

**Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.**

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



All articles for the February 2016 newsletter, must be submitted to:  
[Constance@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:Constance@wildonesrrvc.org)  
by January 23, 2016.

*Can You Name That Plant?*  
*January 21, 2016*

**Location:** Rock Valley College,  
Woodward Technology Center (WTC)  
3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.



Your game show host, our chapter's own Tim Lewis, will test your skill and broaden your knowledge of common and uncommon native plants with this engaging photographic review. Tim is an avid native gardener, photographer, and national president of Wild Ones. Using photos taken by himself and by other Wild Ones members, he will take you on an interactive tour to discover the names and notable characteristics of dozens of our most beloved and most important native plants and trees.

This will be a fun and entertaining opportunity to hone your native plant ID skills and learn tips and tricks for cultivating them. A Q and A session will follow the photographic overview.

This program is free and open to the public.  
Call 815-881-1014 for more information.

*Hononegah H.S. Plants Natives* **Kim Lowman Vollmer**

Gaia, the environmental club at Hononegah High School, wants to thank the Rock River Chapter of Wild Ones for the grant money to purchase 40 native plants for their prairie planting. Last year's president, Chelsea Peterson, spearheaded this project, which required close work with the administration and grounds people. They applied Roundup and tilled the area to cut down on the weeds and so that it would be easier to dig when planting the new plants. In May, the club, along with its teacher advisers, planted, covered the bare area with newspaper, and applied mulch.



Throughout the summer, Chelsea Peterson and I watered, weeded and cared for the planting area. The small planting area is in a very public area, next to the school and parking lot, so it is visible to all who pass. This fall, you could especially notice the bright red cardinal flowers, but earlier the milkweed and blazing star were blooming. The club expresses its thank for this learning opportunity and chance to care for our natural environment.

## Message from the Co-President **Ginnie Watson**



**Ginnie Watson**

*photo by Jon McGinty*

This is the time of year when I have the bittersweet duty to say goodbye to some hard working folks who have put in a lot of long hours to see to it that our chapter stays up to date and relevant. At the same time, we are pleased to welcome aboard some extraordinary people who have graciously volunteered to give their time and energy for the benefit of this chapter.

Let's take a moment to recognize these leaders.

**Jamie Johannsen**, Director of Marketing and Community Relations for The Forest Preserves of Winnebago County, has been our program chair for the past year, providing us with informative, interesting, and insightful monthly meeting presentations by speakers with extensive backgrounds in their respective subject areas. We thank Jamie for sharing her talents with us as we wish her well in the future. Three long-standing members will be taking Jamie's place as the newly formed program committee. **Lisa Johnson**, in charge of environmental education at Burpee Museum of Natural History, **Ed Kletecka**, past chapter volunteer coordinator, and **Bob Arevalo**, past president of our chapter, will be responsible for finding speakers and setting up programming for the coming year. Each has been a member for at least 17 years and is committed to continuing the tradition of excellent programming for which our chapter is known. We are fortunate to have them on the job!

**Barbara Flores** took over the woodland plant sale from Kim Risley in 2011, growing it to its present size, which rivals the prairie plant sale. Thanks to Barbara, over 2,000 native forbs, grasses, and sedges found their way into area landscapes, habitats, and restorations. We will sorely miss Barbara and all of the energy she poured into the woodland plant sale. Stepping into her shoes are **Jodell and Marty Gabriel**. They are enthusiastic and eager to get the ball rolling for this year's sale. Barbara has met with them and will be mentoring them as they take over the reins this year. Welcome, Jodell and Marty!



**Constance McCarthy**

*photo by Tim Lewis*

**Lenae Weichel** has been sharing presidential duties with me this year as co-president. This chapter has been lucky to have had Lenae on the board in numerous positions in the past, and we hope she will be able to rejoin us in the future. For now, another past president, **Constance McCarthy**, has agreed to fill this position for the coming year. Constance was president for six years, from 2007-2012. It will be

wonderful to have her back with us so that we will be able to draw upon her knowledge and experience.

