

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

Inside this Issue:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Message from the President | 2 |
| Bell Bowl Prairie Program | 2 |
| Sand Bluff Bird Observatory | 3 |
| Financial Report | 4 |
| Membership Updates | 5 |
| Upcoming Programs | 5 |
| Chapter Contact Info | 6 |

www.wildonesrrvc.org



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All articles for the February 2021 newsletter, must be submitted to: Jerry Paulson at paulsonjerry@aol.com by January 21, 2022

Lee Johnson: A Naturalist's Life

Thursday, January 20, 2022

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



Lee Johnson

Local naturalist, Lee Johnson, turned 90 years old on December 18, 2021, and sat with WORRV chapter president Jerry Paulson and videographer Charles Johannsen to reflect on the changes to the natural environment he has witnessed during his life. A keen observer of nature and a life-long bird watcher, Lee will share his remembrances during the first program of the New Year.

Lee's Great Grandfather came to Winnebago County in 1838 and settled near Harrison. His father lost his job and all of his savings during the Great Depression. He worked hard to send Lee and his sister to school where Lee excelled in science and natural history. Growing up in Roscoe near Kinnikinnick Creek, he and his sister explored the creeks, woodlands and wetlands along the Rock River and began his life-long interest in birds.

In 10th grade he visited the area along the Sugar River known as Colored Sands to look for birds. He later acquired the natural area to protect it from being mined for sand and started the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, a bird banding station, on the property. In 1976 he sold the land to the Forest Preserve District of Winnebago County, and the southern part became Colored Sands Nature Preserve. Lee served as Director of the Burpee Museum of Natural History from 1985-1997, raising \$3.5 million to build a new wing to the museum.

Lee has received the Seth B. Atwood Award for Parks and Recreation, the George & Barbara Fell Award, the National Parks and Recreation Award, Service Above Self Award from the Rockford Rotary Club, and the National Audubon Society Presidential Recognition Award. He served on the Natural Land Institute board, Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners, Girl Scouts of Rock River Valley board, the board of Sinnissippi Audubon Society, and was a founding member of the North Central Illinois Ornithological Society along with his sister who became a renowned bird expert in Arizona.

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

Please welcome Ed Foster to the Board of WORRV. He replaces Linda Ricker as an At-large member, who was elected as Vice President. The rest of the Board remains the same. Thank you to Linda, Cathy, Janet, Kim and Ed for doing the work of the chapter, and all of the volunteer Coordinators and Committee members who make everything happen.

Despite the continuing pandemic, our chapter continued to provide interesting and educational programs, an informative newsletter, Facebook page and website, and two successful native plant sales. Program topics included the natural history of Osage Orange and other ghost trees, ethnobotany, the natural history of Boone Co., woodpeckers of Illinois, sedges, the ecology of oaks, dragonflies and damselflies, Raccoon Creek

and the rare flora of Apple River Canyon. We also had a virtual tour of the conservation plantings done by Ken Kielsmeier on his friend's farm near Leaf River. Ken converted marginal cropland to tallgrass prairie and planted native trees and shrubs to create wildlife habitat. His passion for nature is on display for all to see.

Because we can't tour members' natural yards in person, many shared photos of the native plants and wildlife in their yards during our annual meeting in November. This year we plan to start meeting again in person at Rock Valley College, once the COVID 19 numbers are down enough to meet safely. We will continue to stream our meetings on-line for those who won't or can't attend in person. The details are still being worked out with RVC, but we hope to start in-person meetings in the Spring.

We still have volunteer opportunities available, including for the Native Plant Sale in May. Please contact me if you can help. I look forward to seeing you in 2022.

Photos of our members' wildflowers and natural yards are posted on our website at: https://wildonesrrvc.org/Monthly_Meetings.html.

Mark Your Calendar for February 17 Program

The Flora and Fauna of Bell Bowl Prairie and Other Gravel Prairies

Ed Cope, former Ecologist with the Natural Land Institute, will discuss the flora and fauna of gravel prairies in the Rock River valley, using Bell Bowl Prairie as a specific lens through which to bring the bigger picture of this unique ecosystem into focus. He will review the origin and history of gravel prairies in the area, then discuss the plant and animal species that inhabit them. Particular focus will be given to those species who have disappeared, and those



Photo by Jessie Crow Mermel

that teeter on the cusp of extirpation. Bell Bowl Prairie is the last local refuge for a number of species, and its destruction would doubtlessly seal their fate.

