

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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All articles for the January 2018 newsletter, must be submitted to:
Constance@wildonesrrvc.org
by November 30, 2017.

*Member Potluck and Seed Exchange
Thursday, November 16, 2017*

NOTE: Different location Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockford
4848 Turner Street, Rockford, 61107

NOTE: Different time 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Typically, November has been the time for our chapter's annual potluck (members only, i.e. member plus partner, significant other, friend, etc.), annual report from the board, and seed exchange. Our president will present the annual report. This will be a wonderful celebration of the various ways we have positively impacted our community and our environment throughout the year. The potluck is also a great time to reconnect with longer-standing members, as well as to get to know our newer members. Even if you haven't attended any meetings or events this year, you are warmly invited to join us at the potluck.

Please note the **different location**. The UU Church is near the intersection of Alpine Road and East State Street in Rockford. Also note the **different time!** Come at 6:00 p.m. (or as close to that for working folks as you can) so we'll have time to eat, listen to the board report, and enjoy the program. *Bring your own table service (eating utensils, silverware, cups, and napkins) and a dish to pass (salad, vegetable, or dessert)*. If you are concerned about being environmentally friendly, consider bringing table service items that are reusable, rather than disposable items that will go to the landfill. Lasagna (both meat and meatless) and drinks will be provided.

Bring seeds that you have collected from natives in your yard or landscape project to share during the exchange. Please put them in envelopes or baggies labeled with common name, scientific name (if you know it), and place of origin (e.g., Winnebago County, Wild Ones plant sale, or other source), and your name, in case anyone has questions (such as "how does the plant grow?"). Seeds do not need to be cleaned and ready for planting. For newer members: We always have lots of seeds, and even if you are new to this and don't have any seeds to share, you are still welcome to go home with some seeds. We want to share, as this increases the chances of more and more native plants growing in our communities. **Anyone may take seeds, and you do not have to bring seeds in order to take seeds!**

If you are not a member yet, this is a great time to join and participate in one of the fun member benefits. Come help us celebrate another successful year of introducing the community to the benefits and joys of native landscaping!

This program is for Wild Ones members only.
Call (815) 332.3343 for more information.

Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy
photo by Tim Lewis

Maybe it's the fact that I finally threw in the towel and packed away my summer clothes, and hauled out my sweaters and other winter gear. But this week has found me reflecting back on the great year our chapter has had, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those who are leaving the board or a coordinator position they've held, and to welcome those who will be joining us in 2018.

First, **Ginnie Watson** will no longer be our immediate past president, as that role lasts for only the one year following the end of someone's term as president. I have been grateful for her continued steady presence and willingness to let me bounce ideas off her. Ginnie has worn numerous chapter hats over more than a decade: program coordinator (which she did single-handedly, without a committee), library coordinator, and co-president. Lucky for us, she will continue on as library coordinator, where she continues to do a wonderful job finding the best and latest books to add to our collection, and hauling the books to our monthly meetings.

Doreen O'Brien will be stepping down as publicity coordinator - a job she has been doing since before I first joined the board. Indeed, since 2006 she has sent out press releases every month to all of our local media outlets (print, television, and radio). And not just in the Rockford area, mind you, but all across northwest Illinois. This has helped our chapter's message to reach a wider audience, and for this we are very grateful. Doreen also served on the planning committee for the 2017 landscape tour. Again, we are lucky that she will be continuing as an at-large board member. **Fiona Fordyce** will be assuming the role of publicity coordinator for 2018, and we are happy to have her aboard.

Just as I finally mastered the correct pronunciation of her last name (rhymes with fiscal), **Khrisa Miskell** will be passing the baton as volunteer coordinator after two years of service to the chapter. This can be a challenging task at times, wrangling the volunteers who are so essential to everything we do as a chapter, but Khrisa has always tackled this role with a positive attitude. She has also been bringing the beverages for our monthly meetings. For all

her hard work, a hearty thank-you to her. Running with the baton in 2018 will be **Don Heneghan**. With his wife, Marilyn Heneghan, already our Facebook coordinator, it will be a Heneghan two-fer. Yippee!

Mary Anne Mathwich was the chair for our chapter's massive landscape tour and keynote lecture this year (the planning for which spanned over two years), and had organized Show Me/Help Me events prior to that. The Landscape Tour is behind us, and she will be stepping down as Show Me/Help Me coordinator. For 2018, she will be showing the ropes to **Linda Ricker** (whom some of you might already know in her work at the Winnebago office of the University of Illinois Extension). A tip of the hat to Mary Anne for her hard work and attention to detail, and a big Wild Ones welcome to Linda! And yet another "lucky us!": Mary Anne will continue as the coordinator of plant rescues and seed collection.