**Cynthia Nelson** has been our volunteer coordinator for the past three years, assuring event coordinators that there would be sufficient volunteers to get the job done. Cynthia has done an outstanding job and we will miss her mightily. **Khrisa Miskell** joined Wild Ones in May of 2014 and will be taking over for Cynthia as volunteer coordinator. I am excited to have Khrisa on board because I know she will do a great job!

In addition to these new folks, we have created three new positions in order to better serve our mission. We now have a recap coordinator, **Pat Hollingsworth**. We leave it in Pat's capable hands to see to it each monthly meeting presentation is written up in the following month's newsletter, so as to benefit those who are unable to attend as well as remind attendees of the important points made by the speaker. We also have two new at-large board member positions, filled by **Kim Lowman Vollmer** and **Doreen O'Brien**. These two positions will figure strongly in the reorganization of our board as we move from a working board to a policy board.

Let me say what a privilege it has been to work with such a motivated, energized, get-it-done bunch of leaders as is our board, past and present. Please take a moment to look over the last page of this newsletter at the list of board members and coordinators. These are the people who make it happen. Many of the names you see there have been on this list for a long time, while others are making their first appearance. But *all* are deserving of a big, hearty THANK YOU!

# 2015 Released Monarch Butterfly Count Janet Giesen

In an informal count out of general curiosity, I sent a request to chapter members and friends, asking them to send me the number of monarch butterflies they released in 2015. I received over 10 responses and am pleased to report that we released over 1,000 monarch butterflies this past year! To be exact, the count was 1,038 monarch butterflies released in both Winnebago and DeKalb counties.

Some of us planned to raise monarchs in 2015, while others happened to find some eggs or caterpillars and decided to help them become butterflies instead of food for a local predator. And although many of us have native plants in our yards to specifically attract all sorts of insects, we are particularly fond of monarch butterflies and want to protect them from other insects and birds. In doing so, we have designed cages out of plastic boxes, scrap materials (see the McMullen cage image, right), and even purchased cages designed especially for raising butterflies.



We spent untold hours collecting eggs, larvae, and milkweed leaves; cleaning out the cages of the frass that seemed to never end; replenishing fresh milkweed leaves, moving caterpillars from one cage to another, repositioning chrysalides; and watching, watching, and watching the various stages of these fascinating creatures. Barbara Flores found that *Asclepias syriaca*, *Asclepias incarnata*, and *Asclepias tuberosa* were equally popular with caterpillars. And those of us who received milkweed transplants from Barbara were fortunate that they came with many monarch eggs!

We were proud to show our broods to neighbors and friends and never tired of the endless questions about the monarch life cycle - sometimes I even dreamed about them. Last year I raised 17 toward the end of the season after I found a plump caterpillar nearing its time to morph into a chrysalis. This year I planned to raise monarch butterflies, but didn't get started until July 18. Nevertheless, I released the last male, number 72, on September 16. I kept a phenological record of the entire process, from the weather and egg count to which milkweed plants yielded the most eggs, to the wandering caterpillar looking for that perfect location to stop, rest, spin its silk button, and then fall into its "J" form, to the fascinating metamorphosis of a beautifully striped caterpillar into an entirely new being, a shiny jade green chrysalis with golden specks! Some of us were fortunate



**Giesen transition cages**

to witness the tightly folded butterfly eclose from its chrysalis - words cannot describe the thrill of watching a crumpled creature develop into an exquisite monarch butterfly.



**Various caterpillar instars**

A few of us tagged butterflies before release, hoping that at least one of them will be found in Mexico this winter or in Texas on the final leg of its journey next spring. But we can rest assured that our citizen science activities were well worth the effort because less than 10 percent of them would have survived had they been left in the wild on their own. Nice job, everyone. Let's strive to release twice as many monarch butterflies next year!



