

**Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.**

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*Illinois Birds: A Century of Change*  
*Thursday, April 21, 2011*

**Location: Burpee Museum of Natural History**

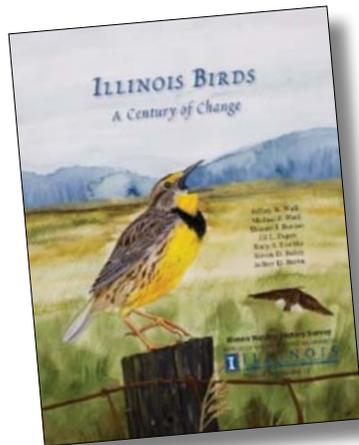
737 N. Main St., Rockford IL

**Time: 7:00 pm**

Although the thermometer is not fully cooperating, spring has arrived in northern Illinois. With these first hints of longer days and warmer weather come our Illinois birds; returning from their sunnier vacation spots. By the end of March, the woodcocks (a sure sign of spring) have returned, as have many others, dressed in showy plumage and enticing potential mates with song and dance.

Much of the work we plan and do with native plants, trees, and shrubs is greatly beneficial to Illinois bird populations but do we know how that population has changed over the years? The first systematic survey of Illinois birds was conducted in 1906 and repeated again in 1956. One hundred years after the initial survey, a team of ornithologists, many from the Illinois Natural History Survey at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, conducted the survey again; allowing for comparison of 100 years of data. The result was a great deal of information and a new book by the same title as our April program.

One of the most interesting things about the book and presentation are the photographs from all three studies. Even in 1906, the field researchers were armed with a camera. There are several photo collections showing the same location taken during each of the three surveys, giving us an idea of the vast (or not so vast) changes undergone in the Illinois landscape. This program, presented by Dr. Michael Ward, of the Illinois Natural History Survey and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, also shows those changes via aerial images of areas experiencing change and interesting narrative comparing the experiences of the 2006 survey team with those that came before.



Please join us for this fascinating look at the birds our state and the expected and unexpected impacts (both positive and negative) of ongoing development.

This program is free and open to the public.

For more information, please contact

Lenae Weichel at 815-282-5482.

Submitted by Lenae Weichel  
Show Me/Help Me Chair &  
Interim Program Chair



Articles for the May 2011 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor, at: [dkcamps@aol.com](mailto:dkcamps@aol.com) by April 23, 2011.

## *Message from the President* Constance McCarthy

### **Winter in the Rearview Mirror**

I am taking the optimist's position and putting winter behind me. There are enough reminders that spring is upon us, even if it's the colder part of the season. With all the rain and melted snow so far, it should be a very green spring, indeed.

There are loads of Wild Ones activities this spring that are calling out for your participation. Our chapter's display booth will be found at Earth Day at Rock Valley College on Saturday, 16 April, and at Bird Fest at Sand Bluff Bird Observatory and Banding Station (at Colored Sands Forest Preserve) on Saturday and Sunday, 14 and 15 May. Chapter members volunteer for shifts to man the booth, chatting about Wild Ones and our chapter with folks who stop by. Tim Lewis, booth coordinator, tends to pair new volunteers with old hands, and it's always a fun experience.

Our chapter's event for the Celebrate Earth series (sponsored by the Four Rivers Environmental Coalition) will again be two woodland tours, on Saturday, 7 May. Featured will be Anita Johnson's amazing restoration project at Klehm Arboretum, the Vi Bates Memorial Garden, as well as the Hoffman landscape. More details will be coming, but be sure to put this one on your calendar. Thank you to Lenae Weichel for pulling this together!

And of course our two spring plant sales are underway. Orders are being taken through 19 April for the woodland sale, and 30 April for the prairie/savanna sale. Pick-up dates are 29 and 30 April for the woodland sale, and 13

and 14 May for the prairie sale. For those who don't get an advance order placed on time, some individual plants will be available for sale on the pick-up days. Volunteers will work during the week before to organize the plants and pull orders together. Kim Risley is showing Barbara Flores the ropes this year, as co-chairs for the woodland sale, and I am organizing the prairie sale.

Importantly, volunteers are needed for all these events. I like to think that we are a fun and easy-going bunch, and we'd be happy to see you as a volunteer (or participant) this spring. Contact the event coordinators or Ed Kletecka, the volunteer coordinator, if you're interested (all contact info is on the back of this newsletter).



