

A Prairie Rendezvous

A joint publication of:



Hibernation Vol3, N1, 2001

As 2000 draws to a close restorationists can look back at the year as one with success. On the national level, the massive Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) passed, although in a lightened form. The election also saw multimillion dollar open space bond referendums pass across the nation.

In Illinois, the first round of grant winners from Governor Ryan's Open Land Trust were announced and the Champaign Co. Forest Preserve District came away a big winner with \$2 million to buy 358 acres along the Sangamon River south of Mahomet.

Locally, Grand Prairie Friends and the Prairie Grove Volunteers welcome new and returning members to their leadership bodies and both are moving forward with plans to improve coordination amongst stewards in east-central Illinois.

Finally, thanks to Lana Gits for donating proceeds from the sale of her prairiearts cards.

- the editors

Bush, Gore, or Us?

by: Alf Siewers

Post-election gridlock is the one sure thing predicted for Washington these days, and environmentalists will need to plan ways to cope and make the best of the situation - which may turn out well for them.

Restorationists and those concerned with land conservation in Illinois probably don't have too much to be concerned about, given the current unexpected political situation nationally, regardless of who is finally declared president after the legal challenges settle.

But the question will be how best to leverage the situation to try to make significant gains, rather than having the next four years being merely a holding pattern.

First, let's briefly consider the campaign positions on the environment of George W. Bush and Albert Gore Jr., especially as they might relate most to restoration-related concerns. I'm drawing here heavily on Lindsay Robinson's analysis of the candidates for the Urbana-based Illinois Student Environmental Network newsletter, with a bit of cynical skepticism added from Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair's leftist critique, "Al Gore: A User's Manual."

Bush generally proclaimed himself a strong state's rights man on environmental regulations, but as Robinson notes: "Texas ranks 49th among the 50 U.S. states in the amount of money it invests in state parks. However, he does show support for federal funding of public lands. He cosponsored a resolution calling for more funding for the Land and Water Conservation Act. Bush also strongly opposes the Federal Endangered Species Act because of its threat on private land rights. More specifically, he strongly opposes breaching dams on the Lower Snake River to protect endangered salmon." Bush also opposed the Kyoto Protocol but has admitted global warming is a real phenomenon.

In terms of how state's rights might play out here under a Bush administration, Illinois Gov. George Ryan has a record of supporting funds for conservation, however Ryan's administration apparently increasingly gridlocked itself over scandal-related issues. What impact this may have on issues such as expansion of Allerton Park remains to be seen.

Bottom line, however, is that Bush won't be able to do too much to dismantle environmental policies and regulations that are still in place at the

(see *Confusion*, page 5)

A Prairie Rendezvous
PO Box 36 • Urbana, IL 61803-0036

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A Prairie Rendezvous is a joint publication of the Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois (GPF) and the Prairie Grove Volunteers (PGV) for the restoration community of east-central Illinois.

A Prairie Rendezvous is published quarterly. Article submissions should be sent electronically to the editor at dchien@megsinet.net.

Prairie Grove Volunteers

www.prairienet.org/pgv

The PGV is part of The Nature Conservancy's Volunteer Stewardship Network. Its stewards help coordinate volunteer workdays at native prairie, savanna, wetland, and woodland remnants. Inquires and tax-deductible donations should be sent to: Prairie Grove Volunteers c/o The Nature Conservancy, 8 S. Michigan Ave. #750. Chicago, IL 60601

Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois

www.prairienet.org/gpf

GPF is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to prairie preservation, restoration, and education in east central Illinois. Inquiries and tax-deductible donations should be sent to: Grand Prairie Friends, PO Box 36, Urbana, IL 61803-0036.

A Prairie Rendezvous
Submission Deadlines:

Hibernation Issue (Dec, Jan, Feb)
November 15

Greenup Issue (March, April, May)
February 15

Summer Issue (June, July, Aug)
May 15

Fall Issue (Sept, Oct, Nov)
August 15

Member submissions encouraged.

Printed on Recycled Paper

New Directions for TNC-Volunteer Stewards Network

by: Mary Ann Fiest

Several personnel changes have occurred within the steering committee of The Nature Conservancy's Volunteer Stewards Network. Over the past year, five of our members have either left Illinois to pursue new careers or education, or resigned to free up time to pursue other interests. The new steering committee is now made up of the following members:

Connie Carroll - Regional Ecologist

Alf Siewers - Regional Newsletter Editor

Mary Ann Feist - Regional Steward

Olin Anderson - Regional Publicist

Dan Busemeyer and Frank Hassler - Regional Burn Coordinators

Gary Beland - Regional Volunteer Coordinator

The positions of Regional Webmaster and Regional Administrator have not yet been filled.

