

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

Inside this issue:

Message from the Co-President	2-3
Wild for Monarchs	3
Board in Action	3
April Meeting Recap	4-5
Membership Update	6
Merchandise	6
Plant-a-row	7
Chapter Calendar	7
Chapter Contact Information	8



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



Articles for the June 2014 newsletter, must be submitted to the Newsletter Chair, at: Pambi@wildonesrrvc.org May 23, 2014.

Thirty Years of Growing and Managing Native Plants

Thursday, May 15, 2014

NEW LOCATION: Rock Valley College/Woodward Technology Center, WTC
3301 North Mulford Road,
Rockford, IL 61114

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm



Join us Thursday, May 15, 2014 – remember, come to our new location at Rock Valley College!

Jerome Johnson, Executive Director of Garfield Farm Museum, will share his experiences of growing and managing native plants for over thirty years, with many slides showing the special, and beautiful native plants he has helped nurture on the property.

Garfield Farm Museum is Illinois' only historically intact surviving former prairie farmstead and teamster inn. Volunteers and donors from 3,000 households and 37 states are saving and presenting Garfield Farm as an 1840s working farm museum. Initially starting as a full-time volunteer in 1981, Johnson helped the museum develop and establish full time staff positions. In addition he has led several capital campaigns. The property includes 307 acres and several rehabilitated buildings.

Programs include not only farm history topics, but also a variety of native plant workshops and prairie tours. Jerome's experiences and expertise are a welcome addition to our monthly programs. Take a break from working in your own native landscaping and come May 15th to enjoy his program!

Come early and browse the library, merchandise tables, chapter information booth, and refreshments table. We welcome new members! Call 815-627-0344.

Submitted by Lynda and Lee Johnson, Co-Chairs/Program



Message from the Co-President

Ginnie Watson



Ginnie Watson

photo by Jon McGinty

I want to talk about something very important. My apologies to those of you who attended our April monthly meeting because this issue was addressed at some length by both our speaker Corinne Daniels and our wise member, Anne Meyer. The topic here is the potent pesticide neonicotinoid so if you signed Anne's petition directed at Home Depot and Lowe's asking them to stop selling neonicotinoids as well as

their plants which are saturated with it, you get a bye on reading this month's column! The rest of you, listen up!

Just for a moment, let's take a look back at the 1960s. The book, *Silent Spring*, written by American biologist Rachel Carson, was published in 1962 decrying the use of the pesticide DDT. In that same decade, Wisconsin conservationist Lorrie Otto, who was the inspiration behind the creation of the Wild Ones, began her successful campaign against DDT after seeing the effects it had on birds and other wildlife on her property. Now, let's fast forward to the present day.



photo provided by Molly Fifield Murray

Development of neonicotinoids began in the 1980s by the German chemical and pharmaceutical company Bayer and by Shell Oil Company. Today neonicotinoids are considered by some to be as dangerous to the natural world as DDT. Neonicotinoids are a class of insecticide which acts on the central nervous system of insects either paralyzing them or killing them outright. It is a systemic chemical which when applied to a plant travels to every part of the plant from roots to pollen. Any caterpillar



which nibbles a leaf; any beetle which samples a tender shoot; any pollinator which laps a drop of nectar is in peril. Airborne pollen from a treated plant which drifts to another, untreated plant creates a danger zone for any unlucky insect happening upon it.

DDT was a terrible threat because it bioaccumulated in the tissues of insects, the birds and small predators who ate them and on up through the food chain to eagles and higher. Neonics persist for a long time as well though not by the same mechanism. It may take as long as 12 years for it to break down and be gone from the ecosystem. Neonicotinoids are water soluble and remain in the soil after the plant on which it was applied dies. A large rainstorm will wash that chemical into a wetland or nearby pond which will remain contaminated for an extended period poisoning insects for years to come. Neonicotinoid contaminated pollen will spread on the wind to other plants and surfaces, threatening even more insects. Though it doesn't travel up the food chain as does DDT, it will reduce the insect population and hence the bird population as they lose their food source.

