
A Prairie Rendezvous



Grand
Prairie
Friends



Prairie Grove
Volunteers

SPRING VOL. 7, NO. 2, 2005
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REMEMBERING A PRAIRIE FRIEND

by Sharon Monday-Dorsey

Mary Hruska, long-time volunteer and member of Grand Prairie Friends, was born June 4, 1956 in Normal, Illinois, a daughter of George and Hope (Brenkman) Hruska. She grew up on the family farm outside Normal-Bloomington. She passed away January 2, 2005 at home after a long struggle with cancer.

Mary graduated from Illinois State University, Normal, in 1979 with a Bachelor of Science degree in biological sciences. As a junior and senior at ISU, she studied as an exchange student at both the University of Maine and Brighton Polytechnic in England. During her time at Brighton, she traveled throughout Europe. She earned a Master of Science Degree in botany from Eastern Illinois University, Charleston where she was a member of Phi Sigma Biological Honor Society. She earned a living as a medical technologist at Provena Medical Center for 16 years, and more recently she worked at Carle Clinic in Urbana.



Original and new member of the GPF-PGV board cutting the cake (2004). From left to right: Brenda Molano-Flores, Sharon Monday-Dorsey, Mare and Jim Payne, Mary Hruska, Joyce Hoffmann, and Paul Marcum.

spending time with family and friends.

Mary joined Grand Prairie Friends the first year it formed in 1984. She helped plan the first Central Illinois Prairie conference held in Mahomet. The success of this conference spurred Mary to help with the planning of 15 other ecologically based conferences in her lifetime. Mary served as the Board President of Grand Prairie Friends in 1987-88. Her summary report from that year includes the stewardship of five sites; support of other conservation minded organizations, and the hosting of our second Central Illinois Prairie

Conference at Wildlife Prairie Park near Peoria. Mary concluded, "It was a busy and eventful year, and I was proud to have been president of such a fine group." she again served on the Board in 1998-2000 as membership chair.

Despite the fact that Mary struggled to maintain her strength due to advanced liver cancer during 2004, she made the effort to volunteer at the spring plant sale, to be with us when we celebrated the 20th birthday of Grand Prairie Friends at Meadowbrook Park in July, and to attend the fall membership meeting (see photo). Mary was a faithful member who worked diligently for Grand Prairie Friends whether as a board member, as the membership chair (despite the fact that she admitted to me she had no idea how to organize the mailing labels on the computer), as a member laboring out at various field locations, planning meetings, helping at plant sales, or just showing up. One of the last checks Mary was able to write was to Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers; she wanted to make sure to renew her membership and give an extra contribution to show her support as well. Mary was passionate about the work of this organization and gave her best to it.

Mary gives new meaning to the word "Friend" in our organization's name. She was a loyal and hard working friend, and the success we have experienced over the years is in great part due to committed members like Mary. GPF-PGV wants to remember her in perpetuity by developing a prairie garden in her honor where we can grow and collect prairie seed for many years to come. We will develop this garden on a small piece of land east of St. Joseph that was generously donated to GPF-PGV by Ms. Frieda Ems of Urbana. Please join us in honoring Mary by sending contributions designated in memory of Mary Hruska to GPF-PGV for use in this new garden.



Mary Hruska (right) and Sharon Monday-Dorsey at the 2003 Central Illinois Prairie Conference.

A Prairie Rendezvous

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A Prairie Rendezvous is a publication of Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers for the restoration community of East Central Illinois. In February 2004, the membership of GPF voted to broaden the group's Constitution and By-laws bringing the missions of GPF and PGV together and the two groups merged.

A Prairie Rendezvous is published quarterly. Article submissions should be sent electronically to the editor at gpf@prairienet.org or by mail to the GPF-PGV PO Box (above). Member submissions are gladly welcomed.

Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to natural community preservation, restoration, and education in East Central Illinois. Our stewards help coordinate volunteer workdays at native prairie, savanna, wetland, and woodland remnants. Inquiries and tax-deductible donations should be sent to GPF-PGV, PO Box 36, Urbana, IL 61803-0036.

www.prairienet.org/gpf

GPF-PGV Board of Directors (term ends)

Jamie Ellis, President (2005)
Brenda Molano-Flores, Vice-President (2006)
Jim Payne, Treasurer (2006)
Bryan Krall, Secretary (2005)
Paul Marcum (2005), Derek Liebert (2006), Lynne Elrick (2007), Betsy Kuchinke (2007), and Patrick Hubert (2007)

Board meetings are the third Monday of the month at 5:30 p.m. and are open to the public. Directions to the meeting location can be obtained by contacting the President.

