

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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All articles for the February 2018 newsletter, must be submitted to: Constance@wildonesrrvc.org by January 23, 2018.

*Monitoring Native Plants in Winnebago County
Thursday, January 18, 2018*

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

Time: 7:00 p.m.



Greg Rajsy is a naturalist/educator at Severson Dells Nature Center in Rockford, contributing to educational programs and overseeing citizen science activities for the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County. He has begun planning for a new season of plant monitoring, and volunteers are being recruited to record phenological data at forest preserves throughout the county. He will talk about how Wild Ones members can help monitor native plants in the forest preserves.

Rajsy joined the staff at Severson Dells in August, 2017. He brings extensive experience in nature education, citizen science, and restoration ecology. In 1996, he obtained a Naturalist Certificate from the Morton Arboretum, where he has continued to teach a variety of courses. He also has taught Restoration Ecology at the Loyola University Retreat and Ecology Campus and been a biology instructor with the Montessori School of Lake Forest.

For more than 25 years, Greg has been conducting ecological restoration throughout northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin. He has been a volunteer steward since the 1990s, with direct involvement in citizen science, conducting biological surveys and monitoring organisms as diverse as frogs, plants, and freshwater mussels. In 2013, Greg established a consultancy through which he has coached landowners in methods to enhance the native biodiversity of their sites. An avid field botanist, Greg takes particular delight in exploring the flora of the northern Illinois region.

This program is free and open to the public.
For more information, call (779) 537-8939

Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy
photo by Tim Lewis

As I sit down to write this, January has not even arrived yet. Nevertheless, I am already excited for the new year before us, as a chapter, and some of the new things that will be happening.

The biggest thing that comes to mind is that this spring will see the first *combination of the woodland plant sale and the prairie plant sale*. This was first proposed by the sale coordinators, Jane

Evans, Cynthia Chmell, and Bobbie Lambiotte, who saw possibilities for sharing the work load among themselves. We are also sensitive to respecting the time that folks volunteer on behalf of the chapter, and combining the sales will hopefully help to minimize our chances of burning out our volunteers – the lifeblood of the chapter. I have already met with the coordinators several times and am very optimistic about the benefits of combining the sales. We are also brainstorming ideas on how to better get the word out to the public about the sale. Watch in coming issues of this newsletter for reports from the coordinators about new plants that will be offered, as well as some of the old stand-bys that are sold every year.

I'm also looking forward to working with the *new coordinators* who will be serving the chapter this year: Don Heneghan (volunteers), Brian Hale (tree and shrub sale, co-coordinator with Jerry Paulson), Lisa Johnson (already a program committee member, this year stepping up to chair), and Fiona Fordyce (publicity). My previous column (Nov. 2017 newsletter) thanked the folks who will be leaving the board, stepping down as coordinators, and/or shifting to new roles. I don't mean to sound like a broken record, but I am so very grateful for the hard

work and dedication of my fellow board members and all the chapter's coordinators. They help to keep the chapter moving onward and upward.

As the coordinator of the contents of the newsletter, in 2018 I will aim to publicize *volunteer work days* that are organized by various like-minded environmental organizations. Unlike some other Wild Ones chapters, the Rock River Valley chapter does not have its own restoration or stewardship projects (I suspect because so many of our members are already working on such projects throughout northern Illinois, if not on their own properties). However, I think that some of our members who are either newer to natives or newer to our area in general, might appreciate information on places where they can volunteer as part of a work crew. These work days are not only a pleasant way to pass all or part of a day with other folks who are interested in native plants and natural landscapes, but also a great way to learn about the flora and fauna of our beautiful region. If you know of any such work day opportunities that would be of interest to chapter members, please pass the information along to me (contact info on the back of this newsletter).

Finally, future newsletters will contain information on the *Illinois Big Tree Register*. Counting just those species native to one or more counties in northern Illinois, there are a whopping 32 species that presently have no champion! Hopefully, this will encourage you to keep your eyes peeled for larger trees that you could nominate. While a state champion tree can be found in Stephenson, Carroll, Ogle, and McHenry counties (and two in Kane county), there is not a single champion tree in Winnebago, Boone, or DeKalb counties. There are surely some large specimens out there, just waiting to be discovered. Will you be the nominator of a new champion tree in one of those counties? It's not too early to start dreaming of your next tree hunting adventure!

