

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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All articles for the August 2017 newsletter, must be submitted to:
Constance@wildonesrrvc.org
by July 23, 2017.

Keynote Lecture: Inviting Nature Home – The Pollination of Native Plants
Thursday, July 13, 2017

Location: **NIU - Rockford**
8500 E. State St.,
Rockford, IL

Times: Doors open: 6:00 p.m.
Lecture: 7:00 p.m.



The lecture is \$5 (free for Wild Ones members and new members). New memberships can be purchased at the lecture.



Heather Holm, will speak on *The Pollination of Native Plants*. This presentation is a fascinating journey showcasing the development of different flower types, and considers the floral resources for pollinators. Exploring the types of insect pollinators, their foraging behavior, and the floral features that attract pollinators, Heather will provide many specific examples of how native plants are pollinated and, for each, which pollinator is most effective and why. Her program will be illustrated with beautiful photographs of pollinators and the native plants with which they coexist.

Heather Holm is author of the books, *Pollinators of Native Plants and Bees: An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide*. Copies of the books will be available for purchase at the lecture and at tour sites.

Join us to learn how you can support pollinators, birds, and other wildlife!

This lecture has been organized in conjunction with two days of free tours of natural yards and landscapes across the greater Rockford area. For more information on the tours, see pages 3 & 4.

For more information on the keynote lecture, call (815) 332.3343.

Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy
photo by Tim Lewis

The Month of Our Biggest Events Is Here!

After many months (more than a year, actually) of hard work and planning, the chapter's main events of the year are upon us.

The nitty-gritty details are found on the first page of this newsletter, but I would like to take this opportunity to beat the drum a bit more here. The chapter

has devoted significant resources to these events, and numerous chapter members have put in many hours of work into planning. An event with this many moving parts is no easy feat to organize, but the committee has never ceased to amaze me throughout the process.

I heard Heather Holm speak at a national Wild Ones conference, and I am confident that we are in for a real treat at the **keynote lecture** she will give at NIU - Rockford on **Thursday, July 13**. There is no shortage of coverage in the press about challenges faced by our native pollinators. I'm sure we will all be inspired by what Heather has to share with us.

Please note: This keynote lecture will take the place of our regular monthly meeting at Rock Valley College. Thus, there will be no meeting this month on the third Thursday.

The weekend immediately following the keynote lecture, Saturday and Sunday, July 15-16, will feature **free tours of natural yards and landscapes**

throughout the greater Rockford area. Some of you might recall that the 2014 event was organized such that the landscape tours took place starting the same day as the keynote lecture (immediately after the lecture ended). This resulted in the tour sites closest to the lecture location, being completely overrun with visitors as soon as the lecture ended. Scheduling the tour dates and the keynote lecture on different days this year will mean that every site should be easy and pleasant to visit, regardless of when you stop by.

Please help us to spread the word about these two events. Now is the time to round up friends, family, colleagues, etc. who might be interested in learning more about natives. The full brochure for this event was included with the June newsletter (for those of you who receive it via postal mail), and was sent in its own separate Constant Contact email (for those of you who receive the newsletter electronically). The brochure is also available for download from the chapter's website, www.wildonesrrvc.org.

I cannot thank enough the event committee for all their efforts to make this a great experience for our members and to (hopefully!) attract new folks to the chapter. Mary Anne Mathwich chaired this committee and has been an organizing wizard. She has been ably helped by the other committee members: Kim Lowman Vollmer, Doreen O'Brien, Cathy Johnson, and Jerry Paulson. Also, a hearty thank-you goes to Khrista Miskell for her tireless work in rounding up the scores of volunteers needed to make these events a success. She pressed on in spite of difficulties and set-backs, and for this we are grateful.

Board of Directors in Action Cathy Johnson, Secretary

Highlights of activities of the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter Board of Directors, as discussed at the June 8, 2017 meeting, include the following.

- Plans for the Lecture and Yard and Landscape Tours are nearing completion. Author Heather Holm will speak on **The Pollination of Native Plants** at the lecture July 13, and eight Wild Ones members are almost ready to share their beautiful and diverse yards with the public July 15 and 16.
- Information and sales brochures for the annual Wild Ones native tree and shrub sale will be available at the **Oaks and the Understory** yard tour site in Roscoe. Prairie plants, as well as merchandise and books will be available for sale at the **Pollinator Partners** site on Safford Road in northwest Rockford. Each of the six other sites will also feature educational information on different topics.
- The annual members-only potluck/social/yard tour will be held in August this year due to the Lecture and Yard and Landscape Tours in July.