*Corrine Daniels, Vice-President, Taylor Creek Restoration Services, talking with WO member, Guy Smith after the meeting*  
Photo by John Peterson

### ***Are you interested in participating in a Show Me/Help Me Day this year?***

The Show Me/Help Me schedule is being organized for this growing season and we are looking for members who would like us to come to your landscapes! Show Me/Help Me Days are evenings or weekend days when we arrange a tour of several chapter members' yards. We hope each tour will contain both established landscapes ("show me") and yards in-progress or with potential and need of plans ("help me"). Chapter members of all levels of experience and knowledge can participate together to learn and share.

What we need is a selection of landscapes to tour! Here is where you come in. Do you have a yard that you have been working on for a while that is showing the beautiful fruits of your labor? Are you trying to determine what you have, what to do, and how to do it? Or does your landscape represent a little of both scenarios; you have some great things going but need some ideas or information to get other things started? If any of these situations describe yours, your landscape should be on one of our Show Me/Help Me tours!

It matters not whether you have a small city lot or a rambling country estate. Location is also not a big factor because we will try to schedule different events in particular areas so that travel distance is reasonable on each day.

Are you interested? Please contact Lenae Weichel, Show Me/Help Me Chairperson, at [lenaeweichel.org](mailto:lenaeweichel@weichel.org) or 815-282-5482 to volunteer your property or for more information.

## Woodland Plant Sale Barbara Flores, Woodland Plant Sale Coordinator

By the time the April newsletter reaches us, we will all undoubtedly have lovingly inspected our yards and gardens again and again looking for those first signs of spring. We now or will soon see that Jack is getting in his pulpit and the Dutchman's breeches are hanging out to dry. Virginia bluebells will be spreading a carpet of blue in many areas and maidenhair and other ferns are beginning to share their delicate beauty with the flowering plants.

This is the time to add to the spring excitement in your yard by taking advantage of the great woodland plants offered at this year's Woodland Plant Sale. Orders will be accepted through April 19, but there is no better

time than now to get your order in. It is a fact that some plants will sell out. In the spring of 2012 we know we will all be out again looking for those early plants so be sure to get them in the ground and off to a good start this year

There is a great selection of 35 plants: 25 forbs or flowering plants, five sedges and grasses and five ferns. Woodland sale brochures were distributed with the February newsletter. However, If anyone needs another order form or would like an extra one for a friend, please contact Barbara Flores (815-289-8602 or [bafheartland@yahoo.com](mailto:bafheartland@yahoo.com)) for a paper or e-copy. Woodland brochures are also available at: [wild.org/chapters/rockriver/](http://wild.org/chapters/rockriver/)

## Prairie Plant Sale Underway

You might think that the adage, "Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue" applies only weddings. However, it also applies to this year's prairie and savanna plant sale.

Something old? Plenty of the usual standbys that are mainstays among this sale's offerings. Butterfly milkweed, asters, coneflowers, black-eyed Susans, little bluestem, prairie dropseed. There are plenty more, but you get the picture.

Something new? Plants that are back in the rotation and again available for advance order this year (after an absence): nodding pink onion, white wild indigo, great St. John's wort, and purple prairie clover. Actually, we had some of the white wild indigo last year, but only because of an error by our supplier. They proved to be well liked, and so they're actually on the list this year, along with cream wild indigo. (The habits of these two plants differ notably, so be mindful of this when filling out your order form.)

Also new this year: The pasque flower (*Anemone patens*) was not available for advance order from our supplier, as the plant germinates late and the supplier could not

By Constance McCarthy,  
Prairie Plant Sale Co-Coordinator

guarantee that they would be available when we pick up our order in May. However, the plants are expected to be available by the first week of June, and we'll have some available for sale then. If you're interested, please let me know and I'll add your name to the list.

And still more new this year: a limited number of wild lupine and New Jersey tea plants will be available for sale on the pick-up days, Friday and Saturday, 13 and 14 May. If you're interested in more than a few of these, let me know. Additional plants can be ordered if there is significant interest.

Something borrowed? Plenty that I am thankful for, including ladders, sawhorses, and other equipment that folks kindly make available for use during the week of the plant sale.

Something blue? Why, sky-blue aster, smooth blue aster, great blue lobelia, and blue vervain, of course! And hopefully plenty of blue skies the week of the sale.

If you need additional order forms or have any questions, contact me at (815) 282.0316 or [kublaikhan@mac.com](mailto:kublaikhan@mac.com).

Orders are being accepted through Saturday, April 30 2011.

## Membership Update Marilyn Heneghan, Membership Chair

### 161 memberships on April 1, 2011

61 attended the March Program Thank you to Lisa Johnson and Lee Johnson for greeting members.

