

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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

*Backyard Kids Wild About Nature
Thursday, October 19, 2017*

Location: Rock Valley College
Physical Education Center PEC0110 (lower level)
3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, 61114

Time: 7:00 p.m.



As “wild” landscapers of native yards, we spend a great deal of time concentrating on what native plants to put where, and what pollinators or other critters will be attracted to them. But do we consider the education and experience our backyards could possibly have for kids and the long-term benefits of

such an exposure? Steve Trimble states, “As parents [grandparents, aunt and uncles, as well as friends and neighbors] our job is to pay attention, to create possibilities to be careful matchmakers between our children and the Earth.” Why is it so important that we introduce children to the wonder and awe of nature all around us? What role can our backyards play in assisting kids to develop an appreciation and understanding of nature? What benefit does it bring to these children and to the natural community? In this presentation, we will consider and discuss how to work toward ending the phrase “extinction of experience,” as Bob Pyle put it, and include our backyards, as well as other natural settings in the answer.

Don Miller has been getting people outside for more than four decades. He spent almost 30 years as Director at Severson Dells Nature Center. He has received the distinguished Atwood Award, was named Illinois Environmental Educator of the Year, and was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Environmental Education Association of Illinois. He loves and lives in Winnebago County, a place he has called home all his life. His favorite honor, however, is being called “grandpa” by twin 2-1/2-year old girls and smiled at by a four-month-old grandson. He looks forward to seeing the county and beyond through their eyes.

This program is free and open to the public.
For more information, call (815) 332.3343.

Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy
photo by Tim Lewis

Time flies! I can't believe that our last regular monthly educational program of the year is upon us. Of course, we will be hosting our *annual potluck and seed exchange* in November – a great opportunity also to celebrate what the chapter has accomplished this year, thanks to its dedicated volunteers and hard working board and coordinators.

Thanks to everyone for your flexibility last month as our meeting was relocated to the Student Center. It was our first time being bumped this way, and it was a learning experience for those of us organizing things behind the scenes. A special thanks to Ed Kletecka for hauling the sound equipment to the meeting, only to find out that Rock Valley staff would be operating and providing the sound and projection equipment (and thanks, too, to Bob Arevalo and Ed for making a reconnaissance mission the week before the meeting – all for naught, it turns out). Live and learn, as they say. Our meeting will be bumped to the Student Center Atrium again in March 2018, when we can anticipate everything running much more smoothly now that we have the lay of the land.

A big thank-you also goes to Don Heneghan, who stepped up to be our chapter's volunteer coordinator for 2018. And as Mary Anne Mathwich will continue as our chapter's plant rescue and seed collection coordinator next year, the one position that we still need to fill for 2018 is the *show me/ help me coordinator*. As I mentioned before, there is a very clear roadmap and task description, so this person need not reinvent the wheel. There will even be a list of folks who indicate their interest in participating as a stop on a show me/help me tour, based on the results of our annual membership survey. If you are interested in this role or would just like more information, please contact me (contact info is on the last page of this newsletter). We are a pleasant and fun-loving bunch, your board and coordinators, and would love to have you join us.

Speaking of the *annual membership survey*, which will likely be mailed out in December, please plan to take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it to us in the handy self-addressed envelope we provide. The results of this survey are critical in helping us plan events and line up volunteers for all the chapter goings-on of the coming year, and your feedback on how we are doing is taken very seriously by your board and coordinators. Our chapter would be lost without happy volunteers and engaged members. Watch your mailboxes, and thanks in advance for helping us to take the first steps towards what will surely be an awesome 2018!

Upcoming Events of Interest

Lake-to-Prairie Wild Ones chapter

Conference: Building Healthy Habitats Today for a Better Tomorrow

November 11, 2017, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Prairie Crossing Charter School, 1531 Jones Point Rd., Grayslake, IL
A co-dependent relationship exists between the plant and the animal world – one cannot live without the other. The circle of life is possible only when our ecosystem is healthy. Chief Seattle, a member of the Duwamish tribe of Puget Sound Native Americans in Washington, said, "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, but rather borrow it from our descendants." This conference reminds us of his words and will teach us what we have to do, in our own landscapes, for a better tomorrow.