Free Tours of Natural Yards and Landscapes

Dates: Rain, shine, or drought!

Saturday, July 15, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday, July 16, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Be inspired and learn how you can include native plants in your own garden, school, business, or place of worship to attract beneficial pollinators, butterflies, birds, and other wildlife.

Each site will feature different educational information on a variety of topics. Visit as many or as few sites as you like, in any order you like, at any time during the above-mentioned hours. Tours are free and open to the general public.

Pollinator Partners

6055 Safford Rd. Rockford

The driveway on this 12-acre rural property follows alongside a colorful prairie and leads to a mature oak hickory woodland. The property owners are ardent birders and naturalists, and have planted and maintained their property with nature in the forefront. An area cleared of non-native honeysuckle and buckthorn is now a savanna that supports wildflowers, vines, shrubs, and small trees, as well as the birds, insects, and other wildlife that depend on them.

Merchandise and books related to natural landscaping will be available for sale at this site.

Designed with Nature

Winnebago County Forest Preserve District Headquarters

5500 Northrock Dr., Rockford

A natural landscape for a reclaimed quarry and old field was designed using a great variety of native plants. A prairie specimen garden is by the building entrance, fronted by a larger prairie. Native trees and shrubs line the walking path around the quarry lake. The use of native sumacs, wild plum trees, and eastern red cedar is unusual and noteworthy.

Plants with a Purpose

8232 Pueblo Dr., Rockford

Inspired by Sara Stein's book *Noah's Garden*, the plants here don't just look good, they offer many environmental benefits. Trees on the west side form a wind break. Both native and non-native plants produce food. Wetland plants help solve a water problem. A great variety of native trees, small trees, and shrubs form hedgerows that act as wildlife corridors. Sculptures are created with gathered natural materials, and a cactus garden

features the native prickly pear cactus. Learn from the homeowner how solar panels on the roof provide electricity and hot water.

Interested in creating a school or other planting project? Learn about the Wild Ones grant programs.

A Prairie Story

11250 Forest Hills Rd., Machesney Park

A telescope manufacturing plant is surrounded by prairie landscaping. Good stories are being told by this landscape for beginners and experienced gardeners alike. This site tells of the journey from an old field of Eurasian weeds; the appearance of dormant, early successional natives; the battle with invasives; and the successful spread of longer-lived native prairie plants.

Explore celestial happenings and telescopes.

Oaks and the Understory

13161 Twelve Oaks Ridge, Roscoe IL (off McCurry Rd.)

Huge oak trees provide a canopy over a number of understory trees and shrubs. All are hugely beneficial to our native birds and pollinators. Native oak trees alone provide food for over 500 species of Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths). Wafer ash, bladdernut, wahoo, nannyberry, buttonbush, and other understory shrubs provide food and habitat to even more species. Native vines and woodland wildflowers populate the lower level of the landscape, while prairie plants occupy a sunny spot.

Learn how to choose a native tree or shrub for your landscape, and about the chapter's tree & shrub sale.

Showstopper Swale

3218 Redhawk Tr., Rockford

In addition to slowing water runoff and eliminating mowing from side to side, the wildflowers in a swale alongside the street pack a punch of many colors and textures. Also, woodland, savanna, and prairie landscaping in the rest of the yard has reduced mowed lawn by half and provided habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. This diversity of plants is colorful from late spring to late fall. A greenhouse is used for growing both native plants and vegetables.

Stop by the Wild Ones booth to find out about natural landscaping programs and presentations.

Free Tours of Natural Yards and Landscapes (cont'd)

Wild for Monarchs

3038 Bildahl St., Rockford

This incredibly diverse urban yard has a tremendous variety of native herbaceous plants and three species of native milkweed. Monarch butterflies are raised here by collecting larvae from the milkweed plants and raising them in protected habitats. Eight in ten caterpillars survive to be released as adult butterflies, far outpacing the one in ten rate in the wild.

Learn how you can raise milkweed, monarchs, and other butterflies.

Seeds to Awesome

9101 Meadowsweet Dr., Belvidere

The seeds of prairie plants were broadcast over this large hillside home site 27 years ago. Different soil and moisture types were planted with different seed mixes. Despite a drought the first year, the seeds survived to create a terrifically diverse and beautiful landscape. Planting with seeds is an economical way to create a natural landscape with a great diversity of species.

