

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

Inside this Issue:

Message from the President	2
Tree & Shrub Sale Recap	2
Nurturing Native Plants	3
National Seeds for Ed Grant	3
Program Recap	4
Bell Bowl Prairie	5
Membership Updates	5
Chapter Contact Info	6

www.wildonesrrvc.org



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

Protecting Raccoon Creek Watershed

Thursday, October 21, 2021

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

The Raccoon Creek valley, located at the top edge of Winnebago County, harbors rare remnants of natural fens, sedge meadows and shallow bogs, including an Illinois Nature Preserve and several endangered species of plants, fishes, and insects. The Natural Land Institute (NLI), a regional land trust based in Rockford, has created a conservation plan for the Illinois portion of the Raccoon Creek watershed as an important first step in protecting and conserving the natural land and habitat, and improving water quality in this cool water, relatively high-quality stream. NLI chose this priority area for protection because its Nygren Wetland Preserve sits at the bottom of the watershed, and its new Lost Flora Fen is near the top at the Stateline.



Kerry Leigh

NLI's Executive Director, Kerry Leigh, will talk about the goals and strategies to protect the Raccoon Creek watershed, and where the climate resilient areas are located.

Kerry has worked in restoration ecology for much of her career and has an MA in Landscape Architecture. Her passion is protecting and restoring the natural communities of northern Illinois including working with rare and globally impaired ecosystems. She has also worked regionally doing watershed planning, facility planning area and wastewater treatment reviews for the IEPA, and Great Lakes restoration work with other regional planning agencies and local governments. She became the Executive Director at NLI in 2013 and was recently appointed by the Governor to the IDNR Advisory Board. She grew up in DeKalb and has lived in over 7 countries. She did all her higher education in Great Britain where she raised her family for many years before returning to Illinois in 1990.

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 email to members prior to the meeting. The program is free and open to the public. For more information call (779) 537-8939.

Message from the President Jerry Paulson



Jerry Paulson

As many of you know, I had the honor of being appointed to fill an unexpired term as a Commissioner of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County last month. The District will celebrate its centennial year in 2022, and I hope to be able to help highlight all of the great things that it has done during the last 100 years to preserve and protect the natural heritage of this beautiful

county. The Commissioners oversee some of the most important forests, prairies and wetlands in the area, and provide recreational and educational opportunities for thousands of people. I invite you to share your thoughts and concerns about our forest preserves with me.



I will still be fulfilling my job as President of the Wild Ones Rock River Valley chapter, but I need your help. We currently have a vacancy on our Board, and several coordinator positions have not been filled. Please check the list of Chapter Board, officers and coordinators on the back page of the newsletter and see if one of these jobs interests you.

We also need help making plans for our native plant sale in the Spring of 2022. This is our biggest fundraiser for the chapter and introduces many people to the beauty of our native wildflowers, grasses, ferns, vines and sedges. If you can help with the planning and preparation, please contact Janet Giesen or Jane Evans the sale coordinators.

Finally, please send me photos of the native plants in your yards and farms to show during our virtual annual meeting on November 18th. Because we have not been able to get together or visit with each other during the year, sharing pictures of your yards is the next best thing. Send them to me at paulsonjerry@aol.com.

Thank You For Planting More Oaks

Thank you to those Wild Ones members and friends who purchased oaks and other native trees and shrubs from our Chapter's fall Native Tree & Shrub Sale. There were 42 orders placed for 180 plants...the highest number sold in many years! These included 24 native oaks: 3 White Oaks, 1 Swamp White Oak, 8 Chinquapin Oaks, 6 Bur Oaks, 3 Hill's Oaks, and 3 Red Oaks. As our speaker last month said, "Our native oaks are a "keystone" species that many other species rely on." (see recap of The Ecology of Oaks)

In addition, we sold 14 Coralberrys and 3 Snowberrys, new species for sale this year. We also sold 3 Nannyberry Viburnums, that have not been available for several years, and 2 Yellow Birch, a very rare species in northern Illinois!

Thanks to Brian Hale for coordinating the Tree & Shrub Sale again this year and to Janet Giesen, Linda Ricker and Jerry Paulson for producing the sale brochure.