**Newly released butterfly**

Name	Number of Adult Monarch Butterflies Released	County
Bobbie Lambiotte	237	Winnebago
Peggy Doty	206	DeKalb
Jane Evans	166	Winnebago
Barbara Flores	154	Winnebago
Ginnie Watson	76	Winnebago
Janet Giesen	72	DeKalb
Rich and Susan McMullen	61 (60 tagged)	Winnebago
Tim Lewis	25	Winnebago
Kathryn Sewell	19 (12 tagged)	Winnebago
Kim Lowman Volmer	8	Winnebago
Rick Freiman	7	Winnebago
Cathy Johnson	5	Winnebago
Khrista Miskell	1	Winnebago
Amy Wolf	1	Winnebago
2015 Total	1,038	

## 2015 Annual Member Potluck and Seed Exchange



**Co-presidents Ginnie Watson and Lenae Weichel hosted a chapter year-in-review with a summary of 2015 activities.**

*photo by John Peterson*

The evening began with a potluck dinner that included vegetarian lasagna, beverages, and coffee provided by the chapter. Members shared a variety of hot foods, salads, and delicious desserts. Thank you, everyone, for your contributions and assistance in helping to make the event a success!

Co-presidents Ginnie Watson and Lenae Weichel hosted a chapter year-in-review with a summary of 2015 activities. The board of directors started the year with a planning meeting at Indian Hill Manor. Three successful plant sales resulted in nearly 6,000 native plants being distributed in the area. Woodland plants were featured at the first sale of the year in late April, all coordinated by Barbara Flores and held in Durand. The prairie plant sale was coordinated by Rick Freiman, and hosted by Jerry Paulson in Caledonia. The tree and shrub sale, also hosted by Jerry Paulson, was coordinated by John Peterson and held in early October.

Mary Anne Mathwich organized three plant rescues, which were requested by property owners in order to share native plants with Wild Ones members. The Wild Ones booth, created and maintained by Tim Lewis, was on display at six events over the year.

Claudia Fleeman arranged three Show Me/Help Me events at which members were invited to visit eight different sites. She and her husband also hosted members for the July social and yard tour.

The chapter supported the attendance of our co-presidents, Lenae Weichel and Ginnie Watson, at the national Wild Ones meeting in Appleton, Wisconsin. Tim Lewis also attended the meeting as the national Wild Ones president.

A committee convened by the grants and education chair, Kim Lowman Vollmer, reviewed applications and awarded six grants to help with purchasing native plants. The chapter web page has information about the mini-grant program, as well as other resources of the organization and an up-to-date schedule of meetings and events. A recent feature of the site is a page with membership information for new and continuing members, as well as information about our business members. Shey Lowman, our membership chair, also maintains the chapter web page, which can be viewed at <http://wildonesrrvc.org>.

### **Board members for 2016 are:**

Co-presidents	Ginnie Watson and Constance McCarthy
Vice president	Jerry Paulson
Secretary	Cathy Johnson
Treasurer	Janet Giesen
Board members at large	Kim Loman Vollmer and Doreen O'Brien

## 2015 Annual Member Potluck and Seed Exchange (cont'd)



**Seed Exchange.**

*photo by John Peterson*

Cynthia Nelson thanked the membership for supporting the chapter and recognized the contributions of outstanding volunteers during the past year. The success of chapter meetings and events was assured not only by the work and planning of the directors and event coordinators, but by the efforts of volunteers. During the past year, 53 member-volunteers accounted for slightly over 600 volunteer hours to benefit the chapter.

Treasurer Janet Giesen reported on chapter finances and shared the following statistics on the cost of printing our chapter newsletters 11 times in 2015: number of newsletters printed: 1,793; printing cost: \$1,011; average number of pages per newsletter: 9.25; total pages of paper: 182,886, which equates to approximately 366 reams of

500-count paper! Her message was loud and clear: Consider receiving your chapter newsletter electronically as one of your 2016 New Year's resolutions.

The second half of the evening featured the ever-popular seed exchange. This year saw even more bags of native plant seeds that included many details, as well as individual tags to help remind seed seekers what they had selected when they got home. Even though the chapter held three successful plant sales this year, our members are still interested in collecting seeds to further expand their native plantings. Happy planting!

