatrick, Executive Director

Even though winter is still holding on into the beginning of spring, we know that soon we will be able to get our Nomex suits back on and start doing our most prized activity - prescribed burning. We know that through this process the diversity of our landscape is renewed and nourished and will continue to thrive for future generations. I have also been amazed at how TPE continues to grow and thrive as we mature. As I look back at what we have accomplished by the support of our chapters and members this past winter, I feel like our enthusiasm is spreading like the fires we use to nourish and restore our prairies.

I watched this fire get lit with our generous year-end giving. I must thank every member who contributed to our annual appeal or other year-end donations. These donations totaled over \$50,000, which came close to doubling the \$30,000 goal set by the Fundraising & Endowment Committee. As the enthusiasm continued to spread into this year, the Board has stepped up, with 100% of the members pledging a total of over \$15,000 in our Board Challenge.

In early January the Board approved the Strategic Plan that I highlighted in my last article. At the same time they also approved a Development Plan and the 2013 budget. These items have put into motion some very exciting growth for the organization. The Development Plan identifies five focus areas to support our Strategic Plan. The first part of this is the Board Challenge. The second part of the plan is to focus on expanding our membership program by hiring a new part-time Communications Coordinator. Currently we are reviewing resumes for this position, which will oversee our renewal process, work on our appeals, and communicate membership information to chapters. The third part of our plan is a new giving program to recognize our members who give at a \$1,000+ level. The final portions of this plan include recognizing our Legacy Givers who have us in mind in their wills, estates, and trusts.

As we move into burn season this spring I see us growing and moving forward as an organization like nourishing the prairies we seek to manage and restore with the use of fire. With this growth we can ensure our chapters are enabled to protect, manage, and restore the remnants that we are responsible to care for. We are working to develop effective ways to have educational and outreach activities and share these successes and experiences with all our chapters. This will see us grow our membership as well as increase and recognize our volunteers so we can continue to ensure the perpetuation of our prairies, savannas, and associated ecosystems.



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. The Prairie Promoter is a quarterly publication of The Prairie Enthusiasts. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without permission. We welcome articles, announcements, artwork and photographs relevant to prairie and savanna ecosystems. Mail or e-mail submissions to local chapter editorial volunteers or to The Prairie Promoter editor. Copy any text into the body of the e-mail. Send photos (.jpeg or .bmp) as attachments. 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 2 (Spring issue); May 18 (Summer issue); Aug. 17 (Fall issue); and Nov. 16 (Winter issue). If you would like to receive electronic notification of the newsletter, please e-mail Victoria Oberle at TPE@theprairieenthusiasts.org.

President's Message

By Jack Kussmaul

Accreditation

Accreditation has been discussed several times in articles in this publication. It is a continuing process, and I was advised at a recent Southwest Chapter meeting that it would be useful to provide another review. Specifically it was suggested that I discuss the disadvantages as well as the advantages of becoming accredited.

The Land Trust Alliance, a nationwide organization to support and provide guidance to land trusts initiated an accreditation program in 2006. There are about 55 land trusts in Wisconsin. Two years ago only one had achieved accreditation. Today six are accredited.

So that you know my bias, I am a strong advocate of accreditation. That said I will attempt to be objective in discussing the pros and the cons, beginning with the pros:

1. Credibility As more and more land trusts become accredited it will become more important. Foundations awarding grants may favor accredited land trusts over those who are not. Donors may look more favorably on those who have achieved the "seal of approval". In the future there may be essentially two classes of land trusts - those which are accredited and those which are not. An analogy may be to those colleges which are accredited and those which are not.

In a survey of 113 accredited land trusts, 96% reported the process had strengthened their organization and 63% reported it made it easier to meet funder requirements.

2. High Standards Achieving accreditation requires meeting high standards in our activities. These include fiscal management, monitoring of easements, capacity to care for the properties we hold, avoiding conflicts of interest, developing work plans for staff, long-term planning, complying with all IRS rules and ethical fundraising. Meeting and complying with these standards will guarantee to all of our supporters that we operate in a sound manner.

Now to the cons:

1. High Standards This is a con as well as a pro. High standards mean that there will be rules and guidelines we all need to follow rather than taking shortcuts. All segments of the organization, whether the chapters, the Board or the staff, will have to meet these standards in everything they do. While this may make us a stronger land trust, it may create an occasional annoyance. One example has already occurred. The Southwest Chapter agreed to purchase a parcel of about 4 acres for \$2,700 per acre, or a total of \$10,800. The price is based on another parcel the landowner just sold. While the price is minimal, we are required to have an appraisal to support the price if anyone ever claims we were paying too much to a favored landowner or that we are using TPE funds foolishly. In this case it is an annoyance. Meeting LTA accreditation standards, however, requires appraisal.

2. Cost There are costs involved with the process, though so far we have been lucky in obtaining grants to cover these. An initial step was to do an organizational assessment to determine where we are strong and where we are weak. This was conducted with Gathering Waters, but funding

through the LEAP Program paid the expense. When we register to get our application in the queue there is a \$1,000 fee. When the full application is submitted the fee will likely be between \$5,000 and \$7,000, depending on the amount of our expenses in the previous year.

3. Time Accreditation will take both staff and volunteer time. So far, we have been working on the process for two years, with most of the work done by volunteers but with some staff time. We do not expect the process to increase our total staff hours, but the accreditation process, will continue to take staff time.

While there are headaches and annoyances involved, I believe that they are a price well worth paying. I believe that in the long term the benefits to TPE in joining the ranks of the accredited land trusts greatly outweigh the drawbacks. As an organization we have committed to the process. Our goal is to submit an application not later than 2016.

Board Evaluation

As most of you know, the Board of Directors of TPE has a member selected by each chapter. In addition, there are members at large who are elected by the Board.

