

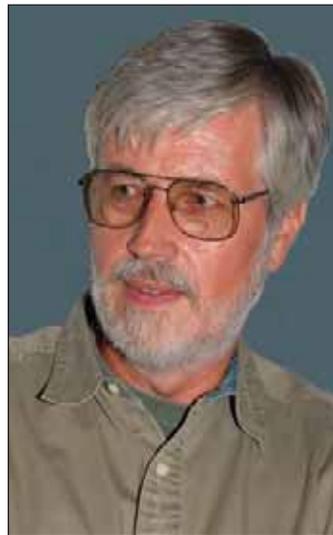
**Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.**

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*Secrets to Identifying Our Native Trees*  
*Thursday, August 20, 2009*

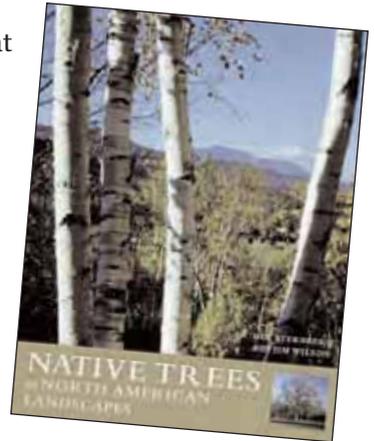
**Location: Burpee Museum of Natural History**  
737 N. Main St., Rockford, IL  
**Time: 7:00–9:00 pm**



**Guy Sternberg**

Photo by Tim Lewis

“Trees are the primary living structural elements of the outdoor environment – the meat and bones of the landscape. Tree planting is a lifetime investment, and such investments should be made with prudence. Native species have evolved with our climates, soils, pathogens, pollinators, and associated species over thousands of years; what you see is what you get”, writes renown author and lecturer Guy Sternberg in the introduction to the book he wrote in 2004 with Jim Wilson – *Native Trees for North American Landscapes*. The owner of his own research arboretum, **Starhill Forest**, Guy will describe for us some



native trees, which are suitable for our changing climate.

Following that, an interactive workshop on tree identification will allow the audience to examine some tree specimens. Audience members will learn how to distinguish between different members of tree families (i.e. burr oak vs. red oak, sugar maple vs. black maple) in a hands-on workshop as Guy discusses different trees’ distinguishing features and cultural requirements.

Feel free to bring a sample of any tree you are having trouble identifying and join us in this interactive, hands-on workshop on identifying our native trees.

For more information, please contact Kim Risley at (815) 962-4584.

Submitted by Kim Risley,  
V. Pres./Program Chair



Articles for the September 2009 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor, at [dkcamps@aol.com](mailto:dkcamps@aol.com) by August 23, 2009.



## *Message from the President* Constance McCarthy

### Sorry, no tote bags...

We need your help. Don't worry—there's no heavy lifting involved! We'd like to introduce more people like you to Wild Ones, and to show them the many benefits of membership so that hopefully they will become members, too. You might say that this a membership drive of sorts. But instead of receiving a tote bag, you'll receive the good feeling that comes with helping to further the Wild Ones mission.

But this is not a membership drive just to increase our total membership or to raise funds for the chapter. At its heart, it's about introducing more people to native landscaping. The more members we have, the more folks we'll be able to teach how to use natives in their home or business landscapes. That means more natives in the ground to improve our environment. Better for all of us (even the critters), and certainly better than a tote bag!

We'd like to ask you to pass along the enclosed brochure to someone who you think might have an interest in native plants. Show (or tell) them how you have used native plants in your own landscape. As you probably already know, we find that one of the best ways to encourage others to plant natives is to get people to start out small with a few plants so that they can see how beautiful they are. And one of the best ways to find new people to introduce to Wild Ones is through people we know.

So, please consider giving the enclosed brochure to someone and invite them to our next meeting. Or, if you're feeling especially munificent, consider giving someone a gift membership. Either way, we're always glad to see our merry flock increase.

## ••••• ••••• **New Wild Ones Merchandise!** ••••• •••••

• Submitted by Shey Lowman, Merchandise Chair

• Be prepared to shop the next Wild Ones meeting! The Parsnip Predator will be available for the first time and a bargain at \$40. Check The Prairie Enthusiasts website for details on this wonderful tool, [www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/merchandise/predator.htm](http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/merchandise/predator.htm). Your favorite Wild Ones items: yard signs, mugs, baseball caps, and t-shirts, sweatshirts and denim shirts in a wide range of sizes, including XL and XXL. Be ready for those gift giving seasons!