Brian Hale coordinated the 2021 Native Tree & Shrub Sale

Nurturing Native Plants at the Cherry Valley Library

Jane Lenser, Library Director

At the Cherry Valley Public Library District, we have a long history with native plants and have been members of Wild Ones for years. Several beds around the grounds feature a variety of mature species. Therefore, when a 4,000 square foot building addition that was completed in late 2020 left us with some odd-shaped, hilly patches of grass that would be challenging to mow, I immediately wondered if we could turn the turf into expanded native gardens. I thought the transition would need to be a gradual, multi-year project since we had just spent so much money on the new addition and our long-time landscaping company had just told us that they were dissolving.

I figured out that we would need 1,600 plants to fill the six available areas and I hoped to buy at least a few at the Wild Ones annual sale when the mini-grant opportunity for non-profit organizations caught my eye. The possibility of being awarded grant funds for native plants sprouted many questions: Could we afford to purchase ALL of the plants that we would need even at a reduced price?; Could Wild Ones accommodate such a large order?;

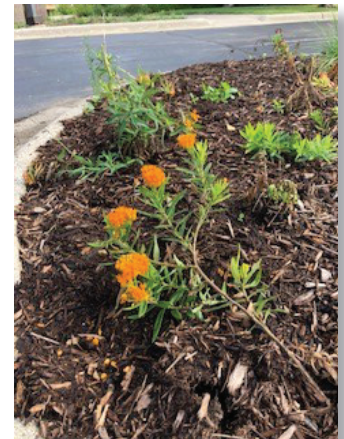


Who could we get to plant and care for that many plants? With a bit of work, answers began to fall into place. Donations and other grant funds could help pay for the plants. Jane Evans, Janet Giesen, Kim Lowman Vollmer, and Sallie Krebs from Wild Ones all assisted in helping us figure out the plant logistics. I investigated landscaping companies who



shared our passion for native plants and ended up hiring Tyler's Landscaping in Rockford. We applied for the grant and were approved!

Fast forward to late summer...all 1,600 baby plants are in the ground and are doing well. Despite a dry summer and an outdoor watering ban in the Village of Cherry Valley, the plants are flourishing, and some are even blooming. We look forward to offering programs next spring/summer and beyond to help share our enthusiasm for native plants with our patrons—adults and kids. A huge thank you goes out to Wild Ones of Rock River Valley for helping make this dream come true!



Photos by Jane Lenser

The National Seeds for Education Grant Applications Due

The Seeds for Education (SFE) is a nationally supported grant program that gives awards to purchase native plants and seeds. It is open to schools, nature centers, after school care programs, churches, community centers or youth groups in need of funding for a native garden, butterfly garden, pollinator garden or habitat for hands-on learning. **The Wild Ones SFE grant program is accepting online applications through October 15th for 2022 projects.**

Got to this site for more information, ideas and application.

<https://wildones.org/sfe-application/>

Please reach out to me if you have any questions.

Kim Lowman Vollmer

Grant Chair

Board Member

Program Recap: The Ecology of Oaks Jerry Paulson

Sarah Michehl, Community Engagement Specialist with The Land Conservancy of McHenry County presented a program on the ecology and care of oak trees for the September 16th meeting. She has spent 20 years as an environmental educator and has a personal interest in sharing the functionality and joy that comes with incorporating native plants into any property. She certifies properties that want to enroll in TLC's Conservation@Home program and advises oak landowners on how to care for their land.

Our native oaks are a "keystone" species that many other species rely on, Michehl said. There are 12 species of native oaks in Northern Illinois that fall into two groups: Red-Black Oaks and White-Bur Oaks. Before it was settled by Europeans, 28% of Winnebago County was covered by oak woodlands, now only 3% of the county has native oak woods.

Oak woodlands can be divided into four natural communities:

- 1) Oak Barrens - 0-10% cover by trees, oaks and shrubs stunted by frequent fires or sandy soils. When fires were stopped the trees grew quickly from their massive root systems.
- 2) Oak Savannas - 10-25% cover by trees, open-grown bur oaks with branches stretching to the ground and grasses, sedges, ferns, wildflowers and shrubs in the understory, maintained by infrequent fires.
- 3) Oak Woodlands - 25-60% tree cover, mostly white and red oaks with a mix of understory shrubs, wildflowers, grasses and sedges.
- 4) Oak Forests - 60-100% tree cover, white oak and red oaks that developed in ravines or along rivers that were protected from fires.