Neonicotinoids have been implicated in the disastrous bee Colony Collapse Disorder. With so many agricultural crops treated with neonicotinoids; so many gardeners using products containing neonicotinoids to keep their plants 'pristine'; and responsible homeowners unknowingly landscaping with plants that have been saturated with neonicotinoids before purchase, caterpillars, butterflies, bees, and other pollinators face dangers nature never intended and their survival is less assured than ever before. There isn't room here to discuss all the hazards neonicotinoids present. It

(continued on page 3)

WILD FOR MONARCHS

Inviting Nature Home Lecture & Tour

July 26 and 27, 2014

The Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter celebrates its 20th Anniversary with a lecture by Michael R. Jeffords, Ph. D., retired entomologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey, and two days of tours of private yards and public landscapes featuring wildflowers and other plants that attract birds, butterflies and other beneficial insects, especially monarch butterflies.

July 26 – 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Jeffords will speak about “Surrounding Yourself with Biodiversity: Strategies for the Home Landscape”

Location:

Northern Illinois University – Rockford, 8500 E. State Street, Rockford
Free to Wild Ones members; \$5 donation suggested for others.

July 26 – 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tour of natural yards and native landscapes in Rockford, Belvidere, Rockton, Roscoe and South Beloit.

July 27 – 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tour of natural yards and native landscapes in Rockford, Belvidere, Rockton, Roscoe and South Beloit.

Each stop will feature different uses of native plants, activities for families, and information about ways to help save Monarchs from disappearing. A milkweed plant will be given to each family while supplies last.

Free, and open to the public. Donations accepted.

The listing of tour locations will be posted one-week prior to the event at www.WildOnesRRVC.org.

Board of Directors in Action Cathy Johnson, Secretary

Highlights of activities of the Board of Directors, as discussed at the April 10, 2014 meeting, include the following:

- Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter has been honored as the recipient of the 2014 Seth B. Atwood Award for Parks and Conservation in the Organization category. The Atwood Award is named in honor of Seth B. Atwood, the late industrialist who preserved and donated more than 1,000 acres of valuable land for the citizens of Winnebago County, and is presented by the Rockford Park District and the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District. To date, 43 recipients have received this award which recognizes individuals and organizations for their exceptional volunteer contributions to facilities, programs or services which preserve natural areas and park spaces, provide recreation or education.
- Plans are in progress for the celebration of the chapter's 20th anniversary. The July 26th and 27th event will feature a talk by Dr. Michael Jeffords, and a tour of homes featuring natural landscaping. Activities highlighting monarch butterflies will be included.
- The chapter approved two mini-grant applications requesting native plants for projects in our area.
- Website coordinator Shey Lowman recently completed a webinar on advanced use of Constant Contact. The chapter's website and on-line newsletter continue to improve in content and grow in the number of visits
- The 2014 Native Woodland and Prairie Plant Sales are progressing well.

(continued from page s)

behooves all of us to learn all we can about the nature of this killer and make a conscious effort to avoid its use. Meanwhile, here is an incomplete list of products to avoid containing neonicotinoids: **Actara, Platinum, Helix, Cruiser, Adage, Meridian, Centric, Flagship, Poncho, Titan, Clutch, Belay, Arena, Confidor, Merit, Admire, Legend, Pravado, Encore, Goucho, Premise, Assail, Intruder, Adjust and Calypso.**

Please take this huge threat to heart and spread the word to family, friends, and neighbors. Albert Einstein reportedly said without bees the future of humanity would measure about four years! ‘Somebody should do something about that’...yes, indeed! Will it be you?



April Meeting Recap Constance McCarthy

photo by Tim Lewis



Corrine Daniels of Applied Ecological Services gave a presentation on the benefits of native landscaping for private landowners, subdivision developers, and businesses.

