

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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www.wildonesrrvc.org



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All articles for the August 2020 newsletter, must be submitted to:
Constance@wildonesrrvc.org
by July 23, 2020.

Virtual Tour of Lost Flora Fen
July 16, 2020

Tyler Pellegrini, Guide
Restoration Ecologist, Natural Land Institute



Tyler Pellegrini, restoration ecologist for the Natural Land Institute, will host a video tour of Lost Flora Fen for the July 16 monthly educational program of Wild Ones: Rock River Valley Chapter. A link to the video will be posted on the chapter website (www.wildonesrrvc.org) beginning on July 16, and will also be distributed via Constant Contact.

The 40-acre Lost Flora Fen is nestled along Raccoon Creek, northwest of Nygren Wetland Preserve (Rockton, Illinois) and near the Wisconsin border. Although not a true fen, a combination of low oxygen and acidic conditions in the soil reduces the availability of nutrients to plants, which allows a host of fen-loving species to thrive.

Naming this preserve the Lost Flora Fen came naturally, as not only had the northern bog orchid (last seen in 1871) been lost to county records, but a suite of plant species first cataloged by Dr. Egbert Fell (father of NLI's founder, George B. Fell) in 1947 had not been seen until rediscovered by NLI staff. More than 250 native plant species, several of which are rare, threatened, or endangered fen and sedge meadow species, as well as rare and unusual butterflies and dragonflies have been inventoried.

This property was acquired in May 2018 through a bequest given in memory of Veronica Cramer and her son Steven Cramer and a grant from Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. Also, with their support and other donors, NLI was able to install a sign, parking area, and boardwalk.

Tyler Pellegrini joined the NLI team on December 2, 2019. As NLI's restoration ecologist, Tyler assists the director of stewardship with all aspects of managing NLI's preserves, including: native seed collection, invasive species control, prescribed burning, greenhouse cultivation, and developing management plans. Tyler is originally from Sandwich, Illinois. He trained as a mechanic after high school, served four years in the U.S. Air Force, and then obtained a degree in environmental science from Northern Illinois University. Tyler started out his habitat restoration career at Nachusa Grasslands and

(continued on page 3)

Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy

photo by Tim Lewis

A Tip of the Hat to Tim Lewis

Even when an organization is near and dear to one's heart, eventually there comes a time to step back and pass the baton. I would like to take this opportunity to extend the heartiest thank-you to Tim Lewis for the tremendous contributions that he has made to our chapter and to the national

organization.

Some of you may have met Tim back in his days working for Anne Meyer at Enders Greenhouse, tending the native plants. Others (including me) know Tim from his many years as a chapter member and holder of a very wide range of positions in the chapter. I apologize in advance if I overlook any of his contributions here; there are so many that it will be a challenge to list them all.

Of course, he was chapter president for many years. Under his leadership, the chapter grew and grew, becoming more prominent in the community and increasing the ways in which we educate folks about native plants and natural landscaping. He helped to select the plants, trees, and shrubs that the chapter sold at our sales, offering sage advice to sale coordinators regarding which plants to offer every year and which to rotate onto the sale list from time to time.

Tim also built the chapter's display booth from scratch. His own design was admired by many, especially when it made its appearance at the annual meeting for Wild Ones chapter leaders at the national headquarters. With its braces and clamps, it could be anchored to a table so securely that it never blew over, no matter how fierce the winds. The photos shown on the display (almost all taken by Tim himself) are an appealing mix of native plants and chapter activities. Tim took great care in curating and maintaining a selection of informative literature and brochures for folks who stopped at the booth.

The booth allowed our chapter to become known to folks who visited events such as BirdFest; the Alternative Energy Fair; Gardening for Food

and Fun; Earth Day at Rock Valley College; and Gardener's Pathway, among many others. Tim made sure that new volunteers were paired with someone more experienced when it came to staffing the booth at events.

At our June board meeting, it was decided that a brass plate will be engraved and affixed to the booth to acknowledge our gratitude to Tim for building this important chapter asset.

Tim has also served as the chapter representative to the Four Rivers Environmental Coalition, allowing us to collaborate with many other like-minded organizations in the northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin region.

Tim's exceptional computer skills were put to good use in his creation of the sale brochures for the chapter's annual native plant sales and tree/shrub sales. For the past several years, he has also maintained the chapter website.

But Tim's contributions were not merely at the local and chapter level. No, he also served as the president of the national Wild Ones organization for a number of years. This was no easy task, with the headquarters located a three-hour drive north of here, and board members scattered all across the United States.

No wonder he has chosen to pass the baton on his Wild Ones responsibilities. I'm growing tired just from listing all these accomplishments and contributions he has made. I can only imagine how satisfied he must be to look back on this long (hopefully complete!) list. Our chapter is so very grateful for all he has done for us, and I'm sure that the wider environmental community shares the sentiment. A tip of the well worn garden hat to you, Tim. Two tiny words seem hardly sufficient, but thank you!