After over a decade as coordinator of the tree and shrub sale, **John Peterson** will be stepping down from that role. We are so grateful for his efforts that have led to the planting of loads of native trees and shrubs in our communities. I'm sure that the native birds, insects, and pollinators thank him, as well. For 2018, the sale will have co-coordinators, **Jerry Paulson** and **Brian Hale**. Jerry is already serving as our chapter's vice president, and are glad to have Brian H joining us.

Finally, a hearty thank-you to **Bob Arevalo** for chairing the program committee in 2017. He and his group have been responsible for planning and organizing all of our top-notch monthly educational programs at Rock Valley College. In addition to the advance planning, he has served as host for our speakers from the moment they arrive at our meeting space. Yet again, we are fortunate that he will continue as our AV coordinator, schlepping the sound system to our monthly meetings and setting it all up. The committee will be in good hands in 2018, with **Lisa Johnson** to serve as chair. Thanks to her efforts and those of Jerry Paulson and other top-notch folks from the environmental community, you can be assured that we will continue to have another year of exceptional programming in 2018.

My task of leading the chapter is made infinitely easier with such a stellar group of passionate and hard-working folks working alongside me as fellow board members and coordinators. Please join me in extending a loud and enthusiastic thank-you to all of them for making our chapter what is, in my opinion, one of the best Wild Ones chapters in the country.

Many Thanks to Our Volunteer Mentors!

One of the many benefits of membership in the Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones is the mentor program. As the growing season is winding down and folks are getting ready to put their yards to rest for the winter, it is a great time say thanks to those who volunteered a little time to help someone with less experience in native landscaping.

Being a mentor isn't challenging and really doesn't involve a huge time commitment; mentors visit their mentee's yards 2-3 times, providing advice and resources. While it doesn't seem like much,

it can make a big difference to someone who is hesitant to make changes to his/her yard without having trusted information from those who have been doing this a while.

So, thanks to all those who volunteered to serve as mentors this growing year. We could not offer this valuable program without your help! If you'd like to take advantage of the mentor program, please contact our mentor program coordinator, Melanie Costello, at melhhj1@hotmail.com. We are also always looking for members willing to give a little time as a mentor.

October Meeting Recap Jerry Paulson

photos by Ginnie Watson

Backyard Kids Wild About Nature

Don Miller, former director of Severson Dells Nature Center near Rockford, has been getting kids outside to enjoy nature for more than four decades. He is now retired and spends quality time with his twin 2 1/2-year old granddaughters and four-month-old grandson, teaching them about the wonders and beauty of nature. One of his projects has been to work with the girls on planting a butterfly garden.

In the process, he learned the value of letting our kids help us with our natural gardens in our own backyards. "If you put the kid together right, the earth comes together, too," Don quoted Richard Luv, author of *The Last Child in the Woods*. Don also posed the question: what is the value of a condor to a child who doesn't even know what a wren is? If we want children to advocate for the environment when they become adults, we must start teaching them to be passionate about nature from a young age.

Don began his presentation by telling about his own childhood, growing up in Rockton. His generation hung around with other kids outside, playing games, building forts in vacant lots, exploring the neighborhood woods and creek, finding snakes, frogs, and bugs, and getting dirty. His house had a vacant lot next door so it was a magnet for the neighborhood kids who came to play and hang out.

The lives of today's kids are so much more structured: doing homework, participating in organized sports, going to band camp, etc. They also spend time on electronic devices and watch more television. Many parents today are afraid of dirt, ticks, germs, and strangers, and so they keep kids inside or doing supervised activities. Luv's research backed what many people had observed: today's kids are not going outdoors nearly enough.



Constance McCarthy with Don Miller

Don shared research that found that in one generation, the percentage of people who reported that the outdoors was the most influential environment of their childhood dropped from 96% to 46%. Research has also shown that:

- exposure of pregnant mothers to nature can produce healthier babies;
- time spent in bright sunlight increases vitamin D and healthier eyes;
- access to parks and green space can foster increased physical activity and reduce the risk of obesity;
- learning in nature can support social-emotional well being, improved relationship skills, and reduced stress and anger;
- learning in nature can lead to better academic performance;
- spending time in nature can help children focus their attention and reduce ADHD symptoms;
- exploration and discovery through outdoor

October Meeting Recap (cont'd)

experiences can promote motivation for greater learning; and

- nature-based learning is associated with reduced aggression and less disruptive behavior.

