

**Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.**

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**Scan with your Smartphone for more information about Rock River Valley Wild Ones**



Articles for the June 2013 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Chair, at: Pambi@wildonesrrvc.org  
May 23, 2013.

*Finding Emeralds In The Dust:  
Developing The Kishwaukee River With  
Green Infrastructure  
Thursday, May 16, 2013*

**Location: Burpee Museum of Natural History**

737 N. Main St., Rockford IL

**Time: 7:00 pm**



**Matthew Bardol,  
Geosyntec**

In April we all became anxious as the rains flooded nearby river, fields, and homes. Join us for the May meeting to learn how the Kishwaukee River is being saved with “Green Infrastructure.” We’ve all seen rushing rainwater-filled rivers washing away the banks and carrying away not only valuable topsoil, but also pollutants washing into the rivers from farms, subdivisions and industries.

Matthew Bardol, from Geosyntec, will explain how he has been working with local governments and other stakeholders to build greenway systems along the Kish. Matt has been with Geosyntec for more than 14 years. His experience includes conservation design, detailed hydrologic analyses, stormwater and wetland permitting, stream restoration, and development of stormwater pollution prevention plans. His two master’s degrees are in civil engineering and environment management.

Geosyntec is working with Chicago Wilderness to provide technical assistance for the development of the Kishwaukee River Corridor. This project is funded through Chicago Wilderness’ Sustainable Watershed Action Team program through a grant from Boeing Corporation. The planning area, shown on the map, contains ecologically sensitive resources bordering the Kishwaukee River and is the subject of a number of land use and development proposals.

Why should we interested? We’re busy planting native plants in our yards, right? Because - our dedication to native plants extends far beyond our own yards – people working on river corridors are looking at sensitive natural resources, natural areas, and open spaces that will benefit us all.

Matthew has been working with the Rockford Park District and the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District, and the Winnebago County Board. The Geosyntec recommendations will include land development policy and ordinance

(Continued on page 3)

## Message from the Co-President Ginny Watson



### Short and Sweet...don't use peat!

Finally! Fickle April has done its worst and we are more than ready for May...planting season! I've been a gardener all my life having been started on this path by green thumb parents who, like we, could hardly wait for the warm days of May. They shared their deep love of nature, and all things

that grow in and on the earth, with me. They are gone now and it is my sadness that I cannot return the favor of shared knowledge.

My Dad was all about site preparation. In part I agree with his ministrations such as weed removal beforehand but now must draw the line at soil amendments. He was correct to think begonias and roses, his favored plants, needed soil to which improvements had been made such as fertilizer, top soil, and peat. How much easier his gardening life would have been if he had known of the pleasures of growing natives which are happy with the soil and conditions they find here already. If he were here now and inclined toward growing natives I would advise him the day's worth of labor it would take to dig the fertilizer, top soil, and peat in to the new bed was a day wasted. I would take particular exception to his use of peat.

Traditionally, peat, or peat moss as it is also known, has been popularly used as a soil conditioner. Peat is rich in calcium and holds water well making it more available

to plant roots. It is also acidic which helps to buffer our alkaline soils. These are all valuable benefits to the new garden or habitat site but the price for such advantages is environmentally unacceptable. Peat is partially decomposed sphagnum moss and other plants growing with the moss which collect over generations in bogs forming thick mats. Because the decay process is slower than the growth rate of the sphagnum moss the decaying plant matter builds up forming a layer which grows deeper with each new growing season. Even so, three inches of peat may take as much as a century to form! A peat bog is an ecosystem unto itself supporting such treasures as pitcher plants, sundews, and its own unique collection of birds, insects and animals. To harvest peat the bog must first be drained, upsetting and destroying an ecosystem which may well have been thousands of years in the making.

Most of us are fortunate to have healthy organic topsoil covering our land which will support our natives very nicely but in some cases top soil has been removed in the process of home or industrial construction and new landscaping. In such cases, organic improvements may well be needed to get plants started. In such cases use of local compost is a much preferred method. The use of chopped fall leaves as mulch will also be beneficial.

I learned a lot from those two gentle souls who taught me the value of nature. I am sure they would have been appalled to learn of the damage wrought by the harvesting of peat leading to their subsequent use of it in their gardens. We **Wild Ones** are all so conscious of improving native biodiversity. Let us pay heed to *primum non nocere!* (*First, do no harm*)

## Membership Update Marilyn Heneghan, Membership Chair

**170 memberships on May 1, 2013**

### Welcome New Members

Claudette Pirrello  
Jane & Jay Evans

76 attended the April program.