Native Plants and Natural Landscaping Conference

The 22nd annual Toward Harmony with Nature Conference will take place on Saturday, January 27, 2018, and is put on by the Wild Ones Fox River Valley Chapter in Oshkosh, WI (at the Oshkosh Convention Center). The conference runs from 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. The topic is "The American Garden: A Life or Death Situation," with keynote speaker Neil Diboll (president of Prairie Nursery).

There will also be nine other breakout sessions during the day, on topics such as prairie restoration, wetlands, invasive species management, rain gardens, savannas, controlled burns, and birds of the prairie. For more information, visit TowardHarmonywithNature.org

Help Wanted: Mentor Coordinator

Spring is not far off, and the chapter is looking for a member to serve as the coordinator of our mentor program. This is not an arduous position; all that is required is matching up the folks who have indicated that they would like to have a mentor (as noted on the annual membership survey), with folks who have indicated that they are willing to serve as a mentor. The list of prospective mentors and folks desiring a mentor are both provided to the coordinator, based on the results of the membership survey. The mentor coordinator also submits blurbs to the newsletter from time to time (templates are already available,

so no need to reinvent the wheel) and follows up with mentors and mentees to be sure that things are running smoothly.

There is no required attendance at any board meetings (although you are always welcome to attend if you like), just submission of a very brief update every other month on how things are going with the mentor program.

If you are interested in being our chapter's mentor coordinator for 2018, please contact Constance McCarthy at kublaikhan@mac.com or (815) 282.0316.

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 October 12, 2017 meeting, include the following:

- The chapter's 2018 Woodland and Prairie plant sales will be combined into one sale. This will be the first time for this, and the hope is that it will simplify some of the tasks involved. More details will be available in early 2018.
- The board discussed the possibility of having an annual lecture event with a well-known speaker who would attract a wider audience. This will be discussed further after reviewing possible speakers and costs.
- The annual board retreat is scheduled for January 21, 2018, from noon - 5 p.m. at the Rockton Historical Society (the same as last year).

Volunteer Work Days at Colman Dells Nature Preserve

Chris Reisetter, the coordinator of volunteer work days at Colman Dells Nature Preserve, is always welcoming anyone out to come help remove the plethora of honeysuckle there and to just admire what they are working to preserve. The Preserve is located southeast of Severson Dells Forest Preserve in Winnebago county.

The work days started out as just a gathering of friends (who have now moved on to other projects, leaving just Chris) on days when they were able to do so, so the schedule has not been set in stone. He works Monday-Friday, and tries to make it out at least twice a month on different Saturdays. Those Saturdays are dictated by a wide variety of factors, but he tries to and plan a week or two in advance. He is out there in most all weather conditions from sunrise to sundown, but 9 a.m. is the usual start time. There are pink trail markers that people should follow from the parking lot to the worksite. He usually shows up around 7 a.m. to get the fire going. He has limited supplies, so please bring gloves, a water bottle, and any hand tools you might want to use. If you don't have any tools, you

can also help by tossing brush on the fire. If you are interested in staying most of the day, bring a lunch. Send him a message if you plan to show up so he can keep an eye out for you. He can be reached at (815) 985.7208 or reisetterc@gmail.com.

**Seed
Exchange
2017**

*photo by
Tim Lewis*



Recap: November Potluck and Seed Exchange Constance McCarthy



Photo by Sallie Krebs

First, many thanks to Bob Arevalo for arranging things at the location of this year's event at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Rockford, and for arriving early to get everything set up (and staying late to clean up). Another hearty thank-you goes to Sallie Krebs for pulling together a lovely slide show of photos from chapter events throughout the year. The slide show played on a continuous loop before and during the meal, and it really captured well the great things our chapter is doing for the community and the environment.

