

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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Insects of the Prairie and Insect Folklore
Thursday, June 16, 2011

Location: Burpee Museum of Natural History
737 N. Main St., Rockford IL

Time: 7:00 pm

Please join us on Thursday, June 16th, at 7:00 pm, at the Burpee Museum of Natural History, to learn about the common, important, and specialized **Insects of the Prairie and Insect Folklore.**



Our presenter is Mr. Robert Ahrenhoerster (aka Prairie Bob), a true, hands-on prairie expert, with extensive field experience and first-hand knowledge about all things found in the region's ecology. He is the owner of Prairie Seed Source, www.prairiebob.com, in Northlake, Wisconsin just west of Milwaukee. Since 1974, he has been specializing in native prairie restoration, and is dedicated to saving local genotypes in southeastern Wisconsin, collecting and selling approximately 200 species of prairie plant seeds.

Prairie Bob is the author of a booklet titled *Prairie Restoration for the Beginner*. Some people think of him as a modern "Johnny Appleseed" of prairie plants and part John Muir, David Attenborough and David Suzuki!

Truly a Wild One, Bob has long led by example. Since 1980, he has worked on the Whitewater Nature Preserve Prairie, a fifty-acre prairie restoration/reconstruction

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Articles for the July 2011 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Editor, at: dkcamps@aol.com by June 23, 2011.

Message from the President Constance McCarthy

Is Conservation Important To You?

I recently learned that the new Board of Commissioners of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (WCFPD) will be undertaking a strategic planning process. Having gone through such a process with the board of another nonprofit, I realize the importance of strategic planning, as it provides the framework for an organization's future activities and priorities.

As you may already know, there are many different interests when it comes to our forest preserves. Some folks are focused on hunting in the preserves, others seek to promote golf as a central activity, and still others are eager to have all-terrain vehicles (ATV's) in the preserves. Now is a vital time to let all of the Commissioners know about what values are important to you when it comes to Winnebago County's forest preserves.

If conservation is important to you, I encourage you to contact each one of the Commissioners *individually* and let them know this. (And if other issues are important to you, of course you should let the Commissioners know this, too.) If not many folks speak up on this issue, it could give some Commissioners the impression that other issues are more pressing and worthy of WCFPD resources. Contact information for the Commissioners is provided below.

I realize that we're all busy, but I think that this is something for all Winnebago County residents to consider. Our last educational program was about hidden gems in the WCFPD, and the need to protect them as much as possible. Hopefully that will inspire some action.

Snail-mail for all Commissioners:

c/o WCFPD
5500 Northrock Dr.
Rockford, IL 61103-1225

Email for Commissioners:

Randy Olson, Chairman}
rolson@wcfpd.org

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Membership Update Marilyn Heneghan, Membership Chair

157 memberships on June 1, 2011

Welcome new members
Joanne Blunt

**Special Thanks to Recent
Rock River Valley Chapter Donators**
(any amount about the \$30 basic dues)

Guy Smith
Lisa Johnson
Cathy Johnson

68 attended the May 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 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.

Insects of the Prairie and Insect Folklore (cont'd from page 1)

for the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater. He is very familiar with all aspects of prairie restorations, seed saving, and, as we'll soon learn, many of the insects that are associated with prairie ecosystems.

For the last 23 years, Prairie Bob has been an environmental educator and head naturalist at the Milwaukee Public School System's Camp Palmyra, located within the Kettle Moraine State Forest (KMSF). He works year-round, teaching in the classroom and in the fields and forests, leading guided tours for schoolchildren in grades K through 8. He teaches a wide range of subjects including: forests, wetlands, prairies, plant and tree identification, plant lore, plant and animal communities, geology, survival skills, conservation and our topic *Insects of the Prairie and Insect Folklore*. All these things combined would fill an encyclopedia, and are taught with a healthy dose of humor and enthusiasm, to promote and nurture a desire for knowledge of, and deeper concern for, our natural world.

This presentation should be of interest to Wild One's of all ages, exploring facts and folklore of more than forty of our local native insect species. This is especially timely as we observe an increasing insect activity in our landscapes as the summer approaches. Insects play a vital role in the health of both plant and animal population. Many insects are closely linked to specific host plant species, and often are the key to survival for specific plant species. It is a mutually co-dependent/symbiotic relationship!