Despite the many changes that have taken place, the steering committee is geared up and energized. We are making plans to follow through on initiatives developed by former members and on new ideas brought forth by our current members. GPF board members are also collaborating with us on these initiatives. These initiatives mainly involve increasing the number of active volunteers and improving communication between volunteers, stewards, and the steering committee. Over the years, we have had a loyal but small group of volunteers. This spring we are going to make a full-force

(see *New Directions*, page 6)

New GPF Board Members & Officers

Lisa Braddock, Jamie Ellis, and Jim Payne were elected to three-year terms on the GPF Board of Directors at the annual meeting, at the Anita Purves Nature Center Sept. 22, 2000. Jamie and Jim were reelected to the board with Doug Chien, who was the GPF Vice President, leaving. Doug, who works for the Sierra Club in Chicago, will continue as an coeditor of *A Prairie Rendezvous*.

GPF is pleased to welcome **Lisa Braddock** as our newest board member. She has been interested in plants for more than 20 years: first houseplants, then veggies and flowers, now trees, prairie and woodland plants. She became a Master Gardener in 1992 and member of the CU Herb Society. Lisa joined GPF four years ago and likes learning about prairie plants and educating the public on the advantages of native plants. Her education is in marketing, public relations, and program planning. Lisa recently worked in the U of I Department of Animal Sciences. She lives near Mahomet with her partner Mark and two dogs from the Humane Society. Lisa planted a 100 x 20 foot prairie in the yard and Mark has planted more than 150 trees in the four years they have lived there.

(see *GPF Board*, page 7)

Volunteer Workday Calendar



'Fridge' Insert - Hibernation, 2001

SATURDAYS, DECEMBER 2, 16; JANUARY 6, 20

BUSEY WOODS RESTORATION. Enjoy a woodlands close to home. Brush cutting and removing non-native species. Wear gloves and bring drinking water. Bring loppers or hand saws if you have them. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 am. Call the Nature Center at 384-4062 for more information.

WINTER MEANS SEED CLEANING AND PLANTING

SEED PREPARATION. Help prepare the seeds collected during the fall for sale next summer and for planting into local restoration sites. Dates and Times will posted on the GPF web site (www.prairienet.org/gpf) or contact Ruth Green (w: 333-7091)




Directions:



APNC - ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER. Urbana Park District. 1505 North Broadway, Urbana. Busey Woods is located behind the APNC.

Prairie Quilt Completed

Grand Prairie Friends is proud announce the completion of its Prairie Quilt. Begun in 1994 and reported to readers in the Greenup 2000 Issue, the quilt has been lovingly worked on by over 3 dozen individuals throughout the years.

The quilt will be publicly unveiled at the opening reception for the Early American Musuem in Mahomet in April 2001. After the unveiling, the quilt, with accompanying storyboard and brochure, will be made available to nature centers, museums, libraries and other civic sites in communities across Illinois, for exhibition. Be sure to join GPF and volunteers in this unveiling. More details will follow in the next issue of A Prairie Rendezvous. 

*For more information contact:
Sharon Monday-Dorsey
217-344-3016 or
ayuda@prairienet.org*

Old issues of A Prairie Rendezvous are now available at the GPF web site: www.prairienet.org/gpf

Interaction and Outreach

by: Jim Hoyt

In the years that I have worked with TNC and Grand Prairie friends I have come to know and respect many of the people involved in natural resource preservation. They spend many long hours devoted to reestablishing, observing, and maintaining natural populations on their sites. I have found these Stewards to be very eager to pass along very valuable information about plant identification for free. For just the cost of my time I have received the equivalent of a college course in botany.

I believe that each of us has something we can add to our organization that will help us to better manage our natural world. By working together we can make a difference. We must think of ourselves as important integral parts of our whole organization which, like a puzzle, depends on each of its pieces to form the final image.

I believe that the image that we project to our friends and people we meet is very important. What we do in their sight will influence them in their thoughts and actions. An ethical quandary is evident in what do we do with the knowledge of our observations. We must take care to protect rare plants and natural communities but at the same time we must not appear to be mysterious or frightening to the public.