One way to reconnect kids with nature is by putting prairies and woods in schoolyards. However, Don noted that he's seen too many of these areas started by an interested and motivated teacher or parent, only to have the area mowed down by the custodial staff when that person leaves. It takes two to three key teachers who think it is important to engage kids with the outdoors in order to make schoolyard natural areas work in the long run.

You also have to create a sense of play and adventure to engage kids in outdoor activities. Don told about creating "The Grove" at Severson Dells as a place for parents to bring their kids to play and explore outdoors. The Grove is a nature-themed playground that uses natural materials and encourages kids to be creative and get dirty. Wild Ones members can create similar spaces in their own backyards. You have control over the space and what grows there.

"As parents our job is to pay attention, to create possibilities to be careful match makers between our children and the earth." -- Steve Trimble

Childhood is the time of our lives when our minds are being developed. It is important to stimulate children's minds at this age to see the world, Don said.

"We need places of initiation where we meet other critters and the borders are broken down, so that the Earth gets under our nails and a sense of place gets under our skin." -- Robert Michael Doyle

Don then talked about how lucky we are in northern Illinois to have so many parks, forest preserves, and natural areas to enjoy. He quoted Carrie Newcomer, "How important it is that we fall in love with the place we live." Don's grandfather was the first superintendent of Sugar River Forest Preserve, so he spent a lot of time with his family there on picnics, hikes, camping, and canoeing.

We are fortunate that there are many areas to take kids to experience nature, Don said. "Our region has more than 10,000 acres of forest preserves, 5,000 acres of parks, a 3,000-acre state park at Rock Cut, more than 1,200 acres of natural land owned by the Natural Land Institute, and four major rivers to enjoy." He then asked members to share their early childhood experiences in the outdoor and how it shaped their lives.

Over his years of teaching children, Don learned that kids have a natural curiosity about plants and animals and they don't always follow a lesson plan when outside in nature. He told a story about working with pre-school students at Dennis School in Rockford. He labored in advance to craft a wonderful activity plan, but as soon as a little girl found a worm, the plan went out the window as other students ran over to huddle around this new discovery. This taught him that the most important thing is to provide opportunities for kids, then step back and let them explore, learn, and get dirty. And don't wear them out; always leave them wanting more so that they will long to return for more excitement in the future.

Don said that it is best to be a mentor to a child, not just a teacher. Rachel Carson said, "It is not important to know the answers but to share feelings when introducing a child to the natural world." Many different senses can be stimulated when one is out in nature - smell, sound, sight, and touch. Don remarked that it is best to stimulate all of a child's senses in order to create memories of the experiences they have in the outdoors.

"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who shares it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in." Rachel Carson

Finally, Don spoke of sharing the beauty of nature with children. Spectacular scenery isn't just beautiful, but it can inspire awe and wonder in children. It is critical to share these experiences, and to help kids realize how diverse life is on earth. When you want to tell someone you love them, share something that you can look at together.

The total eclipse of the sun that took place in August is an example of sharing the cycles of nature with children. Looking at the night sky is another opportunity. Don quoted from Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay on "Nature" about the beauty of the stars:

"If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore, and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown!"

Don had one last morsel of advice for parents and teachers: Let kids collect durable things that fascinate and excite them, and consider allowing them to take only one of those things home, even if the rules technically don't allow collecting. When the child

October Meeting Recap (cont'd)

continues to see that rock, acorn, or buckeye on his or her dresser or bedroom shelf, it will remind the child of the happy time spent at the park or preserve. "That's what grandpa's pockets are for," says Don. His grandkids make him more passionate than ever to

get outdoors with them, and to make sure they will always have a healthy environment to enjoy.

Thank you, Don, for the many years of connecting children to nature.

Membership Update

Sallie Krebs, Membership Coordinator

A membership e-form and our membership brochure describing the benefits of membership are both available on the chapter website (www.wildonesrrvc.org). Click on Join/Renew under the Membership tab. You can renew (or join) with any major credit card through PayPal (no PayPal account required) by using our website. We appreciate your support!!

224 memberships as of October 23, 2017

Special thanks to our members who made contributions above the basic \$37 dues!

Kent & Kathy Lawrence, Oregon
Michael & Jean Maloney, Belvidere

Welcome to our new members

Don Miller, Rockford
Bryan & Peggy Redington, Rockford
Dawn & John Skupien, Roscoe

New members are identified with a green ribbon on their meeting name badges. Please introduce yourself to them and help us welcome all new members to our great chapter!

