

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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www.wildonesrrvc.org



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All articles for the May 2019 newsletter, must be submitted to:

Constance@wildonesrrvc.org
by April 23, 2019.

Gardens Full of Life: Inspiration and Challenges

Thursday, April 18, 2019

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

Time: 7:00 p.m.



April's Wild Ones program will be presented by Susan Carpenter, native plant gardener at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum. With experience in plant ecology, ecological restoration, and science education, she works with students and community volunteers to maintain and monitor a four-acre garden representing the plant communities of southern Wisconsin. Native plant gardens are diverse and dynamic. A native plant garden itself illustrates local flora, appropriate plant placement, and seasonal change. Garden care demonstrates sustainable practices and broader environmental stewardship. Like

the plant communities they represent, these gardens inspire questions and observations. Communicating effectively with a wider community about what we learn is challenging, yet critical.

Susan earned her undergraduate degree in biology at Stanford University, and her Master's degrees in botany and science education at UW-Madison. She also leads a conservation project that involves students and the public in documenting and studying native bumble bees, including the endangered rusty-patched bumble bee, *Bombus affinis*.

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

Chapter Activities Ramping Up

That sound you hear is the chapter shifting into second gear. Much work is going on behind the scenes in preparation for our chapter's busiest time of the year. Before you know it, we'll be in third gear and picking up speed!

Most important of all is the chapter's annual native plant sale. The sale flier

will be coming to you very soon, fear not, and will be available on the chapter's website. This sale now combines what used to be the two separate plant sales for woodland plants and prairie/savanna plants. Now we have one combined event, which is our chapter's main fundraiser for the year. Please help us to spread the word about the sale – surely, we all know people who could use a few more native plants in their home or business landscape.

Orders will be taken in advance of the sale. This is the best way to be able to secure the plants you want (some popular species may sell out prior to the pick-up days). Speaking of pick-up days, plants will also be available for sale on Friday (afternoon and early evening) and Saturday (morning and early afternoon), May 10 and 11 at the Paulson Farm, 4601 Paulson Road. Plants are sold on an as-available basis, so be sure to place an advance order or shop early on the pick-up days.

We also sell plants at non-chapter events,

including BirdFest at Sand Bluff Bird Banding Station (Saturday and Sunday, May 11 and 12), the Vegetarians in Motion meeting (Tuesday, May 14), and the Klehm Garden Fair (Saturday and Sunday, June 1 and 2).

Our chapter's display booth will also be at BirdFest so that we can tell folks about our chapter and its activities.

Volunteers will be needed for all of these activities (including prep days in advance of the native plant sale). If you already indicated an interest on the annual membership survey, expect a call from Laura Sjoquist, our chapter's volunteer coordinator. If you didn't complete the survey or are new to the chapter, Laura's contact information is on the back page of this newsletter. These events are a great chance to meet other chapter members, and of course to help the chapter in achieving its mission. Whether you can volunteer for a few hours, or want to jump into the deep end of volunteering, we are grateful for your help. We could achieve nothing without our volunteers, and it makes me so happy to see us all working towards making this chapter the gem that it is.

A final note: please also consider attending any or all of the Wildflower Walkabouts that are described elsewhere in this newsletter. They are always educational, whether you are a very new to natives or have years of experience. I'm looking forward to spending some spring evenings experiencing this area's beautiful natural areas while being guided by super knowledgeable folks. I'm like a sponge, soaking up all the knowledge shared by plant wizards, tree mavens, and birding gurus. I hope to see you there!

Recap March Meeting Joyce Mori

photos by Tim Lewis

Midwifing the River: The Rebirth of Nippersink Creek

Attendees to the March Meeting of Wild Ones were treated to a fascinating story of how part of Nippersink Creek was restored to its original stream bed. Ed Collins, Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources for the McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD), was the chief ecologist in charge of this innovative project. As a child he was always interested in the natural world and this led to a career path involved in teaching ecology, natural history, "forensic ecology"

and "ecological spirituality" and working on land restoration and preservation in McHenry County. He was involved in the first comprehensive mapping of oak tree loss in the region as well as the creation of the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge.

Fourteen thousand years ago glacial ice melted and the creeks and rivers formed in this region. In the early 1800s settlers moved into the area and started to change the nature of the landscape. Much of the land was wetland. After 1870 wetland drainage came into Illinois. By 1880 drainage districts were formed so that land could be

Recap March Meeting (cont'd)



Ed Collins, guest presenter

drained to create more farmland. This was done by laying drainage tiles below the surface of the land. Draining the land reached its peak around 1900 and this was considered the largest civil engineering project in the United States.

Draining the land makes the area warmer. By 1960 all of the area had been tiled and the creek had been straightened

so there was faster drainage. The creek also became muddy and filled with silt. The high rush of water in the straightened creek allowed for the creation of high banks which eventually would cave into the stream and add more silt to the sides and bed of the creek.

In 1986 after a rain Ed noticed a winding "stream". He was told that was what was left of the original Nippersink Creek.

