

**Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.**

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*With the recent changes made by the USPS, some members have not received their newsletters. If you know someone that this has happened to please let a board member know so we can work through this transition.*



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

*Rain Gardens: Benefits and Installation, Thursday, March 19, 2009*

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



Photo provided by Stacy James

I knew a great deal of rainwater was running down my driveway, from my drain spouts and across many areas of my yard – running to nowhere. Last year I got some rain barrels from the Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District. After placing a rain barrel beneath one downspout that drains water from a small 15' by 12' roof area, I was absolutely astounded by the tremendous volume of water in a 1" rainfall. One 1" rainfall filled two 55-gallon rain barrels to overflowing. After that experience, I simply could not fathom the volume of water in some of our rainfalls that was running to

nowhere – let alone the volume of water from a rainfall like the Labor Day rainfall a few years ago that caused record flooding in many areas.

That experience got me wondering about storm water in general. I learned that storm water runs across hardscapes such as roads and driveways and across yards and fields picking up debris, soil and chemical contaminants. This polluted water then runs into our rivers and lakes where it contaminates those bodies of water. Those bodies of water often are the source of drinking water for communities, a place of recreation for people and a habitat for wildlife. I realized we needed to do our part to help protect our waterways.

Stacy James, a Water Resources Specialist with Prairie Rivers Network based in Champaign, IL will present one solution to the tremendous rainfall runoff – a solution many of us may incorporate into our landscapes using native plants. She will describe what rain gardens are, their role in capturing rain and keeping communities safe from flooding and pollution. Stacy will also explain how these rain gardens can be constructed and maintained. Please join us for an informational presentation from which we will gain enough knowledge and resources to construct and maintain our own rain garden.

This program is free and open to the public.  
For more information, please contact Kim Risley at (815) 962-4584.

Submitted by Kim Risley, V. Pres./Program Chair  
photos on page 2

## *Message from the President* Constance McCarthy

### **Even before springtime, new things are on the horizon**

Hopefully by now you've had a chance to process the beauty that is our chapter's first-ever Woodland Plant Sale flier. Kudos to Kim Risley, who saw a need (and desire) for this, brought a proposal to the board, and ran with it. She and Tim Lewis spent many hours pulling together this very professional looking plant list, and I thank them for their hard work on behalf of the chapter. If you know of any place where we could put a small stack of these for distribution, please contact Kim (her info is on the back of this newsletter).

A few years ago, Tim Lewis started up a native plants discussion group on Yahoo. (If you'd like to participate, contact him at natives.tim@comcast.net.) One of our

chapter members, Guy Smith, has posted some very thought-provoking items, tying together books he's read and actions he's taking to promote biodiversity and help the environment. More than one person suggested that these postings would make some good food-for-thought in our newsletter. And so this month marks the debut of Guy's Corner.

Of course these musings are just one person's opinion, and my hope is that they can be the starting point for not just conversations, but actions of our own. I'm sure that nothing would make Guy, a self-described "instigator," more happy!



photos provided by Stacy James, Water Resources Specialist with Prairie Rivers Network based in Champaign, IL

## *Almost a Full Moon Lake Gathering* Kim Risley, V. Pres./Program Chair

As we all gathered at the dam in Rock Cut State Park late in the afternoon on February 7th to begin our 'Almost a Full Moon Lake Gathering', the moon was rising above Pierce Lake to show us the way to the cabin on the lake that was our destination. We hiked up the hills and around the inlets until the cabin was in sight. Following an unseasonably warm day, a few adventurous hikers trekked cross-country over the still frozen but a bit slushy lake to meet us at the fire.

As darkness started to fall, poems and stories were shared, each paying homage to the season, the lake or

the moon. We even heard an inspiring essay on simply 'poking around' that led some to go off exploring, others to find a few remaining patches of snow for sledding and others to simply gather around the fire enjoying the moon. Marshmallows were toasted and hot chocolate was enjoyed before we prepared to hike back to our cars and leave the peacefulness and quiet of the Almost Full Moon shining upon Pierce Lake.



## *Membership Update* Marilyn Heneghan, Membership Chair

### 168 memberships on March 1, 2009

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

(any amount about the \$30 basic dues)

Lowell and Betty Edwards

Don and Marilyn Heneghan

Karen Matz

Carla Womack

A thank you to program greeters Lisa Johnson, Lynda & Lee Johnson

**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) when your Insight email address has changed.

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.