Speakers will include Doug Tallamy, Pam Karlson, Brett Rappaport, Karin and Klaus Wisiol, Carole Rice, and Fayette Aurelia Nichols.

Visit the website <http://laketoprairie.wildones.org> for complete conference details, and mail in registration form (if preferred).

Fall Owl Programs at Sand Bluff Bird Observatory

The Observatory will host an educational program during peak migration of northern saw-whet owls. Catching them is never guaranteed, but these programs offer a rare opportunity to learn about the research that Sand Bluff and other scientists are pursuing regarding owl ecology and behavior. Experience a magical nighttime hike to listen for calling owls and other nocturnal creatures.

Friday, October 20, 7-11 p.m., hosted by Lee Johnson & others

Saturday, October 21, 7-11 p.m., hosted by Steve Reischel & Ivy Otto

Friday, October 27, 7-11 p.m., hosted by Lee Johnson & others

A per person donation (all ages) of \$25 is requested; due to late hours, it is recommended that children be at least 10 years old. A minimum of 10 persons must be registered for each event to be held, with a maximum of 25 participants. Contact Mary Ann Pettenger at (815) 494.7865 for details and reservations.

Library Update Ginnie Watson

Our chapter library is too big to haul to our events that take place outside of our monthly meetings. You didn't see the library during the summer months because of those outside events, but it was available to members with a phone call or an e-mail to me! Were you interested in doing a little research on your next native garden? Have you wondered what plants do well together and would look good in that backyard corner? Have you just needed a little inspiration to get started on that rain garden you've been planning? If it is between monthly meetings or you are not able to get to the meeting, you can always contact me and we will set up a time when you can come and check out a book or two. The same rules apply:



- Only members may check out books.
- Books are due back at the next monthly meeting at Rock Valley College. There are no monthly meetings at RVC in July or December, so your books will not be due back until the next month.
- Books overdue by more than 1 week will be fined at the same rate as usual: \$1.00/book/week.
- Books may always be returned to me at my home if that is more convenient. Please make those arrangements with me so I know to expect you.
- Books may be renewed at the time they are returned.
- Lost or damaged books will require a replacement value fine

A complete list of the 244 books in both the Traveling Library, taken to monthly meetings, and the Reserve Library may be found here: www.WildOnesRRVC.org > Resources > Lending Library. To take advantage of this member benefit, contact me at: Ginnie Watson, 3703 Highcrest Rd, Rockford, IL 61107. (815) 398.0138 or Library.RRVC@gmail.com (Note the new e-mail address for the Library).

September Meeting Recap Constance McCarthy photos by Sallie Krebs

Recap of Oak Savanna presentation by Stephen Packard

Introducing this month's presenter, Stephen Packard, Jerry Paulson noted that Packard can see larger systems and the big picture, for example in his work at Nachusa Grasslands. Packard has encouraged folks to restore large ecosystems, rather than solely preserving existing ones.

When Packard started working with Jerry at the Natural Land Institute many years ago, they were told that there were no more savannas on good soil. Now, many savannas have been restored.

Packard could find no drawings of the original savannas in Illinois, although he found one from 1852 for southern Wisconsin. This drawing was of a tree before Europeans arrived. The tree has stories to tell, like the trees of the savannas.

He is co-editor of the book, *The Tallgrass Restoration*

Handbook: For Prairies Savannas, and Woodlands.

For the images of original landscapes, he asked an artist to provide illustrations. He wanted these images to show that there were prairies and forests, but also something in between. The artist also created an illustration of the Midwest landscape, divided into types: prairie, forest, savanna (grassland with scattered trees, and many species of animals and plants that don't grow on the prairie) and woodland (a more closed savanna). Oaks can reproduce in woodland, but not in a forest (as it is too dark under the closed canopy).