Ed decided to see if he could develop a project that would bring the straightened part of the Nippersink back to its original meanders. This project was possible because the MCCD owned the land.

This restoration project involved a lot of historical searches otherwise known as "forensic ecology". An 1872 map in a plat book shows the original creek with all its meanders. A 1939 photo taken from a plane shows a number of sand hills. Looking at plat books and having conversations with people from the area helped Ed learn more about how the creek had changed through time.

Prior to beginning the main project, they worked on first order streams. These are small streams with no tributaries. They did 10 of these before beginning on the Nippersink, which is a much larger stream.

The main work began in 1999. The staff consisted of about 22 people, including 2 retired gentlemen, 4 staff, and the rest college students under 20 years of age. Unfortunately, as work began they had a tremendous amount of rain. It was challenging and stressful to try to work in the mud. They had to try to pump water out of areas where they were working. They were moving wet

dirt to dig out the original channel. They broke up all the drainage tiles they came across. It was hard, grueling work but Ed said everyone remained dedicated to the project.

It took over 40,000 man-hours to complete. They were working two shifts a day to make up for the lost time from all the rain. Over 250,000 tons of dirt were moved.

The basic premise was to dig out the original channel at its deepest part and then they graded the sides with slopes at a 3 to 1 ratio at a minimum. This would mimic what a stream should look like. Once the banks were graded they were seeded and covered with erosion control matting. They put some larger rocks in the center of the stream and a few along the sides.

Overall, the project cost less than 1 million dollars. At the end of the project they placed a time capsule in the area which contained items including poems, photos, and a silver bowl with their names engraved.



Ed Collins and Randy Mermel and Jessie Crow Mermel having a happy moment.

Ed presented photos of the stream after 1, 2, and 3 years, and the transformation was unbelievable. The flowers were beautiful and there was aquatic life. Ed says working with the college students was a wonderful experience. They worked hard and became intensely dedicated to the project.

Ed reminds us that we need to have a different relationship with water. We must realize it is a gift. We must remember that backyards are the largest untapped resource we have and we must learn to add some natural plants to them.

2019 Wildflower Walkabout Series

Our chapter is happy to promote these wonderful opportunities to learn about native wildflowers. Not only will you be able to visit some of the area's top natural areas, but the hikes are all led by experts who really know their plants (among many other things). Indeed, many of the hike leaders are Wild Ones chapter members!

These walkabouts are organized and sponsored by Severson Dells and the Natural Land Institute, and showcase native plants that are currently in bloom in natural areas throughout Winnebago, Boone, and Ogle counties. All walks begin at 6:00 p.m. There is no fee for the walks, but membership in Severson Dells and/or the Natural Land Institute is encouraged. For more information, please call (815) 335.2915 (SDNC) or (815) 964.6666 (NLI).

Tuesday, April 23 | Anna Page Park Chapter members Barbara and Dan Williams will lead this walk at Rockford Park District's Anna Page Park. Walk through a variety of plant communities, from creek bottoms to maple forest, to view marsh marigolds, trillium, blue-eyed Marys and numerous other spring flowers. Meet at the large parking lot at the westernmost point along the park loop road (not the parking area by the playground and bathrooms). *Moderate hiking, possibly with muddy areas. RSVP by April 21.*

Wednesday, May 1 | Kinnikinnick Creek Conservation Area Aaron Minson, Boone County Conservation District, and Brian Hale, chapter member and Conservation District volunteer, will lead hikers through the recently restored prairie and basswood, hickory, and white oak forest to explore the wild flowers in northern Boone County. This Conservation Area is located 3.2 miles north of Route 173 on Caledonia Rd. The entrance is just north of North Boone School Rd. *Moderate hiking. RSVP by April 29.*

Tuesday, May 7 | Deer Run Forest Preserve Mike Groves and Steve Hornbeck from the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County will lead hikers on the lookout for Virginia bluebells, trout lilies, red trillium, spring beauties, rue anemones, wild ginger, mayapples and more. Located 3 miles southeast of Rockford city limits on River Rd. *Easy hiking. RSVP by May 5.*

Wednesday, May 15 | Pecatonica Wetlands Forest Preserve Mark Keister and Richard Benning will take hikers on a tour of this Preserve, which includes river edge, floodplain forest, oxbow pond marshes, and upland forest along the Pecatonica River. The site has outstanding spring flora and birdlife. Meet at 4550 N. Pecatonica Rd., Pecatonica. *Easy to moderate hiking. RSVP by May 13.*

Tuesday, May 21 | Burr Oak Valley Preserve Zach Grycan and Ed Cope, Natural Land Institute staff and chapter members, will lead hikers through some of this 99-acre property that is owned and managed by NLI. The natural communities to be visited include mesic upland forest, dolomite prairie, dolomite cliff, and intermittent stream. Expect to see blue-eyed grass, columbine, maidenhair fern, and the rare kittentails. Park at the northern entrance of the Preserve at Cross and Crown Lutheran Church, 7404 Elevator Rd. in Roscoe. *Moderate hiking. RSVP by May 19.*