GPF-PGV Committees

For information on volunteering and getting involved with any committees, please contact the following:

Membership & Volunteerism: Brenda Molano
Stewardship: Paul Marcum, Betsy Kuchinke, and Patrick Hubert
Education: Lynne Elrick and Bryan Krall
Publicity: Derek Liebert
Land Acquisition: Jim Payne, Betsy Kuchinke, and Patrick Hubert
Fund Raising: Lynne Elrick

Submission Deadlines

☞ **Spring Issue '05** (Mar., Apr., May): **February 1**
☞ **Summer Issue '05** (June, July, Aug.): **May 1**
☞ **Fall Issue '05** (Sept., Oct., Nov.): **August 1**

Printed on Recycled Paper

FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Jamie Ellis, President GPF-PGV

Days slip by quickly in the waning months of winter. I yearn for the first days of spring when I can sense the earthy, humid smell of warming soil; I see the flocks of returning waterfowl and warblers; and I may find skunk cabbage, bloodroot, or trillium waking from their slumber.

I know many of you are also thinking of spring as you flip through the seed and nursery catalogs or plan your garden. Spring is a busy time for our little conservation group. We also wake from our slumber by getting outside to conduct spring burns, tackle invasive plant species, and work at the annual Mother's Day native plant sale. Mark your calendars for Saturday May 7 inside Lincoln Square, downtown Urbana. We're teaming up once again with CU Business and Professional Women's club, and John Marlin will provide a great selection of wildflowers. Also, the CU Herb Society will be selling a selection of culinary and medicinal herbs. Of course, GPF-PGV will offer the usual large selection of tallgrass prairie plants.

Besides the plant sale, there are many other events on our calendar. By the time you read this, the tenth annual steward's luncheon will have passed, but make sure you catch up with other prairie enthusiasts at the annual winter meeting March 4 (see Announcements). Also, don't forget to check the workday calendar in this issue.

Due to a variety of cut-backs in funding at the state and federal level, money and people have been lost that should be protecting and managing our natural resources. We can't wait and hope that politicians' minds will change or we'll have more money next year—we need to contact our elected representatives and let them know how we feel. Next, we need to keep working on our small corner of the world.

I urge to get out and volunteer with us. If you can't make it out, I thank you for your current or future monetary donation. We will use this money to steward and conserve our local natural areas. The Board has agreed that we need to be proactive in conserving valuable pieces of land for natural area or open space value by direct purchase or using a tool such as a conservation easement. This is also where we need your help—let us know about these pieces of land that need to be conserved. We also accept donations of land (like the recent acquisition of Nance Woods). Thanks for your continued support, and I hope to see you in the woods this spring!

WHAT I LEARNED LAST SUMMER

by Vera Bojic

My name is Vera Bojic and I was one of two full-time GPF-PGV interns last summer. I started this internship expecting to learn about prairie restoration, prairie plants, and meeting with experts in this field. For two and half months I did all of this and more.

The greatest challenge and perhaps my biggest accomplishment was learning how to drive a manual vehicle...a rusty old Toyota, I should say. One ten minute lesson, and several hours of practice out on the South Farms, and I was ready to head out and save our prairies!

Most of my labor in May and June was focused on pulling parsnip and sweet clover. Albert (the other GPF-PGV intern) and I were able to weed-whack almost all the sweet clover at Prospect Cemetery Prairie and Welles Cemetery Prairie. We eliminated every parsnip we saw at Shortline Railroad Prairie. In addition, we spent hours at Buffalo Trace doing similar work with Phil Hult. Derek Liebert and I spent some time controlling parsnip and clover at Meadowbrook. As soon as the parsnip and clover we were unable to get went to seed, my work shifted to spraying autumn olive, multiflora rose, black locust, and other woody species. I spent a wonderful day with Jim Payne doing such work at Jasmine Hollow. I also had the pleasure of working beside Rick Larimore and helping

him control such invasives at Windfall Hill Prairie. Also, Albert and I destroyed teasel at Paxton Railroad Prairie and Loda. In fact, our rusty old Toyota hauled about four whole loads off the Paxton site! In addition to the GPF-PGV sites, I spent some time cleaning up several prairie gardens at our local schools, helping Red Bison maintain their site, and installing a new garden at Allen Hall.