In 2012 the Board undertook a self-evaluation to try to better understand our strengths and weaknesses and to know our needs when we elect members at large. Ten board members responded to the survey. Each topic was given points - one point for the weak areas to five points for the strong. The results are summarized here:

Focus Area	Board Members Ranking					Total Ranking
	1	2	3	4	5	
Land Management				3	7	47
Conservation Issues				5	5	45
Land Planning			2	4	4	42
Dealing with Government Agencies			2	6	2	40
Working with Conservation Partners		1	2	5	2	38
Public Relations, Communications & Marketing	1	5	3	1		24
Build Memberships		7	3			23
Connecting with the Business Community	2	5	2	1		22
Fundraising	4	4	1	1		19

We rated ourselves strongest in Land Management, Conservation Issues, Land Planning, Dealing with Government Agencies and Working with Conservation Partners. All of our high scoring areas are things we all enjoy.

It will be no surprise that we scored lowest in the areas that do not involve hands-on conservation, including Fundraising, Connecting with the Business Community, Build Memberships and Public Relations, and Communications and Marketing. These are therefore the areas in which the Board needs to be strengthened.

If you know someone who has skills in these areas who would be interested in Board service, please contact one of the Board members or our executive director. A Board with diverse skills is a stronger and more effective Board.

Interview with Dr. Mark Leach on his New E-Book: *Positive Participation with Nature: Ecological Restoration in Wisconsin*

By Kathy Stahl

Your book tells the story of several restoration efforts—Tom & Kathie Brock's savanna/oak woodland restoration in the Driftless area of Wisconsin, the Northern Wisconsin Wild Rice Restoration, the Bad River Watershed Culvert restoration, and the Lower Chippewa River restorations, as well as a history of TPE. How did you go about selecting the restorations you wanted included in your book?

I wanted projects representing a range of types and scales. The commonality is they all feature community.

You very facilely weave restoration theory and practice in this book. Do you think it is important for those of us doing restoration to understand restoration theory? Or do we come to understanding restoration in the abstract by getting actively involved with a restoration?

I'm pleased to hear that, because I was trying to weave practice and theory together in my book. Some of the best restorationists had no training at all when they started. There are a few who had some background in theory, but the actual story is the community building, how people bring practice and theory together. People with different personalities and different strengths can work together to accomplish impressive restorations. People who have been doing restoration have learned the theory. Working together is helpful for those in academia because they too are learning as they go along.

A lot of restoration knowledge comes from judging the results. We should all do more to test our hypotheses. People can do the same restoration techniques for years and not get the results they want. It takes people to a different level when they test their hypotheses and theories. An important thing is attending conferences, workshops, and field visits to find out what other people's experiences are. It's through this kind of sharing that we learn when we should try something different. That's part of what makes The Prairie Enthusiasts such a valuable group. People go to different work parties and different tours with different chapters, and learn from one another. People learn about restoration by being involved in it.

When I first started thinking about this book, I talked with people who might be able to write a "how to" book. Then I started thinking those kind of cook books aren't really that useful. Every restoration site is different. People have different motivations. There are so many variables. Throwing the same recipe at each project might not be a good idea. So I wrote a book about people and their projects. There are recipes in the book, but they are contextual. I hope readers of the book recognize the uniqueness of each restoration, and study with that uniqueness in mind. I purposively started the book with Tom and Kathie Brock as they are exceptional in doing their homework. They never stop studying and learning.

Your book is more than the specific story of restorations and the people involved with the restorations: it's a bit of a dictionary, a restoration primer, a natural history of Wisconsin and a source of relevant research. Was that your vision when you started to write this book?

Each of the stories took on its own life. The book is different than when it was first conceived. My intention was to give a field guide to visit these projects. That idea became difficult with the culvert restorations. What was maintained from that original conception was the perspective that as the reader visiting each featured restoration, I asked myself what would the reader want to learn about the project? And, what knowledge can I give the reader for a broader understanding of the place and the restoration project?

In your book you say "When ecological restoration is done well, communities are strengthened." -- you're talking about people communities there. And you've alluded to community in our discussion, would you tell us more about your concept of community?

Our culture does better when connected with land. Anything that we do that improves the land strengthens the community. This is important for generations in the future. This is bigger than we are. I like to think involvement with the land is being ourselves because people have an innate need to connect with the land. People are getting away from that but we have a good way to get connected through restoration. Interestingly the most active TPE chapters are around the cities. Urban people want to be in nature. There is something about the restoration process that is different than going for a walk. You can come later to see the result of what you've done. There is also a historical perspective to this. Gary Eldred got interested in wild flowers because they'd been there for thousands of years. Native plants provide a real connection with people living in the past and those in the future. Restoration connects you with things that are endless in time and complexity.

You say larger is better in terms of restoration. Would you explain that?

Larger is better for natural areas as they are going to be home for more species. And since one of our goals is to maintain plants and animals, large can be better. That doesn't mean one acre isn't worthwhile. If we look on a whole continent level, even our national parks are not big enough for our biggest animals. My comment about size comes from the data about extinctions and extirpations. The thing that excites me is we can reverse this. If the remnants are too small, we can enlarge and connect them. Unfortunately it isn't a priority for society. For example, the northern forest is so chopped up, many of the animals aren't going to make it. An example is the interior birds dependent upon large tracks of uninterrupted land. We are never going to have extensive prairies. We do have opportunities to patch

prairies together and patch other vital ecosystems together. Prairie chickens are in a small area around Stevens Point. We are getting close to possibly extending that. Elk habitat can be extended.

One of the fallacies you offer at the beginning of your book is that civilization and wildness do not mix. With the effort several make to protect wilderness areas from hordes of people and people management, how is that a fallacy?

