

The PRAIRIE PROMOTER

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Grassroots Conservation at Work

Seed for the Future

By John Day

With good reason, Carl Sandburg called the Illinois tall grass prairie “The Grand Prairie”. Sandburg did so because of the incredible landscape that the prairie has given to Illinois, known as “The Prairie State”.

Do you recall the first time you saw a prairie? The first time you saw Big Blue and Indian Grass rolling across the terrain like waves on the ocean? Stood on a hillside looking across the prairie as you heard the songbirds and bees providing a recital with sounds of nature?

The Northwest Illinois chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts (NIPE) has a desire to give those who have never seen the prairie in all its splendor the opportunity to set eyes on the “Grand Prairie” that Sandburg so often made reference to in his writings. NIPE also continues to look for ways to engage the public at large with our conservation efforts. The restoration and maintenance of the prairie requires the efforts of volunteers to take on the physical tasks of work needed to protect and refurbish the prairie. NIPE, in cooperation with the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation, Jo–Carroll



*Northwest Acadamey students & Ed Strenski working at Sunshine Acre
Photo by Michele Cahill, Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation*

Energy and others has found a way to bring a group of young people, many of whom have never seen a prairie, into the conservation movement as hands-on volunteers.

The Northwest Academy in Elizabeth, Illinois is a school for kids with educational needs and challenges beyond those found in the average school district. In addition to having never seen a prairie, many of the kids in attendance at Northwest Academy haven’t had the opportunity to develop the kind of personal skills needed in the work place. So, the idea of Sunshine Acre was born.

Sunshine Acre is a one acre site on the Casper Bluff Land and Water Reserve. NIPE has been working with the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation in the restoration and land management of this important and historic location for

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New Faces for TPE

Chris Kirkpatrick, Executive Director

The beginning of 2015 is off to a start with some very exciting changes that we are happy to share with the organization. Things started last fall with opening an office space centrally located to serve the entire organization in Viroqua, WI. This is through a partnership with the Valley Stewardship Network and the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative, which together share the office building called Conservation Connections. This has also lead to changing the mailing address and phone number for The Prairie Enthusiasts. This officially changed at the beginning of 2015; but mail from the Madison post office box will be forwarded for the entire 2015 calendar year.



TPE's new office in Viroqua, WI



The other major change that occurred at the end of 2014 is that our longtime accountant Claudia Vlisides retired from working on TPE's finances. We certainly have appreciated all of Claudia's dedicated work on behalf of TPE. Over the years our financial system has continued to grow in scope and complexity to the point that we are now taking on our own bookkeeping at the new office in Viroqua.

In this issue we are pleased to introduce Jerry Pedretti, who is TPE's new part-time bookkeeper and Winnie Bade, who will be TPE's new consulting accountant. The combined experience of Jerry and Winnie will prove essential in ensuring TPE can manage and track our grants and restricted income for all our land management activities. I am very excited to begin working with Jerry and Winnie. With this new team we can continue to provide excellent financial management services, and continue looking for ways to improve our system.

We encourage anyone who might be traveling through southwest Wisconsin along Highway 14/61 to stop at the office in downtown Viroqua and say hello. With these changes we look forward to enhancing our ability to serve all our chapters, so the grassroots volunteer work that is the core of TPE can continue to thrive.

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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. 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. Deadlines for submission of material are Mar. 14 (Spring issue); May 30 (Summer issue); Aug. 15 (Fall issue); and Dec. 5 (Winter issue). If you would like to receive electronic notification of the newsletter, please e-mail Joe Rising at TPE@theprairieenthusiasts.org.

President's Message

By Jack Kussmaul

In my last message I said that this time I would report on the national Land Trust Alliance Rally which was held in Providence, Rhode Island, in September. In summary, attending Rally is a great experience. There were three days of programs dealing with all aspects of land protection, whether scientific, financial or legal. There was the opportunity to connect with members of the land trust community from this and other areas. I should add that Paul Rode, our director representing the Northwest Illinois Chapter, was also there.

I focused on sessions dealing with accreditation, wanting to learn more about the process and the possible pitfalls as TPE moves in that direction. I came away with a renewed appreciation of how much work is required but also a feeling that TPE can do it.

One of these sessions was for those considering applying for accreditation. I was relieved to learn that we do not need to be perfect. If we have older properties where we do not have all of the records we are required to have today, this is not a bar. The Accreditation Commission puts more emphasis on more recent transactions than old ones. They want to know we are doing things in compliance with their standards today. If an endowment to support an easement is not adequate this is not necessarily a bar if we can show we are taking steps to get additional funds. We can achieve accreditation with the stipulation that in order to be renewed in five years we will need to correct these deficiencies. Knowing that perfection is not required left me

feeling more optimistic about TPE achieving accreditation. We are certainly not perfect, but we are good and we are getting better.

