Protection Progress at Sylvan Road Conservation Area

By Linda Lynch

Progress is being made on the Sylvan Road Conservation Area project in Iowa County, WI, which lies within the Southwest Wisconsin Grassland and Stream Conservation Area. You may remember an article in late 2011 regarding our efforts to protect this property. The county has finally accepted the offer to purchase for $212,000. An application for Knowles-Nelson Stewardship money has been submitted, and the project is expected to be approved for funding shortly. The stewardship fund will pay for 50% of the purchase, and we will need to raise the remaining funds in order to close on the property yet this year.

The property consists of 99 acres that contains oak woods, wet prairie and riparian scrub/young forest. The oak woods are highly restorable, with natural community structure and over 30 native species still present, including mature white oaks, red oak, basswood, poplar and box elder.

The prairie consists of wet mesic prairie, wet prairie and sedge meadow, which were spared heavy grazing. This area is the gem of the parcel and contains over 50 native species, including a number of species rarely found in Wisconsin such as the threatened Prairie Indian plantain. Wet prairie systems are rare in Wisconsin’s Driftless area, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has determined this particular example to be ecologically significant and of natural area quality.

The riparian scrub/young forest areas will require intensive management to restore them to a more native state. There are a few native species hanging on in these areas, but invasives such as prickly ash, multiflora rose, reed canary grass, aspen and box elder have established themselves.

Sylvan Road also includes the Dodge Branch of the Pecatonica River and Gribble Creek – two Class II trout streams, the deeper pools of which DNR fisheries staff believe may provide overwintering sites for trout. Protection of the stream banks, control of invasive species and control of non-point source pollution will be critical in maintaining the health of these waterways, and we are looking forward to working with Trout Unlimited on the restoration.

The Southwest Wisconsin Chapter has committed up to $10,000 for funding this acquisition. As TPE continues to raise funds to protect this property, we will provide updates on the website and the chapter’s Facebook page. I hope we can count on you to help protect this significant acquisition.
President's Message

Accreditation

Accreditation has been discussed several times in articles in this publication. It is a continuing process, and I was advised at a recent Southwest Chapter meeting that it would be useful to discuss it again. Specifically it was suggested that I discuss the disadvantages as well as the advantages of becoming accredited.

The Land Trust Alliance, a nationwide organization to support and improve land trusts, launched an accreditation program in 2006. There are about 55 land trusts in Wisconsin. Two years ago only one had achieved accreditation. Today six are accredited.

If you know your bias, I am a strong advocate of accreditation. That said I will attempt to be objective in discussing the pros and cons, beginning with the pros:

- High Standards
- Increased credibility
- Fulfillment
- Increased ability to influence policy

As we move into burn season this spring I see us growing and moving forward as an organization like nourishing the prairies we seek to manage and restore with the use of fire. With this growth we can ensure our chapters are enabled to protect, manage, and restore the remnants that we are responsible to care for. We are working to develop effective ways to have educational and outreach activities and share these successes and experiences with all our chapters. This will see us grow our membership as well as increase and recognize our volunteers so we can continue to ensure the perpetuation of our prairies, savannas, and associated ecosystems.

The Prairie Promoter
Interview with Dr. Mark Leach on his New E-Book: Positive Participation with Nature: Ecological Restoration in Wisconsin

By Kathy Stahl

Your book tells the story of several restoration efforts—Tom & Kathie Brock’s native woodland restorations in the Driftless area of Wisconsin, the Northern Wisconsin Wild Rice Restoration, the Bad River Watershed Culvert restoration, and the Lower Chippewa River restorations, as well as a history of the TPE. Did you go about selecting the restorations you wanted included in your book?

I wanted projects representing a range of types and scales. The commonality is they all feature community. You very factely weave restoration theory and practice in this book. Do you think it is important for those of us doing restoration to understand restoration theory? Do we come to understanding restoration in the abstract by getting actively involved with a restoration?

I’m pleased to hear that, because I was trying to weave practice and theory together in my book. Some of the best restorationists had no training at all when they started. There are a few who had some background in theory, but the actual story is the community building, how people bring practice and theory together. People with different personalities and different strengths can work together to accomplish impressive restorations. People who have been doing restoration have learned the theory. Working together is helpful for those in academia because they too are learning as they go along.