Certainly, we need areas set a side for wild things. My point is that as civilized people we can find ways to protect and restore natural ecosystems. There is a lot of good thinking in the sustainability movement. To have a sustainable culture, we need to look beyond the economics and social affairs, to maintain environmental quality. Much of the dominant culture puts those things in conflict. When our society matures, those things will be in harmony. I quoted Joe Rose in the book. Joe grew up on the Bad River Reservation. He said that wild rice does have economic value but it also has ecological, cultural and spiritual value. If we focus on only one value we will miss important pieces. Pitting economy against other values doesn't serve us very well. We can have a thriving economy and good environment and a society we want to live it, but we don't get there by thinking just about a free market.

One of the often overlooked practices, you offer is monitoring the function or performance of a completed restoration. I'm struck with how this is more complex than it would seem at first thought.

The professional restorationist wants to do a job and then their contract is completed. From their perspective they want an end date, the client probably doesn't want an end date. Since there aren't restoration standards, there are people who get paid and never look back. As a warning to people, if you're serious about restoration, it needs community involvement, over a long period of time. The book describes the importance of citizen-scientists in monitoring such things as culverts, water quality, and bird populations.



Prairie smoke
by Gary Eldred

I've been reluctant to spend more time in front of my computer to read an e-book. But the interactive quality of the graphs in your book and the chance to hear video clips of those practicing restoration certainly got me over that reluctance. What led you to the e book format?

It's seems that the technology is here now, and it keeps cost down. People love books. Print isn't dead. But e-book publishing encourages getting information out there on limited resources. The alternative is to give up a fair amount of control to corporations or publishing houses. My goal is to have other authors work with me and get their work out without much expense. I decided to go with e-books to be read on a computer for this book. Almost everyone has a computer, not everyone has a Kindle or Nook. And I'm not giving up control about my material to a corporation. When I started this there was an international consortium of e-book publishers who indicated eventually all electronic e-readers would be standardized so they are interchangeable. This hasn't happened. Once there is a protocol that is readable on a standardized basis then I'll go in that direction.

What's next?

A picture book by Steve Hubner, a very active Prairie Enthusiast. Twenty five years ago Steve hired me for my first job looking for rare plants. I showed Steve I had found a few along the railroad. I knew the conservation significance of the plants, and Steve knew a place where such plants were thick on the back end of a pasture. He rented one acre, and he and his kids fenced it. The next year all kinds of cool stuff came up. The Bureau of Endangered Resources then paid the farmer the going pasture rate for 14 acres and Steve and his kids fenced those. Steve's been managing it since then and taking pictures. The next book is based on about 60 pictures of Dower's Prairie with Steve's commentary. It's a remarkable case of one person making a difference.

Over all I'm Interested in writing for the non scientist, someone who wants to be a more effective environmentalist.

You can obtain a copy of Dr. Mark Leach's book at www.economoebooks.com.

Book Review: *Spring Wildflowers of the Northeast: A Natural History* by Carol Gracie (Princeton University Press, 2012)

By Thomas Brock

Despite "northeast" in its title, this delightful book is very apt for the Midwest. Heavily illustrated with color photographs taken by the author, this is not your usual field guide, but a detailed and intimate exploration of the natural history of of the spring flowering plants we are most familiar with. Built upon the vast field research of noted botanist and photographer Carol Gracie, the book connects plant structure and function with phenology, taxonomy, and pollination biology. One of the strongest features of this book is the numerous close-up color photographs that permit an intimate understanding of how native plants work. Considering that this is a large format hard cover book (270 pages), the list price (Amazon) of \$19.30 is a real bargain. Highly recommended.

2013 TPE Annual Conference and Banquet

By Evanne Hunt

On Saturday, March 16, the Many Rivers Chapter and The Water Resource Center hosted the annual conference and all-chapter banquet. Both events were held at Minnesota State University in Mankato, MN. The Centennial Student Union Building provided an excellent venue for both the presentations and networking.



Marcia Richards, conference sponsor, Many Rivers Chapter member, Raffle & Silent Auction volunteer and celebrator of St. Patrick's Day. Photo by Steven Gahm

Conference

The conference theme, "Pollinators: Future of our Food & Native Plant Communities," brought together 230 people to celebrate our prairie heritage.

After a welcome by TPE President, Jack Kusssmaul, the conference was kicked off by Dennis Frederickson, Southwest Regional Director, Department of Natural Resources, with his presentation, *The State of the State of Minnesota Prairies and Grasslands*.

The conference consisted of three subject tracks: a water track, a prairie track and an animal track. Topics covered included wildlife, prairie restoration and maintenance, grassland birds, dragonflies, orchids, reptiles and amphibians and befriending bumble bees.

A poster session, organized by Brooke Hacker, showcased the results of research and lessons learned from prairie and savanna restoration or management projects. Eight projects were accepted for the conference.

For only the third time, a track for families and kids was included in the conference program. Co-sponsored with The Water Resource Center, this track featured a day-long series of family-friendly topics. This free event had over 300 children participate over the course of the day and the Many Rivers Chapter is thinking about making this an annual event.



Scene from the highly successful childrens' program. Photo by Art Straub

During lunch, Chris Kirkpatrick presented the "State of TPE", an overview of membership, status, and plans for the 2013. Tim Krohn, journalist and canoeist shared his experiences canoeing 335 miles down the Minnesota River.

At the end of the day, a special session was included for chapter leaders. The "TPE Chapter Leadership Roundtable" was an opportunity for chapters to share their experiences and expertise, and to discuss how to effectively carry out our mission to perpetuate the future of prairies, savannas, and associated ecosystems.



President Jack Kusssmaul presents the TPE Prairie Enthusiast of the Year award to Jim Rogala, Board member from the Coulee Region Chapter. Photo by Steven Gahm

Banquet

A highlight of the evening banquet was the presentation of the TPE Prairie Enthusiast of the Year award to Jim Rogala.

The after dinner speaker was Eric Mader, the Assistant Pollinator Program Director at the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and Extension Professor of

Entomology at the University of Minnesota. Eric described how native pollinators play a critical role in both prairie ecology and agriculture. He explained that intersection between nature and farming provides a unique framework for engaging farmers in the conservation of native biodiversity. Eric took attendees on a virtual tour of progress being made, lessons learned (including economic costs and benefits), and how this work can support broader conservation objectives like water quality protection and reduced pesticide use.