One panel program I attended was conducted by four people from different land trusts that had recently become accredited. They discussed the process and how much work is involved to have everything in shape for submission. Three of the four absolutely agreed that it had an enormous amount of work, but the process made them a better organization and it was all worthwhile. The fourth was from a land trust with no staff which put all the work on volunteers. He agreed it made them a better organization but would only say it was “probably” worth it. One positive thing I learned was that LTA does have some grant money to hire interns to help a land trust to prepare its application and the voluminous supporting material required. This would be of great help to an organization such as TPE.

Of the approximately 57 land trusts in Wisconsin, 8 have so far been accredited and others are in the application process. We have been told by the people we have been working with at Gathering Waters and Land Trust Alliance that we are almost ready. The final decision is yet to be made when to submit the application. While I do not know when it will happen I expect that we will achieve accreditation within the next four years, and probably before that. At one of the programs at the Rally all land trusts that became accredited during the previous year are recognized. While I will no longer be President when someone from TPE gets up on that stage, I expect to be there to cheer.

New Financial Staff for TPE

We're pleased to announce that The Prairie Enthusiasts have hired a new Accountant and Bookkeeper. Jerry Pedretti is the new part-time staff Bookkeeper. Jerry hails from Genoa, WI, and his family has lived in Vernon County for 6 generations. In addition to part-time work as Clerk for the Town of Genoa and as co-owner of the Kwik Stop in Genoa, Jerry has been a professional bookkeeper for 30 years, working for both commercial enterprises and non-profits. Jerry will be responsible for meeting the many and varied bookkeeping needs for the eleven chapters. Jerry says, “Every day that I don't learn something new is a day wasted.”

Winnie Bade, our new part-time Consulting Accountant, has an MBA in Finance from Indiana University and is a Certified Nonprofit Accounting Professional. She has also studied botany, horticulture and landscape architecture. In the past she has worked in retail, pharmaceutical and clinical research, health insurance, medical equipment, aerospace and horticultural production. Winnie is now an independent consultant providing accounting and financial management services to non-profits. She recently served as the Financial Officer for the Natural Resource Foundation of Wisconsin with many of the same responsibilities that



she will oversee for TPE. These will include budgeting, financial statements, endowment and escrow funds, grant accounting, organizational self-assessments and financial compliance. As a volunteer, Winnie does extensive work with a number of farmer's markets, CSA associations and community garden groups in the Madison, WI area.

Please join us in welcoming Winnie and Jerry to The Prairie Enthusiasts!

Dirt—the Ecstatic Skin of the Earth

by Mike Davis

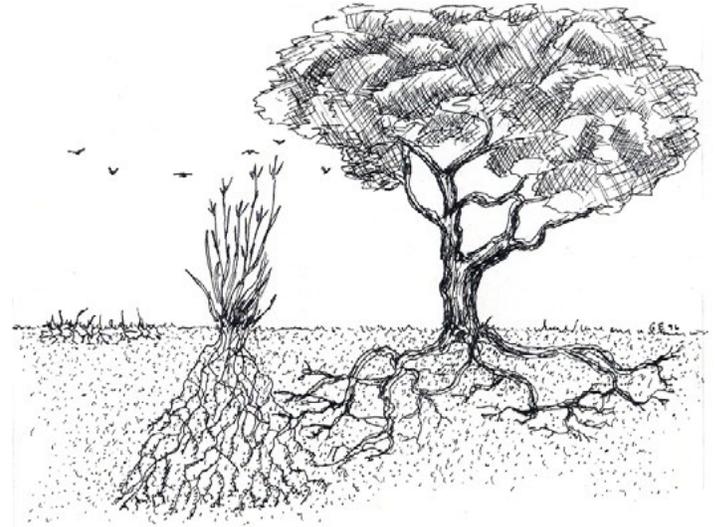
That phrase comes from the title of a book written by William Bryant Logan, an arborist and delightful author from the state of New York, which really sums up in a few words what “dirt” or soil is in this world. Beneath the surface of the soil is a world in itself, another ecosystem within our prairie ecosystem. It is where chemistry, biology and physics all come together in a symphony of balance to nourish billions of bacteria, fungi, zooplankton, arthropods and worms, many of whose biology is unknown. This balance is what makes the soil a suitable place for plants to reach down their roots to grow and reproduce.