Wild Ones on Instagram

Did you know that the national Wild Ones organization is on Instagram? You can follow them at: [@wildonesnativeplants](https://www.instagram.com/wildonesnativeplants)

Virtual Tour of Lost Flora Fen (cont'd)

currently resides in Creston, Illinois with his wife Jaimie and daughter Hadley. In his spare time, Tyler enjoys canoeing, hiking, gardening, and serving as a volunteer firefighter/EMT with the Creston Fire Department.

Lost Flora Fen is open to the public. For directions and instructions for entering the preserve before your first visit, please contact the NLI office at (815) 964.6666 or info@naturalland.org.



Rudbeckia sullivantai
by Mark Blassage



Iris virginica var. shrevei

Congratulations to Colored Sands Forest Preserve: Achieves Audubon "Important Bird Area" Designation

The chapter would like to extend congratulations to Colored Sands Forest Preserve on this recent achievement. According to a recent press release from the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County:

Colored Sands Forest Preserve has achieved Important Bird Area (IBA) status for the State of Illinois. Colored Sands Forest Preserve is the first Important Bird Area designated in Winnebago County and one of 43 IBAs in northern Illinois. Designated in January 2020, Colored Sands exemplifies the high quality habitat and bird diversity that Important Bird Areas protect. The Important Bird Areas program is an international effort to identify, conserve, and monitor a network of sites that provide essential habitat for bird populations.

"The value of these 300 acres to nesting and migrating birds is immense," says Stephanie Bielke, Conservation Science Manager at Audubon Great Lakes. "Colored Sands achieved IBA status due to the documented significant congregations of migratory land birds, including 32 warbler species and high counts of at least 33 migratory species."

The rigorous IBA certification process was led by Sinnissippi Audubon in partnership with Forest Preserves of Winnebago County and Sand Bluff Bird Observatory (SBBO). Sinnissippi Audubon president, Jennifer Kuroda, says, "the IBA designation is a real 'feather in our cap' and a great example of community partnership. Between the ecological quality of the preserve and the valuable scientific research conducted at the banding station, it is really a unique conservation model."

"This designation is an important part of Forest Preserves of Winnebago County's commitment to conserving and promoting our natural areas," says Mike Eickman, Forest Preserves of Winnebago County commissioner and SBBO master bird bander. "This designation is good for the birds and the citizens of Winnebago County."

The 303.9-acre Colored Sands Forest Preserve on the Sugar River is known for its birds – and the bird banding at Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, its unique geology, and wonderful wildflowers. It offers outstanding panoramic views of the pristine Sugar River.

Recap of June Presentation Jerry Paulson

Seed Handling at Forest Preserves of Winnebago County

The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County has restored hundreds of acres of native prairies and wetlands on land it has acquired. Mike Groves, Natural Resource Manager for the Forest Preserve District, said in a video produced for Wild Ones Rock River Valley, that District staff collect, process, and store all the seeds and plants of native wildflowers, grasses, sedges, and shrubs that they use in prairie and wetland restoration projects on land acquired by the District. In 2019 the staff collected and processed \$136,000 worth of seed from 105 different species.

Born and raised in the Winnebago area, Mike graduated in 1994 from the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point with a major in wildlife management and biology. He started working with the forest preserve district in the summer of 1990 in preserve maintenance and also worked a summer at Klehm Arboretum. He was hired full time in 1994, and eventually was transferred to the Natural Resource Department. Mike currently oversees natural resource work in all 43 preserves and on all 10,500 acres. His job duties include seed collection, seed cleaning, greenhouse propagation, invasive species control, tree planting, wildlife monitoring, restoring natural areas, tree removals, and managing prescribed burns. He also oversees all resource staff and equipment.

The District converted the old barn at Severson Dells Forest Preserve to use for seed storage and processing. After collecting the seed from other restoration projects on district land, they bring the seed to the barn to dry. The staff built drying racks using old furnace blowers to dry the seed so it will not mold or rot. After the seed pods and heads are dried, they separate the seed from the heads and pods by hand or with machines called hammer mills. The mill crushes the heads or pods of species like purple prairie clover, pale purple coneflower, and wild indigo that are too hard to separate by hand.

The seed has to be clean enough to run smoothly through a no-till drill, so the next step is to run through various sized screens in a mechanical seed shaker to remove the chaff, stems, and debris. Some of the grass seed is traded with a commercial seed nursery in return for cleaning it for the district; otherwise it is all used on forest

preserve district property. Even the chaff is saved and used to over-seed established plantings to enhance the species diversity.

After the seed is processed and cleaned, it is packaged and stored in an old metal grain bin moved to the barnyard from another property. The bin was made water- and rodent-proof and the seed is stored in the unheated bin all winter to give it the needed cold treatment. Most of it is planted directly into old farm fields in May and June, but some is germinated and used to grow seedlings in the greenhouse that was built on the property 12-15 years ago. The District typically plants between 70 to 80 acres of farmland each year, but only 40 acres were planted in 2020 on five sites.