Learn about seed collecting, plant rescues, plant shares, and other chapter activities.

June Meeting Recap Jerry Paulson

Gardening with Nature

Ray Wiggers is an earth science teacher at Oakton Community College and the College of Lake County, and a frequent lecturer on the geology, soils, and natural plant communities of Illinois. He is the author of several books on geology and natural history of Illinois, including *Geology Underfoot in Illinois*. The theme of his talk to our chapter on June 15 was about being able to see our natural landscape despite all the development that has taken place during the past 200 years, and how to not be a victim of "landscape blindness."

He explained that the landscape of the Rock River valley was created by geological forces, erosion, water, farming, and human development. The rich black soils that allowed us to make the Prairie State into an "agricultural machine" were created by the vast ice sheets that covered most of the state, and by the build-up of organic matter in the soil from the decaying roots of native prairie plants. Soils that were covered with forests are not as fertile, and wetland soils are saturated with water and need to be drained to be used for farming or development.

It is important to know the "parent material" and type of soil that you have before you start a restoration project or gardening with native plants. Wiggers reminded Wild Ones members why we go to all the trouble of using native plants in our gardens: (1) once planted they grow without much additional care, (2) they are adapted to growing in our soils and local climate, and (3) they add beauty and interest to the landscape.

But, to be a good gardener you must understand the soil first. Northern Illinois soils have formed

either from bedrock, older glacial materials (west of the Rock River), younger glacial till (a mixture of clay, silt, sand and gravel) left by the last glaciers found east of the Rock River, sand and gravel deposited by outwash water along the major river valleys, peat and muck formed from organic matter in wetlands, or lakebed clays and silts found in old glacial lake beds that formed when rivers were dammed by glaciers, like along the Pecatonica River.

Geologists and soil scientists classify these types of parent materials into different categories, but a home gardener can determine the type of soil they have by its color and texture:

- dark color + good texture = mollisol (prairie soil)
- dark color + dense, gloppy texture = histosol (wetland soil)
- light color + fairly good texture = alfisol (forest soil)

Mollisols were formed under prairie and savanna vegetation. They have a lot of organic matter that makes them dark and range from dry gravelly or sandy soils to well drained, mesic soils. Some of the native plants typically found growing on these soils include: big bluestem, prairie cordgrass, prairie dropseed, wild lupine (sand), shooting star, culver's root, butterfly weed and other milkweeds, false sunflower, rosinweed, prairie dock, cup plant, smooth sumac, and bur oak.

Histosols are wet soils that formed in peat and other organic materials. They have low oxygen content and high water tables, and can range from high pH in fens, to low pH in bogs. The original

June Meeting Recap (cont'd)



Ray Wiggers chats with Brian Hale and Tim Lewis, past President. Photo by Ginnie Watson

vegetation in northern Illinois was swamp, marsh, sedge meadow, bog, and fen. Cardinal flower, marsh marigold, and many species of sedges (*Carex* sp.) and willows were the typical plants found in natural wetlands.

Alfisols are light colored soils that have formed under forest vegetation. The topsoil layer is generally shallow, and the organic matter content is low. These soils are subject to erosion when the forest cover is removed. Plants that grow in forests have to adapt to low light levels. They do this by (1) growing fast to reach the sunlight, (2) adapting to lower light conditions, or (3) flowering early in the spring before the leaves mature on the trees. Spring ephemerals are an example of the third adaptation, while ferns, woodland grasses, and plants like bigleaf aster are plants that have adapted to grow in low light conditions.

Maps of the soils in the counties in northern Illinois can be found on the U. S. Department of Agriculture Web Soil Survey website (www.nrcs.usda.gov), or from your

local USDA/NRCS office.

Wiggers said that the original plant communities of northern Illinois are described in the new *Flora of the Chicago Region* and the *Flora of Winnebago County*. Both books are available for sale at the Wild Ones merchandise table, or can be borrowed from the library (members only).

A list of Wiggers' upcoming lectures and tours, and his publications can be found at www.naturalhistoryman.org.



The audience at the June meeting. Photo by Sallie Krebs

2017 Plant Rescues and Show Me/Help Me

Mary Anne Mathwich, Plant Rescue/Seed Collection Coordinator



May plant rescue in Dekalb - Emmylou Studier and Marcia Speck

Our first plant rescue of the year was in May at a DeKalb Park District property in DeKalb, Illinois. The DeKalb Sanitary District had purchased the property and plans to expand into this wooded area. Eight Wild Ones members found and transplanted

many native woodland species, including prairie trillium, wild ginger, woodland phlox, Solomon's seal, false rue anemone, Jacob's ladder, trout lily. We also had a plant share which included some great looking pagoda dogwoods donated by Teri Hoffmann.



