



Rock River Valley Chapter Newsletter

Volume 26 Issue 11

November 2024

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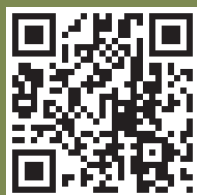
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Scan with your
Smartphone for more
information about
Rock River Valley
Wild Ones

www.wildonesrrvc.org

All articles for the
January 2024 newsletter,
must be submitted to:
[wildonesrockrivervalley@
gmail.com](mailto:wildonesrockrivervalley@gmail.com)
by December 20, 2024.

Happy 30th Birthday Rock River Valley Wild Ones!

Annual Meeting, Potluck,
and Seed Share

Thursday, November 21, 2024

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

920 3rd Ave., Rockford, IL 61104

(Please note time and location)



Members peruse seeds at the
annual meeting.

Join us for our annual meeting featuring a potluck, seed share, and annual report of our 30th year as a Wild Ones chapter! To be as eco-friendly as possible, please bring your own table service (plate, silverware, cup, and napkin) and a dish to pass (salad, vegetable, or dessert). Lasagna (both meat and vegetarian), birthday cake, and drinks will be provided. Nettle Curbside Compost (www.nettlecompost.com) will offer their composting service for the event.

For the seed share: Bring seeds that you have collected from natives in your yard or landscape project to share during the exchange. Please put them in envelopes or baggies labeled with common name, scientific name (if you know it), and other pertinent information (height, color, amount of sun, etc.), and your name, in case anyone has questions (such as "how does the plant grow?"). Seeds do not need to be cleaned and ready for planting. For newer members: we always have plenty of seeds, and even if you don't have any seeds to share, you are still welcome to go home with some seeds! We want to share, as this increases the chances of more and more native plants growing in our communities. Please bring your own envelopes and/or plastic baggies to take seeds home.

If you are not a member yet, this is a great time to join and participate in one of the fun member benefits (go to <https://wildones.org>). Come help us celebrate our 30th year of introducing the community to the benefits and joys of native landscaping!

This program is for Wild Ones members only. Please note the time and location. Call (779) 537-8939 for more information.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT **Jerry Paulson**



Jerry Paulson

On Saturday, October 19th the Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter celebrated 30 years of saving the Earth one yard at a time. More than 75 members gathered at the Northern Illinois University campus on East State Street in Rockford to

view displays about our history, learn about other conservation and education groups that we support, and hear Benjamin Vogt, owner of the garden design company Prairie Up, author, and educator about natural landscaping, talk about gardening for fall color and winter interest. The program began with a video greeting from Debbie Nowak, Chapter Liaison with the National Wild Ones staff. The video is posted on our website, www.wildonesrrvc.org.



This was a remarkable gathering of like-minded people doing their part to save the Earth by tending their little part of it. Planning for the event started months ago and was headed up by Linda Ricker, our vice president. Many

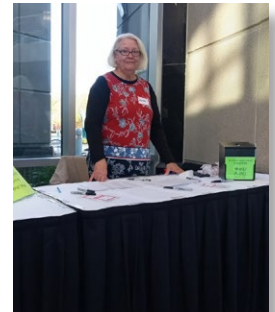
people pitched in with the planning, compiling the chapter's history, getting out mailings and email notices, securing copies of Vogt's books for sale, taking reservations, and inviting the participation of our partner groups. In addition to Linda Ricker, the following people should be thanked for their hard work: Cathy Johnson, Janet Giesen, Ginnie Watson, Carrie Meyers, Kim Lowman Vollmer, Gloria Powell, Lisa Johnson, Jessie Crow Mermel, Cynthia Chmell, Sallie Krebs and Dawn Skupien. I also thank Bernie Luecke, Outreach and Partnership Manager for the NIU Rockford Conference Center, who worked

closely with us on all aspects of the event.

Also, thank you to the groups who participated with displays and information tables at the event: Severson Dells Nature Center, Natural Land Institute, Nature at the Confluence, Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves, Macktown Living History Center, Sinnissippi Audubon Society, and Farmers Rising.



We will wrap up our 30th anniversary celebration at our annual potluck and seed exchange on November 21st when we'll honor our founding and long-time members. I look forward to seeing you then.



Photos by Jackie Rheume, Susan Kasten, Kim Lowman Vollmer, and Jessie Crow Mermel.