As always seems to be the case at our chapter's events, we had a delicious meal. The entrée was provided by the chapter, and folks brought a dish to share (appetizer, side dish, or dessert).

Before the seeds started flying at the very large table during the seed exchange, the chapter president gave a presentation on the chapter's notable events and accomplishments in 2017, including the following:

- We held a *board retreat* in January to discuss new ideas and make plans for the coming year.
- There were nine excellent presentations at our *monthly educational meetings* at Rock Valley College by experts in their fields. At those meetings, merchandise is sold to support the chapter, and the library is made available for members. The booth is often set up and literature offered to attendees.
- Our biggest event of the year was the *landscape tour and keynote speaker*. Heather Holm gave an inspiring presentation on pollinators at NIU Rockford on a Thursday, and there were eight sites open for visits by the public and tours on the following Saturday and Sunday (6 homes, 1 business, and the WCFPD headquarters). A very big thank you to Mary Anne Mathwich

(chair) and her committee for pulling off a tremendously successful event!

- We had three very profitable *plant sales*, namely the woodland, prairie, and tree and shrub sales. The proceeds from those sales are largely what allows the chapter to bring in top-notch speakers, pay for our meeting space, publish and distribute the newsletter, maintain our website, and add books to our library, among other things.
- Our *display booth* made an appearance at several outside events this year. This helps to improve awareness and name recognition for our chapter among the general public, and allows us to educate folks who stop by.
- There was one well planned and executed *show me/help me event* (a reduced number this year, as it was all hands on deck to plan the landscape tour).
- We had an *evening social* at Jerry Paulson's farm in August, featuring a delicious potluck, followed by a tour of his yard (loaded with native trees and shrubs) and restored prairie. Although rain arrived partway through the prairie walk, many folks stayed until the very end. We are a hardy bunch!
- The chapter president attended the *Wild Ones national meeting and workshop* in Burlington, Wisconsin in August along with two fellow board members, Deb Rogers and Cathy Johnson. This was a great networking opportunity, and Constance spoke on a panel about ways our chapter has grown its membership.
- The evening's potluck and seed exchange.
- Six board meetings were attended by your dedicated and hardworking board members.

Recap: November Potluck and Seed Exchange (cont'd)

Numerous coordinators also attended.

- Our memberships have increased to 224 households (up from 215 last year at this time),
- including 9 lifetime memberships.
- Eleven issues of our highly respected chapter newsletter were published.

Voyage to the National Butterfly Center Cathy Johnson

Wild Ones members who are also bird enthusiasts may be familiar with the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) area of Texas, and the excellent birdwatching sites that can be found on the Central Flyway. What may be less well known are the abundant opportunities in that region for watching butterflies. The best known butterfly of the LRGV is, of course, the monarch, whose flight path, to and from its winter home in Mexico, cuts through that part of the country; however, there are many other species of butterflies that make their way to the warm temperatures and numerous flowering plants that can be found blooming there in November.

The National Butterfly Center was established in 2007 as a project of the North American Butterfly Association on 100 acres in Mission, Texas, just a few miles from Mexico. The center's grounds contain a bountiful supply of native plants which provide food for a vast array of caterpillars, as well as nectar for the adults. The center is devoted to educating the public about the value of biodiversity; the role that butterflies and plants play in maintaining beneficial and sustainable ecosystems; and the biology of butterflies and moths.

Each November, the center hosts a four-day festival offering, among other activities, field trips to sites known for their varieties of ecosystems and reports of butterfly activity. I learned about this event earlier in 2017 when a childhood friend, from my years growing up in San Antonio, invited me to attend the festival with her. She had learned about it the year before, but had never participated. Being a butterfly enthusiast who grows a large number of native plants in her yard in Austin and regularly monitors the number and types of species, she was eager for the opportunity to learn and experience more. Having seen fewer and fewer butterflies in my own yard and other northern Illinois natural areas, I was also excited about the opportunity to see the large numbers reported in southern Texas and began making plans.