Elaine Evans, who is pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota, presented on bumblebee life, habitat, home and procreation. Photo by Steven Gahm



Eric Mader checked out the exhibits before delivering an informative and inspirational presentation at the evening banquet. Photo by Steven Gahm

Photo Contest

The winners of the annual photo contest were Jeff & Patty Straub with their photo *Picking Silky Prairie Clover*. Their photo was the popular winner, as determined by balloting during the day and will be used on the cover of the TPE 2012 Annual Report. Finalists in the TPE photo contest each received \$100. They included: Gayle Edlin's *Two Butterflies on Pasture Thistle*, Scott Seigfreid's *Sunrise through the Indian Grass*, Marjie Bennett's *M-Prairie Sleeps*, and Randy Schindle's *Showy Ladyslippers*.

Auction and Raffle

As always, the silent auction and raffle was a success. There were 93 raffle items and 66 auction items. Proceeds – which go entirely to the chapters that submitted the items – totaled under \$5,000.

Thank You!

Many thanks to our presenters who donated not only their time, but generously shared their decades of experience. We could not have had a successful conference without you! Thank you to our sponsors whose support, generosity, and loyalty is appreciated every day. And thank you to all the volunteers who made our attendees feel welcome, provided support to our vendors and exhibitors, sold raffle tickets and merchandise, and pulled off a well-organized conference that was enjoyed by all who attended.



Exhibitors John (and Carol) Morgan from Prairie Habitats, Inc. drove from Manitoba, through the blizzards of northwest Minnesota, to show off their grass and forb harvester in the sunny climes of Southern MN. Photo by Steven Gahm

Many Thanks to Our Conference Sponsors!



Feist Prairie Acquired by TPE

by Gary Eldred

The Feist Prairie remnant in east central Grant County, Wisconsin is another one of those tiny gems most of us are familiar with. Hidden along some seldom used township road and covered with junipers, sumac and other assorted brushy species, the little 1 ¼ acre remnant seemed beyond restoration. Upon closer examination wherever there was a small, unshaded opening on the ground, it was crowded with native plants, upwards of 40 – 50 species in all!

In late 1987 George Brown and Gary Eldred contacted Gerald Feist, the owner, about doing some restoration on the site. Mr. Feist was willing to allow the Southwest Wisconsin Chapter to start the project.

Due to the degraded condition of the remnant, once the junipers were removed a proposal was put before the chapter board to collect and plant seed of the same species found on the remnant from as many other sites in the region as practical, mostly in Grant, Iowa, and LaFayette counties. Several chapter members, including Andrew Williams and Gary Eldred undertook the enrichment project over a 3 year period from 1990 to 1993. Our hope was to have the restoration act as a genetic refuge for the local populations of native prairie plants that were doomed in other areas.

Over the last 25 years, hundreds of hours of cutting and burning trees and brush, pulling weeds, inventorying

plant species, doing prescribed burns and establishing a trusting relationship between our chapter and the Feist family had finally paid off. On Feb 8, 2012, Eldred contacted Mr. Feist to discuss some type of permanent protection for his prairie remnant. Gerald commented that he wasn't interested in selling but would be willing to talk about developing a conservation easement. A call was made to Jack Kusssmaul, our Southwest Chapter lawyer, and a conservation easement contract started to take shape. By April 18, 2012 the plans changed when Mr. Feist decided that he indeed was now willing to sell the restored remnant and 3 ½ acres of additional land adjacent to the remnant. On March 21, 2013 TPE closed on the property and took title

This 25 year long project is a fine example of what I believe the Prairie Enthusiasts stand for - a life-long commitment to conservation, protection and restoration of the last of our tallgrass prairie heritage. Nurturing trust and providing educational opportunities for landowners and the public is a foundation of our desire to leave our environment better than we found it.

Feist Prairie
Photo courtesy
Gary Eldred



Book Review: *The Midwestern Native Garden*

By Charlotte Adelman

My husband Bernie Schwartz and I are Life Members of TPE. We also have turned our Wilmette, IL backyard into a prairie/savanna, placed a conservation lien on our Walworth County, WI hill prairie, helped transform a one-acre detention basin into a wetland prairie surrounded by upland prairie, and wrote *Prairie Directory of North America - US and Canada* and *The Midwestern Native Garden - Native Alternatives to Nonnative Flowers and Plants, An Illustrated Guide* (Ohio University Press 2011).

Our book shines a light on the erroneous assumption that most of our popular garden flowers and plants are native to our region. In fact, most of the plants we see everywhere, from local "nature" parks to shopping mall "landscapes" are non-native. We imported these species for landscaping or erosion control. But if we like them, what's the problem?

First, nonnative species take up space that is badly needed by ever-diminishing native Midwestern species, many of which are endangered. Second, nonnative species have a nasty habit of becoming invasive, which means they take over native landscapes and create monocultures. Landscapes dominated by nonnative invasive plants deprive butterflies and birds of the many native sources of nectar, pollen and seeds required for food. Monocultures of nonnative plants

deprive butterflies of the native "host plants" they must have in order to lay eggs and successfully reproduce.

Why do well-behaved Eurasian plants become invasive thugs when they hit North America? Because the introductions arrive unaccompanied by the plant competitors and animal herbivores that control them at home. Without their normal checks and balances, introduced species easily "jump the garden wall," and become invasive. Efforts at controlling what has become an agricultural and ecological catastrophe cost Americans billions of dollars annually.

A 2009 federal study notes that as long as gardeners and landscapers continue buying nonnative plants, these flowers and plants can potentially become naturalized and potentially invasive. We can help stop the problem by refusing to plant nonnative flowers and plants. This simple step prevents us from unwittingly creating additional species of the invasive plants that degrade our savannas and prairies.