• Also new are copies of the Prairie Seedling and Seeding Evaluation Guide, an extremely useful 120 page guide for identifying common prairie and weed seedlings. Excellent photographs and field descriptions make this a must-own addition to your personal library. The Guide is privately published and can be difficult find, especially at \$12.

## *Membership Update* Marilyn Heneghan, Membership Chair

### 177 memberships on August 1, 2009

#### Welcome New Member

Mary Jane Baucom  
Phil & Carolyn Fulkerson  
Ben & Karen Gallagher

#### Special Thanks to Recent Rock River Valley Chapter Donators

(any amount about the \$30 basic dues)  
Dan & Kirby Doyle  
Marlowe & Nancy Holstrum

38 members attended the yard social.

**Note: It is preferred that renewal donations be sent directly to the Chapter's Membership Chair, Marilyn Heneghan, rather than to the national office.** Processing goes quicker this way for the chapter. Your expiration date is on your newsletter and your Journal address label. Thank you.

**"NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES"**  
Please notify Marilyn Heneghan at  
[informationoptions@att.net](mailto:informationoptions@att.net) if you  
change your email address.

Dues payments can be sent either directly to the National Office or to the Chapter Membership Chair, Marilyn Heneghan. Forty percent of the dues paid, regardless of the amount, are shared with Rock River Valley Chapter. Members wishing to make donations specifically for the local chapter, should make a separate payment or so note on their membership application under "Chapter Contribution" and mail to the Chapter Membership Chair. Dues payments, regardless of amount, are considered a donation and are tax deductible.

## *The Mentor Program is Back!*

Submitted by Constance McCarthy

After a bit of a hiatus, the mentor program is back. Things are still in first gear, but we're moving forward!

One of the many advantages of Wild Ones membership, this program matches newer or less experienced members who request a mentor, with a more experienced member who is willing to share his or her knowledge. Advantages to the mentee are obvious. However, the mentor also benefits from participating, for by teaching another person, one's own knowledge is also enriched. Indeed, one of the best ways to learn more about something is to teach it to someone else. And of course, participation is a great way to further the mission of Wild Ones.

In order to be a mentee, you must be a member of Wild Ones and you need to ask (more on that below). You also will need to value your mentor's free offering of time. One way to do that is to put in the effort to educate yourself, not only relying on the mentor to do the educating. You can educate yourself by attending Show Me/Help Me events, reading books on natives (our chapter's library is a wonderful resource), and attending our monthly educational meetings.

## *We're All About the Learning*

In addition to our amazing Wild Ones educational programs, here are some other educational opportunities that might be of interest to our members.

The University of Illinois Extension in Winnebago County has two great courses coming up. First, our region will become only the third in Illinois to offer the Master Naturalist program, beginning in September. This will involve 40 hours of course work, including two field days.

To be a certified Master Naturalist, course graduates will have to do 30 hours of volunteer work per year, plus 10 hours of continuing education. The volunteer work will generally be of the graduate's choosing, but must have an educational purpose and have to do with conservation, restoration, etc. This is a great opportunity to obtain more in-depth knowledge about the natural world, and then to share that knowledge with folks in our community. The fee for the course will be \$250, which includes the book and course materials.

Another new program for our area will be the Master Composter course. The training will involve five three-hour sessions (three Saturday mornings and two Thursday evenings), between September 12 and October 3. Topics to be covered include the science of composting, various means of composting, how to

There are also simple requirements to be a mentor. Mentors should be willing to share their time, typically two visits to the mentee's home landscape per season (since we're getting started late, maybe just one visit in 2009). Mentors should also have enough knowledge and experience to be helpful to a newer member. However, you need not be an expert! It is also beneficial to be able to know when your own knowledge is inadequate, and to be able to assist the mentee in finding other resources in such cases (e.g., books, other experienced members).

I realize that the mentor program typically gets underway each year in the spring, but there's no time like the present! Besides, many plants and trees can still be planted in the fall, and it might be helpful to obtain some guidance before winter sets in. You can study while your garden slumbers, and hit the ground running in the spring.

If you are interested in participating in this worthwhile program, as either a mentor or a mentee, or if you'd like more information, please contact me at (815) 282.0316 or [kublaikhan@mac.com](mailto:kublaikhan@mac.com).

Constance McCarthy

construct different kinds of piles or bins, worm composting, and troubleshooting. The fee for the course will be \$50, which also includes all course materials. One of the guest presenters will be the professional gardener who manages the kitchen gardens of Chicago celebrity chef Rick Bayless.