**NOTE: If you prefer to continue to receive the hard copy newsletter, we encourage you to please recycle.**

## October 2015 Show Me/Help Me

Claudia Fortucci-Fleeman



**Joe takes us on a tour of his yard**

Our last Show Me/Help Me of the year took place on a crisp October morning at the home of Joe Hemlock. Joe's property commands a sweeping view of Rueben A. Aldeen Park. Joe is a certified arborist, member of the International Arborist Association, an Illinois Master Naturalist, and all-around defender of natural habitat.

Guiding us around his yard, Joe pointed out a mix of saplings and mature trees: walnut, native wahoo, red oak, wild cherry, sugar maple, redbud, birch, and pagoda dogwood, many of which started out as volunteer seedlings from the park. Unfortunately, invasive species also make their way into his yard from the park and he has to be on the lookout for unwanted visitors, such as invasive honeysuckle, buckthorn, and multiflora rose.

Joe tends to keep his dead trees around as long as possible, in the interest of wildlife and also because they are interesting to look at, cutting away branches that may become dangerous and leaving the remainder until the stumps inhibit the growth of healthy saplings. A great horned owl uses one such tree, located next to his house, as a lookout perch for hunting prey.

He has installed a pond in his yard which, he says, during the summer is inhabited by so many frogs it is deafening. He sees a lot of wildlife moving through his yard, including fox, deer, and numerous species of birds. Once, he noted, a heron passed through and dropped a fish into his pond. Joe also practices various other environmentally conscious practices on his property, such as choosing to use brick as opposed to asphalt or concrete for his driveway in order to promote drainage back into his own soil, and mowing as seldom as possible and only for the purpose of weed control. He is blessed with neighbors who promote the same, common sense, mowing practices.

Joe's future goals are to replace the hosta and vinca with native forbs – a goal, I think, many of us share concerning our own yards.



**Hiking through Aldeen Park**

Walking down a path through Joe's backyard, we then proceeded to Aldeen Park. Joe led us down the paths that he himself maintains with permission from the Park District. Regularly walking these trails, he vigilantly cuts the over-growth away from native forbs and saplings to let in sunlight. Joe says he sometimes leaves small artifacts along the trails, treasure-hunt style, for young hikers in order to spark their interest in forests and natural habitat. A true "man of the woods," he is no couch potato.



**Joe discusses the health of native trees in Aldeen Park**

Along with various native trees growing in the park, Joe showed us a majestic 150 year old hackberry tree. Joe also pointed out the invasive buckthorn and honeysuckle problem and commented that an easy way to spot a non-native tree or bush in autumn is to look for foliage that has remained green when the leaves on native trees have turned color.

*Photos by Tim Lewis*

## Membership Update **Shey Lowman, membership coordinator**

A membership e-form and our membership brochure describing the benefits of membership are both available on the chapter website ([www.wildonesrrvc.org](http://www.wildonesrrvc.org)). Click on **Join/Renew** under the **Membership** tab. You can renew (or join) with any major credit card through PayPal (no PayPal account required) by using our website. Go ahead and rack up your rewards points and we all win. We appreciate your support!

### 215 memberships as of November 23, 2015

#### Welcome our new member!

Jane Lenser, Cherry Valley Library,  
Cherry Valley, IL

All new members are identified with a green ribbon on their meeting name badges. Please introduce yourself to them and help us welcome all new members to our great chapter!

### 32 attended the November potluck.

#### Anniversaries

Congratulations to this month's loyal member!

#### 10 Years

Janet Giesen, Sycamore, IL

**It is preferred that renewal memberships be sent directly to the chapter** for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. Remember your dues include membership in **both** National Wild Ones and our chapter. Please use the address below:

Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter  
1643 N Alpine Rd Ste 104  
PMB 233  
Rockford, IL 61107-1464