Of course, throughout this internship, Jamie and several other stewards and scientists were generous enough to share their knowledge on prairie restoration and to help me learn prairie plants. I would like to thank: Jamie Ellis, Rick Larimore, Dan Busemeyer, Paul Marcum, Jim Hoyt, Jim Payne, Phil Hult, Bill Handel, Dave Ketzner, Ruth Green, John Taft, Derek Liebert and Paul Tessene.

It has been my pleasure interning for GPF-PGV. Along with all I have learned about restoration, I have certainly walked away from this internship having a greater appreciation for the struggle, labor, and patience that goes into preserving our prairies.



SITE SPOTLIGHT: MIDDLE FORK BLUFFS

by Dan Busemeyer

Middle Fork Bluffs (see photos) is the name of a small part of Kickapoo State Park just north of Interstate 74 in Vermilion County. The site is southwest of the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River and has a high bluff above the river. Most of the site is covered by dry-mesic oak woodlands dominated by black oak (*Quercus velutina*) and red oak (*Q. rubra*). Several species of hickory (*Carya* spp.), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), and flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) are also common on the site. There is a valley cutting through the site, which has a large population of bladdernut (*Staphylea trifoliata*).

The site is home to many beautiful and interesting herbaceous woodland plants. A healthy population of snow trillium (*Trillium nivale*) grows along the top of the bluff. Many colorful wildflowers can be found throughout the site including blue co-

hosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), doll's eyes (*Actaea pachypoda*), Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium repens*), Virginia pink (*Silene virginica*), dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*), Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), green violet (*Hybanthus concolor*), native stonecrop (*Sedum ternatum*), May-apple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), pussy-toes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*), Bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*), and waterleaf species (*Hydrophyllum* spp.). Also, the Illinois threatened plant, false hellebore (*Veratrum woodii*), can be found at the site.

Stewardship activities at the site fall in two categories: exotic species control and oak-hickory woodland regeneration. In the last two or three decades many aggressive exotic species brought to the United States from Europe and Asia have been invading many local natural areas. Middle Fork Bluffs has substantial colonies



Bob Szafoni (left) and Rick Larimore (right) at Middle Fork Bluffs. Photo by Dan Busemeyer

(Site Spotlight continued on page 8)

Prairie Grove Volunteers
and
Grand Prairie Friends
Activity Calendar



Grand
Prairie
Friends



Prairie Grove
Volunteers

SPRING 2005

Spring burns will be scheduled in March and early April for several sites. Burns are needed at these sites to discourage the competing non-native species and encourage growth of native plants and native wildlife habitat. Wear natural-fiber, non-flammable clothing (long pants, longsleeves, boots, and gloves); *no synthetic fabrics*. Bring drinking water and a snack. Call Dan Busemeyer (wk: 244-2470, hm: 378-5352) or Jamie Ellis (jamese@inhs.uiuc.edu, 244-5695) for more information.

Volunteer Stewardship Activities

First Friday Evening of each month: Enjoy a nice afternoon of Native Gardening at the Champaign County Humane Society in East Urbana. We have native American Toads and Red-winged Blackbirds to serenade us. Most work will include the removal of common goldenrod, wild parsnip, and sweet clover. We will also be transplanting and watering. Work times are every Friday Evening at 4 p.m., beginning in May, unless posted on ecostewards@prairienet.org. Please bring gloves. Contact Jim Hoyt at jwhoyt@prairienet.org

The first and third Saturdays of every month: Busey Woods. Enjoy a woodland close to home, help cut brush and remove non-native species. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 a.m. Contact Derek Liebert (344-9583) for more information.

The fourth Saturday of every month: Meadowbrook. Have an interest in volunteering at a highly visible local prairie restoration? Help remove invasive plants, improve trails, plant prairie species, and assist with general clean-up. Tools will be available and refreshments will be served. Meet at Race St. parking lot at 9:00 a.m. Contact Derek Liebert (344-9583) for more information.

Every Sunday: Red Bison. Workdays held every Sunday unless otherwise noted. Members and non-members welcome. Meet at the University YMCA at 1:00 p.m. Contact Lori Kae Schwab (schwab@uiuc.edu) or Valerie Svicek (svicek@uiuc.edu).

