

**Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.**

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Articles for the March 2010 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor, at: [dkcamps@aol.com](mailto:dkcamps@aol.com) by February 23, 2010.

*Landscaping with Native Plantings*  
*Thursday, February 18, 2010*

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



Garden catalogs are arriving in the mail while the snow lies outside the doors of our Midwest homes. Soon spring will be here and it will be time to enjoy the warm breezes of March while looking forward to the gardening season. As the cold and snow of winter begins to give way showing us a hint of the spring to come, we yearn for the signs of our landscapes coming to life. Tree buds plumping out, spring ephemerals breaking ground, our cool weather grasses beginning to come to life. And we start to plan what we can do this season with our landscapes. We may wish to attract more birds, bees and butterflies to our yards or replace another area of plain old lawn grass with native vegetation. We have learned that using native plants does this best, but how do we include native plants,

shrubs and trees into our existing landscapes? What if we want a totally native landscape? Where do we start?

Patricia Hill has been a professional landscape designer for more than twenty-five years, devoting the last decade to utilizing only plants native to the Midwest in her designs. As the author of *Design Your Natural Midwest Garden*, she will take us through the steps of including native plants within our existing landscapes. Ms. Hill will also show us how we can plan and develop an eye-pleasing totally native landscape for our homes.

Join us at our February meeting and learn how we may include native plantings into our landscapes. Ms. Hill will also have copies of her book available for purchase and signing.

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



## *Message from the President* Constance McCarthy

### **Exciting Development for 2010; Wild Ones Journal Changes**

I know you'll be hearing about this from a variety of sources, but I have to tell you that I'm very excited about our upcoming March program. Shey Lowman and I had seen an amazing and inspiring presentation by Marcus de la fleur, a landscape architect, at the state Master Gardener conference two years ago. He spoke about a pilot project at a normal suburban home in Elmhurst, aimed at dealing with stormwater runoff in a sustainable manner. This home and its lot were about the same size that you'd see in an older part of Rockford, not a huge subdivision. The home features a rain garden, green roof, and bioswale, among many water conservation and retention measures.

Enquiries about bringing him to speak to our chapter revealed that his speaker's fee was higher than our chapter could pay for on its own. Fortunately, we were awarded a grant by the Four Rivers Environmental Coalition to help defray the costs of this presentation, and the University of Illinois Extension-Winnebago County also stepped up to co-sponsor this event. We are very grateful to both of these organizations for their support of our chapter and its efforts to bring outstanding educational programming to the area.

This program will be free and open to the public, as are all of our monthly educational programs. However, because of the wider publicity that the event will receive,

as well as our desire to allow as many people as possible to see the presentation, the location will be at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden. Please help spread the word! If you'd like a promotional flier to display, please contact me or Kim Risley, our amazing Program Chair.

On a different topic: In order to balance the budget for 2010, the national board of Wild Ones has made the decision to publish two of the 2010 issues of the Journal in electronic format only. This means that unless you have email, you will miss out on these two issues.

I know that we have email addresses for around 90% of our chapter's members, and I'm hoping to increase that before folks start missing out on Journal issues. Please contact our Membership Chair, Marilyn Heneghan, to let her know your new email address. If you have given us your email address but don't receive a monthly email from me, please contact Marilyn to be sure that we have your correct address.

As always, neither our chapter nor the national organization ever shares, sells, or otherwise discloses member email addresses to any outside organization or business. Emails are sent by the chapter typically only once or twice a month, and by national perhaps once a month. Fear not: you won't be swamped with messages from us.



## *Membership Update* Marilyn Heneghan, Membership Chair

### **174 memberships on February 1, 2010**

#### **Welcome New Members:**

Duncan & Shirley Gardner

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

(any amount about the \$30 basic dues)

Phil & Jen Rada

Cindy Torrisi

Carla Womack

48 attended the January program

Thank you to Barbara Flores for helping greet members at the January program.

**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.

# Location Change for March Meeting!

In case you have not noticed on the calendar, our March meeting, featuring Marcus de la fleur and his One Drop at a Time presentation on sustainable water management for homeowners, will be held at a different location. This presentation is being co-sponsored by Wild Ones - Rock River Valley chapter, Four Rivers Environmental Coalition, and the University of Illinois Extension - Winnebago County. We are anticipating attendance to exceed the capacity at Burpee Museum. Therefore, **the March Wild Ones meeting will be held at Klehm Arboretum 2715 S. Main St in the Visitor Center. Please plan to join us there for this fantastic presentation.**

Submitted by Kim Risley, Vice President/Program Chair

## January Meeting Recap

Constance McCarthy

photos by Tim Lewis

### Plant Communities, Restoration Projects, and Nature Preserves in Northern Illinois



John Nelson

John Nelson, of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, aimed to paint a picture of what northern Illinois used to look like, so that our enhanced understanding can guide our choices of plants and trees for our own landscapes in the future. The area from southern Illinois up to Wisconsin and Minnesota was considered, to paint a more complete picture.