There are many animals in oak woodlands that don't live in the forest. Packard sees the need to preserve both the savanna and woodland. To further his efforts, he needed stewards to grow plants for his restoration projects.

He presented an image of a woodland, which is very rich in animals and plants. Once European buckthorn

September Meeting Recap (cont'd)

takes over the understory, it chokes out the plants normally found in an oak woodland.

An artist drew images of what happened to the savannas. They became grazing land for cows that belonged to the European settlers. There were too many grazers confined for many of the plant and animal species to survive. This was remedied when preserved savannas were brought about by conservationists. However, now the trees are being choked out because of the absence of fire and care. Savannas and woodland animals and plants are also choked out.

In an image of an oak woodland, Packard noted that the lower limbs of oaks would have leaves on them if the trees were out in the open. The understory now has little to offer any remaining wildlife, and there is nothing growing on the floor except invasives.

Packard emphasized the need for fire. If places had been burned, they would have remained as they had been for thousands of years. Fire won't burn up the oaks, and they look just fine the next year. In one of the first oak woodlands he burned, the fire killed the invasives, and they hoped that a seed bank of rare plants would revive.

He discussed the need for stewards like Wild Ones. To further restoration projects, people have to fall in love with seeds. Gathering seeds is something that he would love to see more people involved with, as it is also meditative and relaxing.

When restoring a savanna, it is better to have many different kinds of seeds. Some seeds are hard to gather because when the seed is ripe, other plants have grown up around the seed heads and they are hard to see and find. Some seed heads pop open and spew seeds before they can be collected. In addition to collecting seed in the wild, he asks folks to grow plants in their yards and collect seeds from them for restoration projects.

Preparing seeds for planting is a great community event. It helps people to feel a sense of ownership of the place that is coming back to life.

Unlike prairie seeds, savanna seeds are often in fruits and nuts. Those seeds are distributed by birds and mammals.

Spring flora are the slowest to grow back, and most sites don't have summer or fall flora in their soil seed bank. Joe Pye weed, Culver's root, and woodland sunflower are among the plants that will grow in a restored oak woodland.

There will be many open areas in a savanna when a restoration project begins. Although an area may have seemed to be overrun with alien (European) plants, little bits of old plants are still there. If the site is burned regularly, species like blue-eyed grass will be able to start to come back. This glorious sight helps to inspire folks to restore more areas. Land can come back from the edge of oblivion, to become a beautiful area again.

Every few years, he recommends burning half of a woodland. There are varying theories on the precise ways to conduct these controlled burns.

It is also necessary to go after invasives, such as teasel, purple loosestrife, crown vetch, and reed canary grass. Some of these invasives are akin to cancer: a malignant force in the ecosystem that can grow so fast that they kill off other good and healthy things in the ecosystem.

Grey dogwood is a natural part of the savanna, even though it is invasive in prairies. Birds breed in shrub thickets. Shrub thickets should be burned off to encourage die back, as they are an important part of the ecosystem.

In the winter, there are opportunities to enjoy the pleasures of stewardship. Indeed, many restoration groups have work days all winter long.

He reminded that restoration projects don't go quickly. A high-quality restoration can take as long as decades.

Michigan lily is very happy in the open woodland (e.g., a bur oak woodland). Yet, many folks find that this plant behaves differently in the woodland than it does on the prairie. These lilies attract hummingbirds. Other birds that make a comeback on restored savanna and open woodland include scarlet tanager, eastern bluebird, and indigo bunting. He used to think of the indigo bunting as a bird of shrublands, but once woodlands were restored, the buntings moved in.

Coyotes are an important animal in the overall ecosystem, as they restore the balance of other species, including midsize predators such as foxes, possums, and weasels.

Packard showed a picture of his own yard. He has plants grown from local seeds, and these plants are specifically grown for restoration purposes. He grows plants primarily to be able to collect the seed from them. He underscored the need for local ecotype seeds. Some of his neighbors became intrigued by his native plants, and they are now growing natives,

September Meeting Recap (cont'd)

too. One neighbor is even raising monarchs.