A lot of restoration knowledge comes from judging the results. We should be able to test what they hypothesize. People can do the same restoration techniques for years and not get the results they want. It takes people to a different level when they test their hypotheses and theories. An important thing that restorationists, along with other ecologists, do is follow-up: after three or five years they go back to see the success of what they’ve done. There is also a historical perspective to this. Gary Eldred got interested in wild flowers because they’d been there for thousands of years. Native plants provide a real connection with people living in the past and those in the future. Restoration connects you with things that are endless in time and complexity.

You say larger is better in terms of restoration. Would you explain that?

Larger is better for natural areas as they are going to be home for more species. And since one of our goals is to maintain plants and animals, large can be better. That doesn’t mean one acre isn’t worthwhile. If we look on a whole continent level, even our national parks are not big enough for our biggest animals. My comment about size comes from the data about extinctions and extirpations. The thing that excites me is we can reverse this. If the remnants are too small, we can enlarge and connect them. Unfortunately it’s not a priority for society. For example, the northern forest is so chopped up, many of the animals aren’t going to make it. An example is the interior birds dependent upon large tracts of untruncated land. We are never going to have extensive prairies. We do have opportunities to patch prairies together and patch other vital ecosystems together. Prairie chickens are in a small area around Stevens Point. We are getting close to possibly extending that. Elk habitat can be extended.

One of the fallacies you offer at the beginning of your book is that civilization and wilderness do not mix. With the effort several make to protect wilderness areas from hordes of people and people management, how is that a fallacy?

Certainly, we need areas set a side for wild things. My point is that as civilized people we can find ways to protect and restore natural ecosystems. There is a lot of good thinking in the sustainability movement. To have a sustainable culture, we need to look beyond the economics and social affairs, to maintain environmental quality. Much of the dominant culture puts those things in conflict. When our society matures, those things will be in harmony. I quoted Joe Rose in the book. Joe grew up on the Bad River Reservation. He said that wild rice does have economic value but it also has ecological, cultural and spiritual value. If we focus on only one value we will miss important pieces. Pitting economy against other values doesn’t serve us very well. We can have a thriving economy and good environment and a society we want to live it, but we don’t get there by thinking just about a free market.

One of the often overlooked practices, you offer is monitoring the function or performance of a completed restoration. I’m struck with how this is more complex than it seems at first thought.

The professional restorationist wants to do a job and then their contract is completed. From their perspective they want an end date, the client probably doesn’t want an end date. Since there aren’t restoration standards, there are people who get paid and never look back. As a warning to people, if you’re serious about restoration, it needs community involvement, over a long period of time. There’s a tremendous need for generalists in monitoring many things such as culverts, water quality, and bird populations.

What’s next?

A picture book by Steve Hubner, a very active Prairie Enthusiast. Twenty five years ago Steve hired me for my first job looking for rare plants. I showed Steve I had a few along the railroad. I knew the conservation significance of the plants, and Steve knew a place where such plants were thick on the back end of a pasture. He rented one acre, and he and his kids fenced it. The next year all kinds of cool stuff came up. The Bureau of Endangered Resources then paid the farmer the going pasture rate for 14 acres and Steve and his kids made the money it cost for a fence, and then and taking pictures. The next book is based on about 60 pictures of Dover’s Prairie with Steve’s commentary. It’s a remarkable story of a different kind.

Over all I’m interested in writing for the non scientist, someone who wants to be a more effective environmentalist. You can obtain a copy of Dr. Mark Leach’s book at www.comonombooks.com.

Book Review: Spring Wildflowers of the Northeast: A Natural History

by Carol Gracie (Princeton University Press, 2012)

By Thomas Brock

Despite “northeast” in its title, this delightful book is very apt for the Midwest. Heavily illustrated with color photographs taken by the author, this is not your usual field guide, but a detailed and intimate exploration of the natural history of the spring flowering plants we are most familiar with. Built upon the vast field research of noted botanist and photographer Carol Gracie, the book is a field guide and a field journal, with phenology, taxonomy, and pollination biology. One of the strongest features of this book is the numerous close-up color photographs that permit an intimate understanding of how native plants work. Considering that this is a large format hard cover book (270 pages), the list price (Amazon) of $19.30 is a real bargain. Highly recommended.

The Prairie Promoter

Spring 2013

The Prairie Promoter

The Prairie Promoter
2013 TPE Annual Conference and Banquet

By Evanne Hunt

On Saturday, March 16, the Many Rivers Chapter and The Water Resource Center hosted the annual conference and all-chapter banquet. Both events were held at Minnesota State University in Mankato, MN. The Centennial Student Union Building provided an excellent venue for both the presentations and networking.