To help Midwesterners figure out what they have growing in their gardens, *The Midwestern Native Garden* identifies many popular nonnative flowers and plants. It then suggests similar looking Midwestern native flowers and plants that share cultivation requirements to choose as alternatives. The book also identifies many of the native species that serve as food sources and "host plants" for the Midwest's stressed and diminishing populations of reproducing butterflies and birds.

The Prairie Promoter

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2013 Annual TPE Membership Meeting and Picnic

The 2013 meeting of the membership and all-chapter picnic will be held Sunday, July 21, in River Falls, WI. There will be the usual board meeting in the morning and field trips to local oak savannas.

The host chapter, St. Croix Valley, has reserved the shelter at Glen Park. Maps and details will be posted on the website in June. The chapter will provide meat & buns, two side dishes, and beverages. Attendees are asked to bring a side dish to share, a plate and silverware.

For those looking for more excitement, come up Saturday. You can camp at Willow River State Park (dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/name/willowriver) or stay at a lodge along the Kinnickinnic River. The Kinnickinnic is a world-class trout stream and loads of fun in a kayak. Kinni Creek Lodge and Outfitters (www.kinnicreek.com) will drop you off and pick you up at different spots along the river. If the temperature is in the 90s and higher, what could be better than a cool trip down the river?

See you in July! Let's hope for temps below 100!

Evanne Hunt

Citizen Science: Help Monitor a State-Endangered Butterfly & Survey Violet Populations

Become a regal fritillary monitor volunteer – do some science while enjoying nature and supporting an endangered species! The summer of 2013 will be our fourth season in a long-term program to monitor regal fritillary presence on remnant and restored prairies in the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area of eastern Iowa County and western Dane County.

The regal fritillary is listed as a Federal Species of Concern. Once widespread, it has nearly disappeared from east of the Mississippi. In Wisconsin it is listed as Endangered due to low or declining populations and is considered critically imperiled because of its vulnerability to extinction within the state. Occurrences have been documented in 14 counties in Wisconsin through the Natural Heritage Inventory program, but currently there are only 3 - 4 areas where potentially viable populations still persist.

To maintain the open prairie habitat these butterflies require, the land must be managed through controlled burns, mowing, and/or mechanical clearing of woody growth, all of which have the potential to positively or negatively impact regal fritillary populations. The monitoring program will improve our understanding of how regals respond to management of prairie remnants and creation of new habitat.

Would you like to participate? No previous experience is required, just a love of the outdoors and

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tolerance for hot sunny days. Training is provided. If possible, we are looking for a commitment over several summers. The monitoring program runs approximately June 15- July 31 with each monitoring team making three visits to their site spaced a week or more apart. The training program has an off-site and a field component. Training opportunities will start in May.

The caterpillars of the regal fritillary butterfly eat only violet species in open habitat. We also need volunteers to help with surveys to find where these violets are located and estimate their abundance on our preserves that host regal fritillaries. This information is crucial to determining how the violets (prairie, birds-foot, marsh, and common wood) respond to management such as burning, mowing, and grazing so we know how best to focus our efforts. The surveys will be done in May when the violets are in bloom, on lands within the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area of western Dane and eastern Iowa counties.

Please join us in these important endeavors! Contact Ruth Kearley (rekearley@gmail.com) or (608) 729-4050 to sign up or to learn more.

Please Help Us Cross the Creek

Kalscheur Savanna is a beautiful 19-acre TPE preserve near Hollandale, WI. It's blessed with a spectrum of natural communities ranging from dry bluestem prairie with Hill's thistles to a sedge meadow, to Olson Creek, a clear stream that spills into the Pecatonica River a mile downstream.

Olson Creek lies between the road and the prairie, which makes it a little hard to get tools to the site. Engineering students from University of Wisconsin – Platteville drew a bridge design for this location that will support a large ATV loaded with water. We have found a nearby contractor with experience in this type of construction.

Would you please help us pay for the bridge? We need \$3000. Please make a tax-deductible donation through www.theprairieenthusiasts.org or by check.

Kristin Westad

2011 Prairie Enthusiast
of the Year Jan Ketelle
risks her neck crossing
Olson creek.

Courtesy Kristin Westad



Regal fritillary
by Gary Eldred

CHAPTER NEWS

CHIPPEWA SAVANNAS CHAPTER

The Chippewa Savannas Chapter hosted *Explore Winter: Winter Tree and Shrub Identification and Wolf Ecology Workshop* on January 26th. Steve Merchant, Minnesota DNR Wildlife Population and Regulation Manager and Wisconsin citizen, spoke about wolf behavior, health and Minnesota management of their 3000 wolves. Beaver Creek Reserve Naturalist, Jim Schwiebert, gave a presentation about how to identify trees and shrubs in the winter and then led the group on an outdoor tree and shrub exploration.

On February 13th Dr. Mark Leach gave a presentation at the Chapter meeting entitled *How Darwin Changed the Evolution of Ecology*. His presentation offered background about Darwin, how ecological concepts have changed over time and who impacted those changes.

On March 2nd, the chapter (along with the Eau Claire Master Gardeners) hosted a day long workshop featuring TPE's Bill Hogseth and Prairie Nursery President Neil Diboll. Bill spoke about *Preserving Our Native Prairies*, giving a historical perspective, an overview of the incredible native lands in our chapter area, and the startling decline of birds and critters as a result on dwindling expanses of native prairie. Neil spoke about *Creating Prairies and Meadows* offering specific information about how to prepare land for prairie plantings and answering participants questions specific to their prairie creation efforts.

Our chapter is currently taking nominations for chapter officers. Nominations are to be turned into Mark Leach or Kathy Ruggles by sending your nominations to the chapter email address: theprairieenthusiasts.csc@gmail.com. Chapter officer elections will occur at our chapter meeting April 23rd at 6:30 that will be held at Simply Dunn in Downsview. Kathy Ruggles and John Thomas, owners of Simply Dunn, will also show the Emmy award winning film, *Green Fire* (a movie about Aldo Leopold and his legacy).