One example of the application of this code of ethics is illustrated by how I use the knowledge which I may obtain after finding a rare plant. I am obligated to protect it by being

very careful about who I talk about it to. However, if I find that a local landowner already is aware of its presence, I will have a moral obligation to future generations. I must build a bridge of interest for this "wonder of nature" to these concerned local people, and show them how it can be of interest to them.

As an example: In the past my hosts had mentioned that there was a strange little plant in Jackson Hollow that I might be interested in. After some research I was sure that they had been referring to a Club Moss called Running Pine in the Genus of Lycopodium. While deer hunting in the area this season I showed my host a picture of this plant in my field guide in hopes that he could show me its location. I was told, "sure it's over on the north side of the hollow in the pine trees." After locating and photographing the Ground Pine I put away my equipment. After receiving some good natured kidding about when was I going to start hunting deer, I agreed that I had found the Club Moss. I continued to explain that one reason I liked the little plant was that it resembled bucks antlers. This gave them a smile and the conversation returned to deer hunting. In my conversations with my host I also learned that there were indeed "pack rats" in the hollow. In fact it was this very reason why I had not found and shot shells. Evidently the industrious little rodents pack them away to

their nests. It is my hope that I have added another plank to my friends' bridge of interest. I also hope that the interested will lead him to protect this plant in the future.

Another example: an opportunity for public relations presented itself when I parked at a hunter's campsite the day before opening season. I was doing some preseason scouting along with taking photos of some natural areas in Shawnee National Forest. One of the hunters upon seeing my Nature Conservancy sticker asked what I was taking a picture of, "if its any of my business." I explained that we liked to take photographs at a given point in all four points of the compass and that these were used to help determine how the forest was doing. He seemed to be very happy with this knowledge.

I feel our main goal after protection should be the education of the public about nature in so doing we must entrust people with the knowledge necessary to make the decisions that our democracy requires. 

WEBMASTER NEEDED

The Prairie Grove Volunteers needs a Regional Webmaster to run their local web site. Contact: Alf Siewers at siewers@uiuc.edu

(Confusion, continued)

federal level, given probable congressional partisan deadlock.

It's even possible that, as under the Republican administration of Richard Nixon, environmental policies could do well. Under this scenario, however, a political coalition would have to be built making it attractive for "moderate" Republicans and "conservative" Democrats to support environmental initiatives. The brand of Republicanism typically in evidence in statewide office in Illinois (viz. Jim Edgar, etc.) illustrates some potential for this. Increased evidence of global warming could help provide a policy-wonk push for this.

This also however would require a strong environmental movement outside Washington, which means that restorationists may want to consider having more of a direct active voice as a group in federal and state lobbying. On business regulatory issues such as coal mining on the Little Vermilion River, such activism will be especially needed (could be under a Democratic administration as well, however: Gore's involvement in the issue of whether to drill on the Elk Hills oil reserve in California during the Clinton administration has come under fire).

President Gore definitely seemed a more welcome prospect to the many environmental groups that endorsed him. He took pro-environmentalist stances during the campaign on key issues such as opposing drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. He has a history of support

for the Kyoto protocol and efforts to combat global-warming, going back to his "Earth in the Balance" book.

However, Gore also, as Cockburn and St. Clair detailed, has a career-long involvement with Occidental Petroleum and somewhat environmentally dodgy interests such as the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Kyoto Protocol that Gore helped influence remains ambiguous in terms of its lack of definition of renewable energy (i.e. does that included nuclear?) and other key points.

Gore-skeptics like Cockburn and St. Clair also have questioned, based on the vice president's record on "welfare reform," whether or not he will "take for granted" core constituencies such as environmentalists once elected, in a search for a centrist majority for the 2004 elections.

And the close election 2000 outcome in the nation as a whole reflects the lack of high enthusiasm for Gore among many environmentalists that helped produce the Nader phenomenon in this election.

However, ecology remains one of few issues today about which many Americans of various political backgrounds can rally, and one of the few issues capable of building some public consensus on the need for a civic role for government in protecting the interests of citizens as a whole.

Evidence for global warming appears to be building and is more generally accepted by conservatives and liberals alike.

The potential for renewing a

national sense of community, this time including humans and other living beings, remains to be fulfilled. But a gridlocked Congress and an administration without a mandate may together offer a surprisingly good time for environmental activism, and for the concerns of restorationists - if they help set the agenda Washington can't.