Part I of the presentation focused on pre-settlement

landscapes. Discoveries at the Koster archaeological site in the lower Illinois River valley reveal that humans have been in the area since around 5,000 BC. Rather than going back that far when thinking about the pre-settlement landscape, one really needs only to think of what existed here 200 years ago or so – the last moment that the landscape was intact before being disturbed by Europeans. At that time, there were oak-hickory forests on ridges and uplands, hill prairies, and flood plains consisting of open grasslands with almost no trees. Illinois and Indiana are said to be in the prairie peninsula, which extends eastward from the Great Plains.

Before settlement, there were lots of trees along the rivers and on islands. Things changed once the rivers were modified for navigation by settlers. Backwaters are now permanently inundated, where in the past there were constant cycles of floods and receding waters.

Contrary to the belief of some, navigation dams do not control floods; their purpose is to maintain the 9-foot navigational channel when the river would otherwise be low. Flood walls, levees, and other creations of the settlers have also changed the hydrology of rivers.

So how do we have some idea of what existed here before the settlers arrived? Surveyors from the U.S. General Land Office, created in 1812, basically followed the exiting Native Americans into the western United States, surveying and platting the land. Their work created the six-by-six mile townships that we now have in this part of the country. Areas on the surveyors' plat maps were labeled with broad generalizations like "prairie" or "timber". More valuable were the surveyors' field notes, in which they wrote their impressions of the land, sometimes mentioning the types of trees and plants that they observed. When a surveyor wanted to mark the corner of a six-by-six mile square, he had to either place a post there or measure off the distance to large "bearing trees" that could serve as guides for arriving settlers. If the surveyor had to walk a longer distance to reach a bearing tree, this could be indicative of a true prairie area with only widely scattered trees.

Mr. Nelson next took us on a trip from south to north through the prairie peninsula. At the south end, tree density was highest on islands and along the rivers. Forests were often cypress swamps (still found in southern Illinois), but also black oak and tupelo. Closer to St. Louis, there were prairies on the flood plains, and not many trees on the uplands. Today's flood plains in that area are now agricultural land with not many trees

## January Meeting Recap cont'd

Constance McCarthy

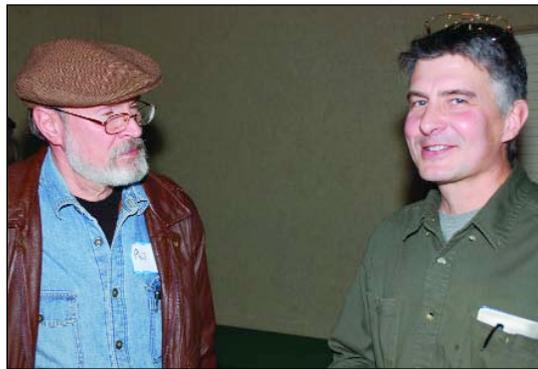
remaining. Around Muscatine, Iowa, the prairie dominated the flood plains, with trees on islands, upland, and in valleys. In the area around Savanna and Galena, prairie was found on the uplands, with trees again on islands and along tributaries. The surveyor there found only young trees, which indicates that fire was more common in the area in the past. (Of course, this changed once the settlers arrived.) Farther north, near Lake Pepin (between Minnesota and Wisconsin), the surveyor wrote of seeing fires that had been set by the Native Americans.

Hill prairies were maintained by fire that started in lower areas and swept up the hills by winds. Once the incidence of fire decreased, bur oaks and other native trees became surrounded by competing vegetation. This made it much harder for the trees to reproduce, and the oak-hickory forests began to fade away. Fire was truly the lifeblood of many native habitats.

The second part of Mr. Nelson's presentation focused on current efforts to protect what is left of intact and sensitive areas. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission does not own any land, but rather partners with land owners and organizations to protect land with the highest level of legal protection that can be granted. After three years were spent combing the state to find the best examples of intact, pre-settlement land, the original Illinois Natural Areas Inventory was completed in 1978. Currently, there are almost 350 areas under protection, totaling around 43,000 acres. The first nature preserve in Illinois is located at the south end of Illinois Beach State Park in far northeast Illinois, where the dune and swale topography there creates a great diversity of habitats.

Nachusa Grasslands is another nature preserve that contains some relic parcels. This site is over 2,800 acres and contains many restored and managed areas.

The main threat to many remnant areas is lack of management. Mr. Nelson showed some striking images of the difference it makes for the vitality of the land when it is properly managed. For example, at the Wolf Road Prairie in Cook County, everything appears to be in balance; no one thing is dominant. When land goes unmanaged, we all know how quickly aliens and invasives can take over and alter the landscape.



*Phil Rada and Guy Smith enjoy a conversation.*

In the LaRue-Pine Hills Natural Area in southern Illinois, a road is closed to all traffic for two months each spring and fall to protect thousands of reptiles and amphibians as they migrate between their summer and winter habitats--the only such road closure in the entire state. The animals hibernate in the bluffs during the winter, and move to the swamp area during the summer. The road separates these two areas, and in the years before the road began to be closed, many animals lost their lives in the migration process.

