

Rock River Valley Chapter Newsletter

Volume 26 Issue 10

October 2024

Inside this Issue:

President's Message	2
Sept Meeting Recap	3
Harlem Hills Kick-off	4
Newsletter Mailing	4
Trees & Shrubs Hike	4
Annual Meeting	5
Ben Vogt Webinar	5
Membership Report	5
Chapter Contacts	6



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information about
Rock River Valley
Wild Ones

www.wildonesrrvc.org

All articles for the
November 2024 newsletter,
must be submitted to:

[wildonesrockrivervalley@
gmail.com](mailto:wildonesrockrivervalley@gmail.com)

by October 20, 2024.

A New Garden Ethic Featuring Author Benjamin Vogt

Join the Rock River Valley Chapter
Wild Ones' 30th Anniversary at the
NIU Center in Rockford.

Saturday, October 19, 2024
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

NIU Rockford
8500 E State St, Rockford, IL 61107



Benjamin Vogt

Register online: <https://bit.ly/BenjaminVogt>

This anniversary reception features national staff, a chapter history display, partner information tables, & featured speaker Benjamin Vogt, author of *A New Garden Ethic* and *Prairie Up*. Benjamin will present "Planting Natives for Fall Color & Winter Interest and Fall Garden Management Strategies (Why Not to Rake Your Leaves!)".

AGENDA

9:00 am to 9:30 am - Atrium - Check-in, browse local organization tables; Benjamin Vogt book sales; RRVC history display; enjoy light snacks

9:30 am to 10:00 am - Auditorium - Welcome

10:00 am to 11:30 am - Auditorium - Benjamin Vogt

(Virtual presentation via Zoom)

11:30 am to 12:00 pm - Atrium - Browse tables

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT **Jerry Paulson**



Jerry Paulson

On September 25th, members of the Board of Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter gathered on the grounds of the newly renamed Esta Barrett Manor and Gardens to witness a natural garden project that was years in the making. Located Southwest of

Rockford on the bluffs of the Kishwaukee River, the gardens were part of the home of Esta Barrett from 1917 to 1947. She took special pride in the “formal sunken garden” where she entertained members of the Rockford Women’s Garden Club, performing artists, and visiting dignitaries. When she died, the garden was allowed to fall into ruin and eventually it was overrun by weeds and brush.

The garden and grounds of the Barrett estate were designed by O.C. Simonds, an early 1900s landscape gardener like the better-known Jens Jensen, who both promoted natural landscaping.. One hundred years later, the great, great grandson of Jensen, also named Jens Jensen, helped to plan the rehabilitation of the formal garden using mostly native plants. Working with the firm, Seelman Landscape Architecture, the original layout of the garden was painstakingly recreated using old newspaper photos and aerial photography from the 1930s. Newspaper stories of



Photo of Jens Jensen by Jerry Paulson

Esta’s garden parties give them a list of flowering plants and shrubs that were in the original garden. The decision was made to highlight the species of sedges, grasses and wildflowers that O. C. Simonds used in his garden designs to demonstrate how native plants can be used in home gardens. The formal garden beds were recreated, and more than 4,500 native plants laid out for planting.

Esta Barrett’s formal garden has been reimaged as an educational exhibit about the use of native plants in home landscapes. Tours of the historic manor and the newly planted garden can be booked through Eventbrite at www.EstaBarrett.com. Wild Ones members will have the chance to see the natural garden and grounds in July 2025 during our annual tour and picnic. To learn more about the work of O. C. Simonds and Jens Jensen, go to our YouTube video of the 2022 program by Bob Grese, Roots of Sustainability: Jens Jensen, O. C. Simonds, and Other Pioneers in Native Garden Design.



Photos of Wild Ones board volunteers planting native plants by Jerry Paulson

SEPTEMBER MEETING RECAP: ENGAGING COMMUNITY TO SAVE AND CARE FOR ENDANGERED NATURAL AREAS

Mark Luthin



Photo of Daniel Pohl (left), Amy Doll (center), and Jessie Crow Mermel (right) by Jackie Rheume

Amy Doll and Daniel Pohl teamed up to give us an informative program on the topic of citizen action working to restore and protect our vital natural areas. After a rousing introduction by Wild Ones member Jessie Crow Mermel, Daniel shared with us many of the volunteer restoration efforts taking place at beautiful Harlem Hills Prairie.