About 3,000 to 6,000 seedlings are grown in the greenhouse each year. These are usually species that are harder to grown from seed, or those that are needed to enhance pollinator habitat for the rusty patched bumblebee and other insects. Seeds of some species of plants need special treatment to get them to germinate. The seed of New Jersey tea is very hard and needs to be soaked for 24 hours in hot water to break dormancy. The district also has a wetland nursery that they constructed in the barnyard at Severson Dells. The plants are grown in the greenhouse, then transplanted into pots and grown in standing water for use in wetland restoration projects.

The district staff started collecting seed in May and will continue through November. Some species produce seed only every 2 to 3 years, and some only after a prescribed burn. Rare species are given special attention to assure that all the species originally found in the county are preserve and propagated on district land.

To view the video, produced by Charles Johannsen, go to <https://youtu.be/S3bW3W11U1g>.



Tree and Shrub Sale Just Around the Corner

Don't forget that the chapter's second fundraiser of the year, our tree and shrub sale, will be underway come late August. Please note that, unlike the native plant sale held every spring, the trees and shrubs are sold *only by advance order*. There will be no in-person shopping possibilities for this sale.

The sale brochure (including a list of available species and an order form) will be distributed via Constant Contact email in late August or early September. Orders will be due by Friday, September 18. Orders can be picked up at the Paulson farm (same location as the native plant sale) on Friday and Saturday, September 25 and 26.

Details regarding the location and specific pick-up hours will be provided in the sale brochure and on the chapter website.

If you are a chapter member and/or have purchased from this sale or the native plant sale in the past, you are already on the distribution list for the brochure. If you know someone who would like to be added to the distribution list, contact Sallie Krebs, membership coordinator, at membershipworrvc@gmail.com.

If you have any other questions regarding the sale, contact Brian Hale, sale coordinator, at moyogi2@gmail.com.

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!!

206 memberships as of June 23, 2020

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

Deb Chostner, Rockford
Mike & Deb Eickman, Rockton
Karen Retzke, Belvidere
Jacqueline Rheaume, Rockford
Karen & Greg Ruffner, Caledonia
Ann Whitney, Pecatonica
Diana Wiemer, Durand

Welcome to our new member(s)!

Anne Remington, Rockford

A big thank you to our June meeting volunteers!

Online Presentation Recap: Jerry Paulson

Anniversaries:

25 Years:

Kim Lowman & John Vollmer, South Beloit

20 Years:

Dianne & Dennis Stenerson

10 Years:

Cathy Johnson, Rockford

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 to the right:

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: membershipworrvc@gmail.com 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!

2020 Chapter Programs and Events

August 20	Invasive Species ID & control	Michael Hansen	TBA
July 16	Online Yard Tour-		Nygren/Lost Flora Fen

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 7/1/2020, 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 kublai Khan@mac.com

Vice president: Jerry Paulson
(815) 222.4414 paulsonjerry@aol.com

Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865
catjohn_22@yahoo.com

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

Board member at-large:
Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044
kimlowvol@aol.com

Board member at-large: Ken Kielsmeier
(815) 289.2812 jodikieles@gmail.com

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell
(815) 969.7435 cynthiachmell@gmail.com

Native Plant Sale: Constance McCarthy & Jerry Paulson (as above)

External plant sale event coordinators:
Constance McCarthy (as to the left) &
Jane Evans (815) 399.3787
javevans.9985@comcast.net

Tree & shrub sale coordinators: Brian Hale
(815) 289.2384 moyogi2@gmail.com &
Jerry Paulson (as to the left)

Booth coordinator: [open position]

Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs
(815) 540.4730 membershipworrvc@gmail.com

Facebook coordinator: Sallie Krebs (as above)

Program committee: Lisa Johnson (chair)
(779) 537.8939
lejohnson3804@outlook.com
Mark Luthin (815) 543.7412
m.luthin@comcast.net

Jerry Paulson (as to the left)

Publicity coordinator: Dawn Skupien
(815) 262.7864 dawnskupien@gmail.com

Website coordinator: Tim Lewis
(815) 874.3468 natives.tim@comcast.net

Youth education & grants coordinator: Kim Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)

Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson
(815) 398.0138 vsatson47@aol.com

Mentor coordinator: [open position]

Newsletter: editorial coordinator: Constance McCarthy (as to the left)

Newsletter: production coordinator: Pambi Camacho (815) 332.7637 dkcamps@aol.com

Plant rescue/seeds coordinator: Mary Anne Mathwich (815) 721.5187 mprairedock@aol.com

Volunteer coordinator: Laura Sjoquist
(815) 298.1387 sjoquist.laura@gmail.com

Show Me/Help Me coordinator:
Linda Ricker (217) 649.3966
greencreations.leioi@gmail.com