OCTOBER MEETING RECAP: 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION FEATURING BENJAMIN VOGT

Linda Ricker

The 30th Anniversary celebration, held at the Northern Illinois University Rockford Conference Center on Saturday, October 19th, 2024, was the best-attended event since before the pandemic. Our featured speaker was Benjamin Vogt, from Lincoln, Nebraska. Benjamin is the owner of Prairie Up, formerly Monarch Gardens, offering garden design, online classes, workshops, webinars, and guidebooks. He is the author of *A New Garden Ethic: Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future*, as well as *Prairie Up: An Introduction to Natural Garden Design*. His forthcoming book, *Unlawning America*, will be released by Timber Press in 2026/27. Benjamin's work has been featured in *Dwell*, *Fine Gardening*, *Horticulture*, *Midwest Living*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Go to www.prairieup.com for additional information.

Benjamin presented a program about fall and winter perennial natives to provide winter interest in your prairie gardens. He began with a look at how the many shades of brown and black create interest in the fall garden, adding white when the frost and snow occurs. He suggested taking your spring and summer garden photos and changing them to black and white to see what forms and shapes you will have in the fall-winter garden and where you can add to fill empty spaces.

Benjamin showed some of his favorite fall brown plants, many of which still have a tint of color into autumn: Schizachrium (little bluestem), Zizia (golden Alexander), and Symphotrichum (asters). He then discussed the seed pods and forms of various plants like Senna (wild senna), Baptisia (false indigo), and Eutrochium (Joe-pye weed).

He also talked about planning your native garden. By using his matrix system, whether you have a 100-square-foot space or 10,000 square feet, it is easy to create a native garden to fit your area. The idea is to create a small garden first using a layering method to include



Jerry Paulson introduces Benjamin Vogt.
Photo by Kim Lowman Vollmer.

short, medium, and tall flower and grass species as well as shrubs of varying heights up to the tree canopy. Creating the basic small plan of 10 feet by 10 feet may take some planning, but once that is done, you can use multiples of the same plan as many times as necessary to cover your entire desired area.



Photo of Benjamin Vogt.

To create a space that is inviting and enterable, Benjamin recommends using benches that allow visitors to be among the plants and contemplate the garden. The use of pathways invites you to enter and explore the areas, creating interesting places to investigate. He also adds artistic sculptural pieces to divide the spaces into areas to direct the eye from the near to farther away.

He asked the question, "Who are we gardening for?" Besides our human enjoyment, there are numerous forms of wildlife that can survive in our gardens. When planning, remember to add a heated water source, shrubs with berries, herbaceous perennials with seeds, dense shrubs and grasses to provide winter cover, and even stick and leaf piles for birds and pollinators for overwintering.

Benjamin admonishes to leave the leaves. They serve many functions by remaining on the surface, such as erosion control, soil building, carbon sequestration, and habitat for caterpillars, butterflies, frogs, spiders, and bees.

He advises clean-up of the garden to take place in the spring, after the winter usage of the leftover plants by the bees, caterpillars, frogs, etc. Once the soil temperature reaches 50 degrees you can begin cleanup of last year's debris. Leave a variety of 12-18 inch dead stems for native bees to use as nesting sites and vary the plant stems you leave as many bees are species-specific when it comes to nesting. Leave the dead stems throughout the season because the nesting habits vary with the time of year as well as the plant species.

IN MY YARD Jane Evans

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) is about 7 ft. tall in my daughter's yard and likes its position where 2 sloping yards meet and water accumulates. Attracting many types of bees, butterflies, and a few hummingbirds, buttonbush would be great in a rain garden, wetland restoration, or any good garden soil that does not get too dry. It is a host for several moth species, and the seeds are eaten by waterfowl and birds. Buttonbush is native all across the country. The town of Buttonwillow, California, was named for a lone buttonbush which served as a meeting place for Native Americans along an old San Joaquin Valley trail. It is now listed as California Historical Landmark 492. Look it up for interesting details.



Buttonbush photo by Jane Evans

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!**

TREE & SHRUB SALE RECAP Jerry Paulson



More than 113 native trees and shrubs were sold to 25 people during our fall plant sale on September 27 and 28th. The list of species being planted in members' yards and public gardens were paw paw, juneberry, hazelnut, northern honeysuckle, hydrangea, prairie willow, and five different oaks. Brian Hale, our sale coordinator, also donated several hazelnut and bur oak saplings to the sale.

Thanks to our members who helped unload and sort the plants. Paul Sikes and Greg Ruffner helped unload and sort, and Paul Sikes took care of Saturday pickups.

Photo of Brian Hale with native trees at the annual picnic in July.

GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR WILD ONES CHAPTER Kim Lowman Vollmer

PRESIDENT

(1 person or 2 if sharing)
 Chapter leader
 Works with others
 Leads meetings
 Organizer
 Connects with National
 Attend 6-7 Zoom meetings



MENTOR CHAIR

Is given a list and pairs the mentors and mentee
 Attend 6-7 Zoom meetings



BOOTH CHAIR

Organizes the booth at 3-4 events a year, using member volunteers
 Provides chapter help
 Attend 6-7 Zoom meetings



MEMBERSHIP

(1 person or 2 if sharing)
 Take attendance & help with name tags at meetings
 Helps at the meetings
 Newsletter mailings
 Meeting notices
 Keeps records
 Contact potential members
 Attend 6-7 Zoom meetings



SHOW ME/ HELP ME CHAIR

(1 person or 2 if sharing)

From a list, organize a half-day plan to see 3-5 homes/yards
 Attend 6-7 Zoom meetings



AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBERS

(2-3 people)
 Supports the Board with various tasks as needed
 Attend 6-7 Zoom meetings



SECRETARY

(1 person or 2 if sharing)
 Attend 6-7 Zoom meetings
 Maintains a file
 Correspondence
 Maintains other records
 Helps the chapter



PUBLICITY CHAIR

(1 person or 2 if sharing)
 Provide meeting information to those on the provided list



VOLUNTEER CHAIR

(1 person or 2 if sharing)
 Uses a sign-up program or calls to obtain volunteers for plant sale & other needs
 Attend 6-7 Zoom meetings



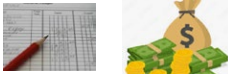
PROGRAM COORDINATOR

(2-3 people)
 Organize the programs for the year from suggestions.
 Attend 6-7 Zoom meetings

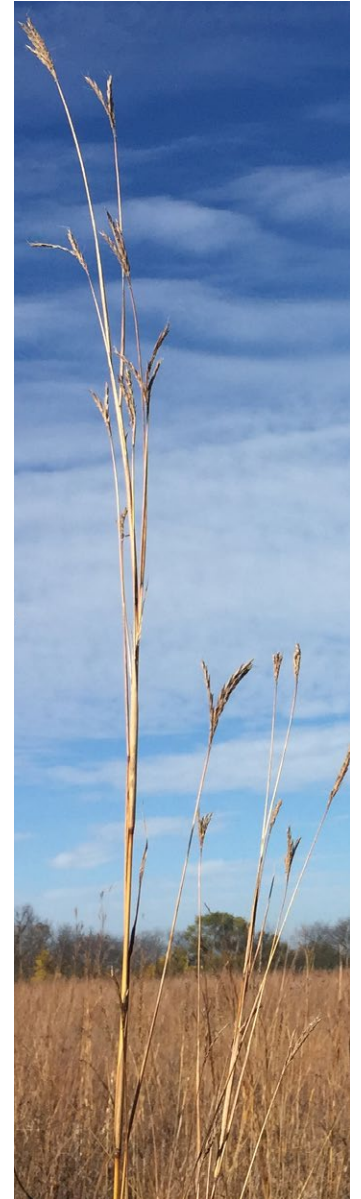


TREASURER

(1 person or 2 if sharing)
 Budget reports
 Bank account/balance
 Checkbook/pay bills
 Supports the chapter
 Attend 6-7 Zoom meetings



Contact Kim Lowman Vollmer with questions or to get involved!
 Phone: (815) 397.6044, Email: kimlowvol@aol.com



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.

181 memberships as of September 22, 2024

Anniversaries:

15 Years:

Paul & Carol Soderholm, Mount Morris





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 11/01/2024, 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

BOARD

President: Jerry Paulson
(815) 222.4414 paulsonjerry@aol.com
Vice President: Linda Tabb Ricker (217)
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catiohn_22@yahoo.com
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janetgiesen@gmail.com
Board members:
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kimlowvol@aol.com
Carrie Meyer (301) 466.8754 Cmeyer@gmu.edu
Gloria Powell glrpowell610@yahoo.com

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

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Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson
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Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs
membershipworrvc@gmail.com
Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell
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Native plant sale coordinators: Janet Giesen (as to the left)
Gloria Powell glrpowell610@yahoo.com
Ginnie Watson (as above)
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Program coordinators: Lisa Johnson
(779) 537.8939
lejohnson3804@outlook.com
Mark Luthin (815) 543.7412

m.luthin@comcast.net
Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)
Publicity coordinator: Dawn Skupien
(815) 262.7864 dawnskupien@gmail.com
Show Me/Help Me coordinator:
Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)
Social media coordinator: Jessie Crow Mermel (as to the left)
Tree & shrub sale coordinator: Brian Hale
(815) 289.2384 treeandshrubsale@gmail.com
Volunteer coordinator: [open position]
Website coordinator: Janet Giesen (as to the left)
Youth education & grants coordinator: Kim Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)