So, come prepared to learn more about the role insects play in maintaining our region's ecosystem. Bring a list of the insects you have observed in your own environment and join us on Thursday, June 16th, at 7:00 pm, at the Burpee Museum of Natural History!

This program is free and open to the public.
For more information, please contact
Lenae Weichel at 815-282-5482.

Submitted by Guy Smith

May Meeting Recap Constance McCarthy

Photos by Tim Lewis



At the May meeting, Eric Bednar spoke to the chapter about Native Plants and Hidden Gems in Winnebago County Forest Preserves. He reminded us that gems are everywhere in the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District (WCFPD), often appearing unexpectedly depending on the day, hour, and time of year. And you'll be amazed at what you can discover if

you get on your hands and knees, and take a good close look at a special area! As the WCFPD acquires more property, restores land, and performs controlled burns more frequently, more gems will appear (or reappear, after having been hidden for a while).

The WCFPD aims to protect critical lands and natural features (flora and fauna) for current and future generations. Education and recreation are also part of the WCFPD mission. The District includes over 9,600 acres, 41 preserves, 4 rivers, and over 100 miles of hiking trails.

Preservation includes not just protecting high-quality natural resources, but also protecting and restoring adjacent areas so as to provide a buffer. They aim for diversity in communities (such as woodlands and

grasslands), and they protect land, the watershed, and insects and wildlife in the natural areas.

Mr. Bednar explained the difference between the WCFPD's management strategy for its reserves, and the way that Illinois Nature Preserves are managed and protected. Illinois Nature Preserves benefit from the highest level of legal protection possible; it is not permitted to even pick berries or mushrooms, or remove anything from the site (including flowers and seeds).

Gems of the WCFPD include the following:

Laona Heights Forest Preserve. Although there was significant damage there during some major storms in the 1990's, one can still find a mesic oak woodland with wild geraniums, shooting stars, and red trilliums. This 40-acre preserve is located in the northwest corner of the county. Half of the forest preserve is protected as an Illinois Nature Preserve.

Sugar River Alder Forest Preserve. This preserve contains over 500 acres, including a dolomite ridge and a hill prairie. There are huge bur oak trees, sand milkweed, prairie smoke, blue-eyed grass, and sand puccoon. The soil is mainly sandy, so there are unique things to see here.

Colored Sands Forest Preserve. This 300-acre preserve includes an Illinois Nature Preserve, as well as the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory and a restored sand prairie. Mr. Bednar acknowledged Lynda and Lee Johnson, present

May Meeting Recap (cont'd)

tonight, and said that without their dedication, we wouldn't have this preserve. The Nature Preserve, in the southern part of the preserve, contains unique habitats and is home to several endangered plant and animal species. Be sure to visit the bird banding station (founded in 1967) when things are active! Notable flora and fauna include special orchids, tree frogs, false white indigo, New Jersey tea, prickly pear cactus, butterfly weed, otters, beavers, swamp white oaks, and owls. Controlled burns are used help manage the preserve.



Edward Jakaitis III & Eric Bednar at the May meeting.

Crooked River Forest Preserve. Located near the Pecatonica Wetlands Forest Preserve, this is relatively recently acquired land. It was acquired with a view towards expanding the corridor of preserves along the Pecatonica River. You can access the site via a parking area near Pecatonica Road on Anderson Road. There is wetland habitat here for waterfowl and aquatic amphibians, reptiles, and insects. Mr. Bednar observed a kestrel catch a snake in the now-restored area. There are also shore birds that forage for leopard frogs.

Sugar River Forest Preserve. Old photos from George Fell from the early 1940's show abundant prairie grasses in the savanna areas of what is now this preserve, which is located in the northwest corner of Winnebago county. Among the 500+ acres, one can find leadplant, milkweed, perennial sundrops (discovered by Jerry Paulson), Pennsylvania sedge, little bluestem, kittentails, puccoons (sand and hoary), June grass, thimbleweed, black-eyed Susan, and mosses. Efforts are being made to control the black locust, which is too invasive in the sandy savanna. A yellow-crowned night heron has been seen by a pond in the lowlands for the past three years, and now juveniles have been seen, as well.