Registration for these two programs will be opening sometime in August, so call the Extension at

(815) 987.4357 or check out

[www.extension.uiuc.edu/winnebago](http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/winnebago) if you're interested.

Finally, are you looking for a way to use mature invasive trees that you'd like to remove from your landscape?

Consider a class on whole-tree architecture! In this two-day course being offered by Angelic Organics Learning Center (in northern Boone County) on August 29 and 30, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day, you'll learn state-of-the-art skills in sustainable construction that you can apply to building projects using your own trees. Roald Gundersen, an architect specializing in whole-tree projects, will teach about whole-tree design, framing and finishing, forestry, tree selection, peeling bark, and assembling a simple structure. To learn more about the course or to register, contact AOLC at (815) 389.8455 or visit [www.LearnGrowConnect.org](http://www.LearnGrowConnect.org).

***"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself."***

***--John Dewey***

## *July 16 Evening Social/Yard Tour* Constance McCarthy

### **Prairie tour at the Judi and John Peterson home in Durand**

Photos by Tim Lewis

In lieu of our monthly meeting at Burpee, on 16 July we visited the home of Judi and John Peterson for our chapter's annual garden tour and social. We couldn't have asked for nicer weather, as the sun was shining and the nice breeze helped keep the mosquitoes at bay.

Their home sits on about five acres just outside of Durand, and includes a 3-acre prairie that John is working on restoring. This prairie contains a variety of soil types, ranging from wetter areas where there are depressions, to drier spots on the upland. AES/Taylor Creek did the initial restoration work. They used five seed mixes, each one tailored for a different kind of soil. Some current problems that John is wrestling with include cattails, ragweed, and reed canary grass.

The ditch along the road is too steep to mow, and John has filled it with native plants. Along the western border of his property, he has planted 15 or so bittersweet vines, all of which are thriving. When mature, the vines can stretch up to 30 feet. Some downy hawthorns from our chapter's tree sale are also doing well here.

Some of you may know that John is one of our chapter's bee wizards, and you may have even seen examples at his stop on a 2008 Show Me/Help Me event of what he has done to support native pollinators. There are several "stations" around the prairie that provide places for solitary bees to build nests (not bee hives, but nest boxes). John's first efforts focused on mason bees, but he later learned that they really prefer fruit trees. Because John is surrounded by farmland, there's not much to attract mason bees. Now he is drawing in the leaf cutter bees. His efforts have been successful, as he now has a great abundance of bees on and around his prairie.

Each bee station consists of two boxes attached to a pole. One box is for the bees to build nests in the current year. In the early spring, he moves the nest cavities into the emergence box, and places the previous year's nest

cavities (cleaned out after all the bees have emerged) back into the nest cavity box. Quite an impressive system that he has developed!

In addition to providing habitat for native pollinators, John has also installed some kestrel nesting boxes

(which are used often) and a bat house. Judi's organic veggie garden was also beautiful, and her squash cages and Leopold benches were especially admired by visitors. Future plans include a potting shed / lean-to, and rain barrels the overflow of which will be directed to the prairie.

There are some beautiful trees and shrubs around the property, all acquired from Possibility

Place, the source for the items we sell in our annual tree/shrub sale. While the newer additions are thriving, the mature black walnut and oak trees are really a sight to behold. John estimates that the walnut trees are around 125 years old (more on that in a future newsletter!), and the white oak in the front yard is around 200 years old.

Normally, the end of the yard tour would mean the conclusion of the educational portion of the evening.

While the social did commence, there was still more leaning on tap. John had invited Marilyn and George Johnson, friends of his who are active in restoring a nearby prairie. I'll do my best to recount for you the story that George shared with us. In 1984, an elderly man in St. Louis found a copy of a diary among his grandmother's things in his attic. The diary was penned by his great great aunt, Mary Sacket. Her

family came to the Durand area in 1841 from Brooklyn, arriving when Mary was only 16 years old. As one of her brothers stayed behind in Brooklyn, she kept this diary for his benefit so that he could have an idea of what the family was experiencing.