On October 30, the day before I flew to Austin, my friend emailed me to say that she had counted

18 different species of butterflies in her yard that day. On October 31, I arrived in Austin, along with a drop in temperatures, which made it only to the low 60's that day. That felt rather warm to me, compared to the low 40's and rain that I had left behind, but it wasn't warm enough for the butterflies to be out. As we wandered through my friend's yard that afternoon, we admired and enjoyed the many flowering shrubs, trees, and plants that surrounded her home, but the butterflies remained hidden.

Warmth and the sun returned the following day, and as we toured the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, I was thrilled to see more butterflies than I had seen in any one place since moving back to Illinois from Texas fifty years earlier. The most ubiquitous were the queens and a variety of skippers, but there were several other species, as well. We spotted an occasional monarch, but most of those were already farther south on their journey to Mexico.

A couple of days later, we started our road trip to Mission, Texas, a couple of days early, to accommodate an itinerary that included stops along the way at wildlife refuges and botanical areas. The first of those stops was in Brenham, just a couple of hours outside of Austin. There we found hundreds of butterflies at the Antique Rose Emporium, an outdoor nursery featuring many gardens full of flowering native plants. Over the next two days, we visited wildlife refuges along the Gulf, along with the Padre Island National Seashore. We saw some butterflies at most of these, but mostly birds, including road runners, green jays, chachalacas, hawks, vultures, and numerous species of shorebirds and other water birds.

Three days later, we were at the National Butterfly Center, from which we were driven to some of the most promising butterfly watching sites in the country. Over the next three days, we visited at least two sites each day. Each of the sites visited during the festival was beautiful in a way that was typical of the rugged Texas terrain: cactus and succulents of all kinds; many varieties of native trees, including the sabal palm; flowering shrubs,

Voyage to the National Butterfly Center (cont'd)

and plants, including crucita, blue passionvine, hairy wedelia, tropical milkweed, Texas wild olive, cenizo, heartleaf hibiscus, pink and red salvia, beggar's tick, low croton, anacua, blue porterweed and Mexican flamevine, but especially the ubiquitous betony mistflower, AKA Betony-leaf thoroughwort (*Conoclinium betonicifolium*) which seems to sustain vast numbers of species of butterflies all over the state, just as other species of mistflower do elsewhere in much of the country. It's rather surprising how many things grow from the sandy, rocky ground. The Rio Grande, along with other rivers, creeks, and bodies of water, and their contrast with the dry conditions and temperatures in the 80's and 90's each day, added to the ambience that defines the valley. Although it was hot and dry, we were well supplied with water, and shady resting spots were available as needed.

Many of the festival participants were much more experienced in spotting, identifying, and photographing butterflies, and rather than try to describe what I thought we were seeing, I've

Resources and photos

www.butterfly-ridge.com/bloggerfly/2017/11/17/2017-texas-butterfly-festival This blog is maintained by one of the festival participants. Besides comments on the festival, it includes a lot of other butterfly-related content, which you can check out by clicking on the site's other tabs. The tab labeled 'Our Garden' will take you to a very interesting account of the construction of the owner's five-acre butterfly haven in Ohio.

www.facebook.com/TexasButterflyFestival/ This includes more details of the festival, including photos of some of the species that were spotted at the center, particularly some of the more unusual and rare ones.

www.nationalbutterflycenter.org/ The website of the National Butterfly Center.

press.princeton.edu/titles/10985.html A link to *A Swift Guide to Butterflies of North America*, second edition, written by Dr. Jeffrey Glassberg, a biologist, as well as founder and president of the board of the North American Butterfly Association. Dr. Glassberg was at the festival and served as a guide and a font of information. Wikipedia refers to Dr. Glassberg as "the leading proponent of moving interest in butterflies from hobbyist collecting and nets to butterflying with binoculars and cameras."

www.facebook.com/NABA-St-Louis-a-Chapter-of-the-North-American-Butterfly-Association-171967236153087/ This appears to be one of the more active chapters of NABA.

