

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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www.wildonesrrvc.org



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All articles for the January 2020 newsletter, must be submitted to: Constance@wildonesrrvc.org by December 23, 2019.

*Member Potluck and Seed Exchange
Thursday, November 21, 2019*

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

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

November has always been the time for our chapter's annual potluck (members only, i.e. member plus partner, significant other, child, friend, etc.), annual report from the board, and seed exchange. Our president will present the annual report. This will be a 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 (plate, silverware, cup, and napkin) 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. Please bring your own envelopes and/or plastic baggies to take seeds home. **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. (Contact the membership coordinator, Sallie Krebs; contact info on the back page of this newsletter.) 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 (779) 537.8939 for more information.

Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy

photo by Tim Lewis

Another year seems to have just flown by. This will be my last column for the year, as we take the month of December off (both the newsletter and our monthly educational program).

Please give serious thought to attending the *annual potluck and seed exchange* this month (in lieu of our monthly educational program at Rock Valley College). You

might be thinking, "I haven't attended many (or any) meetings this year. I don't want to just surface at the potluck." Or, "I'm a new(er) member and don't know other members well at all." Or even, "I don't have any seeds to bring to share and don't want to just be a taker." On all accounts, put those thoughts out of your mind!

Coming together as a chapter to celebrate the year's accomplishments, and to connect with old friends while making new ones - these are the most important aspects of the evening. Our members go to the trouble of collecting and saving native seeds because they want to see more of these plants growing in our area. Trust me, they are not concerned about who brought seeds and who didn't. And newcomers are quickly welcomed into the fold. You'll meet new folks and

learn about what they are doing with natives in their own landscapes. It's always a great evening from many different angles.

I hope you will join us on November 21! And if you have a friend who would like to join the chapter that evening, our membership coordinator will be present and happy to assist.

One last note about *volunteer stewardship days* (organized by NLI and Severson Dells; see Events of Interest in this newsletter as well as the websites of those organizations): Unlike some other Wild Ones chapters, we don't have a chapter-sponsored restoration project per se. I think this is clearly because so many of our members are already involved in restoration projects across the region (and not because our members are not interested in restoration undertakings). However, this can make it more challenging for folks who are new to the area or new to natives, to get involved in restoration work.

Both NLI and Severson Dells organize volunteer work days where you can meet like-minded folks and learn a ton about natives, restoration work, managing invasive plants, prescribed burns, regional birds and mammals, and many other things. These stewardship work days are a great way to get involved in hands-on work and learn a lot, all while helping outstanding local partners like NLI and Severson Dells. You can stay for only part of the day or the whole day,. Bundle up and get outdoors!

Tree and Shrub Sale a Big Success

Thanks to the hard work of Brian Hale and Jerry Paulson, this year's native tree and shrub sale was a big success. A total of 149 trees and shrubs were sold to 40 people, adding to the diversity and beauty of our local landscape. All those plants are by now safely planted and ready for winter.

The cost of the plants and shipping totaled \$2,925 and the amount that our members and friends paid for the plants totaled \$4,532, leaving of chapter with a profit of \$1,606. These funds help to pay for our monthly programs, facility use at Rock Valley College, newsletter, website, and other expenses. Thank you Wild Ones members and friends for buying native trees and shrubs from us! We are grateful for your support.

Did You Hear...?

A reporter from Northern Public Radio attended our October meeting and interviewed the presenter. The resulting story was broadcast during the station's All Things Considered and Weekend Edition programs. You can read the article at www.northernpublicradio.com (article by Connie Kuntz, published online on 18 Oct. 2019).

We are grateful for this exposure given to our chapter and, more importantly, the benefits of using native plants in home and business landscapes. Three cheers for Northern Public Radio!

Chapter Offers Scholarships

The Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones offers scholarships for its members. The chapter wants to encourage its members to learn more about native plants, their role, history, and importance. The chapter will award up to three scholarships per year, up to a maximum of \$50 each. These

Kim Lowman Vollmer,
Youth Education & Grants Coordinator

scholarships can be used to pay attendance fees for conferences and programs in our area or for workshops farther away. The application is on the website under the Resource tab. If you have any questions, please contact me (contact information on the last page of this newsletter).