Starting the day after Christmas

in 2023, a group of volunteers started their focus by removing invasive shrub species. Since Harlem Hills is a remnant gravel prairie and is classified as an Illinois Nature Preserve, it is home to a number of threatened and endangered species. For the last 10 months, this core group led by Daniel and Jessie have regularly met at Harlem Hills to continue invasive species removal, fence removal and seed collecting, but have also focused on monitoring some of the above-mentioned threatened and endangered species, including Downy Yellow Painted Cup, Prairie Bush Clover, Kittentails and Prairie Buttercup.



Photo of Daniel Pohl by Jessie Crow Mermel

Daniel also suggested that we need to learn how to talk to people about why we need to protect these dwindling remnants and their importance. Of course, they're beautiful. Visiting Harlem Hills at different times of the year will allow the visitor to witness the diversity of plant and animal life that a prairie can offer. But this diversity took thousands of

years to become what it is today. The soils, and the microbes and fungi that live there, are unique and don't just show up when we try to create a prairie from farmland. Judging from the pictures that Daniel shared with us, they have accomplished a lot in the last ten months. They can use help, though. **The Harlem Hills Prairie Watchdogs meet regularly on the fourth Sunday of every month from 1 to 4 pm, with a special kick-off event on October 27th from 1 to 4 pm (see page 4).**



Photo of Amy Doll by Jackie Rheume

Amy heads up the Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves, a non-profit set up to “preserve, protect and promote the interests of the

Illinois Nature Preserves”. Often, IDNR staff are under capacity to adequately monitor all of the land that the state owns, which leads to diminished quality of those areas. Since an Illinois Nature Preserve has the highest level of protection of any natural area in the state, the Friend group can step in to assist in the monitoring and care for these special areas.

Amy spent quite a bit of time discussing herbicide drift that is impacting many natural areas. Since 2017, the number of areas impacted by drift has exponentially increased. This can be directly attributed to crop seeds being modified to be Dicamba resistant. Since this herbicide can be broadcast over an entire crop field, it can drift over to a natural area, killing or weakening those plants. It can also vaporize as the crops lose water and drift to neighboring areas. The Illinois Natural History Survey study collected data from 78,000 individual plants of 400 species, found evidence of herbicide damage during at least 97% of site visits and at 99% of study sites. Amy stressed the importance of reporting any incidences of drift, either on public or private lands to the Department of Agriculture.

You can view the entire program on the Wild Ones website at www.wildonesrrvc.org. To learn more about herbicide drift and to take action, visit: <https://bit.ly/herbicedrift>.

HARLEM HILLS FALL KICK-OFF

Join the Harlem Hills Prairie Watchdogs for their fall kick-off on Sunday, October 27, from 1 to 4 pm at Harlem Hills Nature Preserve. Volunteers may engage in a variety of different eco-restoration activities, participate in a campfire cooking demo, and go for a guided hike to learn about the rare ecosystem of the largest gravel prairie remaining in the midwest.

Gloves, tools and snacks will be provided. Please bring a water bottle and dress for the weather. If you would like, you can bring a snack to share. Please RSVP to Jessie for information on where to park.



Above: Volunteers at Harlem Hills monitoring rare plants.
Right: Laura Helmich of NLI enjoys a story by Jack Shouba.
 Photos by Jessie Crow Mermel



NOTICE ABOUT FUTURE NEWSLETTER MAILING ACTION NEEDED TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE PRINTED COPY OF NEWSLETTER

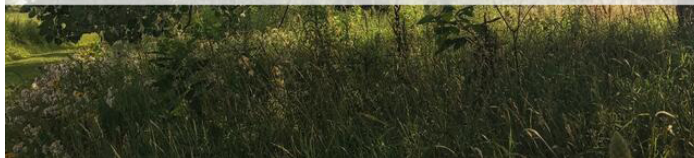
Because of the increase in the price of first class stamps and the cost of printing our newsletter for mailing to some of our members, we are asking that those who currently receive printed copies of the newsletter in the mail to confirm that you do not have access to the on-line version of the newsletter and want to continue to have it mailed to you.