Sunday March 20: Middle Fork Woods Nature Preserve. Middle Fork Woods is a high quality woodlands with ephemeral ponds and steep ravines that borders the Middle Fork River in Vermilion County. Help us to maintain this site as we remove garlic mustard and honeysuckle that have become problems. We'll follow up with a nice hike! Wear gloves and bring plastic bags, loppers, and pruners if you have them. Bring drinking water and a snack. Meet at the Cypress parking lot in Kickapoo State Park at 10:00 a.m. [the parking lot and playground west of the river]. Contact Grant Cunningham (733-2660) for directions or more information.

Saturday April 2: Middle Fork Bluffs. We'll pull some garlic mustard. Then we'll hike around the woods. The hike will feature the Snow Trillium (*Trillium nivale*). Bring gloves and drinking water. Bring a snack too if you'd like. Water, food, and restrooms are also available at the Salt Kettle Rest I-74 rest-stop. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 a.m. to carpool or at the Salt Kettle rest-stop at 10:00 a.m. This rest area is just west of Danville. Contact Dan Busemeyer for more information (244-2470).

Saturday April 2: James Nance Woods. In conjunction with the Embarrass Volunteer Stewards, we'll be basal ark spraying sugar maples in dense areas, also controlling autumn olive and multiflora rose. If you've not visited this 14 acre site before, it should be especially beautiful this time of year! Meet on-site at 9:00 a.m. Directions: Take 6th street west out of Neoga, which is about 12 miles south of Mattoon on I-57, and go 2.2 miles past the city limits to Shelby County Road 3425 E. Turn right (north) and go 0.9 mile, past

- APNC (Anita Purves Nature Center) is located at 1505 N. Broadway Ave. in Urbana.
- NATURAL RESOURCES STUDIES ANNEX: 1910 Griffith Drive, Champaign. Griffith Drive runs south from St. Mary's Road just east of the Illinois Central railroad viaduct (next to St. Mary's Cemetery).
- Workday reminders and updates will be posted on the ecostewards@prairienet.org listserv.
- Please leave your pets at home. Pets are not allowed on Nature Preserves. Activities such as prescribed burnings may endanger pets, even if they are on leashes or otherwise supervised.
- **New reminder:** Please wear clean clothes and boots as a general precaution. After a workday wire brush or scrape lug soles clean. Also, do not wear the same clothes that were used to visit a site with mature exotic seed into another site before laundering them. This is to avoid becoming unwitting carriers of the very invasive species that we are trying to control!

two S curves, to the woods on the right. Bring water, gloves and loppers if you have them. Snacks provided. Contact Jim Payne, jpayne@shout.net, 493-7840, for more information.

Saturday April 16: Horseshoe Bottom and Windfall Prairie Nature Preserves. Spring Wildflower Hike. Hike the long way to HBNP. See hill prairies, seeps, marsh marigolds, and breath-taking views of the Middle Fork of the Vermilion!!! Pull garlic mustard along the way!!! Be prepared for several miles of rough (and maybe a bit wet) hiking. Wear good boots and bring water and a lunch (WE WILL BE MOST of the DAY). Meet at APNC* at 9:00 a.m. to carpool to the site or at the Lake Mingo dam parking lot at 9:45. Contact Rick Larimore (hm: 337-7006, w: 244-6716) or Jim Smith (hm: 896-2079) for more information.

Saturday April 16: Jasmine Hollow. We'll be pulling garlic mustard, and thinning coralberry and gooseberry. The spring wildflowers should be showing nicely! Meet on site at 9:30. We'll work until noon, then have refreshments and take a hike afterward if folks are interested. The address is 1172 N. 200 East Rd., Piatt County. Phone 344-7840 or email jpayne@shout.net if you need directions.

Saturday April 23: Habitat Enhancement Field Day at Homer Lake. See Announcements.

Sunday April 24: Baber Woods Nature Preserve (an Embarras Valley Stewards site south of Kansas!). Wander around this beautiful woods and get a look at the result of prescribed fire and sugar maple removal while pulling some garlic mustard with some volunteers from Charleston. Bring a lunch and some water etc., we will be back mid afternoon. Meet at Anita Purvis at 7:45 a.m. to carpool or for information contact Rick Larimore (hm: 337-7006, w: 244-6716, rlarimo@inhs.uiuc.edu).