**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.

## March Meeting Recap Constance McCarthy

Photos by John Peterson



*Steve Apfelbaum, talking about his book, detailing the restoration of his Stone Prairie Farm*

At the March meeting, Steven Apfelbaum spoke to the chapter about the restoration project that he and his wife have undertaken on their land at Stone Prairie Farm, just over the Wisconsin border. The project has been a love affair with the land since 1980, when they began trying to understand the land and restore its health.

The restoration process began with their efforts to simply know the land, an 80-acre parcel that is a half mile by a

quarter mile. He began to make simple, hand-scribbled maps that were later refined with the help of his wife and mapping software. This process involved not only learning about what was on the land, but also what had once been there, including crops, a gravel quarry, a sod house, and pastures. There had been serious erosion from past farming practices, and the previously meandering stream had been channelized. Their study also considered drainage divides and the hydrology of the site. For example, the recharge had supported some wetland areas at one time. Most of land had been converted to row crops and grazing, with only very small sedge patches remaining.

In getting to know their land, they also learned about their neighborhood. In 1980, they began to speak with neighbors, who were friendly and helpful as they researched other remnants in the area. They learned much about people and their relationships with land. He recounted the story of a nearby hill prairie; the elderly woman who was living there on her family's farm wanted to hear about what they found. He told her that they had seen thousands of pasque flowers in bloom, along with prairie smoke and puccoons. She got tears in her eyes and told him that since she returned to the farm in her mid-70's, she hadn't been able to walk the land. She remembered that when she was 7 years old, the family had an Easter picnic on a hill prairie, but she never realized that prairie was on the family farm.

This wasn't just a science project, but a means of getting to know themselves and their neighbors. They also adopted a stray dog that helped show them things on the land that they wouldn't have seen otherwise, including wildlife.

They studied land survey records from 1892 to learn about the land in the area and to help them find other remnants. They began to assemble a list of what had been on their land in 1800's, including a dry prairie, sand/gravel ridge tops, sedge meadows, mesic and dry savannas, and a trout stream. This helped them start to form a vision for the property.

Once the restored the Apfelbaums initially said yes to folks who knocked on the door and asked if they could hunt on the land, they eventually stopped allowing hunters to come on the property. However, they helped to educate folks about what they could do to restore their own land.

To maintain a local ecotype in their project, they collected seed from remnants on other farms in the area. Indeed, what is now Taylor Creek Nursery started at the farm when they set aside a few acres to grow plants for the restoration projects.

They also got to know their neighbors through food that they produce on the farm. They grow vegetables in raised beds made from logs, and they have a solar food dehydrator. They even grow peaches. There is a good, old-fashioned root cellar, which also attracted attention from the neighbors. It uses no electricity (save for the light bulb), and allows them to store over 400 pounds of apples, cabbage, parsnips, and other root veggies through the winter, until May of the following year. Honey production also attracted interest from the neighbors.

The land responded very quickly to the restoration efforts. By 2001, much of the prairie had been restored, as well as mesic and wetland areas. The stream was also restored to its original path.

Neighbors have also been attracted by the prescribed burning. They begin around 4 in the afternoon, and often go until 11 p.m. or later. They counted 58 cars and trucks one year! They burn at night because research has shown that the best fires are ones that burn irregularly over the landscape; they light the fire, and whatever burns, burns. Some areas burn intensely, others not so much.

Wildlife has also responded to the restoration efforts. An American bittern passes through every spring, stopping at the wetland. The remarkable transformation has created a new aesthetic on the land. While it was a Canada thistle and giant ragweed battle zone for years, native species now prevail. Eastern grey treefrogs and milk snakes have found the property, and he has found goldenrod galls that are created by native wasps. There are ambush bugs (a type of assassin bug that looks like a praying mantis) which change colors based on the color of the plant they land on.

# March Meeting Recap (cont'd) Constance McCarthy

Consider the number of native species found on the property in the 19th century, in 1981, and in 2008:

	Historic	1981	2008
Vegetation	300	131	324
Birds	103	39	115
Mammals	23	18	25
Fish	25	1	10
Amphibians	8	3	7
Reptiles	11	0	5

For the past 8 years or so, the whooping cranes have passed over his property on their trip home to the south in the fall. They fly low enough that he can see the birds moving their heads back and forth, looking intently at the land. The pilot of the ultralight aircraft later told him that about 12-14 miles north of his farm, they hit an elevated ridge near Albany, Wisconsin. From that point on, the cranes see something--the restored land--and lead the way, while the pilot simply attempts to herd them. The birds have the same response when they approach Nygren. Pockets of restored land are crucial stepping stones that the cranes recognize along their journey.