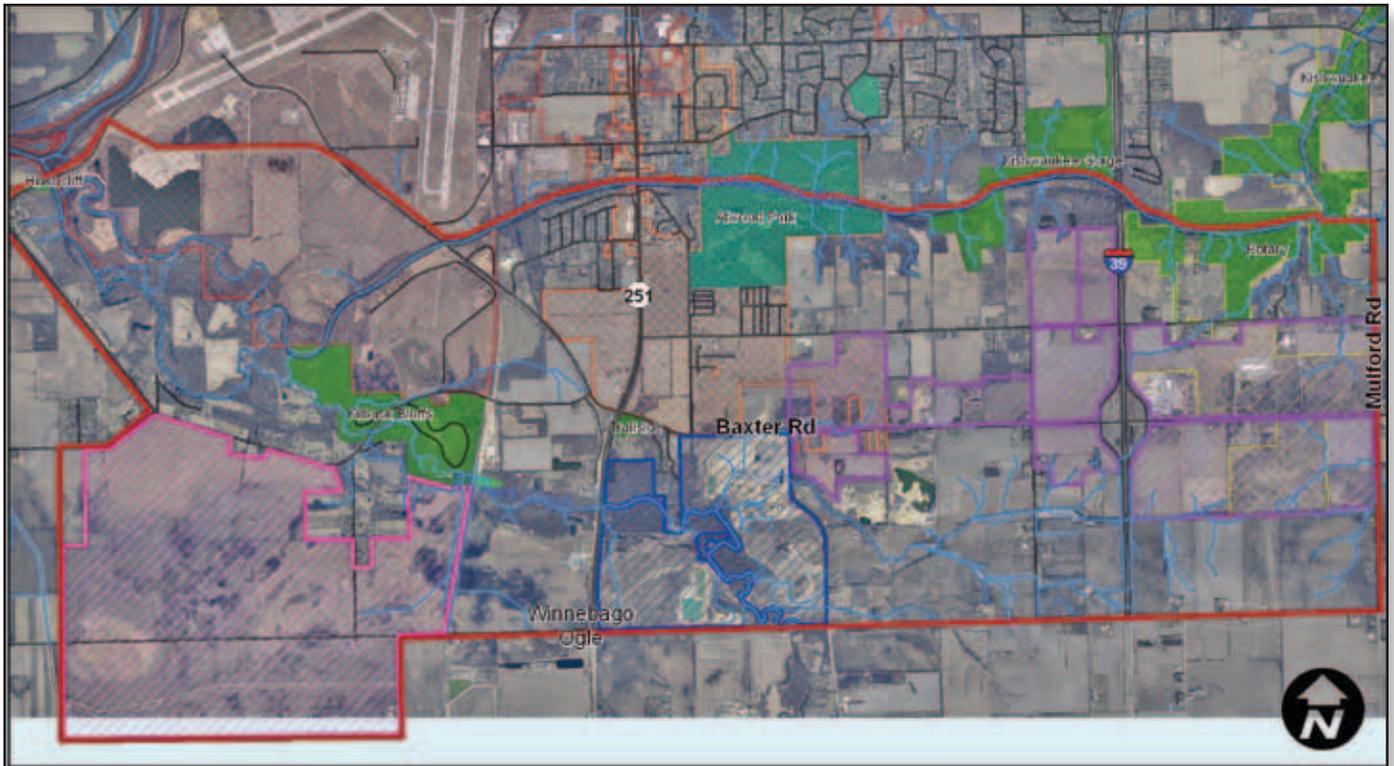
Thank you to Lisa Johnson and Anita Johnson for greeting members.

**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.

# May 16, 2013 Program (cont'd)



Legend			
	Kishwaukee River Corridor Plan Area		Roads
	Streams		Natural Land Institute
	Global Trade Park Annex		Forest Preserve
	I39 Global Trade Park		Park District
	Landfill		CHERRY VALLEY
			NEW MILFORD
			ROCKFORD

**DRAFT**  
**Kishwaukee River**  
**Corridor Planning**  
**Area**

recommendations that can be developed by local governments. An update on county zoning regulations aims to keep development runoff out of the river. County Board Chairman, Scott Christiansen, said green infrastructure principles, like those pitched by a coalition of environmental groups, will be a part of the county's Unified Development Ordinance.

There is much industrial development planned in the Kishwaukee River watershed. Can it be possible that our wildest dreams of encouraging planting of native plants could be considered even by the people writing zoning laws?