Soils develop from weathered rock, volcanic ash deposits, or accumulated plant residues. Soils are often deposits of weathered, loosened and transported particles. These materials, called parent material, are deposited by water, glaciers, wind or gravity into land areas called landforms. Over time these parent materials develop into soil horizons which are often readily recognized when revealed by trenching or erosion. Agronomists have cataloged them by their functions and characteristics. Plant and Soil Science eLibrary has extensive information and descriptions on each of the horizons. (<http://passel.unl.edu>)

So what does soil mean to us prairie enthusiasts? Understanding soil ecology give a basis for understanding the importance of companion plants and why certain plants grow well together. It is not an easy story to tell in a few words because of the vast complexity of the soil ecosystem, but let me try. The area surrounding about a millimeter or two around the roots of plants is referred to as the rhizosphere and this is where plants take in nutrients, and feed a multitude of microbes. Plants take in nutrients by three methods: adsorption, an exchange of ions; absorption of nutrients in solution; and by osmosis. Floating around the water solution in the rhizosphere are positive ions called cations, mostly calcium, magnesium, and potassium; these are attached to negative colloids of clay or humus. Roots exude hydrogen ions which trade places with these cations, creating an exchange. A measurement of soil fertility is determined by the density of humus and clay in the soil which attracts and bonds these cations. Agronomists call this the Cation Exchange Capacity of a sampled soil. The beauty of this bonding is that it helps prevent these nutrients from leaching away into the subsoil. Water and dissolved nutrients can be absorbed into the roots through osmosis, and by the negative pressure created when plants transpire and water is removed from the leaves. Plant roots also exude a host of chemicals into the soil, including sugars, vitamins, amino acid, and enzymes, and acids called secondary metabolites. These feed a multitude of microorganisms creating a symbiotic relationship between plants and fungi or bacteria. For most plants the relationship is with mycorrhizal fungi and for legumes it is with rhizobia bacteria. Mycorrhizal fungi benefit from obtaining nutrients exuded from the roots while rhizobia, which convert or “fix” the inert nitrogen from the

air into a nitrate available to plants, also use the nitrogen to produce amino acids for growth and reproduction.

The soil food web is essential to the existence of life. Organic material feeds the microorganisms in the soil, and the wastes from the microorganisms feed the plants. Microbes also play a vital role in converting many minerals



Artwork by Gary Eldred

into forms readily available for plants to utilize. Phosphorus, for one, generally is tightly bonded chemically to other elements and is unavailable for plants to use until broken down by microbial action. Prairies have produced organic material for centuries. Let’s look closer at how this happens. The deep penetrating roots bring up leached minerals and the dying roots provide carbon and other nutrients for bacteria, fungi and actinomycetes. Nematodes and protozoa feed on the bacteria. The wastes from these microbes produce nitrogen as ammonia which is available to plants.

Another aspect of healthy soil is porosity, or technically, good soil structure. It is important to have good porosity in the soil because roots use oxygen as well as water. CO₂ is expelled by the roots and must escape into the atmosphere; thus loose soil promotes both water infiltration and the exchange of these gases. Most of us are familiar with the heavy, sometimes compacted clay soils found in our yards. Since prairie plant roots grow deeply into the soil, they are able to break up the hard packed, compacted soil, but not alone, they need microbes, too. Bacteria produce a sticky substance called bioslime; it helps them stick to larger soil particles so they don’t wash away. It also helps protect them from being consumed by predators like protozoa and nematodes. Fungi produce a gluey substance called glomalin. As these substances come into contact with soil particles they begin to accumulate, creating aggregates. As these aggregates accumulate spaces are created in the soil producing porosity. When gardening we need to add organic material into the soil; for prairies it is added by duff that

accumulates as the plant naturally senesces in the winter and from the roughly 20% of each plant's roots sloughed off annually. Organic material not only feeds the soil food web, but also contributes to keeping the soil loose, creating tilth and friability.

Plants' interactions with the soil and their neighboring plants are complex. These interactions demonstrate that plant communities have not developed by chance, but rather by evolutionary responses mediated by soil microbes. Plants are known to produce over 100,000 secondary metabolites; these play a key role in determining which plants and which microbes are likely to coexist. The ecology of the soil and its interactions with plants makes one realize plant communities are not random. And if we dig further (pun intended) we might begin to understand how invasive plants affect the relationship of companion plants and their microbes to create an environment that is not favorable to the natives.

"Dirt" is a complex environment: the physical, biological and chemical properties work together to produce a rich growing medium that is essential for life. I find the study of soil fascinating. Since my rather recent culmination

of soil knowledge, I have learned to respect the wonders our Creator has provided for us beneath the ground. The skin of the earth is truly "ecstatic".

About the Author

I have been a certified Master Gardener for ten years, and a member of the Prairie Bluff Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts even longer. Four years ago I began teaching the "Soils, Fertility and Composting" section of the Master Gardening class sponsored by the UW Extension. My study of soils, fertility, and composting is a work in process, as I continually read books and attend seminars to learn more about these fascinating subjects. You can reach me at mmdavis@tds.net.