The chapter has several interesting events coming up. The Tiffany Bottoms Mini Car Train Ride occurs on May 5th, a fun "mini car" train ride that takes us into one of the most biodiverse and bird rich areas in Wisconsin. June 2nd, Elaine Evans from the University of Minnesota will hold a workshop about *Identifying Native Bees*. On June 29th there will be field trip to Marcie and Mike O'Connor's privately owned prairies which are a testimony to their hard work and capable restoration skills. More information about these public events can found in the field trip flyer, on the chapter website (www.chippewasavannas.org) or by emailing theprairieenthusiasts.csc@gmail.com.

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS CHAPTER

Please go to our website www.nipes.org for news and activities.

EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER

TPE Volunteers and Sites Featured in Video

A video created by The Nature Conservancy and the Alliant Energy Foundation on their partnership with TPE in the Military Ridge area in Wisconsin has been posted on YouTube. The video includes shots from TPE Board member Eric Preston of volunteers working at various sites including the Mounds View Grassland, as well as an interview with Rich Henderson. The video may be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Y8_RtO2SNU.

Empire-Sauk Chapter Volunteer of the Year

The Empire-Sauk Chapter is pleased to recognize Kathy Henderson as Chapter Volunteer of the Year for 2012. Kathy has been a long-time volunteer regularly contributing 200-300 hours a year to the organization. She has been the chapter treasurer for the past five years, provides ideas for improving operations and outreach, makes treats for work parties (critical for morale) and is a steadfast and extremely hard-working volunteer on prescribed burns and work parties clearing trees and brush, collecting and cleaning seed, controlling weeds, mowing, facility repair and maintenance, and weeding the seed orchards. She is such a hard worker that sometimes it is a challenge to get her to take a break at work parties. If this were not enough, she has made it possible, over the past 20 years, for her husband Rich (chapter Chair) to put in the effort he has towards TPE's conservation mission. Kathy has been a major reason for the success of the chapter and of TPE as a whole in protecting, managing and restoring our endangered prairie, savanna and oak woodland heritage. She is much appreciated.



Kathy Henderson
Photo by Richard Oberle

Spring Burn Season is here

We have nearly 50 burns scheduled for this spring. If you wish to help on these and have not yet informed us of your interest, please contact volunteer coordinator Diane Hills (volunteers@theprairieenthusiasts.org). Experience and training are desired but are not a prerequisite at this time. Novices will be paired up with experienced people. Personal protective, fire-resistant (Nomex) clothing is highly recommended but not required at this time.

Looking for a Savanna to Restore?

By Rich Henderson

Would you like to be in charge of your very own oak savanna restoration but currently lack the funds to acquire a piece of property with oak trees? If so, here is an opportunity for you. It involves planning and implementing a four-acre restoration of oak savanna in far eastern Iowa County. The site is located 4.3 miles south of Blue Mounds on the A to Z unit of TPE's Mounds View Grassland Preserve (see aerial image). TPE is looking for someone to take charge of this manageable project and make it their own.

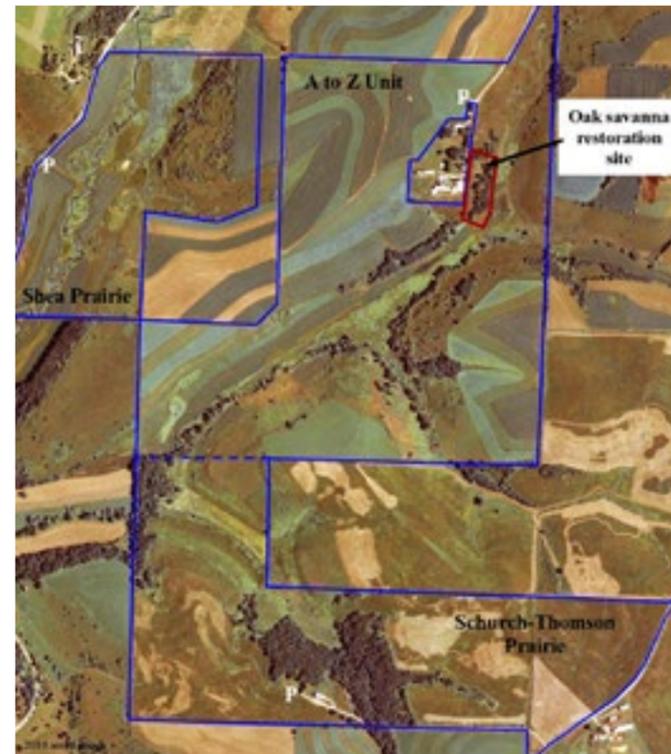
You, as the project manager, would be in charge of planning and implementing the work with technical guidance and resource assistance from the Mounds View Grassland Land Management Committee. Within certain guidelines, such as which species may be introduced and what restoration/management methods may be used, you, as manager, will otherwise have control of the project. You will have the responsibility of doing much of the work yourself. However, TPE will provide assistance in the form of equipment, supplies and time from volunteers and interns.

The project site has mature bur oak trees on an east-facing slope above a wetland complex. Up until seven years ago, it had been heavily grazed. Consequently, there is almost no native ground layer vegetation remaining, but that also means there is relatively little shrub and tree invasion to deal with, at least not yet.

Activities that you will be planning and implementing directly, or planning for others to assist with, include:

1. Assessing the site and proposing a restoration plan (technical guidance may be provided as needed).
2. Establishing and mowing fire-breaks.
3. Controlling invasive, mostly non-native, plants such as sweet-clover, wild parsnip, Japanese hedge parsley, reed canary-grass, honeysuckle and others.
4. Collecting and planting native savanna and prairie seed.
5. Planning and leading work parties.
6. Planning prescribed burns (TPE burn crews will conduct the burns, but you may certainly participate).
7. Keeping records of what gets done.