The key will be a strong and direct movement, not the occupant of the White House. In this way ecological activists may be able to prove of the presidency in the next four years, whoever exercises its power, what Lao Tzu wrote long ago:

*A leader is best
When people barely know that he
exists,
Not so good when people obey and
acclaim him,
Worst when they despise him.
Fail to honor people,
They fail to honor you;
But of a good leader, who talks a
little,
When his work is done, his aim
fulfilled,
They will all say, "We did this
ourselves." (Tao Te Ching, Ch. 17)*

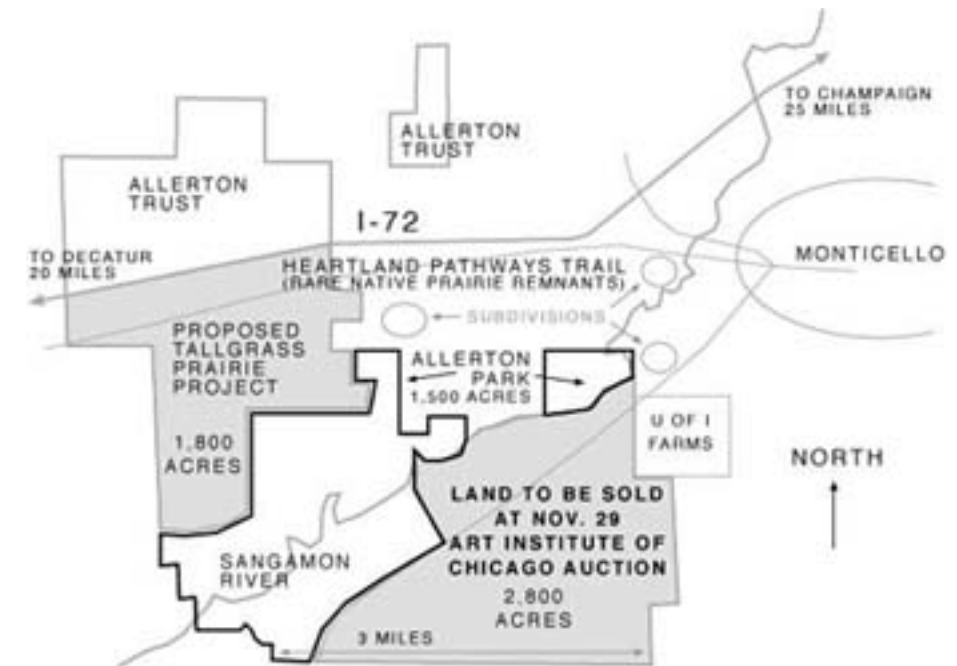
Next Issue, we'll examine one way restoration groups can help build a movement of people and thus shape government policy.

University of Illinois to Expand Allerton Park

In the latest twist of land sales, proposed projects, actions and inactions surrounding Allerton Park, the University of Illinois has announced that it will purchase about 640 acres of the Art Institute's land prior to public auction. The land will become part of an enlarged Allerton Park.


The land includes upland forest and forested areas along the Sangamon River plus a large heron rookery.

With three subdivisions close to Allerton, this critical land purchase will help buffer the park from urban encroachment, protect the



Sangamon River, expand protected habitat, and create a larger park for recreation.

The Illinois Department of

Natural Resources will also acquire several small parcels that adjoin the U of I purchase to help protect some small waterways. 


(New Directions, continued)

effort to increase these numbers and to improve our interactions with the volunteers. We are going to increase advertisement of volunteer workdays by taking advantage of free services offered by the local media (especially the newspaper and radio). Once we get more volunteers attending, we are going to work harder to welcome them and encourage them to return and stay involved with TNC and GPF. We are making sign-up sheets and asking stewards to get the names and addresses of all people that come to the workdays. Volunteer packets are being developed to give to all new volunteers that attend. These will include information about TNC, a copy of the most recent newsletter, and information about


the site where they are volunteering as well as other nearby TNC and GPF sites.

We also want to improve communication with stewards. We are composing a letter to inform all stewards of initiatives we are pursuing and asking for their ideas and input. An information packet is being developed to give to all new stewards. We have realized that we (the steering committee) have not always communicated well with the volunteer site stewards, especially in the area of feedback. Annual and biannual reports have been requested without any evidence that the information provided has been used in any meaningful way. This year we plan on summarizing the results of the annual reports and providing this

to all stewards that are interested. We also want to provide more assistance to stewards by helping to develop management plans for their sites (if desired) and helping to get the equipment and volunteers that are needed to complete the planned activities on their sites.

