

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

Inside this Issue:

Message from the President	2
February Presentation Recap	2-3
Native Plant Sale Update	3
What's Blooming?	4
Chapter Calendar	4-5
Membership Updates	5
Chapter Contact Information	6

www.wildonesrrvc.org



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All articles for the April 2021 newsletter, must be submitted to: Jerry Paulson at paulsonjerry@aol.com by March 23, 2021

Woodpeckers of Illinois
Thursday, March 18, 2021

**Time: 7:00 p.m.
via Zoom**

Peggy Doty will present Woodpeckers of Illinois. Woodpeckers are incredibly unique and have been around for millions of years. They require specific habitats and are very noticeable by their sound and movement. There are seven species of woodpeckers utilizing Illinois habitats. What many may not know is how critical woodpeckers are to some of our common backyard birds. Join the webinar and hear the history of woodpeckers, how to identify them, and why they are important for many other species in the environment.

Peggy is an Educator for University of Illinois Extension specializing in environmental education as it relates to wildlife and water quality issues. She holds a B.S. in Zoology with a specialization in wildlife management. Peggy is interested in human reactions and relationships to wildlife. She also holds an M.S. in Education with a specialization in Outdoor Teacher Education/Curriculum and Instruction. Peggy has been teaching environmental education for over 20 years, helping people understand wildlife as it relates to their lives.



Peggy Doty

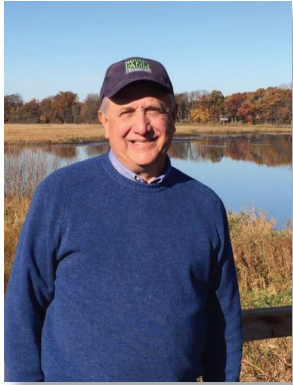
Information on how to connect to the Zoom presentation will be posted on the chapter website (www.wildonesrrvc.org) and Facebook page, and distributed via Constant Contact to members prior to the program. The program is free and open to the public. For more information, call (779) 537-8939.

Library Listing on Website Updated **Ginnie Watson**

Spring is nearly here. If you are planning your next native plant project, the chapter's Fran Lowman Memorial Library can help you with that! Our library offers books to help you choose and prepare your site and select your plants. You will learn which natives benefit our endangered pollinators. Bees, birds, and spiders have their own books to show you how they benefit from the native landscape. There are books that will introduce you to the wonders of the subsoil ecosystem and how especially important it is to the natural world.

continued on page 2

Message from the President Jerry Paulson



Jerry Paulson

With Spring right around the corner, I am anxious to get outside and work in my garden, and to make plans to put in more native plants. The chapter's annual native plant sale pick-up dates are May 7 & 8th with a members-only pick-up and sale on May 6th. This is our biggest event of the year! In addition to getting thousands of native plants into people's yards, the money we make

from the sale is used to pay speakers and meeting room rent (when we meet in person), publish our newsletter, maintain the website and make donations to other conservation and environmental education groups. This year we made gifts to

Severson Dells Nature Center, Nature at the Confluence, Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden, Midway Village, Nachusa Grasslands, Sand Bluff Bird Observatory and Wild Ones-National.

We need every member who can to help with the native plant sale. The work starts on Tuesday, May 4th setting up tables, unloading flats of plants, and labeling and sorting the flats of plants; Wednesday and Thursday we pull plants to fill orders; Thursday and Friday evenings we need help selling the plants, delivering orders to people's cars, parking, cashiering, and keeping order; Saturday morning we need to help the public select the right plant for their space, as well as all the other things...a lot of people are needed. Please help!

Expect a phone call asking you to volunteer to help at the native plant sale. If you want to volunteer to help, send an email to me at paulsonjerry@aol.com or text me at 815-222-4414.

Welcome Spring! It's been a long winter.

Library Listing on Website Updated, cont. Ginnie Watson

You will find books describing the many introduced and invasive weeds we are constantly battling and how to get rid of them.

More than 170 books can be found in our chapter library which has been updated and can be found online on the chapter website, www.wildonesRRVC.org>Resources>LendingLibrary.

To borrow a book or books contact Ginnie Watson, Library Coordinator, with the titles you wish to read. She will make arrangements for you to pick up and return your books. Be sure to read the LIBRARY LENDING POLICY found on the website. Contact information for the Library Coordinator is on the website.

Native Plant Sale Order Form Coming Soon Jane Evans

Finally, the snow has melted, bird songs are changing and we can hardly wait to get out in our gardens! This year's plant sale will be **Friday and Saturday, May 7 & 8**, with a members pickup of preorders on **Thursday, May 6**.