Hartley Memorial Forest Preserve. This is a 40-acre undeveloped natural area in the western part of the

Constance McCarthy

Photos by Tim Lewis



Anne Meyer chatting with new member Joanne Blunt.

county. Although there are no trails, there is public parking on the north side of the preserve. Mr. Bednar suggests wearing clean boots and clothes if you come to explore here, so that you won't risk tracking in weed seeds. There is an oak-hickory mesic forest, and one can find showy orchis, trilliums, mayapples, bloodroot, and Jack in the pulpit. Erosion problems are being caused by drainage from the road – a reminder of the need to protect an adequate buffer around our most prized gems.

Severson Dells Forest Preserve. Gems here include a pond that is used extensively for education (especially for youth), ferns, and skunk cabbage. Plants are also propagated from seed here, including prairie bush clover. Severson Dells Nature Center is located here; they host many educational programs for school groups, youth, adults, and families. This is an Illinois Nature Preserve and has 3 miles of hiking trails (including some paved

A River Gathering

June 16-19 2011 Rockford, Illinois
education, recreation, preservation, history, stewardship






**Celebrate
the beauty,
ecology, and
recreation of
our region's
greatest
natural assets.**

Rock Valley College

FOUR RIVERS
ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION

www.fourriver.org

Mark your calendars...Registration begins in March!

Hummingbird Nectar - They're Back!

The hummingbirds are back and are great fun to watch. They are active and territorial. You can hang the feeder close to a window and have fun watching! Great for kids.



Ingredients: 2 cups of white granulated sugar and 1/2 cup of water. Boil the water and then stir in the sugar. Cool and put in the feeder. Do not use honey as it can have a fungus that is poisonous. Don't be tempted to add more sugar as it is harmful to the birds. No need to add the red food coloring. Be sure and clean your feeder (bottle brush works great) and hands thoroughly each time you refill it. If they are not drinking the sugar water or you notice it fermenting and getting clouding after a few days in the heat then you need to dump it and put in fresh. You don't want to make the birds sick. **Have fun.**

submitted by Kim Lowman Vollmer

2011 Chapter Programs and Events

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|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| June 16 7:00 pm | <i>Insects in the Prairie and Insect Folklore</i> | Robert "Prairie Bob" Ahrenhoerster Prairie Seed Source | Burpee Museum of Natural History |
| July 21 7:00 pm | <i>Yard Tour/Evening Social</i> Members Only | | Home of Don and Marilyn Heneghan (815) 398-7869 |
| August 1 through September 3 | <i>Native Shrub and Tree Sale</i> Orders taken during this time See brochure for complete details | John Peterson Native Tree & Shrub Sale Coordinator (815) 248-2110 tacmot@msn.com | |
| August 18 7:00 pm | <i>Underground Ecology or How I learned to Love Dirt!</i> | Dr. Teri Balsler University of Wisconsin-Madison | Burpee Museum of Natural History |
| September 9 & 10 | <i>Native Tree & Shrub Pickup</i> See brochure for complete details | John Peterson Native Tree & Shrub Sale Coord. | 14037 Baker Rd Durand, IL 61024 (815) 248-2110 |
| September 15 7:00 pm | <i>Ecology 101</i> | Jack Pizzo Pizzo & Associates | Burpee Museum of Natural History |
| October 20 7:00 pm | <i>Bringing Nature Home; How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens</i> | Doug Tallamy Author, professor University of Delaware | Burpee Museum of Natural History |
| November 17 7:00 pm | <i>Pot Luck and Seed Exchange</i> Members only – all members welcome with or without seeds Bring a dish to share. | | Burpee Museum of Natural History |
| December | <i>No Meeting-Happy Holidays!</i> | | |

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.

Look for our Wild Ones booth at these activities

August 13 & August 14 ***Illinois Renewable Energy and Sustainable Lifestyle Fair*** **Ogle County Fairgrounds**
1440 N Limekiln Rd.
Oregon, IL 61061



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 **6/1/2011**, 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

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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

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.