### ***Anne and Norman Meyer were presented the Philanthropist of the Year Award***

*by the Association of Fundraising Professionals  
for their many contributions to our community.*

*Anne taught NLI volunteers the process of identifying, growing and planting wildflowers and for the Nygren Wetland Preserve restoration, and continues to volunteer for Wild Ones and at Midway Village Museum.*

## *Board of Directors in Action* Shey Lowman, Secretary

Highlights of the Board of Directors meeting on February 12, 2009:

- Membership is down from December 2008.
- On May 9, as part of Celebrate Earth, there will be two yard tours open to the public from 1-4. Bob & Bev Beebe and John & Carol Gerrond have graciously offered their beautiful yards for this event. Wild Ones volunteers will be needed to act as guides and answer questions. There will be woodland plants for sale at the Gerrond's.
- Due to the cancellation of the January meeting because of bad weather, the board decided that local speakers will be scheduled for future January and February meetings.
- The board is looking into ways to have a more useful web site for the Rock River Chapter to able to list events, plant sale information and forms which would be a great benefit for all members.
- The lending library is in the process of purchasing two books that should be of interest for many members. *Design Your Natural Midwest Garden* by Patricia Hill and *Prairie Plants of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum* by Cochrane, Elliot and Lipke. The Hill book provides plant layouts for gardens and is based on Swink and Wilhelm's *Plants of the Chicago Region*. *Prairie Plants* contains detailed descriptions and photographs of the many plants in the UW-M Arboretum.

The next board meeting will be Thursday, April 9, 2009, at Aunt Mary's on State Street in Rockford. The meeting officially starts at 6:30 p.m., but many come at 5:30 to purchase their dinner. **All chapter members** are welcome and invited to attend board meetings.

## February Meeting Recap Cathy Schafman



**Corrine Daniels**

Photo by Tim Lewis

Corrine Daniels came to us from Applied Ecological Services/Taylor Creek Nurseries to familiarize us with a relatively new venture of theirs: Using native plants in a green roof system. A green roof is a garden on the roof top. There are two types of green roofs. The tradition green roof begins with impervious membrane put over a roof. This is covered by a soil substrate and then plants. The depth of

the substrate can vary from 2 inches to 18 inches, with increasing weight per depth. A modular green roof system consists of trays of plants put on the roof. These trays can be preplanted and pregrown. If a roof ever needs repair, only the trays over the damaged area need to be removed to do the job, and returned when it is done. A green roof reduces water run off, and heat on the roof. The roof should last longer as it is subjected to fewer temperature fluxuations. Applied Ecological Services has partnered with the GreenGrid System by Weston Solutions to offer Native GreenGrid by AES.

Most green roofs are covered with sedum. A green roof utilizing natives would have the advantages of being hardy, long-lived, and blooming in many different colors at many different times. The textures would certainly be more varied, and the plants would add interest and wildlife to your area. The modules are made of 100% recycled materials. Extensive systems contain 2-4 inches of planting medium. Intensive systems contain 8 inches of planting medium. Some

of the plants being used are Nodding wild onion, Thimbleweed, Side-oats grama, spiderwort, Prairie coreopsis, and Rattlesnake master. Corrine Daniels began trials with both systems in 2006. The number of plants in the shallower trays, extensive, dropped off by the end of 2008. She, however, had good success with the plants in the deeper, 8 inch, trays. She is definitely recommending the deeper trays for those who would plant natives on the roof. One advantage of rooftop natives is the system utilizing them is lighter than the systems utilizing other plant material. This can be explained because a lighter planting material will support natives than other types of plants. Applied Ecological Services was involved in the planting of the largest native green roof in America, 3 acres, at the Aquascapes Corporation Headquarters in 2005. It has fared well. A green roof can be landscaped designed. Some cities have laws that mandate green roofs if the roof is over a certain size.

This spring, Applied Ecological Services will offer GreenGrid kits, with a 32 square foot minimum. The price of the trays will begin at \$16. You would plant them yourself. Corrine advises that anyone considering a green roof consult a local building inspector or an architect before beginning. Of course, the structure of a building would have to support the weight of a green roof. Also, the modular roofing system requires a flat roof or one with very little pitch. She also said to watch for federal grants that will be coming available for green roofs and rain gardens up to \$2000 per residence.



**Members networking at February 19, 2009 meeting.**

Photo by Tim Lewis

## *Guy's Corner* Guy Smith, Member, Rock River Valley Chapter

### **Heads up! Dive bombers incoming!**

Wow! The other day I was looking out at my two-level platform bird feeder, with many mourning doves, and house finches, and juncos picking at the seeds. Suddenly, they all took off – in every direction. Whoosh! Then, a second later in came a large, mature (male?) Cooper's hawk. It alit in the 20-foot scarlet oak, near the feeder, about 10 feet up.

Five seconds later, in came another – but this one looked to be immature. It landed in an adjacent tree, 20 feet away. Then the male flared his wings a bit, with his back to the second bird, and let out a couple of (rather pathetic) cries, rather like the sound of a dying rabbit. I think he was putting on a little pre-mating display, showing off his newly molted wing feathers.

