

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

Inside this Issue:

Message from the President	2
Native Plant Sale	3
Board of Directors in Action	3
April Meeting Recap	4-5
Chapter Calendar	7
Membership	7
Chapter Contact Information	8



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All articles for the June 2018 newsletter, must be submitted to:

Constance@wildonesrrvc.org
by May 23, 2018.

*Invasive Jumping Worms:
The Impact of a New Soil Invader
Thursday, May 17, 2018*

Location: Rock Valley College
Physical Education Center PEC0110 (lower level)
3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, 61114

Time: 7:00 p.m.



Brad Herrick, of the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, will talk about the threat of invasive jumping worms to local ecosystems and gardens. Invasive jumping worms can damage ecosystems, from native forests to back yards. After a general overview of earthworm biology, Herrick will discuss best management practices to minimize the spread of jumping worms and the latest research on impacts and control options.

Herrick is the Arboretum's ecologist and research program manager. His broad research interests include plant community dynamics in prairies, oak savannas, and wetlands, dragonfly abundance

and diversity, and invasion dynamics and control of the invasive jumping worm. He is also involved with setting priorities and developing long-term management and restoration plans for Arboretum lands.

This program is free and open to the public.
For more information, call (779) 537.8939.



Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy
photo by Tim Lewis

The Best Laid Plans of Mice and Men...

I would like to offer an explanation of what transpired at our April educational program at Rock Valley College. We had contracted to use our normal meeting space in the lower level of the PE Center. However, only when the first coordinators arrived around 6 p.m. did we learn that the meeting had been moved to the atrium of the Student Center.

This caused at least five or six people who arrived close to the meeting's start time, to wander around the PE Center looking for the meeting; we were told that those folks left without being able to find the meeting. Several folks did manage to find the new location and arrived late to the meeting (through no fault of their own). As we did not have paper, markers, or tape to make a sign to put on the door of the PE Center, we posted someone on the sidewalk next to the parking lot until it was close to the meeting's start time. We did the best we could to alert folks to the changed location, despite the fact that we found out only one hour before start time.

Bob Arevalo, who hauls and sets up our sound system, had already lugged the equipment into the lower level of the PE Center before he found

out about the changed location. Ginnie Watson, our library coordinator, had not brought her wheeled carts for the books because she was under the impression that she would be doing her usual set-up in the lower level of the PE Center. Again, this was a far from optimal set of circumstances for preparing for the meeting.

Perhaps most maddening of all was that our normal meeting space in the PE Center sat vacant that night. There was no extraordinary event that caused us to be bounced to the Student Center atrium. Rather, in spite of our contract to use our usual space, a Rock Valley College staff person took it upon herself to make the change without giving us advance notice.

The Director of Facilities heard the radio traffic in the frenzied hour when we were doing our best to roll with the punches and set up for the meeting; she came to speak with us and apologized (even though she is *not* the one who caused the problem). I explained that we do much advance publicity to inform the public of our meetings, and – as she could see – there are many people involved in getting things ready for our monthly meetings. We pride ourselves on being a well organized, professional organization, and none of the board or coordinators were happy about the poor impression that this seeming disorganization could give our members and guests.

I apologize to everyone who was inconvenienced and frustrated by the circumstances. Disorganization and poor communication are not the way that our chapter does things. Needless to say, work is being done to ensure that this does not happen again.



Native Plant Sale

Although the last day for advance native plant sale orders has passed, individual plants will still be available for purchase during the scheduled pick-up times on Friday, May 11 (3 to 7 p.m.) and Saturday, May 12 (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.) at the Paulson Farm, 4601 Paulson Rd., Caledonia (across from the Northeast branch of the YMCA, near SportScore 2). Some plants may have already sold out completely; plants will be for sale based on availability.

The plant sale is our chapter's primary fundraiser, and proceeds allow us to rent space for our meetings and bring in top-notch speakers, among other things. The sale is open to the public, so please help us to get the word out.

Some plants will also be sold at BirdFest that same weekend, Saturday and Sunday, May 12 and 13 at Sand Bluff Bird Observatory/Colored Sands Forest Preserve (for information on the event, visit <https://winnebagoforest.org/event/birdfest-2018>; as well as at the Klehm Garden Fair, Saturday and Sunday, June 2 and 3 (for information on the event, visit www.klehm.org).