Seed of the Future, continued from page 1

several years. Casper Bluff is located atop limestone bluffs that overlook the Mississippi River and its backwaters south of Galena, Illinois. In addition to the restored prairie on the gently rolling hills and wooded areas Casper Bluff is the site of several Native American burial mounds, one of which is a giant bird effigy.

The work done on the Sunshine Acre project is done exclusively by students from the Northwest Academy. They have, more or less, staked out their claim on this piece of land. The effort of the group is supervised by Ed Strenski, the NIPE Land Manager. The work being done here by Ed is at least equally important as all his other efforts on NIPE properties and privately owned lands of NIPE members.

The kids learn the basic responsibilities of a day's hard work: arrive on time, be ready to get going, be prepared, and ready to adapt to changes in the plan for the day because of weather, equipment needs or a sudden alteration of priorities. During the day's work these young people learn the basics of "Boots on the Ground Conservation." Leaves are raked and weeds removed. Bushes and shrubs are cut or pulled and stacked somewhere out of the way. The how and why of putting fire breaks on a prairie are learned. The art of the correct use of hand tools is taught.

As the prairie season comes to an end, the young volunteers learn and perform one of the most important of our tasks - the recognition and harvest of specific prairie seeds. The seeds that the young volunteers pick will be planted on sites besides Sunshine Acre, assuring that prairies already restored as well as new restorations will soon be filled with tall grasses and brightly colored forbs.



Photo by Michele Cahill, Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation

Lastly, perhaps most importantly Ed is teaching, or more aptly put instilling in these young volunteers lessons more important than prairie conservation. These kids are being given the opportunity to learn how to interact within a group that has a common goal. They learn how to cooperate and make decisions that benefit each other's efforts. They learn to understand the importance of critical thinking and problem solving in order to attain their objectives.

The lessons these young students learn with Ed Strenski's help will be assets and talents that they will need and be able to use in life no matter where it may take them. I suppose you could kind of look at it as planting seeds on a prairie path, a pathway not just across a prairie, but a pathway through life. In the meantime, the kids involved in this cooperative project will leave behind a small testimonial to their efforts called Sunshine Acre.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II Seeking Participants

In 1995 a group of dedicated volunteers and bird lovers created the first Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, a landmark tool that still helps guide species conservation and land management planning today. But a lot has changed in the last two decades. Species have moved, habitats have come and gone, and an increased awareness of the importance of the natural world and our place in it has arisen.

With that in mind, a new team of volunteers led by the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory (WGLBBO) have come together to coordinate a 5-year, statewide survey of all of Wisconsin's breeding birds, the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II (WBBA II).

According to Nick Anich, lead coordinator for the project from the DNR, "this is going to be the largest citizen science project in the State of Wisconsin"... and your help is needed. Success is only possible through the efforts of a cadre of volunteers across the state. We need your help so that the wild places you care about are represented in the atlas. And the beauty of it is, you do not have to be an expert birder to participate! A love of birds and the patience to watch them are the main requirements. Instead of checking off a bird on a list and moving on to the next one, we want you to watch them with a purpose. Are they singing? Carrying nesting material or food? Sitting on eggs? Patient observation is the key here.

If birding with a purpose sounds exciting, or you simply want to be part of a project that will guide species and land management for years to come, now is the time. Join volunteers and experts at the WBBA II Kickoff Meeting on February 27 – March 01, 2015 at the Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center in Rothschild, WI. This is not just a meeting for professional biologists and ornithologists — anyone with an interest in birds and the desire to help is welcome to attend, to learn more, and to join the volunteer force. To sign up for the atlas, register for the kickoff meeting and explore the volunteer opportunities, check out the WBBA II website at <http://wsobirds.org/atlas>.



TPE Auction: Special Item Available

We have a very special donation to the 2015 TPE Auction -- a guided fishing trip on Lake Mendota.

Captain Terry Frey, of Great River Guide Service and Ultimate Outdoors Radio, is offering a half-day, multi-species guided fishing trip this summer on Lake Mendota for two people. This is your opportunity to fish for walleye, perch, bluegills, or bass with Captain Terry, an experienced Wisconsin guide.

The opening bid for this \$325 trip is \$125. And, for the first time ever, bids will be accepted by text or email -- you need not be present at the conference to win. Details on bidding can be obtained from Evanne Hunt (evanne.hunt@gmail.com) and on the TPE website.

TPE Annual Photo Contest - Enter Now!