This was really a neat way to start my day! Many times I hear the flock of feeder birds whoosh away, and sometimes they are merely spooked, but often, one of these Cooper's hawks comes through. I even saw a red-tailed hawk buzz the feeder. It's so much better than having to watch TV. This is real, live Survivor! I haven't yet seen a hawk catch a bird, but I did recently watch a kestrel eating a newly caught bird (a junco, I think) up at the top of the power pole out at the corner of the yard.

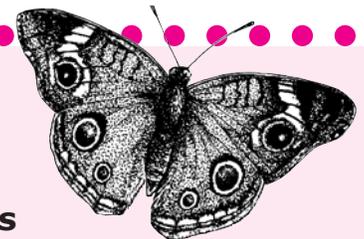
I cant help but think about the Importance of the essentials for the survival of our native species: water, food, shelter... and a mate, and a secure local environment in which to raise their next generation. Seeing and watching the birds is but a part of this daily quest. Think about the other species, too. Try to figure out a way to prepare some space for native species of plants to thrive. These spaces will become a part of your local habitat, which will hopefully then become a home to a multitude of insects, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and birds. Finally, it will become a more vital element in our own environment – our home, too!

So, consider increasing your native plantings. Add as many native plants as you can manage to try! Plant them anywhere and everywhere, even among your existing plants. Eventually, the plants will thrive that ought to be there. Some people choose to eliminate all alien species. For example, people can replace those spruce trees and lilacs, barberries and privets. They can be replaced with some hawthorns and common junipers, for example. A first step is to determine whether you have wet, dry, or middle/mesic, type of soil moisture in your yard. Lay out an area to dig out a shallow rain garden, and plant the more moisture-loving plants there. You can put the upland (dry-loving) plants on a sunny berm that is built

from the excavated rain garden soil. The rain garden will reduce or eliminate the run-off of rain water from your roof's downspouts.

The changes in elevation of your otherwise flat yard might then seem to be a bit more three-dimensional, with high and low spots. These subtle changes in elevation make a huge difference in the complexity of the ecosystem-potential of the property. With a little luck, you'll see more bathing birds, and perhaps some frogs. This could increase the numbers of different species that would thrive on your land. You might want to look for various animal tracks in the soil or snow. Try to spend more time looking over these micro-habitats from a safe distance, letting the little critters do their thing, undisturbed.

Don't be a dive-bomber! Perhaps you'll see the ones nature provides us. Tread lightly! Speak softly! Move slowly.... Nature is now in-recovery here! And don't forget to check out our chapter's plant sales this spring. This year there are woodland and prairie plants, and everything in between. And all are native to our area! Later in the summer, watch out for the chapter's native tree, shrub, and vine sale. There's something for everyone!



### **Girl Scout**

**Troop 319** was

awarded a **Seeds**

**for Education Grant!** This troop is

from Prairie Hill School in South

Beloit, IL, and involves life member

Kim Lowman Vollmer and her

daughter Carly. They were one of 17

to receive grants out of 100 grants

this year. They will be establishing a

butterfly garden. Our chapter

generously donated \$1000 to this

worthy cause, thanks to your support.

## *Immanuel Lutheran School Prairie Learning Center*

Judy Schaefer, Principal

Immanuel Lutheran School began the process of developing a natural prairie almost 9 years ago on a site disturbed by an addition to our school. One of our members offered to develop the plans for plant species and planting areas and grow the necessary 30000 plants. The administration and faculty of the school, as well as, parent volunteers and church members, discussed the value of the proposal in regards to the benefits to the students academically. Appearance of the property was discussed as well as the responsibility and opportunity to care for a restoration of a natural area like the God given prairies found here by our pioneer ancestors.

Planting was started in mid-July 2000, when site preparation was completed, even though students weren't in school. Church members and school families were encouraged to be a part of this awesome undertaking. Planting continued throughout the summer with as much volunteer help as could be mustered. As soon as school started in August we began the task of involving the students from Pre-Kindergarten through Eighth grade in the planting process. Students at Immanuel participate in a school program called "Big Friends/little friends". Our first activity of the year involved prairie planting. With over 300 students it was quite an undertaking. Students were taught the purpose of the prairie in terms of ecology and education. They were also taught "how" to plant and asked to bring any tools they might need. It was definitely a "No child left inside" situation.

In addition to the Big Friends/little friends event, teachers continued to take their students out to work in the prairie as long as the weather cooperated. Fourth graders, fifth graders, and seventh graders planted plants and worked on paths. Eighth graders raked leaves and spread them on the prairie. Classes discussed the prairie plants and the benefits we receive by restoring prairie areas in our community.

A prairie restoration as part of the school landscape provides an opportunity to engage students in scientific inquiry in a meaningful context, hands-on, minds-on learning, interdisciplinary learning, work among peers, classes, grades and schools, and community involvement through cooperative projects. In addition to restoring local species' diversity, the schoolyard habitat rewards the entire school community by developing a teaching area at our school's campus that widens the classroom walls. It enriches learning opportunities for students, teachers, and the community and invites wildlife into the lives of youth and adults alike. The prairie offers to students creative ways to learn math, science, social studies, art, and other subjects and to demonstrate hands-on methods of habitat conservation.