Saturday April 30. Nettie Hart Memorial Woodland. Help us remove one of the more insidious invasive plants - garlic mustard, as well as other non-natives. This woodland includes upland forest and floodplain forest along the Sangamon River. Wear gloves and bring drinking water too. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 a.m. to carpool. Contact Bryant Barnes (493-8686; email: bbarnes@prairienet.org) for more information.

Saturday April 30: Horseshoe Bottom Nature Preserve. Spring Wildflower Hike. A hike, the short way to HBNP. See hill prairies, seeps, and breath-taking views of the Middle Fork of the Vermilion!!! Pull garlic mustard along the way!!! Be prepared for moderate (and maybe a bit wet) hiking. Wear good boots and bring water and a lunch. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 a.m. to carpool to the site or at the Newtown School parking lot at 9:30. Contact Rick Larimore (hm: 337-7006, w: 244-6716, rlarimo@inhs.uiuc.edu) or Jim Smith (896-2079) for more information.

Sunday May 8: (Mother's Day) Orchid Hill Tour led by Bob Szafoni (Illinois District Heritage Biologist). 10:00 a.m. Come see the orchids in spring bloom and enjoy some topography! This is a rare chance to explore this natural area which is usually closed to the public. Contact Connie Carroll (352-4731, 244-7741) or Mary Ann Feist (355-3174, 244-6858,

mfeist@inhs.uiuc.edu) to sign up and get directions. Space is limited to **12 people**. Meet at site at 10 a.m. or at APNC* to car pool at 9:15 a.m.

Saturday May 14: Jasmine Hollow. We'll be pulling garlic mustard, and thinning coralberry and gooseberry. Meet on site at 9:30 a.m. We'll work until noon, then have refreshments and take a hike afterward if folks are interested. The address is 1172 N. 200 East Rd., Piatt County. Phone 344-7840 or email jpayne@shout.net if you need directions.

Saturday May 28: Middle Fork Bluffs. Help pull garlic mustard. After working we'll take a hike around the woods to see the spring wildflowers. Bring gloves and drinking water. Bring a snack too if you'd like. Water, food, and restrooms are also available at the Salt Kettle Rest I-74 rest-stop. Meet at APNC* at 9:00 a.m. to carpool or at the Salt Kettle rest-stop at 10:00 a.m. This rest area is just west of Danville. Contact Dan Busemeyer for more information (244-2470).

Saturday June 11: Shortline Railroad Prairie. Help restore Grand Prairie Friends first prairie remnant by removing non-native vegetation. Wear long sleeves, bring gloves and drinking water. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at APNC* to carpool or 9:45 a.m. at the site. For more information contact Paul Marcum (333-8459, 390-6141).

Sunday June 12: Buffalo Trace Prairie. Help pull parsnip!!!!. Bring gloves, drinking water, and wear long sleeves. Bring a snack too if you'd like. Workday will start at 8:30 a.m. (latecomers are more than welcome). Directions to Buffalo Trace Prairie: From I-74, take Route 47 North away from Mahomet. At first asphalt road to the left, turn left (2100 N) and turn left again at the next intersection (300E). Drive south to the parking lot on the left across from the cell-phone tower. Walk out on the bike path to the prairie between the 0.2 and 0.3 Mile mark on the bike path. Contact Phil Hult and Gail Snowden for more information (217-586-4511).

Seedlings Transplant and Plant Sale Schedule

Help Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers plant seeds, transplant seedlings, and sell plants for the annual spring native plant sale! No experience necessary; just a willingness to get your hands dirty. Join us Monday evenings this spring at the NRB greenhouse at the corner of Sixth and Pennsylvania in Champaign to help out. Call Jamie Ellis (244-5695, jamese@inhs.uiuc.edu) to volunteer or for more information.

- February 21, 7-8 p.m., NRB greenhouse, seed flats
- April 4, 6:30-8 p.m., NRB greenhouse, transplant seedlings
- April 11, 6:30-8 p.m., NRB greenhouse, transplant seedlings
- April 18, 6:30-8 p.m., NRB greenhouse, transplant seedlings
- April 25, 6:30-8 p.m., NRB greenhouse, transplant seedlings
- May 2, 6:30-8 p.m., NRB greenhouse, transplant seedlings
- Friday May 6, 6 p.m., move plants to Lincoln Square, Urbana
- Saturday May 7, 2005, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers Annual Mother's Day Plant Sale at Lincoln Square in Urbana!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GPF-PGV Annual Winter Meeting

Please join us at the Anita Purves Nature Center (1505 N Broadway, Urbana) on **Friday March 4 at 7pm** for food, fellowship, and an educational speaker, Dr. Jeff Walk. The meeting will start with a dessert potluck, followed by a short time of announcements, and then the speaker. Please bring your favorite sweets and goodies to share. Drinks and eating utensils will be provided. All are welcome to attend.