TPE members are encouraged to submit photos for The Prairie Enthusiasts fifth annual photo contest! This contest is in conjunction with our Annual Conference and Banquet. Images can portray all things prairie, so be creative. The aim is to promote knowledge of prairies and savannas, ecological systems, management by humans, and fauna and flora of the prairie. Subject matter may include plants, animals, insects or amphibians that are native to prairie areas or, activities that are taking place on a prairie. The photographer of the winning photo will receive \$100 and a print suitable for framing.

Photos may be submitted to Joe Rising, TPE Communications Coordinator, at tpe@theprairieenthusiasts.org. Please email each entry individually and be sure to include the photographer's contact information and name of the photo. A few details to keep in mind:

- All photos must be submitted in digital format, (please try to keep your photos to 5MB in size)
- Maximum three entries per member
- A finalist group of photos will be displayed at the TPE Annual Conference, where members will vote for their favorite photo.
- The winning photo will be used on the cover of the 2014 TPE Annual Report. Runners up will be featured in The Prairie Promoter newsletter.
- Copyright remains with the photographer.
- Submittal deadline is February 20, 2015.
- You must be a TPE member to participate.

If you have questions, please contact Joe at the above email address. Thank you for bringing the prairie to life during these chilly months with visual inspirations!

Pleasant Valley (2014 TPE Photo Contest finalist)
by Jonah Westrich

CHAPTER NEWS

COULEE REGION CHAPTER

by Jim Rogala

A Good Friend of Holland Sand Prairie Passes Away

George Varnum of the Town of Holland passed away November 18 at the age of 71. While there were many people who played a role in the protection of the 61 acre Holland Sand Prairie (HSP), none had a more lengthy connection with the prairie than George. While helping his daughter with a class assignment looking for plants in a “field” near their home, he realized the field had an amazing variety of plants. Through studying field guides, he began learning the plants on HSP and documenting the rich diversity of native plants found on what was then called the “Chalsma Prairie”. Varnum then took the initiative to contact the WI DNR in the mid-1990s to bring their attention to this unique natural area.

George continued to stay connected to the prairie until his death. He volunteered to mow trails (making his last mowing just months before his passing), maintained the prairie’s bluebird houses, and was there for work parties such as fence building. On his many visits to the prairie, he served as a watchdog and reported invasive species infestations. Above all this, George shared what he observed with other friends of the HSP with an obvious passion. George was a self-taught naturalist, but it doesn’t take a prairie expert to be enthusiastic about natural areas and make a difference in protecting and maintaining our natural heritage.

The Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC) protected the Holland Sand Prairie, and it is now owned by the Town of Holland. While volunteers from TPE, MVC, and the Friends of the Holland Sand Prairie manage the property, funding to carry out management is needed. If you like to donate towards the land management fund, please send checks to “HAF-FSHP”, in care of Brian Gray, N7007 Sunrise Lane, Holmen, WI 54636.

students who volunteer one to four hours per week, the same day and time each week, with some 80 organizations focused on education, sustainability, and public health.

The work parties took place on two TPE properties, the Smith-Reiner Drumlin and Hauser Road prairies, and two of our partnership properties, the Koltjes Addition and Westport Drumlin units of the Empire Prairies State Natural Area. Badger Volunteers arranged their travel to the first work party, and Ted drove them from and to campus on subsequent outings. TPE supplied supervision and necessary equipment and supplies. The work parties ran on Tuesday afternoons from September 23 through December 2 and lasted from one and one-half to two hours (not including travel time). Seven of us (Jane Graham participated in two sessions) spent a total of 78 hours at eight outdoor sessions, and five worked a combined 35 hours indoors at the Wisconsin State Herbarium on three days with inclement weather.

At the first meeting Rich Henderson told the volunteers about TPE, its mission, and a little about how its properties are managed, and Ted gave background information on the Empire Prairies. Tasks for six sessions consisted of collecting, mixing, and sowing seed, carried out in weather conditions ranging from excellent to chilly and windy, and for the final two sessions they involved cutting, treating, and burning small brush, when there was snow on the ground and temperatures were cold. On the latter occasions Denny and Brent took turns working with a brush cutter while the rest of us used hand tools. Thus, students practiced some of the skills of hands-on conservation work, contributed to the practical work of TPE, and enjoyed contact with natural areas. TPE is very grateful to have had the help of these dedicated volunteers.

Thanks also go to Diane Hills, the chapter Volunteer Coordinator, for working with the UW-Madison staff to set up this successful program for more student involvement in the work of TPE.