Nature preserves provide habitat for threatened animals, reptiles, and amphibians. The Blanding's turtle has seen much of its habitat destroyed or compromised. The species is of special concern because the females cannot begin reproducing until they are at least 14 years old. Other animals that benefit from the existence of nature preserves include the little green heron, bats, and sandhill cranes. Plants that benefit include the grass pink orchid, shooting star (they don't like to be disturbed, so

spotting them in the wild is a good sign), skunk cabbage (indicative of spring seeps and fen wetlands), and the yellow lady slipper orchid. Protected habitats have also benefited the Baltimore checkerspot butterfly, which is often found in fens and high-quality wetlands.

The preservation of natural areas is represented by three intersecting circles: defense (from external threats), (legal) protection, and management. Unless land can be protected, it will be lost to development. Management and restoration efforts include removal of invasives and prescribed burns. Tree removal can be done during winter when the ground is frozen, to minimize compaction of the soil by heavy equipment.

As a final comment, Mr. Nelson illustrated how not all development is bad. At the Sanctuary of Bull Valley (near Woodstock, Illinois), development took place in a sensible way because the developer embraced the notion of conservation design. Instead of just digging massive trenches to bury utilities (which would have destroyed trees), directional drilling was used. Indeed, over 90% of the oak trees on the land were preserved. Walking trails are made of porous pavers. There is not much turf grass, and homes have bioswales in front to deal with stormwater. The developer even put money into a permanent set-aside for the management and protection of the land in perpetuity. You can learn more at [www.sanctuaryofbv.com](http://www.sanctuaryofbv.com).

## 2010 Chapter Programs and Events

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>February 18</b> 7:00-9:00 PM	<b><i>Planning native plantings, incorporating into existing, using cultivars, planning for burns</i></b>	<b>Patricia Hill</b> Author of <i>Design Your Natural Midwest Garden</i>	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>March 18</b> 7:00 PM	<b><i>One Drop at a Time</i></b> Sustainable Stormwater Management for Homeowners	<b>Marcus de la fleur</b> Landscape architect - de la fleur LLC	<b>Klehm Arboretum</b> <b>2715 S. Main St</b> <b>Rockford, IL</b> <b>(815) 965-8146</b>
<b>Mar-Apr</b>	<b><i>Native Plant Sales</i></b> Orders taken during this time	<i>Sales flyers to come</i>	
<b>April 15</b> 7:00 PM	<b><i>Butterflies in the Garden</i></b>	<b>Jane Grillo</b> Monarch Watch participant	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>April 20</b>	<b><i>Last Day Woodland plant orders will be accepted</i></b>	<b>Kim Risley</b> Woodland Sale Coord.	
<b>April 30</b>	<b><i>Last Day Prairie plant orders will be accepted</i></b>	<b>Constance McCarthy</b> Plant Sale Coord.	
<b>April 30 &amp; May 1</b>	<b><i>Pick Up Woodland Plant Orders</i></b> See order form for full details	<b>Kim Risley</b> Woodland plant Coord.	3007 Vinton Ave. Rockford, IL (815) 962-4584
<b>May 8</b> 1:00 - 4:00 PM	<b><i>Woodland "Open Yard" Tour</i></b> For additional information contact	For additional information contact <b>Lenae Weichel</b> at 815-962-2725	Watson Yard 3703 Highcrest Rd. Risley Yard 3007 Vinton Ave.
<b>May 14 &amp; May 15</b>	<b><i>Pick Up Prairie Plant Orders</i></b> See order form for full details	<b>Constance McCarthy</b> Prairie Plant Sale Coord.	7208 N. 2nd St Machesney Park, (815) 282-0316
<b>May 20</b> 7:00 PM	<b><i>Edible Mushrooms of Illinois</i></b>	<b>Gregory Mueller</b> Coauthor of <i>Edible Mushrooms of Illinois and Surrounding States</i>	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>June 17</b> 7:00 PM	<b><i>Photographing Native Plants</i></b>	<b>Tim Lewis</b> National Board Director, Wild Ones	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>July 15</b> 7:00 PM	<b><i>Yard Tour/Evening Social</i></b> Members Only		To Be Determined
<b>Aug.-Sept.</b>	<b><i>Native Shrub and Tree Sale</i></b> Orders taken during this time See brochure for complete details	<b>John Peterson</b> Native Tree & Shrub Sale Coordinator	
<b>August 19</b> 7:00 PM	<b><i>The Missing Link The Transition from Canopy to Ground: The Ecology, Culture and Use of Shrubs and Small Trees</i></b>	<b>Professor John Harrington</b> University of WI - Madison	Burpee Museum of Natural History SeptNative Tree & Shrub

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 **2/1/2010**, 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.