If you have questions, contact one of the sale coordinators: Cynthia Chmell (815) 969.7435; Jane Evans (815) 399.3787; or Bobbie Lambiotte (815) 398.6257.

Board of Directors in Action Cathy Johnson, Secretary

Highlights of activities of the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter Board of Directors, as discussed at the April 19, 2018 meeting, include the following.

- The *native plant sale* is well underway, with pickup dates May 11-12. Plants include those suitable for woodland, wetland (rain gardens), and sunny areas. Plants will also be sold at Bird Fest.
- Volunteer coordinator Don Heneghan is working on *recruiting new volunteers*. Anyone who is able to give 2-3 hours once or twice a year is encouraged to contact Don about opportunities.
- Jerry Paulson anticipates that extra help will be needed with the July 19 *potluck/yard tour* at the Holstrum home, due to the size and location. Please let him know if you can help transport tables or help direct parking.

**Speaker Becky Hartman
at the April RRV
Wild Ones meeting**



April Meeting Recap Jerry Paulson

photo by Sallie Krebs



Becky Hartman, Steward at Nachusa Grasslands

Nachusa Grasslands preserve has 4,000 acres of prairie, woodland, and wetlands, making it one of the largest native grasslands in northern Illinois. Located on the Ogle-Lee county line near Franklin Grove, Illinois, it is owned by the Illinois chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year.

The grassland preserve protects Blanding's turtles, ornate box turtles, many species of birds, butterflies, and rare wildflowers, and now a herd of 100-150 bison.

Nachusa Grasslands has three full-time staff, seasonal college interns, and many volunteers, including Hank and Becky Hartman, who manage one of the prairie units in the preserve. Hank was not able to make it to the meeting due to a cold, but Becky told us about the history of the preserve and their efforts to restore native grassland to the former farm fields and pastures.

Nachusa Grasslands started with the purchase of 200 acres of degraded prairie in 1986. Tim Keller and Dot and Doug Wade, founders of the Prairie Preservation Society of Ogle County, had found upland sandpipers breeding in the pasture in the

area, and then discovered remnant prairies on the hilltops. TNC staff got together with the staff of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and scientists, and decided there was a need to establish a "big prairie" in the area to recreate habitat for grassland birds and other wildlife.

What started as just 200 acres is now a patchwork of protected public and private lands that tie together Franklin Creek State Natural Area, Lowden State Forest, Castle Rock State Park, and private property into a large regional complex of natural land. St. Peter sandstone bedrock underlies Nachusa Grasslands, which is the same bedrock that is found in Castle Rock and Starved Rock State Parks. The sandstone crops out of the earth in knobs and cliffs throughout the preserve.

Most of the 4,000 acres of former cropland and pasture have been restored to native grasslands over the years by volunteer stewards, like Hank and Becky Hartman, who collect and process seeds, sow the seeds, pull weeds, conduct prescribed burns, cut brush, and monitor the changes in the vegetation and wildlife. Becky showed photos of the changes in the landscape of the unit that she and Hank manage.

What started out as a field of brome grass now contains a diversity of native grasses and wildflowers. Even prairie white fringed orchid, listed as a threatened plant in the United States, is found in the wet prairie. Seeds of the orchid were planted in the preserve by the IDNR in an attempt to expand the populations of this rare species.

Now the preserve is also home to a herd of bison. There used to be 30-50 million bison in North America. The herds of bison that once roamed over the grasslands of North America were nearly wiped out by hunting, fencing, and destruction of the prairie. The National Park Service set out 100 years ago to establish pure herds of American bison at Yellowstone and Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota. Since then, TNC has worked with the Park Service to establish new herds from the Wind Cave bison at their different grassland preserves.

In 2014, they shipped some to Nachusa Grasslands, after building sturdy fences and corrals, and establishing fenced exclosures to allow scientists to study changes occurring in the plant communities, soil, and wildlife from these 1,000-

Native Plant Sale

pound herbivores.

Bison live in grasslands, and grasslands evolved with these hungry grazers, which prefer to eat grass. Grassland plants and animals of all sizes co-evolved with large grazing animals. This

- led to plants having growth stems below ground;
- led to tree and shrub adaptations;
- creates microhabitats for other animals, including insects; and
- allows forbs (flowers) to compete and hold their own against the grasses.