Events of Interest

Opt Outside Hike

Tues., Nov. 29, 10:30 a.m. - noon
Severson Dells Nature Center

If you'd rather go for a walk in the woods than shop 'til you drop, join Severson Dells and Rocktown Adventures for a leisurely hike. Free, but donations are appreciated. Please register by Nov. 26 by contacting Severson Dells at (815) 335.2915.

Stewardship Days

Various Weds. & Sat. throughout Nov. & Dec.
Nygren Wetland Preserve, Silver Creek Woods Preserve, and Burr Oak Valley Preserve
Volunteer tasks include control and removal of bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard and/or other invasive species; planting/collecting seeds; helping in the greenhouse; planting plugs; general maintenance; bird and mammal monitoring; prescribed burns; and set-up for special events. Enjoy the beauty of the prairies and wetlands while you work. You never know, you might see a rare bird, mammal or plant.

Individuals or groups who wish to participate in one of the volunteer stewardship days at Nygren

or Burr Oak Valley Preserve should contact Zach Grycan, Director of Stewardship, for more information and to confirm participation at (920) 912.4338 or zgrycan@naturalland.org. Those wishing to participate at Silver Creek Woods Preserve should contact the site steward, Dion Faith, at (815) 520.6916 or Docfaith68@yahoo.com. What to bring: NLI provides tools, gloves, and water (and sometimes special snacks!). If you plan to stay through lunch, you may want to bring a sack lunch. Dress for the weather. Long sleeves, pants, and sturdy boots are recommended.

Luminaria

Fri. & Sat., Dec. 13-14, 6:00 -9:00 p.m.
Severson Dells Nature Center

A winter favorite returns! Bring your family and friends out for an evening of wintry fun. Walk the candlelit trail, listen to live music in the classroom, enjoy hot chocolate at the roaring fire on the patio, hop on a horse-drawn wagon ride through the prairie, and take a picture at the fun photo booth. This year you can also decorate your own Severson Dells tree cookie ornament to take home.

October Meeting Recap Jerry Paulsen

photo by Tim Lewis



Establishing a Natural Yard

Zach Grycan, director of stewardship for the Natural Land Institute (NLI), hopes that everyone will think about bringing nature to their yard through the use of native plants. He has overseen the management and restoration of all of NLI's natural areas, including the 720-acre Nygren Wetland Preserve near Rockton, Illinois, since

2015. Prior to coming to work for NLI, Zach worked for Applied Ecological Services in Brodhead, Wis. and volunteered with the Wild Ones chapter in

Stevens Point.

Zach encouraged us all to plant native species at our homes, at work, school or church, or wherever we can to add biodiversity to our area. Originally, Native American tribes found grasslands, wetlands, and savannas in northern Illinois, which they managed for game by using fire. The early settlers cut the land into towns, farms, pastures, and roads, and brought with them old-world ideas about the need to have manicured lawns like the country estates found in England and Europe. Now we spend hours of time, along with much energy and money, to maintain those lawns. A natural area - even a small one - in your yard saves time and money and adds beauty and diversity to the landscape, he said.

October Meeting Recap (cont'd)

He then gave a brief explanation of why planting a natural area in your yard increases the diversity of plants and animals, which in turn feed other organisms throughout the food chain. Small natural areas in private yards also tie together protected natural lands in public parks and preserves, helping to create a vast network of habitat for birds and other wildlife.

The Natural Land Institute, in partnership with the Wild Ones Rock River Valley, sponsors the Conservation@Home program. This program helps property owners protect and create yards that are environmentally friendly for plants, animals, and people. The program's goals are to:

- encourage the use of native plants in residential yards and gardens;
- protect and restore natural areas;
- promote good water resource management practices that reduce runoff and filter rainwater;
- reward landowners who practice good conservation measures;
- educate landowners about how they can improve habitats; and
- provide a visible sign of good conservation design and implementation.

Zach then outlined how to plan and implement a natural area in your yard using the "How-To" Natural Landscaping Guide published by NLI for the Conservation@Home program (available from NLI; contact them at info@naturalland.org).

Step 1. Get inspired. Go check out nearby natural areas to learn what grows well in your area. The Wildflower Walkabouts, sponsored by NLI and Severson Dells Nature Center each spring and summer, are a good way to learn about native plants and natural areas.