## 2016 Chapter Programs and Events

<b>January 21</b> 7:00 p.m.	Can You Name that Plant?	<b>Tim Lewis</b>	Rock Valley College Woodward Technology Center
<b>February 18</b> 7:00 p.m.	Native Orchids of Winnebago County	<b>Ed Cope</b> Restoration Ecologist at Natural Land Institute	Rock Valley College Woodward Technology Center
<b>March-April</b>	Native Woodland Plant Sale Orders taken until April 18	<b>Marty &amp; Jodell Gabriel</b> <a href="mailto:woodland@wildonesrrvc.org">woodland@wildonesrrvc.org</a> <a href="http://www.wildonesrrvc.org/Plant_Sales.html">www.wildonesrrvc.org/Plant_Sales.html</a> 815-963-2137	

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.  
Please contact Lisa Johnson at (815) 881-1014



NATIVE PLANTS. NATURAL LANDSCAPES

## ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Pambi Camacho  
1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104  
PMB 233  
Rockford, IL 61107

### *Don't become extinct!*

If the expiration date on the mailing label is **1/1/2016**, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last Wild Ones *Journal* until you renew your membership. National Wild Ones drops expired memberships the first week of the expiration month, so please don't be late! See the *Membership Update* for renewal information.

#### **Mail your renewal:**

Wild Ones Rock River Valley  
1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104  
PMB 233  
Rockford, IL 61107

#### ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



### *Wild Ones Mission*

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

### *Rock River Valley Chapter Meetings*

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Rock Valley College, Woodward Technology Center (WTC), 3301 N. Mulford Rd., Rockford, IL.

*Special meetings, outings, and events are scheduled periodically and sometimes replace the regular meeting. Contact any officer to confirm information about our next meeting.*

### *Rock River Valley Chapter Board and Coordinators*

#### **Board**

*Co-Presidents:* Ginnie Watson  
(815) 398.0138 [ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:ginnie@wildonesrrvc.org)

Constance McCarthy (815) 282.0316  
[constance@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:constance@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Vice President:* Jerry Paulson  
(815) 222.4414 [jerry@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:jerry@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Secretary:* Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865  
[cathy@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:cathy@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Treasurer:* Janet Giesen (815) 899.6139  
[janet@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:janet@wildonesrrvc.org)

*At-Large:* Doreen O'Brien (815) 985.4064  
[doreen@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:doreen@wildonesrrvc.org)

*At-Large:* Kim Lowman Vollmer  
(815) 397.6044 [kim@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:kim@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Immediate Past President:*  
Lenae Weichel (815) 282.5482  
[lenaew@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:lenaew@wildonesrrvc.org)

#### **Coordinators**

*Membership, Website:* Shey Lowman  
(815) 757.4456 [shey@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:shey@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Newsletter-Production:* Pambi Camacho  
(815) 332.7637 [pambi@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:pambi@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Newsletter-Editorial:* Constance McCarthy  
(as above)

*Volunteers:* Khrista Miskell  
(815) 298.5449 [khrista@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:khrista@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Woodland Plant Sale:* Jodell & Marty Gabriel  
(815) 963.2137 [jodell@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:jodell@wildonesrrvc.org)  
[marty@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:marty@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Prairie Plant Sale:* Rick Freiman  
(815) 871.7424 [rick@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:rick@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Tree & Shrub Sale:* John Peterson  
(815) 979.8539 [john@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:john@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Plant Rescues & Seed Collection:*  
Mary Anne Mathwich (815) 721.5187  
[maryanne@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:maryanne@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Programs:* Lisa Johnson (815) 881.1014  
[lisa@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:lisa@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Show Me/Help Me:* Claudia Fleeman  
(815) 985.5158 [claudia@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:claudia@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Youth Education & Grants:*  
Kim Lowman Vollmer (as above)

*Booth, FREC Representative:* Tim Lewis  
(815) 874.3468 [tim@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:tim@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Facebook:* Marilyn Heneghan  
(815) 389.7869 [marilyn@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:marilyn@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Library:* Ginnie Watson (as above)

*Mentors:* Melanie Costello (815) 645.8430  
[melanie@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:melanie@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Merchandise:* Cynthia Chmell  
(815) 969.7435 [chmell@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:chmell@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Publicity:* Doreen O'Brien (as above)

*Meeting Recaps:* Pat Hollingsworth  
(815) 627.9180 [pat@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:pat@wildonesrrvc.org)