EMPIRE-SAUK CHAPTER

Badger Volunteers

by Ted Cochrane

Four University of Wisconsin-Madison undergraduate students joined TPE supervisors Ted Cochrane and Denny Connor on Empire-Sauk Chapter work parties last fall: Katy Zionkowski (team leader), Brent Janssen, Claire Li, and Kelly Cui. They were recruited through Badger Volunteers, a program run by the university’s Morgridge Center for Public Service, to volunteer for our organization. Badger Volunteers is a semester-long program that pairs teams of

*L to R:
Katy Zionkowski,
Claire Li,
Kelly Cui, and
Brent Janssen
Photo by
Denny Connor*



Solstice Bonfire

by Scott Fulton

A lively group of over 20 chapter members, friends and neighbors attended our fourth annual Solstice Bonfire at Schurch-Thomson Prairie in Brigham, WI on December 20. The fuel was provided by a huge cottonwood tree cut down at the far end of the site, and “musical entertainment” was contributed by a pair of great horned owls and some distant coyotes. All in all, it was a great way to get ready for the holidays and to end up our year on the prairie together!



Photo by Scott Fulton

Donations Sought for Annual Raffle/Auction

It is time again to line up items for TPE’s annual raffle/auction fundraiser. If you wish to contribute for the Empire-Sauk Chapter, please contact Willis Brown (webrown3@hotmail.com, 608-316-5411). Proceeds from items donated to the chapter help with land protection and management activities in the chapter’s geographic area of operation. **All items must be preregistered by March 15, 2015.** See details under banquet and conference announcement..

GLACIAL PRAIRIE CHAPTER

by Walter Mirk

The Glacial Prairie Chapter has had a productive autumn and early winter. On September 20 we joined the WDNR and other volunteers collecting seed at the Young Prairie State Natural Area. We joined Willowbrook Conservancy members cutting and piling buckthorn on October 18 and cleared and piled woody understory vegetation at Smoke Ham Savanna on November 1. We finished the year at the Whitewater Oak Opening where we joined WDNR, the

UW-Whitewater Ecology Club and volunteers in cutting and piling buckthorn on November 18

We also did not neglect our commitment to education. On August 18 we again presented an introduction to the native grassland community to the new second grade class at Frank Elementary School in Kenosha. Alice and Walter Mirk presented a slideshow to the children and teachers along with stories of encounters with prairie birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles. And highly talented chapter member William Webb composed songs and lyrics during the presentation and then led the children in singing and dancing to the songs as an aid to helping them remember key points. It is no exaggeration to report that the children saw Alice and presentation as the opening act for William! We have begun to develop plans to install a small prairie planting on school property. And we hope to help lead a field trip to Chikwaukee Prairie in the spring.

On November 11 we gave a presentation about tall grass prairie and oak savanna to the UW-Whitewater’s ecology club. Finally, on January 10 we showed the film “Mysteries of the Driftless” at the Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest Headquarters in Eagle, WI. Seven people attended despite bitterly cold temperatures. After the film, we held a brief discussion that included a description of TPE and its mission. All seven attendees took brochures and one person asked for an extra copy for a friend.

The Glacial Prairie Chapter is planning to be more active in 2015 and invites members to schedule work parties on their properties or in their area. You can contact us by email at glacialprairiechapter@gmail.com. We will be participating in work parties on local WDNR State Natural Areas the first Saturday of each month, so watch your email for reminders about 10 days in advance.



Checkerspot
(2014 TPE Photo
Contest finalist)
by Randy Schindle

ST. CROIX VALLEY CHAPTER

by *Evanne Hunt*

2015 Intern

My name is Zach Stewart and this spring through summer I will be conducting a management and public outreach internship in River Falls, Wisconsin with The Prairie Enthusiasts. I am an undergraduate student here at the University of Wisconsin River Falls with a Conservation major and Outdoor Education/Biology minor.



I have a great passion for restoration and am really interested in prairie and oak savannas. I will be planning and implementing a biological inventory on the Foster Prairie, Alexander Oak Savanna, and the Jackson Preserve in River Falls. I hope to have a detailed plant inventory with pictures and descriptions of each plant. I will also be revising the written management plan of one or two of the prairies (hasn't been decided which yet).

The final piece to my internship is doing outreach with the community. I will be leading some of the walks throughout the summer with the St. Croix Valley Chapter as well as helping plan their prairie days. This is all being funded by a grant I received from the University. I am very excited to be an even more integral part of the Prairie Enthusiasts' cause!

Prairie Days

The chapter will celebrate Prairie Days on Saturday, August 22, at Willow River State Park. In addition to the demonstrations and exhibits, Dr. Stanley Temple returns to talk on "phenology and climate change." Contact Buck Malick if you are interested in volunteering (malickcw@baldwin-telecom.net).