Now that they are aging, they are thinking about the future for this land. Who will carry on? Who will love the land the same way?

Corinne Daniels, the nursery director at Taylor Creek, also provided the chapter with an update on Applied Ecological Services (AES) and Taylor Creek Nursery. AES is working on 20-30 million acres of projects around the world, including helping to design national parks in Argentina and Chile. They are consulting on

700 projects, mainly in North and South America, but also in Europe. Taylor Creek handles around 700,000 plants each year, some for seed production and some for restoration projects.

Wild Ones members, as well as Master Gardeners, receive a 10% discount on plants and trees upon presentation of a membership card (for Wild Ones, these are sent out by the national office). Everything they sell is local ecotype.

In response to a question about the tension that sometimes exists between farmers and restoration folks, it was suggested that one be sensitive, listen, and ask a lot of questions. Some farmers do know and care about conservation, but how it plays out on their land may not align with what Wild Ones or an ecologist might want. It is important to honor what farmers have done, and acknowledge that they love the land. It was also suggested to find a champion in the community, someone who is known in the area and is not regarded as an eccentric. Getting area school kids involved is another way to engage the community.

areas, such as a woodland garden that can be enjoyed in early spring and can look differently each day. She leaves her prairie area in winter for the animals and burns it each spring. She has gotten her plants from rescues, our plants sales, and moving them from her last property.

Those of us who attended got inspiration from the speakers to work on our own native projects.

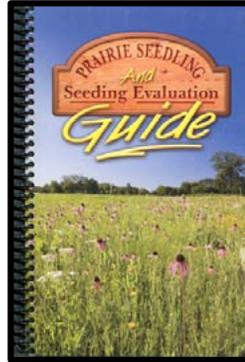
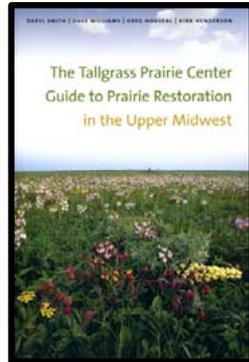
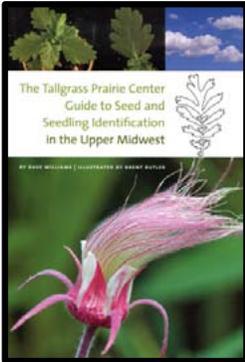
*Steve Apfelbaum, taking questions from the audience*



## Merchandise Update

Shey Lowman, Merchandise Chair

### It's Spring, Get Ready... New Resources Just for You!



**The Prairie Seedling and Seeding Evaluation Guide** is a must have reference to have for identifying native plants and weeds as they emerge. It identifies 42 native forbs and 14 grasses, plus 14 flowering weeds and 8 grass weeds. This is a privately published book that is difficult to find. **\$14.00.**

New! **The Tallgrass Prairie Center Guide to Seed and Seedling Identification in the Upper Midwest** by Dave Williams, published by the University of Iowa Press, contains excellent photographs and descriptions of 51 wildflower forbs and 14 grasses. Endorsed by Robert H. Mohlenbrock from Southern Illinois University. **\$14.00.**

New! **The Tallgrass Prairie Center Guide to Prairie Restoration in the Upper Midwest** is by four of the most knowledgeable prairie restorationists in the Upper Midwest. This guide focuses on conservation plantings, prairie recovery, native landscaping in yards and at schools, roadside plantings, and pasture renovations. It includes everything that anyone, regardless of background, needs to know for proper tallgrass prairie restoration. **\$28.00.**



The **Parsnip Predator** is a remarkable tool for killing thistle, Queen Anne's Lace as well as Wild Parsnip, while allowing you to stay on your feet! Made for slicing tap roots below soil level, it is light weight and ergonomic too. Your back will thank you for making this **\$42.00** investment.



The thorn and bramble protection you need! **The Pallina Pruning Sleeve** made from rugged nylon and polyurethane material, fully lined for protection. They have covered knuckles and thumb for added protection, Velcro adjustment, elastic finger stays, all quality construction. **\$25.00**

**Gloves not included.** For best puncture resistance, use these sleeves with any inexpensive *grain pigskin, grain or split cowhide work gloves*, most under \$10.