The steering committee is excited about the new directions we are moving in and about the new faces that have joined our staff. Anyone interested in finding out more about the TNC-VSN or to contribute their ideas and suggestions is encouraged to attend the next steering committee meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for December 11th at 6:30. Please call Mary Ann (244-6858) for the location. 

Renew your membership on-line!

For your convenience, GPF now accepts secure online credit card donations and membership renewals through the GuideStar website, a non-profit charity organization. If you are making a donation, it can be made anonymously, or donated in memory of a friend or loved one, or even designated for a specific purpose. If you are renewing your membership, you should designate it for "2001 Membership Renewal", and of course it should not be made anonymously. To donate or renew your membership online, click on the "Donate Now" button on the bottom of the main page of the GPF website, which is located at <http://www.prairienet.org/gpf>. This link will take you to the GuideStar website where you can make your donation. GPF hopes this will make membership renewals easier for its members. 

(GPF Board, continued)

Returning board member **Jamie Ellis** works as a botanist at the Natural History Survey. First introduced in last years Hibernation Issue, Jamie and his wife, Mindy, now have a 6 month old daughter, Autumn. Jamie has been a member of the GPF board for the past year, serving as Secretary. He is now the Stewardship Chair.

Also returning is **Jim Payne**. He has long had an interest in the preservation of natural areas in central Illinois and was a founding member of GPF in 1984. He's spent many years helping with local prairie projects and is working on the restoration of a large tract of forest (Jasmine Hollow) on the Sangamon River near Allerton Park. Jim's background is in finance and he owns of a small business in Philo. He also volunteers with the Champaign County Humane Society and WILL. Jim and his wife, Mare, live in Urbana with two beagles from the Humane Society. Jim has just completed a full term on the GPF board as Treasurer and will continue in that role.

Continuing board members are:

Chris Hauser - UIUC graduate student, Urbana (term expires 2002, Secretary/Web master)


Joyce Hofmann - Natural History Survey mammalogist, Urbana (2001, President)

Mary Hruska - Carle Clinic medical technologist, Urbana (2002)

Heidi Leuszler - Parkland Community College biology instructor, Urbana (2002, Education Chair)


Patti Malmborg - Illinois Department of Natural Resources natural areas specialist, Springfield (2001, Land Acquisition Chair)

Paul Tessene - Illinois Natural History Survey botanist, Urbana (2001, Vice President)

The GPF board meets monthly and its meetings are open to all members. Dates and locations of the meetings are posted on the GPF website. E-mail to gpf@prairienet.org will reach all board members. 

Ems Donates Property to GPF

Mrs. Freida L. Ems of Urbana has donated to Grand Prairie Friends 1.69 acres of land in Champaign County that was once part of her family farm. Mrs. Ems signed the warranty deed on September 21, 2000 and GPF is paying the costs associated with the land transfer.

The property is located northeast of St. Joseph, directly east of County Road 2500 East and adjacent to the south right-of-way of Interstate 74. This site is highly visible from the interstate, and one possible option is to plant the site with a variety of colorful native prairie plant species. A dedication ceremony will be held in the spring of 2001. GPF thanks Mrs. Ems for her generous donation. 



Line art by Dick Young "Wild Plants and Natural Areas of Kane County"

Upcoming Events

Prairie Grove Volunteers Steering Committee Meeting.

December 11th at 6:30. Please call Mary Ann (w: 244-6858) for the location.

Grand Prairie Friends Annual Winter Meeting.

Friday, February 9. Anita Purves Nature Center. Contact Joyce Hoffman for more information w: 244-2366

Volunteer Burn Training Offered

Volunteers interested in assisting with or conducting prescribed burns are encouraged to attend a volunteer burn training being offered in Vermilion County. The location and date of the training are still TBA, but it will probably be held in January or March at Forest Glen Preserve. If you are interested please contact Ken Konsis at Kennekuk County Park at 217-442-1691.

Prairie Conference

March 2 - 3, 2001
Eau Claire, WI

The Prairie Enthusiasts celebrate 13 years with a Conference. To register for the banquet or conference, visit The Prairie Enthusiasts web site www.prairie.presenter.com or call Deb Konkel at 715-839-2782.

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Meet new PGV and GPF Officers
Presidential Confusion and Restoration?
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