Robert Roll leads Wild Ones on a walk through his woods.

In June, about 20 Wild Ones participated in a Show Me/Help Me day that started in Capron, Illinois.

Robert Roll led a walk through his wooded

acreage, pointing out large shagbark hickories, white, red and bur oak, black cherry, walnut, white pine, American elm, boxelder, cottonwood, and more. We identified a number of understory shrubs and trees such as pagoda dogwood, cranberry viburnum, gooseberry, and elderberry. We saw how a recent F1 tornado had brought down some large limbs, opening some areas to the sun.



The Fran Lowman prairie garden at Willowbrook Middle School

Next was Willowbrook Middle School with its two school-side prairies and a large 3-acre prairie. Kim Lowman Vollmer and Carly Vollmer, both of whom helped implement these natural spaces, led the group around the school. Harebell, phlox, June grass, and alumroot were some of the showy natives to be seen there.



Kim Lowman Vollmer points out prairie plants at the Vollmer home

The final stop was the Vollmer residence where the prairie was blue and white with Ohio spiderwort, blue-eyed grass, thimbleweed, mountain mint, and more. Our tours were followed by cookies and drinks while members looked over a good number of plants contributed for another plant share.



Anita Johnson finds plants for Klehm Arboretum's Vi Bates Woodland Wildflower Garden at a plant share

Membership Update Sallie Krebs, 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). 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. We appreciate your support!!

212 memberships as of June 23, 2017

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

Kirby & Dan Doyle, Rockford
 Ginny Hatwich, Rockford
 Lynda & Lee Johnson, Rockford
 Joe Jonakin, Byron
 Pat Schroder, Winnebago

Welcome to our new members

Sally Canfield, Ocala, FL
 Ed Cope, Roscoe
 Gene & Joy Jordan, Rockford
 Andrea Wallace, Rockford

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!

65 attended the June meeting, including 8 guests

A big thank you to our June meeting volunteers!

Greeters: Judy Letourneau

Refreshments: Khrista Miskell & Anita Johnson

AV/Sound Equipment: Bob Arevalo

Meeting Recap: Jerry Paulson

Photographer: (see photos)

Library Assistants: Marcia DeClerk, Karen Matz,
 Cathy Johnson

Merchandise: Cynthia Chmell

Anniversaries:

20 Years:

Pat Schroder, Winnebago
 Lynda & Lee Johnson, Rockford

5 Years:

Ron Cress, DeKalb
 Todd Sullivan, Kirkland

It is preferred that membership renewals be sent directly to the chapter for quicker processing

and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. Remember that your dues include membership in both National Wild Ones and our chapter. Please use the address below:

Sallie Krebs
 Wild Ones Rock River Valley
 7492 Renfro Rd.
 Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter above your name on the label. You will be mailed a renewal reminder from the chapter two months prior to your expiration date with a completed membership form and return envelope for your convenience.

A portion of all dues paid is returned to the chapter by National Wild Ones to support our chapter activities. National Wild Ones provides liability insurance for our meetings and events. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

Please send address and email address changes to the **Membership Coordinator:** Sallie Krebs Email: membership@wildonesrrvc.org or call (815) 540-4730 if you have any questions about membership.

Wild Ones Annual Memberships:
 Household \$40, Limited Income/Full-Time Student \$25, Affiliate Non-Profit Organization \$90, Business \$250.

Thank you for your continuing support!



2017 Chapter Programs and Events

July 13 The Pollination of Native Plants
 7:00 p.m.

Heather Holm
 Author of books and lecturer
 on insect pollinators

NIU - Rockford
 8500 E. State St.,
 Rockford, IL

July 15 & 16 Yard Tours and Lecture

Locations on pages 3&4

August 17 Member Potluck/Yard Tour
 7:00 p.m.

Jerry Paulson
 Vice President, Wild Ones
 Rock River Valley chapter

Jerry's home

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.

For more information, contact Bob Arevalo at (815) 332.3343



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 **7/1/2017**, 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 to:

Sallie Krebs
Wild Ones Rock River Valley
7492 Renfro Rd.
Cherry Valley, IL 61016

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, Physical Education Center PEC0110 (lower level), 3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, 61114.

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

President: Constance McCarthy
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