Before diving into her presentation, Ms. Daniels spoke about the information that Anne Meyer distributed to attendees about the risks related to the use of neonicotinoids (also referred to as neonics). This

chemical has been largely banned in the European Union due to the threat that it poses to pollinators, among other things. It is now suspected to be a cause of colony collapse disorder, which is wiping out bee populations.

So-called “big box” home improvement retailers and other plant nurseries often sell plants that have been treated with neonics for purposes of Japanese beetle control. Unfortunately, the plants are not labeled as having been treated with this chemical, so that even gardeners who are taking an organic approach and not applying chemicals in their home landscapes, are unwittingly bringing neonics into their gardens.

Ms. Daniels said that the best way to make an impact on the presence of neonics is to do business with a local nursery. Because Illinois is already classified in Category III with regard to Japanese beetle infestation (i.e., the infestation is widely present and we have moved beyond the point of trying to prevent the presence of the beetles), there is no reason for local nurseries to be applying neonics to the plants that they are growing. However, big-box stores get their plants from nurseries far and wide, many in states or areas where neonics are applied in an attempt to keep the Japanese beetles at bay.

In short, local nurseries should not be applying neonics to their plants that are sold locally. Educate yourself as a consumer and ask questions to get the information you need. Japanese beetle host plants are primarily grasses and sedges; even with natives, it is important to buy locally sourced plants to be sure the plants aren't bringing neonics into your garden, harming the pollinators you are trying to help.

The information that Anne Meyer shared before the meeting consisted of letters folks could sign, addressed to the CEO of Lowe's and the CEO of Home Depot, asking them to cease selling plants that are treated with neonics, in light of the threat that they pose to the environment. For more information and/or to take action, visit the website of Friends of the Earth at www.foe.org.

Back to the evening's presentation...

The first topic concerned what is native and why this matters. Natives should be used in our landscapes

(whether home, business, subdivision, etc.) because they have adapted to local conditions (and so the use of fertilizer, pesticides, and water is reduced); they reduce erosion and increase the absorption of water into the soil; they give back rather than take from the health of the ecosystem; they provide food and shelter for wildlife; and maintenance costs are less than for non-native plants.

Ms. Daniels showed an image of her garden in June 2012 during the terrible drought of that hot, dry summer. She did not provide any supplemental water, yet her yard was still full of beautifully colored flowers and was very lush. Even at the peak of the drought, she did not have to water her garden.

Climate change considerations also have an effect on restoration work. There is now increased thought about what is appropriate to plant in restorations. What is now considered local and native has changed due to concerns about climate change. While restoration experts used to be happy to use plants from within 200 miles, the acceptable radius has shrunk significantly. Some people even speak about the possible need to relocate national parks to help endangered, isolated species have a safe place.

Ms. Daniels believes that this speaks very much in favor of using local ecotype (rather than maximizing diversity by pulling in too many species). Some research shows that when species are pulled in from too broad of an area, there is actually decreased genetic diversity in the end. Still, other research shows that this makes for healthier overall populations. The question posed by Ms. Daniels is, “Are we good at predicting mother nature?” In her view, not so much!

On the issue of local genotype, there is debate about the issue of “how local?”. This debate concerns factors such as eco-regions and hardiness zones. In a restoration context, this carries over to project sensitivity and “buildability”. The latter refers to the ability to make a project happen in spite of limited resources (available plants).

Ms. Daniels also spoke about embracing “wild-types.” Wild-type refers to a plant as it exists in the wild (from a remnant savannah or prairie). As a grower, she seeks to collect seeds on several dates, from different patches within the remnant area. This allows for maximum genetic diversity in the seed (rather than just the average diversity). It is important to retain as much wild diversity as possible.

She is not in favor of cultivars, and believes in avoiding selections. She doesn't think it is wise to find only four or five plants in a remnant that you like, and pick seeds only from those plants. The issue of “nativars” is another hot one these days. The national Wild Ones organization does not believe in the use of nativars (i.e., cultivars of native plants), even though there is much discussion and disagreement on the subject.