Mary Sacket made daily entries in this journal, describing the prairie plants that surrounded her, and mentions wolves, orphan trains, the Trask family (for





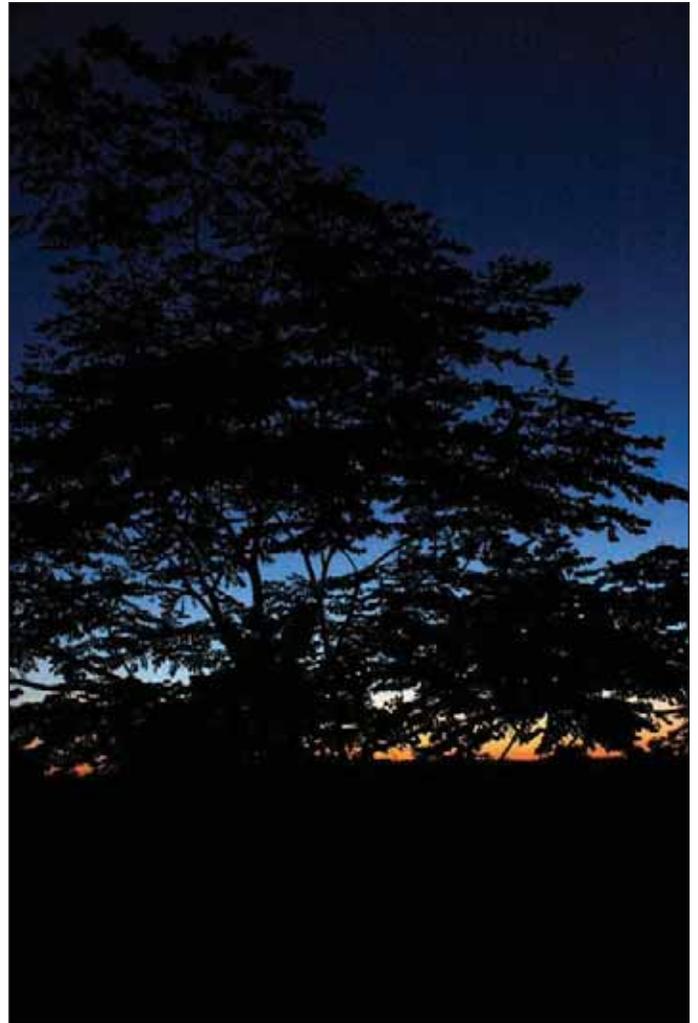
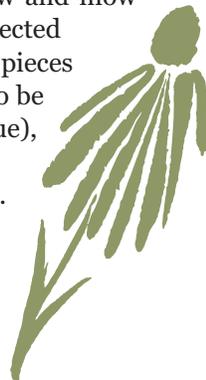
**John Peterson**

whom Trask Bridge Rd. is named), and other aspects of life on the prairie. The journal covers only a few years; there are periods during which no entries were made, and the journal ends abruptly. Considering that it was written by a 16-year old girl in the mid-1800's, the diary is remarkably well written. The Sacket family name has died out in this area, but that's not the end of it.

The man in St. Louis did some research and managed to get in touch with local historians. George had the diary transcribed, as the original was on 150-year old paper, tied together at the top with a ribbon. In fact, the original manuscript has been accepted into the permanent collection of the Newberry Library in Chicago, a repository of precious and historically significant books, maps, and other documents. They have described it as one of their most significant records of what life must have been like in our area during that era. George and John generously donated to our chapter a transcribed copy of Mary's journal, which Ginnie Watson accepted as our librarian. If you'd like to read it, ask at future Wild Ones meeting.

When George retired and sold off his land, he retained a 26-acre parcel and donated a conservation easement to the Natural Land Institute. This land has been named the Mary Sacket Prairie, and the restoration work has been going on for five years so far. The oaks there are estimated to be over 200 years old, and Red Buffalo Nursery is helping to propagate some of the acorns collected from those very trees. Talk about local ecotype! In order to decrease the amount of labor needed for larger restoration projects, he uses a sow-and-mow system, with much direct sowing of collected seeds. He also managed to rescue large pieces of "sod" from prairies that were going to be bulldozed (a very large-scale plant rescue), and some of that sod has been transplanted to the Mary Sacket Prairie.

Even the anthropology department at Northern Illinois University is interested in the Mary Sacket story, and research on the Sacket family continues.



## *Sunset behind a Kentucky Coffee Tree*

**Kentucky Coffee Tree**  
(species *Gymnocladus dioica*),  
plant of the pea family (Fabaceae),  
native in North American woods  
from New York and southern Ontario to  
Oklahoma. In colonial times the seeds  
of the tree were used for coffee.

Sometimes cultivated as an ornamental,  
the tree grows to about 30 m (100 feet) tall.  
The bipinnate leaves are twice compound  
(i.e., the leaflets, in turn, bear leaflets).

The greenish white flowers,  
about 1 cm (0.4 inch) long,  
are borne in large clusters.