Oaks are monoecious, meaning that male and female structures are produced on the same trees. However, the pistils and stamens mature at different times to prevent self-fertilization. Red and black oaks take two growing seasons for the acorns to mature, while white and bur oaks only take one season. Red oaks take 20 years of growth before they will produce acorns, while bur oaks take 35 years. The acorns germinate as soon as they fall to the ground. They send down a tap root, then the roots grow for 1-2 years before sending up leaves. Acorns are spread and planted by squirrels, chipmunks, and Blue Jays. Jays can carry up to 5 acorns in pouches in their throat.

Oak leaves contain tannins and are only palatable to caterpillars with the largest mandibles. Leaf miner moth caterpillars eat the soft tissue in the center of the leaf. There are many species of insects that feed on oak leaves, acorns or stems. These in turn feed many birds and other wildlife.

The root systems of oak trees are massive. Young oaks send down tap roots to reach water and anchor the tree to the ground. Older trees send out lateral roots that capture moisture from rainfall and nutrients with the help of Mycorrhizal fungi. The fungi provide nutrients to the tree roots and the tree gives carbohydrates to the fungus. Native plants growing around oak trees help to support the fungi that support the trees.

The wood of oaks is some of the densest of all the North American hardwoods. The slow-growing trees capture and store carbon for long periods, making them important for reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

The dead leaves, bark and branches of oak trees provide valuable habitat for many insects and other wildlife to overwinter. That is why you should not rake and burn oak leaves in the fall. It is also important that you do not burn the oak litter every year, and when you do, use prescribed burning to leave sections unburned.

How can you help care for your oak trees?

- 1) Leave the leaves that fall under the dripline of the tree
- 2) Don't drive on or compact the soil under the dripline or near the tree
- 3) Remove invasive species of plants that compete for moisture and nutrients
- 4) Do prescribed burns periodically in savannas and oak woodlands
- 5) Protect oak seedlings from browsers and mowers

The Land Conservancy holds workshops about how to care for your oak woods, brush removal and prescribed burning. They have established a goal of having 5,000 acres of well managed oak woodlands in McHenry County (go to www.conservemc.org/get-involved).

The full recording of the program can be seen on the WORRV website at https://www.wildonesrrvc.org/Monthly_Meetings.html

Save the Bell Bowl Prairie

Sinnissippi Audubon and the Natural Land Institute have been working to inform and organize the community to stop the development of the remnant Bell Bowl Prairie by the Greater Rockford Airport Authority. In addition to being a rare remnant prairie, Bell Bowl Prairie is habitat to the federally endangered Rusty Patched Bumblebee.

Barbara Williams has released an informative video on the Rusty Patched Bumblebee on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgMin6YfzFA>

Stay informed and get involved, follow the Save the Bell Bowl Prairie Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/581138436414631>

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!

200 memberships as of September 25, 2021

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

Nathan Aaberg, Grayslake
Abigail Bukowski, Beloit WI
Brett & Margret Hanson, Belvidere
Nancy Holstrum, Belvidere
Michael & Jean Maloney, Belvidere

Welcome to our new member(s)!

Nathan Aaberg, Grayslake
Abigail Bukowski, Beloit WI

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!

Anniversaries:

20 Years:

Steve Hall, Rockford

5 Years:

Melodee & John Rearden, Rockford

It is preferred that renewal memberships be submitted through the Member Center online rather than by check 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. If you need to mail a check, please use the address below:

WILD ONES

ATTN: MEMBERSHIP
2285 BUTTE DES MORTS BEACH RD
NEENAH, WI 54912-1274

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 weeks prior to your expiration date.

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 10/1/2021, 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:

WILD ONES

ATTN: MEMBERSHIP
2285 BUTTE DES MORTS BEACH RD
NEENAH, WI 54912-1274

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. 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

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Vice President: [open position]
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: Linda Tabb Ricker
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APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Booth coordinator: [open position]
Facebook coordinator: Sallie Krebs (815)
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Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson
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Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs
(as to the above)
Mentor coordinator: [open position]
Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell
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Native plant sale: Janet Giesen (as to the left)
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Newsletter: production coordinator: Jessie
Crow Mermel (815) 955.0653 serendipitree@gmail.com

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m.luthin@comcast.net
Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)
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Show Me/Help Me coordinator:
Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)
Tree & shrub sale coordinator: Brian Hale
(815) 289.2384 moyogi2@gmail.com
Volunteer coordinator: [open position]
Website coordinator: Janet Giesen (as to the
left)
Youth education & grants coordinator: Kim
Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)