If this opportunity interests you, contact Rich Henderson at tpe.rhenderson@tds.net or 845-7065.



Mounds View Grassland, Brigham, WI

GLACIAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER

Glacial Prairie Chapter has had a busy winter. We held two Chapter events at the Southern Region Kettle Moraine Headquarters near Eagle. The first, in January, was a showing of the Aldo Leopold movie *Green Fire*, followed by a social hour/discussion and a simple meal.

The event in February was a presentation on *Planting Prairies and Prairie Reconstruction* by Walter Mirk, who has worked on prairies and oak savannas for the last 27 years. At this event we also served food and again showed *Green Fire* by popular request.

The Chapter has also made the decision to start a member cooperative to share knowledge, seed and sweat equity. We set some work party dates, but unfortunately have yet to meet at the time of this writing as the weather has failed to cooperate! Nevertheless, we have some eager workers ready to get started on those prairies as soon as we get a break from the great snows of February!

PRAIRIE BLUFF CHAPTER

Fire Conference

We saw many familiar faces at the Regional Fire Conference held recently at Dubuque, Iowa. We heard experts in many aspects of fire ecology, but we paid special attention to the insects, attending sessions presented by Armund Bartz on prairie butterflies, skippers and moths, Mike Arduser on bee diversity, Karl Gnaedinger on the effects of fire on insects and Matt Zine on insect refugia.



Burr oak scene
by Gary Eldred

Certified Restorationists

We are all in the process of being certified volunteers, as we are asked to provide proof of training to various NGO and government (fire) programs. Where is your S130/S190 certificate? Your chainsaw safety class certificate? Are you a certified herbicide applicator? Did you attend an annual fire crew refresher? Have you signed a waiver?

These are becoming necessary documents for us volunteers to continue to perform the various tasks at the sites that we have been actively managing. The drivers of these changes are a combination of the evolution of our restoration activities, insurance policies, the land trust certification process, risk-managers at public institutions, and our ever-increasing litigious society.

Basswood Harvest

Our long-term management plan for Iltis Savanna has always been to thin out the non-oak trees, including cedar, apple, cherry, walnut, hickory and basswood. Years ago we hired a forester to mark trees in anticipation of a wood pulp harvest, but the plan fell through due to low pulp prices. Three winters ago we started to do the work ourselves, first cutting eastern red cedars, working from the edge of the prairie eastward into the savanna, saving the logs and burning the slash.

Our plan accelerated last year when we found a sawmill that would purchase basswood logs, which they prepare into round slabs for the art market. Basswood is a soft, clear wood, suitable for carving, painting and other decorative arts. The last two winters we have cut and delivered several loads of logs. The result is a much more open savanna that is beginning to resemble what we see on the 1939 aerial maps.

Recently Nick Faessler took the time to count growth rings on a large basswood we had felled -- 44 years, with a noticeably thin ring for that hot, dry year 1988.



Photos courtesy Tom Mitchell

ST. CROIX VALLEY CHAPTER

Sunday, March 3, was a perfect day for a “frost seeding” at Blueberry Hill, a native two-acre remnant overlooking the St. Croix River.

An eight-acre corn field adjacent to the remnant was long coveted as an expansion of the prairie – both as a buffer and habitat for birds and insects. Both pieces are owned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, which agreed to let us manage the remnant and field.

Working with a local farmer, the field was planted with RoundUp-ready soybeans to reduce weeds. This gave us time to raise sufficient money to purchase local ecotype seeds from three nurseries: Kinnickinnic Natives, Gentian Farms, and Pure Prairie Seed. These nurseries also generously donated additional seed for our project.

Chapter members spent two years hand-collecting forb seed - 14 pounds (worth \$2500!) - from ditches and area prairies. Proceeds from the 2013 TPE auction and raffle were also dedicated to purchase seed.



Photos courtesy Evanne Hunt

Sunday was perfect – the temperature was about 35 degrees and the sun was shining. This is important with a frost seeding as the sun warms the seeds causing them to nestle down into the snow. A six-inch snow fall was predicted for that night.

Thanks to TPE members, members of the St. Croix Valley Bird Club, and friends of both organizations:

John Arthur	Barb Bend
Jamie Bolwerk	Tasha Cudinski
Pamela Deerwood	Carol Fitzgerald
Wendy Hill	Evanne Hunt
Heather Kieweg	Sam Lewis
Buck Malick	John McKay
Dave Middleton	LaVonne Middleton
Pat Ryan	Angie Sechler
John Sippel	Jyneen Thatcher

And a special thanks to Wayne Huhnke, Mike Miller, Rob McManus, and Jeremiah Swain who stayed very late to finish spreading the remaining seed.

The Prairie Promoter

SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN CHAPTER

TPE Provides Unique Opportunity for UW-Platteville Students

By Lucas Bybee, Student at University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In the Fall of 2012 the Soil Morphology & Classification (Pedology) course at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville created a detailed soil map of the Eldred Prairie, near Lancaster, WI. For those unfamiliar with the Eldred Prairie, it consists of 45 acres and is characterized by a sandstone ridge running from the southeast corner to the northwest corner. Both sides of the ridge are hillside with varying degrees of steepness and the very north part levels off into a narrow floodplain. North of the ridge was formerly a tree farm which has been cleared, while the southern portion has been minimally disturbed by human activity. The Southwest Wisconsin Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts have removed the trees from the area, planted native prairie species from the locally collected seed, and have encouraged the establishment and survival of prairie species through brush removal and burning. This project was facilitated through the Pioneer Academic Center for Community Engagement (PACCE), which provided funds for travel to the site and equipment necessary to conduct the field work.