We have a wonderful list of native species for you to pick from including many butterfly larvae host plants such as Pussytoes, Prairie violet, Heartleaf golden alexander and 5 kinds of Milkweed. Bumblebees require early blooms such as Virginia waterleaf, Virginia bluebells and Bloodroot to

provision their nurseries. Porcupine sedge is wonderful for helping all kinds of water birds along ditches and ponds. And Common blue-eyed grass, from the Iris family, is tiny but beautiful. The sale brochure will be coming soon with all these choices and many more. To be sure you are on the list contact me at 815-399-3787 or jayevans9985@comcast.net.



Pussytoes

Recap of February Presentation

Mark Luthin

Ethnobotany and Natural History of Early Boone County, Illinois

Twenty-eight Wild Ones members and friends joined us on-line for the February 18th program. Pam Stock, retired Special Events and Public Outreach Manager for Boone County Conservation District, and Josh Sage, Director of Natural Resources for BCCD, teamed up to provide an interesting perspective of pre-settlement life in Boone County. If you missed the presentation, it is posted on the Wild Ones website www.wildonesrrvc.org.

Pam got the nod to go first with a video centered on how the local indigenous populations such as the Potawatomi, Winnebago and Menomonee utilized plants in the region. Plants were considered animate objects by these cultures, and proper blessings and thanksgiving were essential prior to using them. Once a fruit, nut or piece of bark was picked, that portion of the plant then became inanimate.



Pam Stock

Local plants were used for a variety of purposes. Food was a primary use, but plants were also used for medicine, seasoning, fiber, dyes and shelter. Interestingly, some plant parts such as the gum of the Kentucky Coffee Tree seed pod is poisonous. But, in low doses it was used medicinally.

Pam had samples of many plants and how they were used, and talked about the variety of written resources that she has used to acquire her knowledge. Luckily for our members, Pam created a booklet that lists many local species and how the first people in the area used them which she has graciously shared with us. This is posted on the Wild Ones website and her booklet can be directly linked here: [Ethnobotany of Boone County 1800's.pdf](#). Pam has also sent a list of her resources that she uses in her research, and this list will also be posted on the Wild Ones website.

Josh also started with a video that focused on the pre-settlement habitats found in Boone County. These habitats can be found throughout the Rock River valley of northern Illinois. Boone County, pre-settlement, would have looked a whole lot different than it does today. Farms, roads, subdivisions and

towns have all changed the landscape significantly in the past 170 years. But, through the efforts of organizations like the Boone County Conservation District and devoted stewards like Josh, some areas that were once tilled and pastured are now looking like they may have back in the 1830s.

Boone County has a variety of natural habitats, from sedge meadows to prairies, from riparian woodlands to fens. Oak savannas are considered one of the rarest habitats left in Boone County, and BCCD is working hard to reestablish them. Invasive species are the primary culprit. Shrub species such as honeysuckle and buckthorn tend to move in quickly and shade the understory. Oak seeds require sunlight for germination, and the lack of sunlight prevents successful regeneration of oak trees. Oak savannas, due to mottled sunlight, are one of the more diverse habitats found in the area.

Josh talked about some of the projects that BCCD has been working on. This winter, they “frost-seeded” 85 acres of prairie, with a heavy emphasis on forbs rather than grasses. Forbs tend to attract more pollinators such as the endangered Rusty patched bumble bee, that has been located at many of the Conservation District sites. BCCD does have what Josh described as one remnant prairie, basically undisturbed since pre-settlement times. This is Flora Prairie which is found close to the Winnebago County line in southern Boone County. Flora Prairie is likely the only remnant found in Boone County. Flora Prairie, along with Kinnickinnick Creek Conservation Area in northern Boone County are listed as Illinois Nature Preserve sites.



Josh Sage

In the early 1960's, Roger Gustafson helped create BCCD as the first conservation district, and since then BCCD has created 27 conservation areas encompassing 3800 acres. Having spent a lot of time exploring a good portion of BCCD properties over the years, I can attest to the fact that Josh and Aaron Minson, who works with Josh, are working hard to improve the natural habitats in Boone County. They are worth visiting any time of the year.

What's Blooming?

A new monthly in-depth plant column by Lenae Weichel (inspired by Jeff Stack's Latin Minutes)

Symplocarpus foetidus

Arum family (Araceae)
Eastern Skunk Cabbage

AKA: clumpfoot cabbage, meadow cabbage, fetid pothos, polecat weed, swamp cabbage

Generally the earliest bloomer in our area, skunk cabbage is a thermogenic plant which is able to generate temperatures up to 60°F above air temperature through cellular respiration; effectively melting snow and warming the ground to allow its early development. Spathes up to 6 inches tall emerge directly from the ground, range from a mottled green to burgundy to brown, and protect a round yellow or purple spadix containing both stamens and pistils. These blooms appear before the leaves and are typically observed in March here in northern Illinois.