Nachusa's restored prairies are dominated by native grasses, which make them less diverse. By selectively munching on the grass, the bison can increase the diversity of the prairie.

According to Jeff Walk, Director of Conservation for TNC in Illinois, "It's well-documented that bison prefer to consume grass over forbs, so we're optimistic that their grazing will suppress the

grasses and give wildflowers a chance to catch up. We want a mix of tall, dense vegetation and shorter, thinner vegetation because a structurally-diverse plant community accommodates more species." (*Monitoring the Impacts of Bison on the Prairie/The Nature Conservancy*)

Scientists will quantify the effects that the bison are having on Nachusa's plant communities by collecting data on plant height, density, and species from both the grazed and ungrazed areas to understand how the plant community changes over time in response to the grazing. The information that they collect will help the land managers make better-informed decisions to maintain the herd and the health of the prairie.

Becky said that the best times to see the prairie in flower are the last week of June and first week of July, and in August when the blazing stars are blooming. Ironweed and asters bloom in the wetlands in the fall when the prairie grasses are turning color.

The preserve is open to the public, except the areas where the bison are located. TNC has monthly tours to see the bison, which you can sign-up for on their website:

<https://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/illinois/index.htm>



Wildflower Walkabouts

We are once again fortunate this year that Severson Dells and the Natural Land Institute are organizing a series of wildflower walks in natural areas across northern Illinois (Boone, Ogle, and Winnebago counties). All walks begin at 6:00 p.m. and are free to attend. Membership in either or both organizations is encouraged. Registration is requested at www.SeversonDells.com. For questions, call Severson Dells at (815) 335.2915 or NLI at (815) 964.6666. The schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, May 16 Howard D. Colman Dells Nature Preserve

Greg Keilback of Byron Forest Preserve District will lead this hike on property owned and managed by NLI. This 96-acre Nature Preserve is located along Hall Creek, southwest of Rockford. One of its attractive features is a series of cliffs known as the dells. Many unique plants restricted to limestone and dolomite outcrops are found here, as well as some northern relict plants. The floral display in the upland woods is one of the best in Winnebago county. Aldo Leopold and Paul Riis conducted some early deer studies in this preserve in the mid-1930s. Located near the intersection of E. Severson Rd. and N. Weldon Rd. From Meridian and Montague Rd., drive south and turn west onto McGregor Rd., then turn north onto Weldon Rd. Moderate-difficult hiking.

Tuesday, May 22 Hall Memorial Woods

Nathan Hill, Rockford Park District natural areas supervisor, will lead us through this RPD-owned 40-acre remnant upland forest. Many of the trees are old growth dominated by red oaks, basswood, slippery elm, and black walnut. White oak is more common on the drier sites. White ash, black cherry, shagbark hickory, yellow bud, and butternut are also common throughout. Ironwood, choke cherry, hazel, arrowwood, and dogwood comprise the shrub layer. The herbaceous flora consists of nodding trillium, Dutchman's breeches, wood phlox, wild geranium, wood anemone, and toothwort. Meet at the corner of Euclid and Linden in Rockford. Moderate hiking.

Wednesday, May 30 Colored Sands Forest Preserve

Join Sand Bluff Bird Observatory's naturalists Lee and Lynda Johnson for a wildflower walkabout tour of the beautiful sand country at Colored Sands Bluff Nature Preserve. The vegetation is unique to dry sand prairies, which once dominated the area but now are very rare. This easy level walk will be a great hike for both beginners and the experienced. Bring a wildflower book, binoculars, and bug spray.

Meet at the Banding Station parking lot at the end of Haas Rd. near Durand.

Tuesday, June 5 Cedar Cliff Forest Preserve

We have the opportunity to explore the woodland wildflowers and limestone cliffs at the new Cedar Cliff Forest Preserve with Severson Dells naturalist, Greg Rajskey. We will walk 0.7 miles through newly planted prairie before we reach the wildflowers and walk 0.6 miles in the forest before we return to our cars. As a reward for your efforts you will find Jack-in-the-pulpit, wild geranium, sharp-lobed hepatica, bloodroot, and red trillium set in a forest canopy of chinkapin, bur, and red oaks. We will walk atop the most dramatic feature, which is the limestone cliff that follows the Rock River. Take Highway 2 south past the Rockford Airport and turn right on Kishwaukee Rd.; drive for 3.8 miles. The Forest Preserve will be on the right side of the road at 7901 Kishwaukee Rd., Stillman Valley. Moderate-difficult hiking.