There have been changes in the restoration industry over time. For example, restoration professionals are not much

more aware of safety, especially with controlled burns. Ms. Daniels went on to point out some fallacies regarding native plants, including the following:

- Natives are expensive. This is not necessarily so. While seed can be expensive, you don't need that much. For example, 400 pounds of grass seed is needed per acre to seed a lawn, while only 4 to 12 pounds of native seed is needed per acre for a restoration.
- Natives attract nuisance wildlife. Ms. Daniels moved last year and now her kids complain about how dead and boring the new yard seems, as they have not yet had a chance to convert it to natives. And she has not had problems with nuisance wildlife.
- Natives need to be burned. It is possible to manage a restoration without burning (even though there are a few things really do like to be burned). One reason not to burn a restored area is to preserve the insect base. Management practices that can be used instead of burning include mowing, cleaning out dead plant material only in the spring (leaving it for wildlife all winter), raking and mulching.
- Going native means no more yard work. Most of us know that some work is indeed involved, but when your yard is a labor of love, the work is something to be enjoyed.

Among the lessons that Ms. Daniels has learned: Less is more (for example, seeding rates have come down significantly). There is now increased attention to PLS, pure live seed, rather than a focus on pounds per acre. Over time, the restoration industry discovered that they were putting down far too much seed (up to 300 seeds per square foot). The focus on pure live seed helps to keep restoration costs down. Seed-related lessons that have been learned, include:

- Seeds from the same genus vary greatly by size.
- There is more to quality than just "pure live seed." In some cases, seed isn't always "cheaper" than plants (e.g., Turk's cap lily seed is rare and harder to obtain).
- Defluffed vs. dehulled seed. The restoration industry is moving towards both defluffing and dehulling seed. This makes the seed more flow-able. However, some research shows that defluffed and dehulled seed is more vulnerable to disease and less hardy in a restoration. The mechanical process damages the seed coat, which is an attachment point for disease. Also, damaged seed can take up water too quickly, such that the metabolic process can kick in too soon if warm and moist weather arrives early. For smaller scale restorations, she recommends that folks not use defluffed or dehulled seed.

Over time, restoration designers have also become smarter. They are better informed about what is commercially available and what the costs are to carry out a restoration. More knowledge has been gained about how ants spread seed from Dutchman's breeches and other spring ephemerals. The ants spread the seed underground and eat the fruit layer of the seed, thereby allowing the seed to germinate. If the fruit layer dries out without being eaten

by an insect, the seed will go into a deep dormancy. Many spring ephemerals have this protective mechanism that helps more seed to germinate.

Knowledge has expanded and changed about what is considered an acceptable plant or plug. The traditional industry does not like plants that take too much water in the nursery. However, restoration nurseries tend to prefer "roots before shoots", and see the wisdom of effectively not paying for dirt. Folks realize that it is silly to pay for a gallon-sized plant when a smaller plant will grow to that same size within six months after being transplanted into a landscape.

Taxonomy is also changing. For example, the Latin name of sky blue aster has changed to *Symphyotrichum oolentanginense* (try saying that 10 times fast!). Spotted Joe-Pye weed is on its fourth name, and the Latin name for stiff aster has also changed. To find the most current name, go to the USDA website (Google or another search engine is helpful for this task).

Finally, Ms. Daniels talked about how restoration work has changed people across demographics:

- older farmers who used to kill certain plants are now seeing the wisdom of keeping them;
- youth now realize the need for diversity and natives because of field trips and tours of restored areas;
- youth from urban areas who have had not much experience with growing anything, are experiencing the beauty of restored areas and learning how to bring those benefits to urban areas;
- young people see the need to keep water clean and how what we plant on the land affects water quality;
- schools are more engaged, and school prairies are becoming more prevalent;
- Brittany, a young woman who had fetal alcohol syndrome as a baby, is now aging out of the system. The Moving Out program has helped Brittany and people like her to sustain their own lives and not be dependent on external support. Brittany has started a business that grows native plants, Tiger Lily Seeds. She loves to grow the plants and does restoration work. She will be expanding with a small greenhouse and will focus on using very local genotype seeds. Natives have changed her life, and she is thriving because of this microenterprise;
- a documentary filmmaker has come to film controlled burns;
- children and families realize the importance of diversity. They are paying more attention and seeing interconnectedness around them;
- kids are becoming more engaged, seeing the need for sustainable agriculture and the connection to the health of the land;
- through their restoration projects, Applied Ecological Services has helped change neighbors, retirement communities, schools, hospitals, farmers, children, chain stores, big business, small businesses and town centers;
- some malls now even have natives planted inside; and
- churches are doing prairie restorations on their properties.

Membership Update Shey Lowman, Membership Co-Chair

Thanks to our **13** members who renewed this month! A membership e-form and our membership brochure describing the benefits of membership are both available on the chapter website (www.wildonesrrvc.org), just click on the **Membership** tab. Thank you in advance for helping us reach our goal of 200 members in 2014!

178 memberships on March 23, 2014

Special thanks to our members who made donations above the basic \$37 dues!

- Jane & Jay Evans, Rockford, IL
- Cynthia Nelson, DeKalb, IL
- Francie Barnes, Rockford, IL
- Janice Christ, Oregon, IL

Welcome to new members!

- Cheryl Henry, Roscoe, IL
- Mark Luthin, Belvidere, IL
- Charron & Frank Rausa, Sterling, IL
- Todd Sullivan, St. Aubin Nursery, Kirkland, IL

Anniversaries

Congratulations to this month's loyal members!

5 Years

Ted Ross & Kathie Ayres, Rockford, IL

10 Years

Cindy Torrisi, Belvidere, IL

5 Years

Steve Engler, Beloit, WI
 Shirley Angell, Rockford, IL
 Harold & Carol Korte, Apple River, IL

89 attended the March meeting.

72 attended the April meeting.

A big thank you to our April meeting volunteers!
 Refreshments - Janet Giesen, Cynthia Nelson, Pat Rooney
 AV/Sound Equipment - Bob Arevalo
 Library Assistants - Barbara Flores
 Greeters - Marilyn Heneghan, Janaan Lewis
 Meeting Recap for the Newsletter - Constance McCarthy
 Photographer - Tim Lewis

It is preferred that renewal memberships be sent directly to the chapter for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. Please use the address below:

Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter
 5411 E. State Street #340
 Rockford, IL 61108-2907

Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter and your national Journal address labels. You will be mailed a renewal reminder two months prior to your expiration date with a completed membership form and return envelope for your convenience.

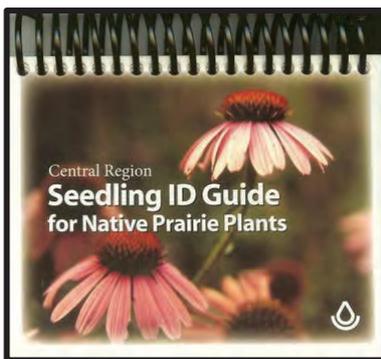
Please send address and email address changes to Shey Lowman at shey@wildonesrrvc.org.

Thirty percent of all dues paid are returned to the chapter by National Wild Ones to support our chapter activities. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

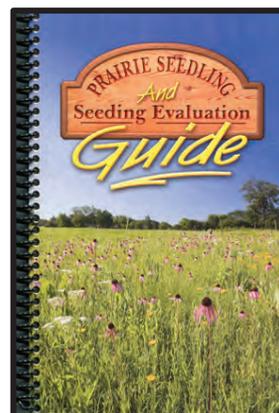
Thank you for your continued support!

Merchandise Must Have Shey Lowman, Merchandise Coordinator

What's Growing in Your Yard? These Handy Guides Will Help You!