60 attended the October meeting, including at least 7 guests.

A big thank you to our September meeting volunteers!

Greeter: Olga Bechtol

Refreshments: Khrista Miskell, Anita Johnson & Judy Letourneau

AV/Sound Equipment: Bob Arevalo

Meeting Recap: Jerry Paulson

Photographer: Ginnie Watson

Library Assistants: Cathy Johnson

Merchandise: Cynthia Chmell

Anniversaries:

20 Years: Pat Hollingsworth, Paw Paw

10 Years: Maureen Elick, Rockford

Randy Mermel & Jessie Crow Mermel, Roscoe

It is preferred that membership renewals be sent directly to the chapter

for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. Remember that your dues include membership in both National Wild Ones and our chapter. Please use the address below:

Sallie Krebs
Wild Ones Rock River Valley
7492 Renfro Rd.
Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter above your name on the label. You will be mailed a renewal reminder from the chapter two months prior to your expiration date with a completed membership form and return envelope for your convenience.

A portion of all dues paid is returned to the chapter by National Wild Ones to support our chapter activities. National Wild Ones provides liability insurance for our meetings and events. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

Please send address and email address changes to the **Membership Coordinator:** Sallie Krebs Email: membership@wildonesrrvc.org or call (815) 540-4730 if you have any questions about membership.

Wild Ones Annual Memberships:
Household \$40, Limited Income/Full-Time Student \$25, Affiliate Non-Profit Organization \$90, Business \$250.

Thank you for your continuing support!

2017 Chapter Programs and Events

November 16

6:00 p.m..

Pot Luck, Seed Exchange & Annual Meeting

Members only: All members welcome with

or without seeds. Bring a dish to share.

Chapter President to present annual report to the members

Unitarian Universalist

Church of Rockford

4848 Turner Street

Rockford, IL 61107

December

No Meeting-Happy Holidays!

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.

For more information, contact Bob Arevalo at (815) 332.3343



ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Pambi Camacho
1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104
PMB 233
Rockford, IL 61107

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is **11/1/2017**, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last Wild Ones *Journal* until you renew your membership. National Wild Ones drops expired memberships the first week of the expiration month, so please don't be late! See the *Membership Update* for renewal information.

Mail your renewal to:

Sallie Krebs
Wild Ones Rock River Valley
7492 Renfro Rd.
Cherry Valley, IL 61016

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Wild Ones Mission

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

Rock River Valley Chapter Meetings

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Rock Valley College, Physical Education Center PEC0110 (lower level), 3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, 61114.

Special meetings, outings, and events are scheduled periodically and sometimes replace the regular meeting. Contact any officer to confirm information about our next meeting.

Rock River Valley Chapter Board and Coordinators

Board

President: Constance McCarthy
(815) 282.0316 constance@wildonesrrvc.org

Vice President: Jerry Paulson
(815) 222.4414 jerry@wildonesrrvc.org

Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865
cathy@wildonesrrvc.org

Treasurer: Deb Rogers (815) 624.1036

At-Large: Doreen O'Brien (815) 985.4064
doreen@wildonesrrvc.org

At-Large: Kim Lowman Vollmer
(815) 397.6044 kim@wildonesrrvc.org

Immediate Past Co-President:
Ginnie Watson (815) 398.0138
ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org

Coordinators

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membership@wildonesrrvc.org

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Newsletter-Editorial: Constance McCarthy
(as to the left)

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(815) 298.5449 khrista@wildonesrrvc.org

Woodland Plant Sale: Jane Evans
(815) 399.3787 rrvc.woodland@gmail.com

Prairie Plant Sale: Cynthia Chmell & Bobbie Lambiotte, (815) 969.7435 & (815) 398.6257

Tree & Shrub Sale: John Peterson
(815) 979.8539 john@wildonesrrvc.org

Plant Rescues & Seed Collection:
Mary Anne Mathwich (815) 721.5187
maryanne@wildonesrrvc.org

Programs: Bob Arevalo (815) 332.3343
bob@wildonesrrvc.org

Landscape Tour & Lecture: Mary Anne Mathwich (as to the left)

Youth Education & Grants:
Kim Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)

Booth, FREC rep., website: Tim Lewis
(815) 874.3468 tim@wildonesrrvc.org

Facebook: Marilyn Heneghan
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Library: Ginnie Watson (815) 398.0138
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Publicity: Doreen O'Brien (as to the left)