As Immanuel's prairie established itself the teachers found

more and more ways to involve their students in study and in the appreciation of native plants. The students study the plants and the toads and butterflies and the insects that inhabit the prairie. They learn about science and their own land and heritage. In addition, library books and materials provide opportunities for both teachers and students to grow in their knowledge of the prairie.

The prairie at Immanuel is itself an educational opportunity. We have a field trip ready right outside our back door. Permission slips are not needed! Prairie adventures include scavenger hunts for specific plants, art activities, scientific classification of plants and insects, and creative writing with literature and social studies connections. All the while we are getting the kids out into the fresh air and sunshine with vitamin D, walking, moving and having fun.

Paths cut through the prairie and around the perimeter making it accessible to students, teachers, church members, and the community. Guests at Immanuel's annual volleyball tournament appreciate our prairie area and look forward to spending time walking the paths (some even collect bugs) between matches.

Teacher Vicky Goltermann notes that "In the summer students are invited to visit with their families. Some take time to explore, looking for insects and enjoying the colors of the many flowers in bloom. Children from the neighborhood often come too as do people who like to walk here with their dog. A stop-over for a Monarch butterfly migration was an awesome sight.

In the fall students are able to collect seed to be used on our prairie and to share with other groups establishing native plants. It's quite amazing to see the enthusiasm of the students gathering seed from "their plant" as they work on this activity, which they especially enjoy. The many different seed forms are fascinating. Even in winter the prairie has many wonderful things to explore. We look for animal tracks and other evidence of animals and birds on the prairie."

The purpose of the establishment of a prairie goes "hand in hand" with the philosophy and purpose of Immanuel Lutheran School. The Parent Handbook reads: "As guided by the Holy Spirit, our school strives to educate every child to be an academically successful student, a socially responsible citizen, and a Christian Witness to his/her fellow human beings. The purpose of Immanuel Lutheran School is to help each child reach his potential physically, spiritually, socially, mentally academically, and emotionally in a Christ-centered environment." The administration of our school, the teaching staff, the church Garden Club, and the congregation are committees to maintaining this area as a native prairie. It is an excellent opportunity to give back to our Creator as stewards of the land He has so graciously given us.

## 2009 Chapter Programs and Events

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>March 19</b> 7:00-9:00 PM	<b><i>The Importance of Rain Gardens</i></b>	<b>Dr. Stacy James</b> Water Resources Scientist, Prairie Rivers Network	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>Mar -Apr</b>	<b><i>Native Plant Sale</i></b> Orders taken during this time	<b>Dianne Stenerson</b> Plant Sale Chair <b>Kim Risley</b> Woodland plant Ch.	
<b>April 16</b> 7:00-9:00 PM	<b><i>Natural Landscaping for Shaded Environments</i></b>	<b>John Harrington</b> Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>April 21</b>	<b><i>Last Day Woodland plant orders will be accepted</i></b>	<b>Kim Risley</b> Woodland plant Ch.	
<b>April 28</b>	<b><i>Last Day plant orders will be accepted</i></b>	<b>Dianne Stenerson</b> Plant Sale Chair	
<b>May 21</b> 7:00-9:00 PM	<b><i>Identifying Prairie &amp; Savanna Plants</i></b>	<b>Dr. Steven Hill</b> IL Natural History Survey	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>June 18</b> 7:00-9:00 PM	<b><i>Welcoming the 'Bee' Pollinators to Our Landscapes</i></b>	<b>Cynthia McConnell</b> Entomologist Univ. of IL - Champaign	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>July 16</b> 7:00-9:00 PM	<b><i>Yard Tour/Evening Social</i></b>	<b>John &amp; Judy Peterson</b>	14037 Baker Rd Durand, IL 61024 815-248-2110
<b>July 15 – September 12</b>	<b><i>Native Shrub and Tree Sale</i></b> Orders taken during this time.	<b>John Peterson</b> Native tree & shrub Sale Chair	
<b>August 20</b> 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
<b>September 19</b>	<b><i>Native Tree &amp; Shrub Pickup</i></b> See brochure for complete details	<b>John Peterson</b> Native Tree & Shrub Sale Chair	Discovery Center Parking Lot
<b>September 17</b> 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
<b>October 15</b> 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
<b>November 20</b> 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
<b>December</b>	<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 **3/1/2009**, 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 (kublaikhan@mac.com) *Newsletter Editor:* Pambi Camacho 815-332-7637 (dkcamps@aol.com)  
*Vice President:* Kim Risley 815-962-4584 (rip-cordo1@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.