Come at 6:30 pm to socialize before the 7:00 meeting, browse the merchandise tables, and check out the library and Wild Ones Information Booth.

This program is free and open to the public. For more information please call 815-627-0344

Submitted by Lynda and Lee, Co-Program Chairs



## April 2013 Meeting Recap Cynthia Nelson

photos by Tim Lewis

Kay Charter is the executive director of Saving Birds Thru Habitat, an organization that teaches people how to help birds, whose populations are declining. Kay is a prolific author, engaging speaker, and committed advocate for the birds both she and her husband love. Kay and Jim Charter have 47 acres in Northern Michigan, which they purchased to protect and enhance habitat for migrating and nesting birds. She shared some of their experiences at the "Charter Sanctuary" in an engaging presentation on how to plant a bird feeder, that also touched on the destructive impact of some human activities as well as on actions we can take to protect and support birds.

Many people who care about birds, and enjoy seeing them in their yard, stock bird feeders with seeds, nuts and suet. This is helpful, but migrating birds are in critical need of protein, and nearly all birds feed their young with insects and other small arthropods. Although hummingbirds will come to the feeder with sugar water, which along with nectar from flowers provides needed energy, they also require a source of protein. Doug Tallamy's work provides a basis for recommendations on which plants are likely to provide protein for birds. Doug Tallamy is the author of *Bringing Nature Home*, an important book about the necessity of native gardening and why biodiversity matters. Tallamy found a greater abundance of birds, and a higher number of different species of birds, in all-native gardens when compared to conventional (mixed native and alien) gardens. Tallamy's research shows which woody and herbaceous plants are likely to provide needed protein, by documenting the number of different caterpillar species found on the plants. At the head of the list of trees to plant as bird feeders are Oaks (*Quercus*), followed by Willows (*Salix*), the *Prunus* species including Black Cherry, and Birches (*Betula*), of course selecting local species. Shrubs and smaller trees ranking high on Tallamy's list include those in the genera *Amelanchier* (Serviceberry, Juneberry), *Cornus* (Dogwood), and *Viburnum*. Even dead trees are beneficial, because of insects they attract and cavities that can be used for nesting. If it feasible to leave a dead or dying tree standing, doing so can help birds and other wildlife.

The Charters are continually learning through their work at Charter Sanctuary. For example, a planting of Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) on their property provides food for birds; but it is too dense for nesting birds. They plan to thin out the grass and establish some forbs in order to attract birds that nest on the ground. Native grasses and forbs will produce many seeds during the growing season, and some persistent

seed sources will be available during the winter for those birds seeking food in cold weather. Also, native plantings attract insects, another source of food for birds. Forbs may provide nectar, and some are larval host plants for butterflies. Tallgrass prairies, which support birds as well as butterflies, bees, and other wildlife, are one of our most endangered ecosystems with only a fraction of the original tallgrass prairie remaining in the United States. Human enterprise, including agriculture and development, has been a major factor in the loss of this habitat. Efforts to protect remnant prairies and restore native plantings on public land and in our own back yards can create a beautiful landscape and the satisfaction of knowing we are helping birds. We are cautioned to keep our distance from nesting birds, since our visits can be disruptive, and could leave a trail to the nest for predators.

Birds face many threats. Millions of birds die every year from collisions with glass on buildings. Even if a bird flies away after striking a window, there is a high likelihood that it will die later as a result of injury from the collision. Screening windows or using decals that reflect ultraviolet sunlight can protect birds from flying into the glass. We can also help protect birds from a major risk, particularly to young birds: The suburban cat. Both stray cats and domestic cats that spend time outside are effective predators, a danger to birds as well as to other small wildlife. Cats, unlike dogs, are rarely managed through municipal animal control, making stray and feral cats all too prevalent. Responsible cat ownership includes spaying or neutering your pet, and keeping it indoors.

A thoughtful choice about our morning cup of coffee can support habitat for birds. *Coffea arabica*, a shrub that provides coffee beans, was traditionally grown under a canopy of large trees that supported hundreds of species of insects and provided important winter habitat for our neo-tropical birds that migrated from North America to Central or South America for the winter. When forest is stripped in order to develop coffee plantations, using a sun-tolerant variety of shrub for a higher yield, that habitat is destroyed. Some shade plantations remain, and by selecting coffee that has been grown in shade we can support an industry that supports important habitat for birds and other wildlife. Seek out shade coffee among brands that source from small growers rather than a large agribusiness, are ethically sourced, responsibly grown, fairly traded, or organic. Certification programs for coffee have different rules, so a label designed to make you feel better might not represent your particular goal. Kay Charter challenged us to become more

educated about our choices, and directed us to some resources to help us do so.