Pedology is the study of soils in their natural environment, utilizing various factors such as soil depth, landscape position and appearance of the individual soil

layers (horizons). The class of 25 students divided into five groups and each was assigned a nine acre strip to survey. Each group used a hand-operated soil auger to take at least one soil core for each acre, in different landscape positions. The groups also described soils in five backhoe pits that were dug at the site for use in the Regional Collegiate Soils Contest, held in October. The groups described the individual cores using the methodology taught in class and matched their descriptions with official soil series descriptions maintained by the USDA-NRCS. Each group then made a map of their assigned area and pieced the data together to create an overall soil map of the prairie. The final requirement of the project was researching each of the soils to compile information on their general characteristics such as land capability classification, water holding capacity, average depth to bedrock, and hydraulic conductivity. Posters showing the results of this research and comparisons to the existing county-based soils map were presented at the PACCE poster day on December 5, 2012.

We, as a class, thank The Prairie Enthusiasts for affording us this unique hands-on learning experience. We hope that the information we compiled for the Eldred Prairie site will aid in efforts to restore that site to its natural state and educate the public about this unique natural area. A special thanks to Dr. Chris Baxter, our intrepid professor and overall orchestrator of this project. Anyone wishing to see the posters or written reports for the project may contact Dr. Chris Baxter (baxterch@uwplatt.edu).

2012 Annual Appeal Exceeds Goal

by Chris Kirkpatrick

Thank you to everyone who responded to our 2012 Annual Appeal Campaign. This is the biggest fundraiser we do in the year that supports operations. Without your help, we could not continue to do the good work of the organization. The Fundraising and Endowment Committee had a goal to raise \$30,000. To date we have raised a total of \$43,265!

The generosity from our members to support the work of the organization and its chapters is truly amazing. The following is the list of people who responded so generously to our 2012 Annual Appeal.

“Thank you” doesn’t begin to express how grateful we are for your support!

Phil & Kathy Aaker
 Craig & Jean Anderson
 Mark & Donna Baller
 Chris Barlow
 George Barry & Oakwood Village West
 Gary & Shirley Baxter
 Carol & Bob Benish
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 Town of New Glarus
 Shooting Star Native Seeds
 Nicollet Conservation Club
 Darlene Tymn

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The following people have joined TPE during the period November 15, 2012 through March 13, 2013:

Joe Beattie, Hastings, MN Tod Becker, Mankato, MN Moni Berg-Binder, Winona, MN Bruno Borsari, Winona, MN Katie Bovee, Glenwood City, WI Ron & Karen Bowen, Prairie Restorations, Inc., Princeton, MN Renna Bowman, Eau Claire, WI Genevieve Brand, Saint Peter, MN Michelle Bridges, Mankato, MN Terri Broxmeyer & Ron Grasshoff, Prairie Du Sac, WI Marc Chipault, Madison, WI John Delaney, New Richmond, WI Diane DeWitte, Montgomery, MN Don Dunker, Mountain Lake, MN Merle Fossum, Saint Paul, MN Kay Gabriel, Madison, WI Charlotte Gallagher, Good Thunder, MN	Paul Ganshert, Fitchburg, WI Virginia Homme, Granite Falls, MN Paul Hoppe, Ogilvie, MN Dave Johnson, Mankato, MN Maria Jonietz, Norwalk, WI Craig Koester, Saint Paul, MN Robert Laeser, Argyle, WI Michael Lynch, Minneapolis, MN Dan May & Kristine MacCallum, Eau Claire, WI Mary McCann, Milwaukee, WI Jennifer Meadows, Lanesboro, MN Erik & Larissa Mottl, Grinnell, IA Monty & Mara Natrakul, Mankato, MN Clinton Nienhaus, Winnebago, MN Carla Rae Oestreich, Watertown, WI Brad Petersburg, Hanover, IL Tom Rice & Mary Becker, Shoreview, MN Janeen Ruby, Jackson, MN	Janice Runge, Watertown, WI Loren & Sherry Schoewe, Alpha, MN Mike Sonnek, Mapleton, MN Calvin Spear, Saint Peter, MN Jeremiah Swain, Durand, WI Janet Swartz, Mount Horeb, WI Lloyd Terrill, Sun Prairie, WI Megan Ulrich, Granite Falls, MN Tracie Vranich, New Ulm, MN William Webb, Helenville, WI Lee & Carol Williams, Mankato, MN Bridgett Winkels, Mankato, MN Edward Wojciechowski, Ellsworth, WI Scott Wold, Granite Falls, MN Jessica Woodrow, Courtland, MN Kay Yost, Menomonie, WI TJ Boatman Photographer, Minneapolis, MN
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GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

To: T.J. Callahan, Chicago, IL	From: Linda Lynch
Gary Christopherson, Nelson, WI	Bonnie Harper-Lore
Mike Graham, Kenosha, WI	Michael Graham

THANK YOU DONORS

We thank everyone who made a donation to The Prairie Enthusiasts during the period November 15, 2012 – March 13, 2013. These gifts above and beyond membership dues and the annual appeal are truly generous and appreciated.

\$5000 or more

Pat Trochlell & Ken Wade	The Estate of Carl Thedens
Doug Steege & Kris Euclide	The Estate of Sharon Foster, Ph.D.

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Under \$100

<i>In memory of Sharon Foster, Ph. D.:</i> SuperTree Seedlings, Patricia Kokotailo, David Bernhardt, Timothy & Sarah Corden, Elizabeth Cox, Christopher & Ann Green, Gregory & Ann Schwab Landry, Jeanette Holz	Dodge County Master Gardeners Assn. John & Karin Exo Charles Church Jon Zweck <i>(in honor of Justin Zweck)</i> Donna Bahler Pamela Maher Roger & Diane Hanson	Linda Nelson & Mike Larsen Community Shares of Minnesota Hal Kantrud Kevin Moore Lisa Coons Robert Laeser Darrell Voitik
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Questions? E-mail Victoria Oberle (membership coordinator) at TPE@theprairieenthusiasts.org.

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