The endangered savanna blazing star (*Liatrix scariosa*) must have woodland to survive. It can't compete with dense, tall grasses, but also doesn't live in forest shade. He had a hard time finding any seed at first, so he grew them in various yards and collected seeds himself.

The Chicago Botanic Garden appreciated his work and began to grow plugs of native plants for his projects. A volunteer grows the plants from seed, but takes some soil from below the original plant. This keeps the soil biota of the original plant with the seedlings.

It takes 5-10 years for many of these species to bloom.

One problem encountered in oak savanna restoration is that oaks are eaten by the deer. Indeed, close to 100% of young oaks are grazed by deer each year. The oaks do not experience natural conditions because the deer are so much more abundant now. Packard stated that deer need to be controlled by hunting; indeed it is the only way to do it, in his view, as hunting is an important part of conservation.

Packard's restoration groups have cage-making parties where they make wire cages to protect the most rare plants and some oaks. Rare plant that needs deer cages include ear-leaved false foxglove (*Tomanthera auriculata*), an annual that loves to grow on the edge of the brush where brush is burned back. Deer will devour them. When they started to protect these plants with deer cages, the result was that the voles ate them. The group then invented special vole cages to further protect them. As a result, the numbers have grown dramatically.

Some restored woodlands now have nesting woodcocks and woodhens. This bird lays her eggs right on the ground, and she sits on them. The woodchicks are very well camouflaged and stay perfectly still. The mother will lure approaching people away from the nest of chicks by acting like she is lame or injured.

Nature under modern conditions requires people



to help maintain it. The relationships within nature are very compelling to him. When we lose this, we lose something special, too. He gave the example of caterpillars on native plants, where ants protect the caterpillar by fighting off predators of the caterpillar. The ants and caterpillar developed this relationship over time. The ants will stroke the caterpillar with their antennae, to provoke the caterpillar to emit a droplet of something that is really prized by the ants. The ants do all this work just to get that one droplet. This ancient relationship is one that we ought not to lose. Just think of how many more relationships like this must exist in nature that humans have yet to discover.

The silvery blue butterfly (*Glaucopsyche lygdamus*) is almost extinct in Illinois. Global warming is forcing them north. As global warming progresses, organisms from south of us will need places to live in our area. Perhaps we need to help them on their journey north.

Packard showed the image of a survivor tree, an amputee that has lost most of its lower branches. It is a swamp white oak that was surrounded by invasives. Perhaps the tree will never completely heal, but will still live 100 more years.

Golden alexander, shooting star, wild geranium, and wild hyacinth are a few of the plants that were once just clinging to life in a corner of one of Packard's restored areas. The group collected seeds and scattered them to start the process. Now, there are finally thousands of them.

Packard hopes that Wild Ones will continue to live and grow with these restored areas and feel ownership of them. By passing the mantle from generation to generation, we can help to build a sense of community.

September Meeting Recap (cont'd)

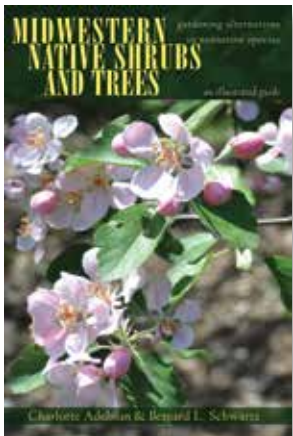
Audience questions included the following:

- Regarding burning, his preference is to burn first, then seed in the fall. If they can't get a burn in during the fall, they still seed anyway and hope that the seeds will settle in during the winter.
- Regarding black cherry, boxelder, basswood, and cedar, Packard cuts them all down. However, they do have their place somewhere. Cedar belongs where it doesn't burn (e.g., rocky cliffs). He even cuts down some oaks. For example, red oak is a pest in a bur oak savanna, and some oaks kill off other kinds of oaks. With vigorous fire, most of these problem trees are controlled. But if there are large numbers of them, it is necessary to be more aggressive in order to give the oaks a chance and allow fires to do the work they need to do.
- Regarding his suggestions for how to determine if one should restore a savanna or a woodland on one's own property: A natural way is to find out what vegetation was on one's property originally. Thomas Jefferson set up a survey process that moved across the country. One can find out what kind of trees were in the area in the earlier 1800s, and now try

to put back what was once there. But perhaps the property was once a prairie that was invaded by oaks, so that an oak ecosystem has been growing there for 100 years.