References and Links

Charter, K. (2000). *For the Love of Birds*. Crofton Creek Press, South Boardman Michigan.

Tallamy, D.W. (2009). *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife With Native Plants*. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon

[www.savingbirds.org](http://www.savingbirds.org)

This site has links to Kay's birding blog, a list of native plants, information about shade coffee, and much more.

<http://bringingnaturehome.net/native-gardening/woody-plants>

Tallamy's documentation of the number of caterpillar species on woody and herbaceous plants is available for download.



April Meeting Audience

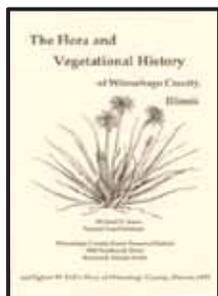
<http://www.abcbirds.org/index.html>

The American Bird Conservancy provides information about threats to birds, and includes recommendations about domestic and stray cats and steps to take to prevent birds from colliding with windows.

**Merchandise Must Haves...**

Submitted by Shey Lowman,  
Merchandise Coordinator  
[shey@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:shey@wildonesrrvc.org)

**NEW! *The Flora and Vegetational History of Winnebago County, Illinois*** by Michael D. Jones, Natural Land Institute. The definitive source for native plants in Winnebago and surrounding counties. This book also includes Egbert Fell's *Flora of the Winnebago County, 1955*, which is out-of-print and difficult to find. Add this valuable reference to your library along with Swink & Wilhelm's *Plants of the Chicago Region* and Mohlenbrock's *Distribution of Illinois Vascular Plants*. **\$15.00**



The parsnips are coming! 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 1" below soil level, it is lightweight and ergonomic too. Your back will thank you for making this purchase **\$42.00**

## *Meet Lynda and Lee Johnson, Program Co-Chairs*

**Periodically, we will introduce you to members of the Board of Directors of the Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones so that you may meet the hardworking people who keep this chapter on the cutting edge. They are all volunteers who give of their time and energy to make this chapter the bench mark for chapters just starting up.**



Lynda and Lee moved to rural Shirland Township from Rockford's downtown historic Haight Village in 1993. They were able to use their life-long interests in the natural world when they both worked at Burpee Museum of Natural History from the mid-1980s through most of the 1990s. Lee was the Director and Lynda was the Education Director.

Lee: "Not many people get paid at jobs that involve their personal love, too. Both Lynda and I have a life-long interest in all aspects of nature. I spent my entire childhood wandering around outside, coming home with pockets full of rocks, shells, worms, snakes, frogs – my Mother never complained. I have a deep interest

in reptiles, mammals, butterflies, shells, rocks and fossils, besides birds."

Lynda: "In the early morning hours at Burpee Museum, when visitors weren't there, if a staff member yelled, 'warblers!' we would all grab our binoculars and dash outside to look at trees full of migrating warblers. Not many people can do that at work! We spent a great deal of time developing programs, classes, field trips, and exhibits to teach people to love the natural world. I was proud that Rockford College gave me the Alumna Award of Distinction in 1989 for my contributions in educating children in the Rockford area. When we had our Live Reptile Exhibit for ten summers, none of the staff members would go on t.v. with the 'critters', so I ended up taking a live snake to all the t.v. stations, several times. I became known as 'the snake lady', which is very funny, because when I met Lee, I was petrified of snakes and wouldn't even touch one! I am proof that it is possible to learn not to be afraid of snakes."

Lee: "Most people know me as 'the Bird Man', because I started Sand Bluff Bird Observatory at Colored Sands Forest Preserve in 1967. Today, with the help of many dedicated volunteers, we have banded over 275,000 migrating passerines, and over 3,000 hawks. This is a scientific study of bird populations, but we also feel very strongly that the public should be welcome, so they can not only learn about birds, but about the importance of saving habitat for all living things."

Lynda: "I started volunteering at Sand Bluff in 1980. What is fun for me is watching all the volunteers share their love of birds and nature with visitors. People are always surprised at the unique native plants at Colored Sands. Botanists often visit, looking for unusual plants growing there. If you have never seen the Lupines blooming in May – I urge people to come on out just to see five acres blooming within a short distance of the parking lot!"