Work Days

- Sat., February 14: Foster Conservation Area
- Sat., February 28: Alexander Oak Savanna
- Sat., March 14: Site TBD by the weather
(Burns? Prepare fire breaks?)
- Sat., March 28: Multiple sites TBD by weather
(Burns? Prepare fire breaks?)
- Saturdays in April: Prescribed burns. Multiple sites & dates depending on the weather

Check the website or call Wayne (715-222-6910) to confirm the date and location. Changes are possible because of weather.

Chapter Facebook Page

You are welcome to post your questions, comments, and photos on the chapter Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/TPESCV>

Membership Drive

Our dreams outstrip our abilities! Evanne is planning a membership drive this spring. We need more work day volunteers, more organizers, more leaders. If you have some ideas or are interested in volunteering with the drive, contact Evanne (eahunt@pressenter.com).

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The following people have joined TPE during the period October 1 – January 7, 2015

Michael Everson, DeSoto, WI
Wade Gibson, Dubuque, IA
Jim & Erinn Letts, Maplewood, MN
Robert Hutchinson, Hanover, IL
Timothy Long, Spring Green, WI
Marcel Wuethrich, Madison, WI
Norman & Shelley Selle, Madison, WI
Stephen Beaumont, Garber, IA
Jane Graham, Cambridge, WI

Darrin Obrien, Ann Arbor, MI
Mark Berggren, Madison, WI
David Hughes, Wautoma, WI
Steve & Dianne Marson, Woodman, WI
Pat Mercatis, Mt. Hope, WI
Theran Stautz, Middelton, WI
Russell Rolffs, Chicago, IL
Anne Marie Cusac, Evanston, IL
Amy Klusmeier, Madison, WI

Pat & Dave Casper, Galena, IL
Joseph & Patricia Roti, Highland, IL
Max Heintz, Oakwood, OH
Stephen Silberman, Galena, IL
Brad Crawford, Decorah, IA
John McKay, Minneapolis, MN
Paul & Mary Colette, Avoca, WI
Soliers Grove Public Library, Soldiers Grove, WI
Terry Benson, Holmen, WI

THANK YOU DONORS

We thank everyone who made a donation to The Prairie Enthusiasts during the period October 1 – January 7, 2015.
These gifts above and beyond membership dues and the annual appeal are truly generous and appreciated.

\$5000 or more

Douglas Thomas <i>For Thomas Stone Barn fund</i>	Dennis & Joan Thomson <i>For Schurch-Thomson Prairie</i>	Ken Wade & Pat Trochlell <i>For Parrish Savanna & Pleasant Valley</i>
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\$1000 - \$4999

The Savanna Oak Foundation, Inc. James & Rumi O'Brien Max & Shelley Lagally	Willis Brown Gary Adams <i>In memory of Gail Adams</i>	Robert & Kathryn Richardson
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\$500 - \$999

Roma Lenehan <i>In Honor of Tom & Kathie Brock</i> Ted Ross & Kathie Ayres George Barry & Oakwood Village West	Elizabeth Tuttle Glenn Chambliss & Diane Derouen William Damm Swamplovers Foundation, Inc Jean Clark	West Bend Mutual Insurance Marvin & Colleen Smitherman Gary Werner & Melanie Lord Jim Lesniak & Shelly Armstrong
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\$100 - \$499

George & Carmeen Johnston Frank Grenzow Scott Sauer Gof Thomson Nathan Gingerich Jon & Metta Belisle Joan Braune & Tod Highsmith Mike Miller & Susan Goode Doris Rusch Don Waller T.J. Callahan Lee & Margaret Skold Jackie & Wayne Pauly Davin Wedel John & Retha Mecikalski John Steinke Gary Konkol Mike Engel & Hannah Spaul Marilyn Workman Thomas Vale Bruce & Ruth Marion John Shillinglaw Judith Lovaas Donald & Helen Hagar Tom & Mary Schrader Alice & Walter Mirk Erik & Nancy Goplin George Vernon Jim & Jo-Ann Lynch Dale Beske & Dorothy Gertsch John Brennan & Regina Voss Brennan	Patrick & Barbara Clare Mary Eastwood Ralph Henry Jim & Rose Sime <i>In memory of Gail Adams</i> Hans Rinke <i>In honor of Olivia Thomson</i> Carolyn Meyer <i>For Avon Ridge acquisition</i> Nancy McGill Howard & Nancy Mead Thomas & Shahaireen Pellett Telle Zoller John Peterson Frances Peterson Peg Rasch & Dave Stute Patricia Stocking Paul & Linda Bishop William & Joyce Brandt Martha Christensen Barbara & Ted Cochrane Sue & Tom Gorski Brandon Mann & Ann Calhoun Richard & Joanne Meinert Randy Nyboer Russ & Meribeth Pomaro Glenn Smith William & Nancy Tans William Zarwell & Robin Chapman Etas Carria Diane Dempsey & Robert Dempsey	Galena Territory Association Christopher & Ann Green Douglas C. Hancock David & LaVonne Middleton Dan & Judy Peterson Paul Roemer Gary & Shirley Baxter Ron Reynolds Jim Peterson Ann Thering & Dave Eide Steve Glass Irv Sather Ron Schwartzlow Jim & Judy Schwarzmeier Sam Skemp James Welsh Carla Wright Sandy Stark Andrew Gulya David & Helen MacGregor Mark Martin & Sue Foote-Martin Michael M & Charlotte Smith Glenda Denniston Paul Kaarakka & Andrea Gargas Gary Zamzow & Elizabeth Frawley Peg Wallace Kay Bongers Wild Birds Unlimited of Galena Lloyd & Mary Lee Croatt John & Cate Harrington Sharon Manhart
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Under \$100