- Regarding the economic advantages of savanna restoration, Packard noted that there are advantages to preserving biodiversity, but those advantages may not be known or experienced for 100 years. There is also an economic plus to having beauty and richness around us. Indeed, people pay more for houses near beautiful areas. Ultimately, we should restore oak savannas because we love it and have an affection for nature.
- An audience member commented on outdoor schools in the Pacific northwest that have no school building; school takes place in the forest, even when it is cold or rainy. Even though they get no money from government because there is no actual school building, the kids are testing well and have few behavioral problems. That is an economic advantage, too. These types of schools are also seen in Europe. School systems should do more to encourage relationships between children and nature.

Book Review: *The Midwestern Native Garden: Native Alternatives to Nonnative Flowers and Plants*



by Charlotte Adelman and Bernard L. Schwartz

Midwestern gardeners and landscapers are becoming increasingly attracted to noninvasive regional native wildflowers and plants over popular nonnative species. *The Midwestern Native Garden* offers viable alternatives to both amateurs and professionals, whether they are

considering adding a few native plants or intending to go native all the way. Native plants improve air and water quality, reduce use of pesticides, and provide vital food and reproductive sites to birds and butterflies, that nonnative plants cannot offer, helping bring back a healthy ecosystem.

The authors provide a comprehensive selection of native alternatives that look similar or even identical to a range of nonnative ornamentals. These are native plants that are suitable for all garden styles,

bloom during the same season, and have the same cultivation requirements as their nonnative counterparts. Plant entries are accompanied by nature notes setting out the specific birds and butterflies the native plants attract.

The Midwestern Native Garden will be a welcome guide to gardeners whose styles range from formal to naturalistic, but who want to create an authentic sense of place, with regional natives. The beauty, hardiness, and easy maintenance of native Midwestern plants will soon make them the new favorites.

Maryann Whitman, the editor of the *Wild Ones Journal*, had the following to say:

“At last, an idea whose time has come! This is the only book I know of, for the Midwest, that systematically suggests native plants of similar appearance and growing requirements, to replace nonnatives we might otherwise plant in our landscapes. Importantly, *The Midwestern Native Garden* alerts the reader to the natives' unique roles in attracting and sustaining increased biodiversity in our gardens.”

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!!

227 memberships as of September 23, 2017

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

Marlowe & Nancy Holstrum, Belvidere
Dennis & Denise Suhr, Rockford

Welcome to our new members

Carol Gluff, Loves Park
David Stern, Rockford
Dennis & Denise Suhr, Rockford
Carrie Zethmayr, Kings

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!

77 attended the September Meeting, including 27 guests

A big thank you to our September meeting volunteers!

Greeter: Sallie Krebs

Refreshments: Khrista Miskell & Anita Johnson

AV/Sound Equipment: Ed Kletecka

Meeting Recap: Constance McCarthy

Photographer: Sallie Krebs

Library Assistants: Marcia DeClerk, Karen Matz, Cathy Johnson

Merchandise: Cynthia Chmell



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

October 19
7:00 p.m.

Backyard Kids "Wild" About Nature

Don Miller

Nature educator and grandpa

Rock Valley College
PE Center, PEC 0110
(lower level)

November 16
6:00 p.m..

Pot Luck, Seed Exchange & Annual Meeting
Members only: All members welcome with or without seeds. Bring a dish to share.

Chapter President to present annual report to the members

Unitarian Universalist
Church of Rockford
4848 Turner Street
Rockford, IL 61107

December

No Meeting-Happy Holidays!

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



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 **10/1/2017**, 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
(815) 282.0316 constance@wildonesrrvc.org

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