Conference

The conference theme, “Pollinators: Future of our Food & Native Plant Communities,” brought together 230 people to celebrate our prairie heritage.

After a welcome by TPE President, Jack Kussmaul, the conference was kicked off by Dennis Frederickson, Southwest Regional Director, Department of Natural Resources, with his presentation, The State of the State of Minnesota Prairies and Grasslands.

The conference consisted of three subject tracks: a water track, a prairie track and an animal track. Topics covered included wildlife, prairie restoration and management projects. A poster session, organized by Brooke Hacker, showcased the results of research and lessons learned from prairie and savanna restoration or management projects. Eight projects were accepted for the conference.

By the third time, a track for families and kids was included in the conference program. Co-sponsored with The Water Resource Center, this track featured a day-long series of family-friendly topics. This free event had over 300 children participate over the course of the day and the Many Rivers Chapter is thinking about making this an annual event.

A highlight of the evening banquet was the presentation of the TPE Prairie Enthusiast of the Year award to Jim Rogala. The after dinner speaker was Eric Mader, Assistant Pollinator Program Director at the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and Extension Professor of Entomology at the University of Minnesota. Eric described how native pollinators play a critical role in both prairie ecology and agriculture. He explained that intersection between nature and farming provides a unique framework for engaging farmers in the conservation of native biodiversity. Eric took attendees on a virtual tour of progress being made, lessons learned (including economic costs and benefits), and how this work can support broader conservation objectives like water quality protection and reduced pesticide use.

Banquet

During lunch, Chris Kirkpatrick presented the “State of TPE,” an overview of membership, status, and plans for the 2013. Tim Krohn, journalist and canoeist shared his experiences canoeing 335 miles down the Minnesota River.

At the end of the day, a special session was included for chapter leaders. The “TPE Chapter Leadership Roundtable” was an opportunity for chapters to share their experiences and expertise, and to discuss how to effectively carry out our mission to perpetuate the future of prairies, savannas, and associated ecosystems.

Photo Contest

The winners of the annual photo contest were Jeff & Patty Straub with their photo Picking Silky Prairie Clover. Their photo was the popular winner, as determined by balloting during the day and will be used on the cover of the TPE 2012 Annual Report. Finalists in the TPE photo contest each received $100. They included: Gayle Edlin’s Two Butterflies on Pasture Thistle, Scott Seigfreid’s Sunrise through the Indian Grass, Marjie Bennett’s M-Prairie Sleeps, and Randy Schindle’s Showy Ladieslippers.

Auction and Raffle

As always, the silent auction and raffle was a success. There were 93 raffle items and 66 auction items. Proceeds – which go entirely to the chapters that submitted the items – totaled under $5,000.

Thank You!

Many thanks to our presenters who donated not only their time, but generously shared their decades of experience. We could not have had a successful conference without you! Thank you to our sponsors whose support, generosity, and loyalty is appreciated every day. And thank you to all the volunteers who made our attendees feel welcome, provided support to our vendors and exhibitors, sold raffle tickets and merchandise, and pulled off a well-organized conference that was enjoyed by all who attended.

Many Thanks to Our Conference Sponsors!
Feist Prairie Acquired by TPE

by Gary Eldred

The Feist Prairie remnant in east central Grant County, Wisconsin is another one of those tiny gems most of us are familiar with. Hidden along some seldom used township road and covered with junipers, sumac and other assorted brushy species, the little two-acre remnant went undetected until a group of volunteers went about its initial exploration.

Due to the degraded condition of the remnant, once the junipers were removed a proposal was put before the chapter board to collect and seed plant seed of the same species found on the remnant. There are many other sites in the region as practical, mostly in Grant, Iowa, and LaFayette counties. Several chapter members, including Andrew Williams and Gary Eldred undertook the enrichment project over a one year period from 1990 to 1993. Our hope was to have to restore the act as a genetic refuge for the local populations of native prairie plants that were doomed in other areas.