The fruit is a dark brown pod  
5–25 cm (about 2–9 inches) long,  
containing lens-shaped seeds  
about 2.5 cm (1 inch) broad.

## *July Show Me/Help Me Recap*

Lenae Weichel, Chairperson

Photos by  
Lenae Weichel

Twenty people came out on a beautiful Saturday morning to tour three yards on our latest Show Me/Help Me Day. We began the morning with cinnamon spiral bread and oatmeal muffins in Nancy Jacobsen's front yard where we discussed her deep shade and overgrown shrubbery challenges and watched pollinators buzz about the herb garden near her front door. Moving to the back yard we walked her "nature trail" and among her seating areas and garden art, discovering serene places she has created as well as those she's left to Mother Nature. Like many of us, she has her work cut out for her to rid her yard of imported honeysuckle and deadly nightshade. Members helped her to identify the natives (and non-natives) that volunteered (came up on their own) and made suggestions on natives to sow, plant, and encourage.

Our next stop was Tim and Janaan Lewis' landscape where we were able to view a series of new and mature plantings, learn about areas not focused on at the yard tour/social last summer, and hear about Tim's plans for expansion with new and varied native plantings. We learned Tim's technique for expanding existing planting areas: killing off about a one-foot swath of grass around the perimeter of an established planting (or in the direction he wishes it to go), and then planting seeds or young natives and interplanting with annuals (mostly for neighbor's benefit) to give immediate color. Tim admitted that even with his many years of experience he still has a problem area beneath a river birch. A poor selection by the home builder at about the highest point in the yard and so thirsty that it leaves no water anywhere near the surface for surrounding plants to succeed in the resulting very dry shade.

However, Tim did give us examples of how he was able to use natives to solve other problems such as deeply shaded areas where grass didn't grow (now full of wonderful woodland natives) and water run-off in a neighborhood with a high water table. He solved this problem by installing a rain garden to absorb water coming from the roof of the house. He has even devised a system that helps him water a maple tree that was previously often left dry, even after a good rain. As we continued around the yard, Tim showed us some healthy native plants that are less typical in home landscapes due to their difficulty in starting from seed such as golden seal and green dragon (the latter from a Wild Ones plant rescue this spring).

As a special treat, we were able to observe a Monarch's first flight as it left the screen box where Tim had fostered it from egg, through caterpillar, into chrysalis, and it

had finally emerged (just in time for our event!) as a female Monarch butterfly. It was great fun to watch her flit and flutter upward and light on a tree overlooking the well-manicured vegetable and fruit garden. After a quick stop to check out Tim's native bee housing (Orchard Mason Bees, Leafcutter Bees, etc.). A quick pass by Tim's prairie planting confirmed that this established landscape is beautiful and quite interesting.



### ***Bobby Lambiotte's front yard.***

Our final stop for the day was to Bobby Lambiotte's urban corner lot. Her landscape was a "help me" on a rainy day nine years earlier when she was just starting to plant natives in what was originally her grandparents' (and later parents') home. Now her own property, Bobby truly has put her own spin on it by planting the fence line surrounding it with native plants suited to her sandy soil and mix of sun and shade. Each year she expands her native planting and reduces the amount of lawn she must mow by smothering grass with compost and planting directly into that. Not only has Bobby redone most of the yard, introducing natural woodland, prairie, and savanna areas, but she has also been working on the house;

stripping about 50 layers of paint from the original cedar siding and restoring it with a coat of stain. The house is coming along and the old detached garage at the back of the property has been remade as a lovely garden house, complete with matching cedar siding, skylight, and revitalized front and French doors.

Bobby shared some of her learning experiences with us as she intimated that formal order may be impossible, especially in the sunny areas where vigorous native plants reseed themselves. However, Tim mentioned that at his house, he has found that planting in masses (with multiple plants of the same type together) gives the more ordered look that many urbanites are



***Tim Lewis releases the Monarch he "raised" from an egg.***

accustomed to. Bobby started small, working along the fence line surrounding the property bit by bit and she did communicate with her immediate neighbors to let them know what she was doing and why. She said that all the neighbors now love the yard which has visual interest throughout the year. On this day, we were treated to a brilliant show of many varieties of black- and brown-eyed susans which Bobby lets self-sow at will and sees them as a pretty way to hold the dirt (important in sandy soil that is easily washed away by rain) and keep down weeds. She does encourage other plants as well, spreading seed collected from one part of the yard in another.