2018 Chapter Programs and Events

January 18	Monitoring Native Plants in Winnebago Co.	Greg Rajskey , Naturalist Naturalist/educator, Severson Dells Nature Center	Rock Valley College PE Center, PEC 0110 (lower level)
February 15	Strange & Marvelous Plants	Matt Candeias	Rock Valley College
March 15	Dragons Rule! Dragonfly ID & Info	Barbara Williams , Educator, Severson Dells Nature Center	Rock Valley College

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.
For more information, contact [Bob Arevalo](mailto:Bob.Arevalo@rockvalleycollege.edu) at (815) 332.3343

Spring 2018 Master Naturalist Training: Ogle County

The Master Naturalist program is designed to educate in the interpretation of the region's natural resources, and train a corps of volunteers to provide support in its conservation and management. The training provides science-based educational opportunities connecting people with nature and helping them become engaged environmental stewards.

The Master Naturalist program is a combination of (1) education and (2) service. With the help of local experts, University of Illinois Extension provides the educational support for the program, while the service is often done at a participating partner's location. Master Naturalists receive 40 hours of training and are asked to return 60 hours of volunteer time to their community. Beyond the 60 hour internship, Master Naturalists may remain certified by completing 10 hours of continuing education and 30 hours of volunteer service each year.

Master Naturalists have the opportunity to: enhance your love of nature through hands-on training and

community-based service; give something back to nature and your local community; and learn from and work side-by-side with experts.

The class meets Mondays, March 12 through May 21, from 5-9 p.m. The first class will be held at the Ogle County Extension office, 421 W. Pines Rd., Oregon. Remaining classes will be held at other locations.

Space in the class is limited. The \$250 fee covers eleven sessions of education, materials, and the Master Naturalist manual. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact the Ogle County Extension office at (815) 732.2191.

For more information, contact Peggy Doty, Extension Educator Energy & Environmental Stewardship, psdoty@illinois.edu, or Elizabeth Sosa, Extension Program Coordinator, (815) 732.2191, Sosa6@illinois.edu. You can also visit the website of the Boone-DeKalb-Ogle office of extension at web.extension.illinois.edu/bdo.

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!!

225 memberships as of November 29, 2017

Special thanks to our members who made contributions above the basic \$40 dues!

Frank & Karen Finch, Byron
Donna Gable, DeKalb
Joe Hemlock, Rockford

About 40 attended the November potluck.

Anniversaries:

20 Years:
John & Judi Peterson, Durand

In Memoriam

In memory of our former Wild Ones
Rock River Valley Chapter members
Dennis Suhr - Member 2017-2017

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!



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 1/1/2018, 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

Vice President: Jerry Paulson
(815) 222.4414 jerry@wildonesrrvc.org

Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865
cathy@wildonesrrvc.org

Treasurer: Deb Rogers (815) 624.1036

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

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

Coordinators

Membership: Sallie Krebs (815) 627.0343
membership@wildonesrrvc.org

Newsletter-Production: Pambi Camacho
(815) 332.7637 pambi@wildonesrrvc.org

Newsletter-Editorial: Constance McCarthy
(as to the left)

Volunteers: Don Heneghan, (815) 389.7869,
daheneghan@gmail.com

Woodland Plant Sale: Jane Evans
(815) 399.3787 rrvc.woodland@gmail.com

Prairie Plant Sale: Cynthia Chmell & Bobbie Lambiotte, (815) 969.7435 & (815) 398.6257

Tree & Shrub Sale: Brian Hale, (815) 289.2384,
moyogi2@gmail.com; Jerry Paulson (as to the left)

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

Programs: Lisa Johnson, (815) 965.3433,
lisa.johnson@burpee.org

Youth Education & Grants:
Kim Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)

Booth, FREC rep., website: Tim Lewis
(815) 874.3468 tim@wildonesrrvc.org

Facebook: Marilyn Heneghan
(815) 389.7869 marilyn@wildonesrrvc.org

Library: Ginnie Watson (815) 398.0138
library.rrvc@gmail.com

Mentors: [open]

Merchandise: Cynthia Chmell
(815) 969.7435 chmell@wildonesrrvc.org

Publicity: Fiona Fordyce, (815) 397.6032,
fiona.fordyce@sbcglobal.net