Over the last 25 years, hundreds of hours of cutting and burning trees and brush, pulling weeds, inventorifying plant species, doing prescribed burns and establishing a trusting relationship between our chapter and the Feist family has finally paid off. On Feb 8, 2012, Eldred contacted Mr. Feist to discuss some type of permanent protection for his prairie remnant. Gerald commented that he wasn’t interested in selling but would be willing to talk about developing a conservation easement. A call was made to Jack Kasmun, our Southwest Chapter lawyer, and a conservation easement contract started to take shape. By April 18, 2012 the plans changed when Mr. Feist decided that he indeed was now willing to sell the restored remnant and 3 ½ acres of additional land adjacent to the remnant. On March 21, 2013 TPE closed on the property and took title.

This 25 year long project is a fine example of what I believe the Prairie Enthusiasts stand for, the lifelong commitment to conservation, protection and restoration of the last of our tallgrass prairie heritage. Nurturing trust and providing educational opportunities for landowners and public is a foundation of our desire to leave our environment better than we found it.

Feist Prairie
Photo courtesy Gary Eldred

Book Review: The Midwestern Native Garden

By Charlotte Adelman

My husband Bernie Schwartz and I are Life Members of TPE. We also have turned our Wilmette, IL backyard into a prairie/savanna, placed a conservation lien on our Walworth County, WI hill prairie, and wrote a 2009 federal study notes that as long as gardeners grow in their gardens, The Midwestern Native Garden identifies many popular nonnative flowers and plants. It then suggests similar looking Midwestern native flowers and plants that share cultivation requirements to choose as alternatives. The book also identifies many of the native species that serve as food sources and “host plants” for the Midwest’s stressed and diminishing populations of reproducing butterflies and birds.

2013 Annual TPE Membership Meeting and Picnic

The 2013 meeting of the membership and all-chapter picnic will be held Sunday, July 21, in River Falls, WI. There will be the usual board meeting in the morning and field trips to local outdoor sites. The host chapter, St. Croix Valley, has reserved the shelter at Glen Park. Maps and details will be posted on the website in June. The chapter will provide meat & buns, two side dishes, and beverages. Attendees are asked to bring a side dish to share, a plate and silverware.

For those looking for more excitement, come up Saturday. You can camp at Willow River State Park (www.wisconsinparks/name/willowriver) or stay at a lodge along the Kinnickinnic River. The Kinnickinnic is a world-class trout stream and loads of fun in a kayak. Kinnickinnic Creek Lodge and Outfitters (www.kinnicreek.com) will drop you off and pick you up at different spots along the river. If the temperature is in the 90s and higher, what could be better than a cool trip down the river?

See you in July! Let's hope for temps below 100!

Evanne Hunt

Prairie Enthusiasts of Wisconsin
P.O. Box 378
River Falls
WI 54022
608-729-4050
rekearley@gmail.com
www.theprairieenthusiasts.org

Please Help Us Cross the Creek

Kalscheur Savanna is a beautiful 19-acre TPE preserve near Hollandale, WI. It’s blessed with a spectrum of natural communities ranging from dry bluestem prairie with Hill’s thistles to a sedge meadow, to Olson Creek, a clear stream that spills into the Pecatonica River a mile downstream.

Olson Creek lies between the road and the prairie, which makes it hard to get tools to the site. Engineering students from University of Wisconsin – Platteville drew a bridge design for this location that will support a large ATV loaded with water. We have found a nearby contractor with experience in this type of construction.

Would you please help us pay for the bridge? We need $3000. Please make a tax-deductible donation through Flowernatives.org or by check.

Kristin Westad
The Prairie Promoter

Spring 2013
The Prairie Promoter
Spring 2013

CHAPTER NEWS

Looking for a Savanna to Restore?
By Rich Henderson

Would you like to be in charge of your very own oak savanna restoration but currently lack the funds to acquire a piece of property with oak trees? If so, here is an opportunity for you. It involves planning and implementing a four-acre restoration of oak savanna in far eastern Iowa County. The site is located on a 4.3 miles south of Blue Mounds on the A to Z unit of TPE’s Mounds View Grassland Preserve (see aerial image). TPE is looking for someone to take charge of this management project and make it happen.

You, as the project manager, would be in charge of planning and implementing the work with technical guidance and resource assistance from the Mounds View Grassland Land Management Committee. Within certain guidelines, such as which species may be introduced and what restoration/management methods may be used, you, as manager, will otherwise have control of the project. You will have the responsibility of doing much of the work yourself. However, TPE will provide assistance in the form of equipment, supplies and time from volunteers and interns.