Wednesday, June 13 Flora Prairie Nature Preserve

This 9.7-acre prairie is owned by the Boone County Conservation District. Aaron Minson, BCCD restoration technician, will lead us through the dry dolomite prairie, through a small wooded ravine, and near several large, spreading bur oaks. The state endangered woolly milkweed was collected here in 1946 by Egbert Fell. Easy hiking.

Tuesday, June 19 Harlem Hills Prairie Nature Preserve

Gary Anderson and Jerry Paulson will offer their guidance on this visit to Harlem Hills Prairie. If the season is progressing typically, the hills should be pink/purple with thousands of Pale Purple Coneflowers. Always a great place to see a sunset. Meet on Flora Dr. in Loves Park. Easy hiking.

Wednesday, June 27 Deer Run Forest Preserve

Mike Groves of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County will lead us on this walk through Deer Run Forest Preserve. We will enter between two prairie restorations undertaken in 2000 and will compare a burned with unburned prairie (one side is slated to be burned in early spring). Spiderwort should be in full bloom; white wild indigos, pale purple coneflowers, and butterfly weed will be starting to develop flower stalks and heads. June grass will be flowering and setting seed. We will then hike along the Kishwaukee River trail through the floodplain forest. We should hear frogs and migrating birds. Located 3 miles southeast of Rockford on River Rd. at 5691 River Rd., Cherry Valley.

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!!

228 memberships as of April 23, 2018

Special thanks to our members who made contributions above the basic \$40 dues!

Judy Letourneau, Rockford
Linda Ricker, Rockton

Welcome to our new members!

Curt Johnson, Rockford

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!

93 attended the April meeting, including at least 25 guests

A big thank you to our April meeting volunteers!

Greeters: Krina Goss

Refreshments: Khrista Miskell, Anita Johnson

AV/Sound Equipment: Bob Arevalo

Meeting Recap: Jerry Paulson

Photographer: Sallie Krebs

Library Assistants: Karen Matz, Cathy Johnson

Merchandise: Cynthia Chmell

Anniversaries:

20 Years:

Francie Barnes, Rockford
Crystal & Don Mason, Galena
Kim Risley, Rockford

15 Years:

David Kostka, Juda, WI

5 Years:

Janice Christ, Oregon

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!

2018 Chapter Programs and Events

March to May

Native Plant Sale

The woodland/wetland/prairie sale begins mid-March with the deadline for orders April 27.

The pickup dates will be May 11 and 12 at: Paulson Farm, 4601 Paulson Rd., Caledonia, IL

May 17

7:00-9:00 p.m.

The Threat of Invasive Jumping
Worms

Brad Herrick

Ecologist/Research Program
Manager, UW-Madison

Rock Valley College

PE Ed Center

June 21

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Designing Your Backyard
Habitat

Andrea Rundblade

Green Key Landscape Design

Rock Valley College

PE Ed Center

July 19

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Member Potluck and Yard Tour!

Marlowe & Nancy Holstrum

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

For more information, contact Lisa Johnson at (779) 537.8939



NATIVE PLANTS. NATURAL LANDSCAPES

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 5/1/2018, 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

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(815) 222.4414 jerry@wildonesrrvc.org

Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865
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At-Large: Doreen O'Brien (815) 985.4064
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At-Large: Kim Lowman Vollmer
(815) 397.6044 kim@wildonesrrvc.org

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Newsletter-Editorial: Constance McCarthy
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daheneghan@gmail.com

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(815) 399.3787 rrvc.woodland@gmail.com

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

Tree & Shrub Sale: Brian Hale, (815) 289.2384,
moyogi2@gmail.com; Jerry Paulson (as to the left)

Plant Rescues & Seed Collection:
Mary Anne Mathwich (815) 721.5187
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Merchandise: Cynthia Chmell
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