Lee: "We joined Wild Ones in 1996, after attending a tour of various yards on a bus, narrated by Fran Lowman. This organization is a great fit for our interests, and we enjoy finding presenters for the programs. We have both received recognition for our interests in conservation of the natural world. In 1989, I received the Seth B. Atwood Award in Conservation, and in 2000, Lynda also received the Seth B. Atwood Award in Conservation. I also felt very privileged to receive the George and Barbara Fell Award from the Natural Land Institute in 2006."

Lee's other interests include stamp and shell collecting, and model trains. Lynda's other interests include needlework and journaling. They enjoy working on the native sand prairie in their yard, and traveling near and far to look for birds.

## *Last Chance to Support the Chapter's Woodland Plant Sale*

The remaining woodland plants will be available for purchase at the May meeting. While much thanks goes to the members who have already supported the woodland sale this year, they represent but a small percentage of the total membership. So, if you have room in your yard for a few more plants, and really, who doesn't, please consider purchasing a plant or two. Native plants provide nectar, pollen and vegetative food for various insects who, in turn, become the vital protein rich food that migrating birds need as they travel through our area and parent birds require in order to nourish their nestlings. As the April speaker reminded us the hummingbird too

is dependent on insects to feed its young. Dyed sugar water does not provide the sustenance the hummingbird nestlings require. So please consider making a purchase as this will be the last opportunity to support the woodland sale and acquire some of these hard to find species.

Submitted by  
Barbara Flores,  
Woodland Plant Sale Coordinator

## *2013 Chapter Programs and Events*

<b>May 16</b> 7:00-8:45 pm	Finding Emeralds in the Dust Kishwaukee River Corridor Green Infrastructure Plan using native species	<b>Matthew Bardol</b> Geosyntec	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>May 17</b> 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Prairie Plant Sale Pickup	<b>Lenae Weichel, Coord.</b> 815-282-5482 <a href="mailto:Lenae@wildonesrrvc.org">Lenae@wildonesrrvc.org</a>	1438 Collingswood Dr Rockford, 61103
<b>May 18</b> 8:00 – 11:00 a.m.			
<b>June 20</b> 7:00-8:45 pm	Planting Natives to Attract Monarch Butterflies & Other Insects: WO Joint Venture	<b>Patricia Miller</b>	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>July ??</b> 7:00-9:00 pm	Evening Social/Yard Tour Members only: All members welcome. Bring a dish to share, and folding chair.	<b>Bobby Lambiotte</b>	3038 Bildahl Street Rockford, IL 61109 815-963-6483
<b>Aug-Sept</b>	Native Tree & Shrub Sale Orders taken during this time	<b>John Peterson</b> Tree and Shrub Sale Coordinator	
<b>August 15</b> 7:00-8:45 pm	Native Trees & Shrubs: What Works!	<b>Conner Shaw</b>	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>September TBA</b>	Pick Up Tree and Shrub Orders See brochure for full details	<b>John Peterson</b> Tree and Shrub Sale Coordinator	14037 Baker Rd Durand, IL 61024 815-979-8539
<b>September 19</b> 7:00-8:45 pm	Global Warming as it Relates to Natives	<b>Jessica Hellman, PhD</b> Univ. of Notre Dame	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>October 17</b> 7:00-8:45 pm	Native Plants in Winter	<b>Dr. James Reinartz,</b> Director Univ. of Wisc.-Field Station	Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>November 21</b> 7:00-8:45 pm	Pot Luck and Seed Exchange Members only: All members welcome with or without seeds. Bring a dish to share.		Burpee Museum of Natural History
<b>December</b>	No Meeting-Happy Holidays!		

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.  
Please contact Lynda and Lee Johnson at (815) 629-2781 for more information.



NATIVE PLANTS. NATURAL LANDSCAPES

## ROCK RIVER VALLEY

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 **5/1/2013**, 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  
**Wild Ones Rock River Valley**  
**5411 E. State Street PMB340**  
**Rockford, IL 61108**

## Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter

### *Board of Directors and Chairs*

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**Past President:** Constance McCarthy  
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**Merchandise/Website Coordinator:**  
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**Volunteer Coordinator:** Cynthia Nelson  
815-758-8978 Cynthia@wildonesrrvc.org

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 \$37, Limited Income/Full-Time Student \$20, Business \$250  
Entire membership contribution is tax deductible. Contact Membership Chair for additional information or to join.

815-627-0344 • Visit our Web site at [www.WildOnesRRVC.org](http://www.WildOnesRRVC.org)

### *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.