The project site has mature bur oak trees on an east-facing slope above a wetland complex. Up until seven years ago, it had been heavily grazed. Consequently, there is almost no native ground layer vegetation remaining, but that also means there is relatively little shrub and tree invasion to deal with, at least not yet.

Activities you will be planning and implementing directly, or for others to assist with, include:
1. Assessing the site and proposing a restoration plan (technical guidance may be provided as needed).
2. Establishing and mowing fire-breaks.
3. Controlling invasive, mostly non-native, plants such as sweet-clover, wild parsnip, Japanese hedge parsley, reed canary-grass, honeysuckle and others.
4. Collecting and planting native savanna and prairie seed.
5. Planning and leading work parties.
6. Planning prescribed burns (TPE burn crews will conduct the burns, but you may certainly participate).

If this opportunity interests you, contact Rich Henderson at tph@nipes.org or 845-7065.

By Rich Henderson

Prairie Bluff Chapter

Fire Conference

Spring Burn Season is here

We have nearly 50 burns scheduled for this spring. If you wish to help design and help us inform others of your interest, please contact volunteer coordinator Diane Hills (volunteers@theprairieenthusiasts.org). Experience and training are desired but are not a prerequisite at this time. Novices will be paired up with experienced people. Personal protective, fire-resistant (Nomex) clothing is highly recommended but not required at this time.

By Gary Eldred

The Empire-Sauk Chapter

Volunteer of the Year

Kathy Henderson is being honored as Chapter Volunteer of the Year for 2012. Kathy has been a long-time volunteer regularly contributing 200-300 hours a year to the organization. She has been the chapter treasurer for the past five years, provides ideas for operations and outreach, makes treats for work parties (critical for morale) and is a steadfast and extremely hard-working volunteer on prescribed burns and work parties clearing trees and brush, collecting and cleaning seed, controlling weeds, mowing, facility repair and maintenance, and weeding the seed orchards. She is such a hard worker that sometimes it is a challenge to get her to take a break at work parties. If this were not enough, she has made it possible, over the past 20 years, for her husband Rich (chapter Chair) to put in the effort he has towards TPE’s conservation mission. Kathy has been a major reason for the success of the chapter and of TPE as a whole in protecting, managing and restoring our endangered prairie, savanna and oak woodland heritage. She is much appreciated.

By Rich Henderson

The Chipewa Savannas Chapter

Hosted Explore Winter: Winter Tree and Shrub Identification and Wolf Ecology Workshop on January 26th. Steve Merchant, Minnesota DNR Wildlife Population and Regulation Manager and Wisconsin citizen, spoke about wolf behavior, health and Minnesota management of their 3000 wolves. Beaver Creek Reserve Naturalist, Jim Schwobetz, gave a presentation about how to identify trees and shrubs in the winter and then led the group on an outdoor tree and shrub exploration.

On February 13th Dr. Mark Leach gave a presentation at the chapter meeting entitled How Darwin Changed the Evolution of Ecology. His presentation offered background about Darwin, how ecological concepts have changed over time and who impacted those changes.

On March 2nd, the chapter (along with the Eau Claire Chapter) hosted a day long workshop featuring TPE’s Bill Hogseth and Prairie Nursery President Neil Leach or Kathy Ruggles by sending your nominations to the chapter Chair) to put in the area.

Our chapter is currently taking nominations for chapter officers. Nominations are to be turned into Mark Leach or Kathy Ruggles by sending your nominations to the

The Empire-Sauk Chapter is pleased to recognize Kathy Henderson as Chapter Volunteer of the Year for 2012. Kathy has been a long-time volunteer regularly contributing 200-300 hours a year to the organization. She has been the chapter treasurer for the past five years, provides ideas for operations and outreach, makes treats for work parties (critical for morale) and is a steadfast and extremely hard-working volunteer on prescribed burns and work parties clearing trees and brush, collecting and cleaning seed, controlling weeds, mowing, facility repair and maintenance, and weeding the seed orchards. She is such a hard worker that sometimes it is a challenge to get her to take a break at work parties. If this were not enough, she has made it possible, over the past 20 years, for her husband Rich (chapter Chair) to put in the effort he has towards TPE’s conservation mission. Kathy has been a major reason for the success of the chapter and of TPE as a whole in protecting, managing and restoring our endangered prairie, savanna and oak woodland heritage. She is much appreciated.