The program will be presented via Zoom. The link will be posted on the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter website, www.wildonesrrvc.org and on Facebook.

Sand Bluff Bird Observatory Anna Gray, SBBO Volunteer



Photo by John Longhenry

Sand Bluff Bird Observatory's history began when the bird banding station was started in March 1967 by Lee Johnson, on land that he owned along the Sugar River. In 1976 the land was purchased by the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County and dedicated as Colored Sands Forest Preserve.

In August 1989, a new building, donated by the Barbara May Atwood Foundation, was dedicated and continues to be the base for bird banding operations and educational programs. The FPWC owns and maintains the building and adjoining lands.

Sand Bluff Bird Observatory (SBBO) acquired non-profit status and incorporated in February 1998. The fifteen member board of directors meets regularly and oversees its mission of research and study of avian species and education of the public.

SBBO is totally operated by volunteers who contribute an average of 6,000-7,000 hours annually. During the pandemic a small group of dedicated volunteers has been committed to banding on a limited basis while programming has been temporarily put on hold. The SBBO website, Facebook page, and newsletter, the Sand Bluff Birder, provide communication and outreach to our supporters and the general public.

The banding station is surrounded by Colored Sands Forest Preserve's unique natural areas filled with prairie grasses and flowering native plants. Over the years, we have shared the prairie's diversity and beauty with visitors. Butterflies,

snakes, insects, turtles and trees, in addition to migrating birds, continue to fill volunteers and visitors with awe.

From March 1967 through November 2021, a total of 429,321 birds have been banded and information collected. SBBO has the appropriate permits and receives aluminum bands from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. We have significantly added to the research collected in our nation's scientific data base.

"I always liked birds from an early age onward, but I never really learned to love them until I started volunteering at Sand Bluff so many long years ago. The knowledge and passion shared by the other volunteers, the miles of mist nets that I walked, and every small miracle that I held, banded, and released eventually opened my eyes



Deb Eickman, Treasurer; Mike Eickman, Station Master, Donna Hilton, Board Member
Photo by Anna Gray

to the importance of bird conservation." These thoughts were shared in a letter from a former SBBO volunteer who started volunteering as a young man and now is working as a conservation advocate.

As an all-volunteer organization, SBBO depends on the generosity of donors like the Rock River Valley Chapter Wild Ones to be able to continue its research and educational programming. With your generous gift we were able to purchase equipment and mist nets for the 2021 and 2022 banding seasons. These nets are a key component in capturing birds safely before they are banded and released.

Wild Ones and SBBO have shared a cooperative partnership for two decades at SBBO's Birdfest event. Your gifts of prairie plants for the auction, information booth, plant sales, and knowledgeable members have inspired many to take an interest in native plants and promote natural landscapes.

Sand Bluff Bird Observatory appreciates the Wild Ones long-term collaboration and support to protect and preserve natural habitats and avian conservation.



Dave Seal (on left) and Steve Reischel (on right)
SBBO Volunteers and Board Members
Photos courtesy of SBBO

Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter Financial Report

as of December 31, 2021, prepared by Janet Giesen, Treasurer

Each month I update the financial statement that reflects all chapter-related revenue and expenses. The following items have been selected from the December 2021 monthly financial statement.

January 1 through December 31, 2021

| Selected Line Items | Revenue | Expenses |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Donations received from members | \$1,465 | |
| Membership dues returned to our chapter from National - 25% of dues paid is returned to our chapter from National (\$10.00 per \$40.00 membership) | \$1,425 | |
| <i>Plant sales net income - our chapter has the highest plant sale revenue of the entire Wild Ones organization</i> | <i>\$3,940 increase from last year</i> | |
| Native plant sale (net \$12,891 w/ PayPal sales) | \$31,110 | \$18,219 |
| Tree and shrub sale (net \$3,032 w/ PayPal sales) | \$6,687 | \$3,655 |
| Donations to organizations | | \$3,500 |
| Monthly program presenter fee - for virtual productions and presentations | | \$1,290 |
| Monthly newsletters - production (\$1,000), printing (\$559), postage (\$422) | | \$1,981 |
| Apollo Hosting (\$638) - website hosting/maintenance Constant Contact (\$699) - online marketing company for announcements to members | | \$1,337 |
| TOTAL | \$40,687 | \$29,982 |
| | Representative net revenue: \$10,705 | |

What Does the Chapter's Treasure Do?