Bobby's landscape is truly diverse and relaxing and beautiful to walk through. In addition to the exuberant color and texture in the sunny areas (accessed by mowed grass paths), she has some beautiful and serene woodland plantings (including another green dragon from the rescue) and a variety of wild and manicured areas - all on a typically-sized urban lot!

Bobby has put so much work into her landscape over the past nine years and her landscape has come a long way. The small section of fence line planting she began with now follows the full perimeter of the property where it curves and undulates along the mowed grass between it and the street; helping to give her yard an intentional, planned look. She uses narrow, modular concrete edging at the



***Bobby Lambiotte leads the way through her back yard as members admire the plantings.***

transition, setting it low enough that she can mow over it without fear of nicking her blade (she just sets the wheels on the edging and follows it along).

All who attended were pleased with what we saw and discussed. At tour's end, some of us couldn't wait to get home to start applying the lessons we'd learned.

*Note: there is a possibility of one more Show Me/Help Me day in September, please contact Lenae Weichel (815-282-5482) to add your landscape to those we visit then.*

## 2009 Chapter Programs and Events

Date/Time	Program	Speaker	Location
July 15 – September 12	<b><i>Native Shrub and Tree Sale</i></b> Orders taken during this time.	<b>John Peterson</b> Native tree & shrub Sale Chair	
August 20 7:00-9:00 PM	<b><i>Secrets to Identifying Our Native Trees</i></b>	<b>Guy Sternberg</b> Starhill Forest Arboretum	Burpee Museum of Natural History
September 19	<b><i>Native Tree &amp; Shrub Pickup</i></b> See brochure for complete details	<b>John Peterson</b> Native Tree & Shrub Sale Chair	Riverfront Museum Park parking lot
September 17 7:00-9:00 PM	<b><i>Underground Ecology-or, How I Learned to Love Dirt</i></b>	<b>Dr. Teri Balsler,</b> Assoc. Prof. Earth Sciences	Burpee Museum of Natural History
October 15 7:00-9:00 PM	<b><i>What is a Burn? How Does Burning Help Our Landscapes?</i></b>	<b>Andy Bacon</b> Natural Land Institute	Burpee Museum of Natural History
November 19 7:00-9:00 PM	<b><i>Pot Luck and Seed Exchange</i></b> <u>All Members only</u> welcome with or without seeds		Burpee Museum of Natural History
December	<b>No Meeting-Happy Holidays!</b>		

**Please check future newsletters for remaining 2009 Events and Activities**

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.

Please contact Kim Risley (815) 962-4584 for more information. 7:00-9:00 PM



ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Pambi Camacho  
6680 Hartwig Drive  
Cherry Valley, IL 61016

*Don't become extinct!*

If the expiration date on the mailing label is **8/1/2009**, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last *Wild Ones Journal* until you activate your membership

You may receive a renewal notice from both the National organization and your chapter. Your membership information will be updated quicker if you renew through your chapter so you won't miss an issue of the chapter newsletter.

Mail your renewal to Marilyn Heneghan  
P.O. Box 114, Roscoe, IL 61073

## Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter

### *Board of Directors*

*President:* Constance McCarthy 815-282-0316 (kublai Khan@mac.com) *Newsletter Editor:* Pambi Camacho 815-332-7637 (dkcamps@aol.com)

*Vice President:* Kim Risley 815-962-4584 (rip-cord01@comcast.net) *Plant Rescue Chair:* John Peterson 815-248-2110 (tacmot@msn.com)

*Secretary:* Shey Lowman 815-757-4456 (slowman@niu.edu)

*Show Me/Help Me Chair:* Lenae Weichel 815-282-5482 (lenae@weichel.org)

*Treasurer:* Janet Giesen 815-899-6139 (giesen@niu.edu)

*Youth Education & Grants Chair:* Kim Lowman Vollmer 815-397-6044 (kimlowvol@aol.com)

*Membership Chair:* Marilyn Heneghan 815-389-7869 (informationoptions@att.net)

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Burpee Museum of Natural History, 737 North Main St., Rockford, IL

*Special meetings, outings, and events are scheduled periodically and sometimes replace the regular meeting time/place. Contact any officer to confirm information about our next meeting.*

Wild ones Annual Membership: Family \$30, Limited Income/Full-Time Student \$20, Business \$200  
Entire membership contribution is tax deductible. Contact Membership Chair for additional information or to join.

Visit our Web site at [www.for-wild.org/chapters.html](http://www.for-wild.org/chapters.html)

### *Wild Ones Mission*

Wild ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restorations and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.