Central Region Seedling ID Guide for Native Prairie Plants by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Missouri Department of Conservation. This 5" x 4" spiral bound laminated field guide fits in your pocket. It has photographs from seed to seedling to mature plant for 40 species. **\$12.00**



The Prairie Seedling and Seeding Evaluation Guide is a must have reference 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.**



Plant-a-Row and share with others!

Many of us have our lovely areas of native plantings, and also vegetable gardens. I hope this is a summer of health and abundance for both. When you have an over-abundance of produce there is an outlet for those vegetables – the hungry. This is organized by the University of Illinois Extension and here are some drop-off sites:

University of Illinois Extension, 1040 North Second Street, M-F, 9-4

Rock River Valley Pantry, 421 South Rockton Street, M-F, 8:30-4

Lifescape, 705 Kilburn Avenue, M-F, 8-4 and Sundays 8-11

OSF St. Anthony, Tuesdays, July-September, 5-7 PM

Edgebrook Farmers Market, Wednesday, July-September, 10-noon

NE Corner of Durand Town Square (next to Hearth & Garden Gifts) Mondays, July-September 12-noon

If you have questions please contact the Extension office at 815-986-4357 or <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/jsw>

Submitted by Kim Lowman Vollmer, Youth Education and Grant Chair

Membership Application



Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

- I prefer receiving the color digital version of the monthly newsletter as a PDF file via email.
- Check here if you do not want to be published in the annual January membership roster.

Please select your membership category:

	Wild	Wilder	Wildest
Household Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$37	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100+
Household Lifetime Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1500 (Or payable in 3 annual payments of \$500)		
Professional Educator Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$90	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150
Affiliate Not-for-Profit Organization Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$90	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150
Associate Membership (limited income/student)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20		
Business Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> \$600	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,200
Gift Household Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$37	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100+

If this is a gift membership, please enter your name below so we can let the recipient know it is from you:

- I would like to make an additional donation to support the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter for: \$ _____

Please make your **check payable to Wild Ones** and mail it to this address:

I have enclosed \$ _____ to start/ renew my membership for _____ year(s).

Wild Ones
Rock River Valley Chapter
5411 E State St #340
Rockford, IL 61108-2907

2014 Chapter Programs and Events

<p>May 16 5-7 pm May 17 8-11 am</p>	<p>Pick Up Prairie Plant Orders See brochure for full details</p>	<p>Rick & Deb Freiman 815-871-7424</p>	<p>4601 Paulson Rd. Caledonia, IL</p>
<p>May 15 7:00-8:45 pm</p>	<p>Thirty Years of Growing and Managing Native Plants</p>	<p>Jerome Johnson Executive Director of Garfield Farm Museum</p>	<p>RVC/Woodward Technology Center, WTC 3301 North Mulford Road Rockford, IL 61114</p>
<p>June 19 7:00-9:00 pm</p>	<p>Planting Natives in Farms, County Parks & My Own Yard: What Works!</p>	<p>Brian Russart Milwaukee County Parks</p>	<p>RVC/Woodward Technology Center, WTC 3301 North Mulford Road Rockford, IL 61114</p>

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 **5/1/2014**, 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:
Wild Ones Rock River Valley
5411 E. State Street #340
Rockford, IL 61108

Wild Ones - Rock River Valley Chapter

Board of Directors and Chairs

Co-Presidents: Bob Arevalo 815-332-3343

Bob@wildonesrrvc.org

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Ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org

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815-629-2781 lyndaLee@wildonesrrvc.org

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barbara@wildonesrrvc.org

Tree & Shrub Sale Coordinator: John Peterson
815-979-8539 john@wildonesrrvc.org

Booth Coordinator: *FREC Representative:*

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tim@wildonesrrvc.org

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Merchandise/Website Coordinator:

Shey Lowman 815-757-4456

shey@wildonesrrvc.org

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

Rock Valley College/Woodward Technology Center, WTC, 3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114

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: Household \$37, Associate \$20, Affiliate Non-profit \$90, 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

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.