PLEASE SEND A NOTE TO: Sallie Krebs, Membership Coordinator, WORRV, 2205 S. Perryville Rd., PMB 191, Rockford, IL 61108, or email her at membershipworrvc@gmail.com to confirm that you want to continue to receive a printed and mailed copy of the newsletter. **Starting January 2025 we will only mail the newsletter to members who ask for it!**

TREES AND SHRUBS FOR WILDLIFE HIKE AND PRESENTATION



Trees and Shrubs for Wildlife Hike and Presentation



Event Date: October 17, 2024

Event Time: 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Location:

Forest Preserves of Winnebago County
 5500 Northrock Dr., Rockford

Join Chris Evans, Extension Forestry Specialist, with the U of I Extension, for a hike and presentation on Trees and Shrubs for Wildlife. This presentation will touch on several aspects of forest management with a focus on habitat improvement and increased wildlife utilization. Chris will focus on issues of local concern, including invasive plant species control, tree and shrub species selection, timber stand improvement, and selective harvesting.

The optional guided hike will start at 5:00 p.m., and the presentation will follow at 6:15 p.m. We will meet on Thursday, October 17, at the Forest Preserve of Winnebago County, located at 5500 Northrock Drive in Rockford.

Note: There is no Wild Ones Meeting planned for this evening because of the 30th anniversary event on Oct. 19th, therefore members are urged to attend this free event.

SAVE THE DATE - ANNUAL MEETING & SEED SHARE

Our annual meeting with dinner and seed share will take place on Thursday, November 21, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. This year, our meeting will be at Emmanuel Lutheran Church's Celebration Room. The address is 920 3rd. Avenue in Rockford, IL. Park in the parking lot on the north side of the building and enter through the north door.

Please bring seeds collected from your yards to share. There will be seeds available to members whether or not you bring any. Now is a perfect time to collect seeds. Please make sure they are labeled properly. Small envelopes and paper bags work well for organizing seeds.



Wild Ones members at the 2023 seed swap. Photo on left by Jessie Crow Mermel.

FREE WEBINAR: "MATRIX LANDSCAPE DESIGN"

Join Wild Ones National for the upcoming free Wild Ones national webinar, "Matrix Landscape Design," featuring author, landscape designer, activist, and educator Benjamin Vogt. Discover how to create beautiful, low-maintenance landscapes using high-density plantings that mimic natural ecosystems. Learn how to enhance ecological functions, support biodiversity, and design aesthetically pleasing, sustainable gardens with native plants. Don't miss this opportunity to explore the benefits of matrix planting techniques and gain practical insights from an expert in the field. Register now to transform your landscape into a thriving habitat!

Matrix planting is a landscape design approach that mimics natural ecosystems by closely planting and layering compatible perennials and grasses to cover the soil, provide more ecosystem services, and eliminate the need for wood mulch or aggressive weeding. Join Wild Ones for a webinar to learn how

author, educator, and landscape designer Benjamin Vogt applies this approach to create stunning native gardens. Learn the principles behind this method, its ecological benefits, and practical steps to implement matrix planting in your own garden.

You will also learn about Benjamin's latest collaboration with Wild Ones on the new Native Garden Design for Lincoln, NE. Don't miss this opportunity to gain insights from a leading voice in natural garden design and take your gardening skills to the next level. Register now to secure your spot!

Date: Thursday, October 24, 2024

Time: 6:00 PM CT

Join Virtually: Link provided with registration. This webinar will be recorded and shared after the premier: <https://wildones.org/matrix-landscape-design-with-benjamin-vogt/>

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.

195 memberships as of September 23, 2024

Welcome to our new member(s)!

Mike Brien, Rockford





ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Cathy Johnson
2205 S. Perryville Rd. PMB 191
Rockford, IL, 61108

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DON'T BECOME EXTINCT!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 10/01/2024, 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.



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

Our regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month. We are live streaming the programs over ZOOM and posting recordings on YouTube. Links to the meetings and programs are posted on our website and our Facebook page, and sent to members via email the week of the meeting. If you want to receive the link send an email to: janetgiesen@gmail.com.

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER BOARD AND COORDINATORS

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