As the chapter's treasurer, I manage the financial resources and promote prudent financial practices for the chapter. My position is important because I am responsible for creating accurate and timely records of the chapter's financial transactions in a monthly financial statement. I create this statement in conjunction with reconciling the bank statement each month and distribute these statements electronically to chapter board of directors. We discuss the chapter's financial resources at bi-monthly meetings.

Here are additional duties for which I am responsible: create an annual budget, which we discuss and approve at the December board of directors meeting; file an end-of-year financial statement with National Wild Ones by the end of January each year; maintain all chapter-related accounts including Harris Bank, PayPal, Square (a financial services and digital payments company we use at our plant sales), our website hosting service, and Constant Contact

(the online marketing company, which allows us to send monthly newsletters and other news blasts to our membership); process expense vouchers, merchandise deposits, member donations, pay invoices to various vendors, and until recently, assist with membership dues transactions.

As you can see, my position as chapter treasure is vital to the chapter's success and has many responsibilities. Although I work on the financials on a weekly basis, the busiest times of the year for me are during the native plant sale in spring and the tree and shrub sale in the fall. I enjoy what I do because it keeps me in touch with the board, our many coordinators, and chapter members. I was chapter treasurer for eight years after which I took a brief sabbatical. I'm now in my fourth year of what was supposed to be just one, until someone else steps forward to assume the treasurer position. We are always looking for new board members.

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!

191 memberships as of December 27, 2021

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

Bob & Bev Beebe, Rockford
 Lisa Bleed, Rockford
 Brian Hale, Sycamore
 Rick & Jane Hoffman, Monroe Center
 Judy Letourneau, Rockford
 Thomas & Nancy Mangan, Clare
 Dennis McFall, Rockford
 Pam Mott, Rockford
 Steve Symes, Belvidere
 Joanne Thompson, South Beloit

Welcome to our new member!

Lisa Bleed, 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!

Anniversaries:

25 Years:

Karen Matz & John Skowronski, DeKalb

10 Years:

Krina Goss, Rockford

Ron Hendrickson, Rockford

5 Years:

Lynn Berg, Dixon

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. To renew your Wild Ones membership [Log in](#) or contact support@wildones.org for more information. Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter above your name on the label. You will receive several emails from the Wild Ones national organization prior to your expiration date. If you want to join Wild Ones as a new member go to the [Member Center](#). 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

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!

Wild Ones Rock River Valley 2022 Programs

January 20 - Lee Johnson; A Naturalist's Life

February 17 - Ed Cope; Flora and Fauna of Bell Bowl Prairie

March 17 - Peggy Doty; The World of Owls

April 21 - Erin Garrett; Planting a Shade Garden

May 19 - Travis Cleveland, Native Tree Identification Using Dichotomous Keys

June 16 - Celebrating 100 Years of Winnebago Co. Forest Preserves

July 21 - Members Picnic and Tour

August 18 - Jim Kleinwachter; Creating Eco-friendly Yards



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 01/1/2021, 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

President: Jerry Paulson
(815) 222.4414 paulsonjerry@aol.com
Vice President: Linda Tabb Ricker (217)
649.3966 greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com
Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865
cattjohn_22@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912
janetgiesen@gmail.com
Board members:
Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044
kimlowvol@aol.com
Ed Foster (815) 654-3441 thistletwo@aol.com

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Booth coordinator: [open position]
Facebook coordinator: Sallie Krebs (815)
540.4730 membershipworrvc@gmail.com

Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson
(815) 398.0138 vsWatson47@aol.com
Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs
(as to the above)
Mentor coordinator: [open position]
Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell
(815) 969.7435 cynthiachmell@gmail.com
Native plant sale: Janet Giesen (as to the left)
Jane Evans
Newsletter: editor: Jamie Johannsen (815)
494-6977 jjohannsen50@gmail.com
Newsletter: production: Jessie Crow Mermel
(815) 955.0653 serendipitree@gmail.com
Plant rescue/seeds coordinator: Mary Anne
Mathwich (815) 721.5187 mprairiedock@aol.com

Program coordinators: Lisa Johnson (chair)
(779) 537.8939
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m.luthin@comcast.net
Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)
Publicity coordinator: Dawn Skupien
(815) 262.7864 dawnskupien@gmail.com
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)