By Rich Henderson

The Empire-Sauk Chapter

Volunteer of the Year

Kathy Henderson

Glen Lake Press
Spring 2013
Certified Restorationists

We are all in the process of being certified volunteers, as we are asked to provide proof of training to various NGO and government (fire) programs. Where is your S130/S190 certificate? Your chainsaw safety class certificate? Are you a certified herbicide applicator? Did you attend an initial fire crew refresher? Have you signed a waiver?

These are becoming necessary documents for us volunteers to continue to perform the various tasks at the sites that we have been actively managing. The drivers of these changes are a combination of the evolution of our restoration activities, insurance policies, the land trust certification process, risk-managers at public institutions, and our ever-increasing litigious society.

Basswood Harvest

Our long-term management plan for Iltis Savanna has always been to thin out the non-oak trees, including cedar, apple, cherry, walnut, hickory and basswood. Years ago we hired a dentist to mark trees in anticipation of a wood pulp harvest, but the plan fell through due to low pulp prices. Three winters ago we started to do the work ourselves, first cutting eastern cherry, walnut, hickory and basswood. Years ago we hired a crew to thin out the non-oak trees, including cedar, apple, cherry, walnut, hickory and basswood. Years ago we started to do the work ourselves, first cutting eastern cherry, walnut, hickory and basswood. Years ago we hired a crew to thin out the non-oak trees, including cedar, apple, cherry, walnut, hickory and basswood. Years ago we hired a crew to thin out the non-oak trees, including cedar, apple, cherry, walnut, hickory and basswood. Years ago we hired a crew to thin out the non-oak trees, including cedar, apple, cherry, walnut, hickory and basswood.

Working with a local farmer, the field was planted with RoundUp-ready soybeans to reduce weeds. This gave us time to raise sufficient money to purchase local tree seedlings. Several nurseries also generously donated additional seed for our project.

Chapter members spent two years hand-collecting forb seed - 14 pounds (worth $2500)! - from ditches and area prairies. Proceeds from the 2013 TPE auction and raffle were also dedicated to purchase seed.

2012 Annual Appeal Exceeds Goal

The generosity from our members to support the work of the organization and its chapters is truly amazing. The following is the list of people who responded so generously to our 2012 Annual Appeal Campaign. This is the largest fundraiser we do in the year that supports operations. Without your help, we could not continue to do the good work of the organization. The Fundraising and Endowment Committee had a goal to raise $30,000. To date we have raised a total of $43,265!

Thank you to everyone who responded to our 2012 Annual Appeal. This is the list of people who responded so generously to our 2012 Annual Appeal. We, as a class, thank The Prairie Enthusiasts for affording us this unique hands-on learning experience. We hope that the information gathered for the Eldred Prairie site will aid in efforts to restore that site to its natural state and educate the public about this unique natural area. A special thanks to Dr. Chris Baxter, our intrepid professor and overall orchestrator of this project. Anyone wishing to see the posters or written reports for the project may contact Dr. Chris Baxter (baxterch@uwplatt.edu). We, as a class, thank The Prairie Enthusiasts for affording us this unique hands-on learning experience. We hope that the information gathered for the Eldred Prairie site will aid in efforts to restore that site to its natural state and educate the public about this unique natural area. A special thanks to Dr. Chris Baxter, our intrepid professor and overall orchestrator of this project. Anyone wishing to see the posters or written reports for the project may contact Dr. Chris Baxter (baxterch@uwplatt.edu).

TPE Provides Unique Opportunity for UW-Platteville Students

In the Fall of 2012 the Soil Morphology & Classification (Pedology) course at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville created a detailed soil map of the Eldred Prairie, near Lancaster, WI. For those unfamiliar with the Eldred Prairie, it consists of 45 acres and is characterized by a sandstone ridge running from the southeast corner to the northwest corner. Both sides of the ridge are hillside with varying degrees of steepness and the very north part levels off into a narrow floodplain. North of the ridge was formerly a tree farm which has been cleared, while the southern portion has been minimally disturbed by human activity. The Southwest Wisconsin Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts has removed the trees from the area, planted native prairie species from the locally collected seed, and have encouraged the establishment and survival of prairie species through brush removal and burning. This project was facilitated through the Pioneer Academic Center for Community Engagement (PACCE), which provided funds for travel to the site and equipment necessary to conduct the field work.