## Woodland "Open Yard" Tours

Wondering how to make a beautiful garden of your shady yard? Take your time and stroll through two landscapes created using native woodland plants. See how you can take a typical wooded yard (or the deep shade under a tree or two) and create an oasis of your own. Two gardens will be open to the public and the creators will be on hand to answer questions and share their experiences.

**8232 Pueblo Drive, Rockford (61103):** The Hoffmann yard is a perfect example of change and transition in our home landscapes. When the homeowners moved in about 20 years ago, the yard was mostly grass with a few trees. They started by planting native and fruit-bearing trees and replacing some of the lawn with prairie plants that could tolerate the sun and didn't require watering and mowing. As the trees grew, the sunny landscape slowly transformed to a wooded one and the homeowner planted shade-loving natives that remain verdant and interesting all season long but are especially beautiful in spring.

**Vi Bates Memorial Woodland Garden at Klehm Arboretum - 2715 S. Main Street, Rockford (61102):** Violet Bates was a life-long gardener who had a special affinity for (and talent with) woodland plants. A hidden gem within the arboretum, the woodland garden is truly something worth visiting. Lush woodland plants of all types line cool paths under a canopy of trees. Long-time Wild Ones member, Anita Johnson has devoted so much time and energy to this lovely place, you'll not want to miss it. Admission to Klehm is free May 7. Park in the

**Saturday, May 7, 2011 • 1:00 – 4:00 pm**

lot, walk through the visitor's center, exit the back door, and follow the mowed grass path to your left.

**Woodland Plant Sale:** If you are inspired by what you see in these two landscapes and you want to add some native woodland plants to your own landscape, you might find just what you are looking for at the sale table at 8232 Pueblo Drive. A wide variety of native woodland plants will be available for purchase here.

This program is free and open to the public. For additional information contact Lenae Weichel at 815-282-5482 (or 815-962-2725 on the day of the program).

## 2011 Chapter Programs and Events

<b>April 21</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>Illinois Birds:</b> <i>A Century of Change</i>	<b>Dr. Michael Ward</b> Illinois Natural History Survey and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>Mar. -Apr.</b>	<b>Native Plant Sales</b> Orders taken during this time	<b>Kim Risley</b> Woodland plant Coord. <b>Constance McCarthy</b> Plant Sale Coord.	
<b>May 7</b> 1:00 - 4:00 pm	<b>Woodland Open Yard Tours</b>	<b>Lenae Weichel</b> Coordinator 815-282-5482	Vi Bates Memorial Garden at Klehm Arboretum 2715 S. Main St., Rockford Hoffmann Landscape 8232 Pueblo Dr., Rockford
<b>May 19</b> 7:00 pm	<b>Native Plants and Hidden Gems in Winnebago County Forest Preserves</b>	<b>Eric Bednar</b> , Winnebago Co. Forest Preserve District Natural Resources Technician	Burpee Museum of Natural History

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.  
Please contact Lenae Weichel at 815-282-5482 for more information.



NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

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 **4/1/2011**, 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 and Chairs*

*President:* Constance McCarthy 815-282-0316 (kublai@mac.com) *Librarian:* Ginnie Watson (815) 398.0138 VSWatson47@aol.com  
*Vice President:* Kim Risley 815-962-4584 (rip-cordo1@comcast.net) *Show Me/Help Me Chair:* Lenae Weichel 815-282-5482 (lenae@weichel.org)  
*Program Chair:* Mary Thiesing (815) 874-3975 (mvtcorgis@verizon.net) *Youth Education & Grants Chair:* Kim Lowman Vollmer 815-397-6044 (kimlowvol@aol.com)  
*Secretary:* Shey Lowman 815-757-4456 (slowman@niu.edu) *Volunteer Coordinator:* Ed Kletecka (815) 389.0120 fiero2@charter.net  
*Treasurer:* Janet Giesen 815-899-6139 (janetgiesen@gmail.com) *Booth Coordinator, FREC representative:* Tim Lewis (815) 874.3468 natives.tim@comcast.net  
*Membership Chair:* Marilyn Heneghan 815-389-7869 (informationoptions@att.net) *Refreshments Coordinator:* Bev Crittenden (815) 964.8252 bevcrit@aol.com  
*Newsletter Editor:* Pambi Camacho 815-332-7637 (dkcamps@aol.com) *Merchandise Chair:* Shey Lowman 815-757-4456 (slowman@niu.edu)  
*Plant Rescue Chair:* John Peterson 815-248-2110 (tacmot@msn.com)

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.wildones.org/chapters.html](http://www.wildones.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.