Broad green leaves, veined and oblong, emerge coiled by mid-April, unfurl, and continue to grow up to 3 feet in length until mid- to late-summer when they brown and die back. The leaves have a skunk-like odor when crushed. Blooms have the same odor which attracts carrion feeders to pollinate. Fruit is mature by late summer and, unless eaten or carried off, falls to re-seed itself. Although often observed in large groupings,



skunk cabbage is not clonal and reproduces only from seed.

Skunk cabbage requires shady, moist sites and is generally found in seeps along creeks and springs, and in very moist woods. It is indigenous to Winnebago and surrounding counties and found readily throughout northeastern Illinois. Its general range is throughout the north- and central-eastern US and southeastern Canada. There is also a Western Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*) with bright yellow spathes on short stalks found throughout the Pacific Northwest.



Foliage feeds the Ruby Tiger Moth (*Phragmatobia fuliginosa*) and the Cattail Borer Moth (*Bellura obliqua*) caterpillars and spiders may use the warm spathes to await gnats and other insects in early spring. Although all parts of the plant were used medicinally by Native Americans and early Europeans, it is generally understood to be toxic due to the presence of calcium oxalate.

Nice stands of skunk cabbage may be observed at Rock Cut State Park along the little creek between the C2 and F22 markers and at Anna Page Conservation Forest on the north side of the wildflower trail along the North Fork of Kent Creek.

2021 Chapter Programs and Events

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| March 18
7:00 p.m. | Woodpeckers Peggy Doty, University of Illinois Extension via live Zoom program |
| April 15
7:00 p.m. | The Sedges You Know, the Sedges You Don't Andrew Hipp, Morton Arboretum via live Zoom program |
| May 6-8 | Native Plant Sale Pick-up Dates |
| May 20
7:00 p.m. | Rare Spring Flora of Apple River Canyon Randy Nyboer via virtual tour |
| June 17
7:00 p.m. | Dragonflies & Damselflies Cindy Crosby via live Zoom program |
| July 15
7:00 p.m. | Virtual Yard Tour Ken Keilsmeier via virtual tour |

2021 Chapter Programs and Events (con't)

August 19 Invasive Species ID and Control | Michael Hansen-Land Care Manager, University of Wisconsin-Morton Arboretum via live Zoom program
7:00 p.m.

September 16 Conservation Planning in the Raccoon Watershed | Kerry Leigh, Natural Land Institute
7:00 p.m.

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

Membership Updates

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!

186 memberships as of February 23, 2021

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

Eric Ellison, Rockford
Rick & Jane Hoffman, Monroe Center
Judy Letourneau, Rockford
Mark & Laurie Luthin, Belvidere
Dennis McFall, Rockford

Welcome to our new member(s)!

Jean & Scott McKeever, Machesney Park

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!

A big thank you to our February meeting volunteers!

Meeting Recap: Mark Luthin

A special thank you to:

Mark Luthin and Janet Giesen for help with the February meeting.

It is preferred that renewal memberships 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
Membership, Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter
7492 Renfro Rd.
Cherry Valley, IL 61016-9788

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!





NATIVE PLANTS. NATURAL LANDSCAPES

ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 03/1/2021, 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

Due to COVID 19 restrictions on gatherings of more than 50 people we are not holding our regular meetings on the third Thursday of the month at Rock Valley College. Instead, we are meeting over ZOOM or posting videos on YouTube of the program. Most other in-person events are cancelled until such time as the restrictions are lifted. Links to the meetings and programs are posted on our website and our Facebook page, and sent to members via email the week of the meeting. If you want to receive the link send an email to: janetgiesen@gmail.com.

Rock River Valley Chapter Board and Coordinators

BOARD

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

Vice president: Constance McCarthy
(815) 282.0316 kublaikhan@mac.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 jodikiels@gmail.com

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

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

Native plant sale: Janet Giesen (as left) & Jane Evans (815) 399-3787 jayevans9985@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

Linda Rickter 217) 649.3966

greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com

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

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: [open position]

Newsletter: production coordinator: Jessie Crow Mermel (815) 955.0653 serendipitree@gmail.com

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

Volunteer coordinator: [open position]

Show Me/Help Me coordinator: Linda Ricker (as to the left)