Step 2. Make a planting plan. Select native plants based on height, color, form, and bloom period. Don't obstruct the view of traffic or neighbors. Deal with drainage problems and wet spots so you don't block the flow of water, and pick species to plant that tolerate wet soils.

Step 3. Prepare the planting area. You will need to eliminate competition from weeds and lawn grasses by repeatedly cultivating the soil or smothering the plants using black landscaping cloth, old rugs, cardboard, or plywood sheets. It is important that you uncover the ground, let the weeds grow, and then smother again several times throughout the growing season to get rid of as many weed seeds as possible. You can also spray the area with an herbicide, but be careful. When spraying any pesticide, be sure to wear gloves,

long sleeves, pants, rubber boots, and protective goggles. If cultivating the soil, repeat several times during the growing season to bring up weed seeds.

Step 4. This is the installation phase. Plant seeds in the winter or early spring, and trees and shrubs in the fall. You will need to water the seedlings or plants if it does not rain enough. Get someone to help you if you are seeding a large area or planting live plugs of plants. Seeding prairie species on top of snow helps the seeds work into the soil and to keep them moist. If in doubt, consult with an expert at NLI or the University of Illinois Extension office in your county.

Step 5. Evaluate the results and maintain the area. It is important to evaluate the results of the planting to see what grew and what didn't, and to replace the plants that didn't make it. You need to mow or pull the weeds until the native species get established, and to keep pulling out invasive or aggressive species. Remove or trim any plants that grow too tall or lean over streets or sidewalks. Watch to see if some species either become too abundant or fade away, and take corrective action.

Zach then gave us some recommendations of species to consider planting when creating a natural area in our yards. Native roses are a good choice, and he suggests considering the use of wild strawberry, ginger, and violets as ground covers in small spaces. Milkweed plants are needed by monarch butterflies and come in many sizes and shapes.

He then gave some rules to follow when planting a natural area in your yard:

- Go with shorter species than you think you might want because some species can grow too tall, especially in years when we have a lot of rain.
- Avoid planting aggressive species (such as certain goldenrods and native sunflowers) in highly visible areas. They can look weedy, even if they are pretty and attract insects.
- Take care not to plant species in areas that are too wet, shady, or the wrong soil type.

There are many sources of information about the soil and moisture requirements of each species of native plant online, or you can ask local experts. Some good resources can be found at www.illinoiswildflowers.info/, as well as in the Prairie Moon Nursery catalogue and books like *The Flora of the Chicago Region* (available from our chapter's lending library (a membership benefit)). To contact Zach Grycan, call NLI at (815) 964.6666 or visit the NLI website at www.Naturalland.org.

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!!

207 memberships as of October 23, 2019

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

Joe Hemlock, Rockford
 Bryan & Peggy Redington, Rockford
 Paul & Carol Soderholm, Mount Morris

Welcome to our new member(s)!

Michelle George, 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!

87 attended the October meeting, including at least 12 guests

A big thank you to our October meeting volunteers!

Greeters: Jacqueline Rheaume, Linda Ricker
Refreshments: Anita Johnson
AV/Sound Equipment: Bob Arevalo
Meeting Recap: Jerry Paulson
Photographer: Tim Lewis
Library Assistants: Cathy Johnson, Karen Matz

A special thank you to:

Northern Public Radio for recording audio of Zach Grycan's presentation which was broadcast during their All Things Considered and Weekend Edition programs.

Anniversaries:

20 Years:

Terry Laman, Lena

10 Years:

Paul & Carol Soderholm, Mount Morris

5 Years:

Mary Dolak, 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

November 21 6:00 p.m.	Member 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 St. 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 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 11/1/2019, 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
(815) 222.4414 jerry@wildonesrrvc.org

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

Treasurer: Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912
janetgiesen@gmail.com

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

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

Membership: Sallie Krebs (815) 627.0343
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Newsletter-Editorial: Constance McCarthy
(as to the left)

Volunteers: Laura Sjoquist
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

Programs: Lisa Johnson, (815) 965.3433,

LeJohnson3804@outlook.com

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

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

Facebook: Sallie Krebs (as to the left)

Library: Ginnie Watson (815) 398.0138
library.rsvc@gmail.com

Mentors: [open position]

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Coordinators