Wednesday, May 29 | Colored Sands Forest Preserve Lee and Lynda Johnson, long-time naturalists and chapter members, will lead the group on an exploration of the sand country at Colored Sands Forest Preserve. The plant community is unique to dry sand prairies, which once dominated this area but are now very rare. Meet at the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory parking lot, at the end of Haas Rd. near Durand, with your wild flower book (if you'd like) and bug spray. *Easy to moderate hiking. RSVP by May 27.*

Tuesday, June 4 | Bald Hill Prairie Preserve Spend the evening at this Preserve in Mt. Morris with Russell Brunner, superintendent of land management, Todd Tucker, Byron Forest Preserve District executive director, and Mark Herman, superintendent of education. This Preserve has endangered woolly milkweed and several recently restored bur oak savannas, and is home to the Big Tree Champion for the State of Illinois, an Eastern cottonwood that is 28.5 feet in circumference and 122 feet tall. The Preserve is also home to many nesting grassland birds such as bobolinks, Eastern meadowlarks, and short-eared owls. The Preserve is located at 5502 N. Silver Creek Rd., Mt. Morris. *Moderate hiking. RSVP by June 2.*

Wednesday, June 12 | Kieselburg Forest Preserve Chapter members Lenae Weichel (Severson Dells board member) and Dave Kostka (experienced nature educator) will lead this trip to discover the natural beauties of native prairie remnants and restoration in North Central Illinois. Hikers will work their way through many prairie and sedge meadow communities from dry to wet. The Preserve is located at 5801 Swanson Rd. in Roscoe. *Easy hiking. RSVP by June 10.*

Tuesday, June 18 | Harlem Hills Prairie Nature Preserve Gary and Judy Anderson, and Jerry Paulson, chapter vice president and former director of NLI, will offer their expertise on this visit to Harlem Hills Prairie. If hikers hit it just right, the hills should be bright with the pink and purple of the pale purple cone flowers. The always-beautiful sunset will be a bonus on this favorite of walks. Meet at Flora Dr. in Loves Park. *Easy hiking. RSVP by June 16.*

Wednesday, June 26 | Searls Prairie Nature Preserve Joni Denker of the Rockford Park District and Jack Armstrong, chapter member and Severson Dells and Rockford Park District board member, will lead this hike through mesic and wet-mesic prairie, where prairie dropseed, Indian grass, and big bluestem grow. This site is one of the highest quality wet prairies in the state. Meet at Searls Park on Central Ave. in Rockford across from the soccer fields. *Easy hiking, but the area may be wet. RSVP by June 24.*

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!!

212 memberships as of March 23, 2019

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

Cynthia Chmell, Rockford
 Jane & Jay Evans, Rockford
 Paula Evans, Rockford
 Ed & Charlotte Kletecka, South Beloit
 Sallie & Jim Krebs, Cherry Valley

Welcome to our new members!

Jack Houghtby, Rockford
 Sharon Shipp, 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!

53 attended the March Meeting Including at least 1 guest

A big thank you to our March meeting volunteers!

Greeters: Linda Graf, Linda Ricker, Janaan Lewis
Refreshments: Anita Johnson, Laura Sjoquist
AV/Sound Equipment: Ed Kletecka, Tim Lewis
Meeting Recap: Joyce Mori
Photographer: Tim Lewis
Library Assistants: Cathy Johnson

Anniversaries:

25 Years:

Lisa Johnson, Rockford
 Mary Anne & Bruce Mathwich, Rockton
 Anne Meyer, Rockford

15 Years:

Mary Berve, Darien WI
 Jim & Karen Timble, Franklin Grove

10 Years:

Cynthia Nelson, DeKalb

5 Years:

Mark & Laurie Luthin, Belvidere

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!

2019 Chapter Programs and Events

April 18 7:00 p.m.	Native Plant Gardens	Susan Carpenter Senior outreach specialist, UW-Madison Arboretum	Rock Valley College PE Ed Center
May 16 7:00 p.m.	Beneficial Insects in Your Garden	Jennifer Lazewski Master Gardener, expert in native	Rock Valley College PE Ed Center
June 20 7:00 p.m.	Prairie Ethnobotany: People & Plants	Cindy Crosby The Morton Arboretum	Rock Valley College PE Ed Center

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



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 4/1/2019, 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
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cathy@wildonesrrvc.org

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Newsletter-Editorial: Constance McCarthy
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sjoquist.laura@gmail.com

External Plant Sales: Jane Evans
(815) 399.3787 Constance McCarthy (as to the left)

Native 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
maryanne@wildonesrrvc.org

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lisa.johnson@burpee.org

Youth Education & Grants:
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Facebook: Sallie Krebs (as to the left)

Library: Ginnie Watson (815) 398.0138
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Mentors: [open position]

Merchandise: Cynthia Chmell
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Publicity: Joyce & John Mori,
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Show Me/Help Me: Linda Ricker, (217)
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Coordinators