Pedology is the study of soils in their natural environment and how they are affected by various factors such as depth, landscape position and appearance of the individual soil layers (horizons). The class of 25 students divided into five groups and each was assigned a nine acre strip to survey. Each group used a hand-operated auger to take at least one soil core for each acre, in different landscape positions. The groups also described soils in five backhoe pits that were dug at the site for use in the Regional Collegiate Soils Contest, held in October. The groups described the individual cores using the methodology taught in class and matched their descriptions with official soil series descriptions maintained by the USDA-NRCS. Each group then made a map of their assigned area and pieced the data together to create an overall soil map of the prairie. The final requirement of the project was researching each of the soils to compile information on their general characteristics such as land capability classification, water holding capacity, average depth to bedrock, and hydraulic conductivity. Posters showing the results of this research and comparisons to the existing county-based soils map were presented at the PACCE poster day on December 5, 2012.

We, as a class, thank The Prairie Enthusiasts for affording us this unique hands-on learning experience. We hope that the information gathered for the Eldred Prairie site will aid in efforts to restore that site to its natural state and educate the public about this unique natural area. A special thanks to Dr. Chris Baxter, our intrepid professor and overall orchestrator of this project. Anyone wishing to see the posters or written reports for the project may contact Dr. Chris Baxter (baxterch@uwplatt.edu). We, as a class, thank The Prairie Enthusiasts for affording us this unique hands-on learning experience. We hope that the information gathered for the Eldred Prairie site will aid in efforts to restore that site to its natural state and educate the public about this unique natural area. A special thanks to Dr. Chris Baxter, our intrepid professor and overall orchestrator of this project. Anyone wishing to see the posters or written reports for the project may contact Dr. Chris Baxter (baxterch@uwplatt.edu).
The following people have joined TPE during the period November 15, 2012 through March 13, 2013:

Pat Trochell & Ken Wade
Donovan Dabney & Carl Eidlitz

$1000 - $4999

Angela Pressman & David Charles
Barbara V. Martinez & Mark E. Martinez

Anonymous

Page Jones Richards Family Foundation

$100 - $499

Joe Beattie, Hastings, MN
Tod Becker, Mankato, MN
Mori Berg-Binder, Winona, MN
Bruno Borradori, Winona, MN
Katie Bower, Glenwood City, WI
Ron & Karen Bowen, Prairie Restorations, Inc., Princeton, MN
Ronna Bowman, Eau Claire, WI
Genevieve Brand, Saint Peter, MN
Michelle Bridges, Madison, WI
Terri Borrower & Ron Grasshoff, Prairie Du Saxe, WI
Marc Chipault, Madison, WI
John Delaney, New Richmond, WI
Diane DeWitte, Montgomery, MN
Don Dusker, Mountain Lake, MN
Merle Eusso, Saint Paul, MN
Kay Gabriel, Madison, WI
Charlotte Gallagher, Good Thunder, MN

Paul Gaasbeek, Fitchburg, WI
Virginia Homme, Granite Falls, MN
Paul Hoppe, Ogivie, MN
Dave Johnson, Mankato, MN
Maria Joniart, Norwalk, WI
Craig Koester, Saint Paul, MN
Robert Laeser, Argyle, WI
Michael Lynch, Minneapolis, MN
Dan May & Kristine MacCallum, Eau Claire, WI
Mary McCunn, Milwaukee, WI
Jennifer Meadows, Lanesboro, MN
Donnie Hanson, Mountain Lake, MN
Carla Rae Oestreicher, Watertown, WI
Brad Parsburg, Houston, WI
Tom Rice & Mary Becker, Shoreview, MN
Jenean Ruby, Jackson, MN

Michael Graham

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!
TIME TO RENEW? (hint: check the renewal date printed above your address)

Did you know you can renew online? Visit: www.ThePrairieEnthusiasts.org

Or, mail a check and the form below to:

The Prairie Enthusiasts, P.O. Box 1148, Madison, WI  53701-1148

Questions? E-mail Victoria Oberle (membership coordinator) at TPE@theprairieenthusiasts.org.

Thank you.

Name: ___________________________________________________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________________________________________________
City: _____________________________________________________State: ___________  Zip: __________
E-mail: ___________________________________________

The Prairie Enthusiasts Membership Levels:
[ ] $15  Student  [ ] $200  Blazing Star
[ ] $25  Little Bluestem  [ ] $500  Compass Plant
[ ] $40  Big Bluestem  [ ] $1,000  Monarch
[ ] $65  Pasque  [ ] $5,000+  Bur Oak Benefactor
[ ] $100  Shooting Star