Nancy Stoudemire & Randy Schmitz <i>In Honor of Jack Kusssmaul</i> Arlene Dorsey Siss Rob & Barb Stanley	Green Prairie Cemetery Dennis & Nancy Connor Judy Kingsbury & Leslie Grossberg Ralph & Ann Woldt	Eric Eckberg Tom & Jenny Mitchell Rebecca Gilman Heidi Schmalz
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Jean Adler & Rich Woolworth
Gary & Cindi Birch
Judy Burnley
Karen Dega
Craig & Pam Heilman
Scott Taylor
Paul & Avicia West
Thomas Wedel & Eva Wedel
Chuck & Pat Wemstrom
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James Curtis
Joey Esterline & Scott Giraud
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John Rosenberg & Anke Boudreau
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Darrel Turner & Jane Haag
James Theler
Sandy Bennett
Eric & Mary Hamburg
Mark Jeffries
Richard King
Tracey & Ann Terrazas
Laureen Thorstad
Barbara Voelker
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Kathy Kirk
Curt Meine
Thomas & Nancy Hunt
Richard Pearce
David Lovell & Irene Wren
George & Betty Hamilton

David Kostka
Hugh Iltis
Mitchell & Deborah Cholewa
Sig Midelfort
Richard & Mary Norman
Ruth Nishioka
In Memory of Bernard Roberts
Jamie Bolwerk
John & Carol Meland
Laurie Polacek
Susan Slapnick
Susan Hollett
Jerome McAllister
Hans & Bobbi Bernet
Scott Kudelka
Christine Mueller
Jo Ann Rucker
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Eleanor Wolf
David Drews & Roberta Drews
Jan Westemeier
Carol & Bob Benish
Jesse Decker
Jenifer Buckley
The K Foundation
Chris Roberts
Randall & Yvonne Eide
John Heywood
Paula West Kaplan
Kristopher Heinekamp
Rollie Henkes
Richard Magyar
Steve & Jana Gerbitz



COMPASS CLUB

The following are members of the Compass Club, who give \$1000+ to support the overall TPE organization on an annual basis. These members donated a total of \$69,500 in 2014.

Jack Kussmaul
William Hunt
Kenneth Lange
Gail & Willi Van Haren
Jeff Ralston & Debbie Ralston
Anonymous
Jerry Martin
Ronald Endres
Max & Shelley Lagally
James & Rumi O'Brien
Kimberly Kreitinger & Eric Preston

Dennis & Nancy Connor
Nick & Linda Faessler
Karen Agee & Scott Fulton
Bill Ramsden & Doreen Lynch
Paul Jacobsen
Ken Wade & Pat Trochlell
Patrick & Madeleine Fleming
Stephen & Susan Carpenter
Peter Thomford
Keith Rodli & Katharine Grant
Lori Lins

Richard Oberle
Paul & Linda Rode
Cary & Scott Reich
Gerd & Ursula Muehlelehner
Peggy & Jon Traver
Barbara & Brad Glass
Rich & Kathy Henderson
Kathie & Tom Brock
Anonymous
Evanne Hunt
Ron Panzer

The Prairie Enthusiasts
110 S. Main Street
P.O. BOX 824
VIROQUA WI 54665

www.theprairieenthusiasts.org

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TIME TO RENEW? (check the renewal date printed above your address)

Renew online by visiting *www.ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org*

Or, mail a check and the form below to:

The Prairie Enthusiasts, P.O. Box 824, Viroqua, WI 54665

Questions? E-mail Joe Rising (Communications Coordinator) at TPE@ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org
or call us at 608-638-1873. Thank you.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

The Prairie Enthusiasts Membership Levels:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Blazing Star |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Little Bluestem | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Compass Plant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Big Bluestem | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Monarch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$65 Pasque | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000+ Compass Club (100% to TPE) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Shooting Star | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000+ Bur Oak Benefactor |