Dr. Walk, Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan Coordinator with the IDNR, will talk about the Comprehensive Wildlife Plan for Illinois, how it will affect conservation planning in Illinois, how money may be spent, and how you can participate in the process. <http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/wildliferesources/theplan/>

New Book: Illinois Wildflowers by Don Kurz

This is a comprehensive, easy-to-use field guide to the wildflowers of Illinois. The flowers are grouped by color and season of bloom, with corresponding color tabs on each page to quickly locate the flower in question. In addition, the guide has an additional 127 closely-related flowers described and a complete index of common and scientific names. The author, Don Kurz, has been a professional botanist, writer and nature photographer for more than 30 years. This guide is published and distributed by Cloudland.net. (6" x 9", 256 pages, 429 color photos, paperback) with a retail price of \$22.95. Contact Cloudland.net Publishing for more information, to place an order, or to request a review copy of the book: phone (800-838-4453), fax (870-861-5736), or email (Tim@TimErnst.com).

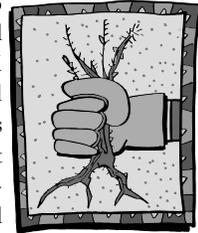


Plant Sale

The annual GPF-PGV Mother's Day native plant sale will be Saturday May 7, 2005 9am to 3pm inside Lincoln Square Village in downtown Urbana. Choose from a large selection of native tallgrass prairie plants at reasonable prices to beautify your home landscape. Woodland wildflowers will also be offered by John Marlin as well as herbs from the CU Herb Society and bedding plants from the CU Business and Professional Women's club.

Habitat Enhancement Day

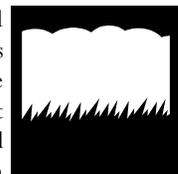
Attention landowners, park district and conservation professionals, hunters, birders and all environmentally concerned - on Saturday, April 23 at Homer Lake there will be a special event where interested people can learn how to take better care of woods and other wild land. This event will begin at 9:30 AM and will run until about noon. There will be a brief talk followed by short walks with demonstrations on exotic plant identification and control methods. Various exhibits by private contractors and volunteer groups should be of interest.



Snacks will be provided. Please pre-register at (217) 586-3360. If space is available walk-ins are welcome. Participants will include: Champaign County Forest Preserve District, Illinois Natural History Survey, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Restoration Ecology) and Grand Prairie Friends/Prairie Grove Volunteers. Call Rick Larimore (244-6716) for more information.

New Video: America's Lost Landscape - The Tallgrass Prairie

America's Lost Landscape: The Tallgrass Prairie is a sixty minute documentary film designed for national broadcast on public television. The film tells the story of one of the world's great ecosystems and its transformation from natural landscape to farmland. The tallgrass prairie was once a prominent feature of the North American Continent that was reduced, in less than a hundred years, to the vanishing point. The film is narrated by Iowa native, Annabeth Gish and includes commentary by Richard Manning, Pauline Drobney and many other regional scholars. America's Lost Landscape: The Tallgrass Prairie is a co-production of the University of Northern Iowa and New Light Media, Inc and directed by David O'Shields. For more information regarding how to purchase this documentary as DVD or VHS go to <http://www.uni.edu/~lostland/>



RESEARCH CORNER: 30 YEARS OF ILLINOIS NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY

by Brenda Molano-Flores and Mary Ann Feist

Well, we are still in the early weeks of winter and based on "Punxsutawney Phil," yes!!!! we will have six more weeks of winter. So, in this issue of the *Research Corner* we would like to talk about a special symposium regarding the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) that will be going on at the Illinois State Academy of Science meetings, April 8-9 at Knox College, Galesburg, IL. Why? Because many of our GPF-PGV sites are INAI sites, many people do research at these sites, and without these sites we won't know about the biological history of Illinois. The title of the symposium is *The Past, Present, and Future of the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory: A Symposium Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory*. This symposium is going to be held Saturday, Apr. 9, although the poster session will be Friday, Apr. 8 (see Schedule).

For those of you who do not know much about the INAI, this inventory helped to establish criteria to judge the conservation value of public and private natural lands, its data have helped to guide responsible development in Illinois, and its conduct was responsible for training of dozens of field biologists. Today, a lot of support has been built to conduct this inventory again. At this symposium sessions are being dedicated to reminisce about the scope of the accomplishment, to understand how the state agencies and commission use the inventory, and to look to the future of a new INAI. You should be aware that this symposium is not free; registration prior to March 2 will be \$40 for regular registration and \$20 for students. Late registration will be \$50 and \$25, respectively. A boxed lunch will be available for Saturday at an additional charge of \$10. Please visit <http://cs.knox.edu/ISAS2005/> to find information and registration forms for the ISAS Annual Meeting and the INAI Symposium. We hope that you take this opportunity to learn more about our INAI.

SCHEDULE

Friday, 8 April 2004

4-5:45 p.m. Poster Sessions (posters associated with the INAI are to be given at the ISAS poster session, ISAS registration required)

6:00 p.m. Keynote Speaker, Dr. Brian D. Anderson. Dr. Anderson has had a distinguished 20-year career working for Illinois natural resource agencies and commissions. His experience in how the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory shaped the Nature Preserves Commission, and how the resulting information has been used by state government to protect public and private lands, should captivate the audience.

Saturday, 9 April 2004

8:00-9:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00-12:00 noon, *The Past, Present, and Future of the INAI*

Topics include

- 9:00, Welcoming Remarks
- 9:10, *An Introduction to the INAI*. John Schwegman
- 9:30, *How the Inventory was Organized and Conducted, and Trials along the Way?* Randy Nyboer, Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board
- 9:50, *How Is the Information from the INAI Used?* Don McFall, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission
- 10:10, *Thirty Years of Change: A Biologist's Interpretation of Changes in Natural Areas*. Marlin Bowles, Morton Arboretum
- 10:30, Break
- 10:50, *The Future of the INAI*. Todd Strole, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- 11:10, *Social and Political Implications of the INAI*. Carl Becker, The Nature Conservancy
- 11:30, *The Illinois Natural History Survey: Its Role in Past, Present, and Future of the INAI*. Dr. David Thomas, Chief, Illinois Natural History Survey
- 11:50 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Lunch and Conversation (boxed lunches provided)
- 1:00-3:00 p.m., Workshops
- 1:00-2:00 p.m., *How, What, Where, and When: An Overview of the Methods of a New INAI*. Jack White, Ecological Services
- 2:00-3:00 p.m., *Planning and Implementation of the INAI Update*. Dr. Deanna Glosser, Environmental Planning Solutions, Inc.
- 3:00 p.m., Wrap up of Symposium

(Site Spotlight from page 3)

of garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) and bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) as well as several other exotics. The second main management activity at the site has been to try to encourage oak and hickory regeneration. Fire suppression for the last 100 years has resulted in many woodlands becoming more dense particularly with more shade tolerant species but



Volunteer getting ready to cut bush honeysuckle and to pull garlic mustard at Middle Fork Bluffs. Photo by Dan Busemeyer

fire sensitive species such as sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*). Sugar maple has been selectively thinned and the site will eventually be burned to thin the woods allowing more light



Middle Fork Bluffs-woodland. Photo by Dan Busemeyer

to reach the forest floor promoting both oak seedling survival and eventual canopy replacement and also wildflower abundance.

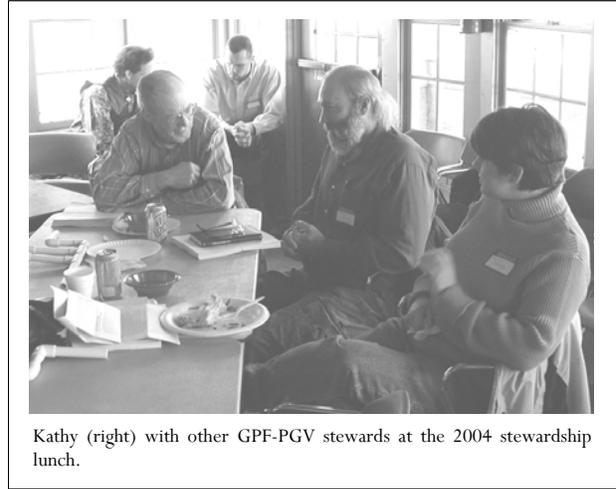
If you are interested in visiting or learning more about the site contact Dan Busemeyer at 244-2470.

STEWART SPOTLIGHT: KATHY SPONDER

by Kathy Sponder

Hi! I'm Kathy Sponder (see photo), a relatively new steward with GPF-PGV. I became interested in stewardship a few years ago, not long after we moved to Vermilion county, settling not far from Kickapoo State Park. The new governor had announced potential budget cuts that would close the park. I was outraged not only that the park might close, but also with the apathy of my fellow residents for not standing up and protesting, vigorously.

Around the same time Connie Carroll, my nature loving neighbor, told me about a hike scheduled on the damn at Kennekuk and I was hooked. The day was spent looking at various species of trees, looking at the native plant life, identifying invasives, and enjoying the view along the ridges of Middle



Kathy (right) with other GPF-PGV stewards at the 2004 stewardship lunch.

Fork River. As I talked with other hikers that day I realized that stewardship was this great thing I could do to combine my love of the outdoors, desire to learn about my new home, and the need to do my part to preserve what few natural resources are left in this state.

I am the steward of an area just east of Collison, on the Middle Fork River at Kinney Ford. It is truly a beautiful sight, reminding me in many ways of my home state of Wisconsin. The diversity is lovely, oak savannah, open fields, a stand of old apple trees, and of course the river! Last year was the first I've had to deal with the dreaded garlic mustard along the river banks, but it hadn't reached epidemic proportions so I'm hopeful for this year. Optimistic or naive, we'll see! Other than that the area is in pretty good shape, so I'll keep monitoring for bush honeysuckle and autumn olive and address things as they come up. Stop out and visit! The area is rich with plants, birds, and insects of all sorts, definitely worth the drive! Happy hiking everyone!

SUMMER 2005 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Sponsored by GRAND PRAIRIE FRIENDS-PRAIRIE GROVE
VOLUNTEERS OF ILLINOIS

Natural Lands Management in East-Central Illinois of Tallgrass Prairie, Savanna, Forest and Wetlands

For students interested in environmental conservation, natural lands management, ecological restoration, plant identification, and the preservation of Illinois natural areas.

2005 Internship Goals:

- Experience hands-on natural lands management by removing invasive vegetation from GPF-PGV sites;
- Learn to identify native and invasive plant species;
- Meet professional land managers and biologists and learn management, restoration, and monitoring techniques from them;
- Coordinate with GPF-PGV site stewards to perform annual management activities;
- Assist with GPF-PGV activities, site visits, and work days;
- Learn the importance of managing our natural area remnants;
- Maintain local school prairie gardens;
- Collect native plant seeds;
- Contribute to management database for GPF sites.

General Position Information:

- **Application due March 25, 2005.**
- Two full-time intern positions available (40-hr work week) for 3 months (90 days) beginning late May and ending late August 2005.
- Stipend is \$8.00/ hour (total of \$4460 available), plus a maximum of \$300.00 travel expenses if personal vehicle used. GPF-PGV will provide stick-shift truck for use also.
- Interns will work with natural resource professionals and volunteers at scheduled times throughout the summer as well as work independently at GPF-PGV sites.
- Liability coverage is provided when working on any GPF site.
- Valid driver's license is required; pesticide applicator's license will also be required but can be obtained after the start of the internship.

For more information and application, contact GPF-PGV P.O Box 36, Urbana 61801 (gpf@prairienet.org), Jamie Ellis (jamese@inhs.uiuc.edu, 244-5695), or Heidi Leuszler (hleuszler@parkland.edu, 373-3734) or visit our website (<http://www.prairienet.org/gpf>)

THE PRAIRIE CHEF

by Betsy Kuchinke

Thanks to the birds or the breeze, we have a beautiful Curly Dock, *Rumex crispus*, growing among our flowers. Since it's a perennial, each year it gets a little larger... giving us more delicious meals! More about that in a minute.

A total of 16 species of the *Rumex* genus (belonging to the Buckwheat [or *Polygonaceae*] Family) are known as Docks and all are edible. (The Prairie Dock, *Silphium* genus, that we have here in Illinois is not related – it's a member of the Composite Family; I'm not sure if it's edible.) Curly or Yellow Dock is very tasty and has wavy dark green leaves & deep, yellow roots. Dye was extracted from the roots by the Navajo Indians. Tiny greenish flowers borne on tall stalks are replaced in the fall by rusty brown fruits. The seeds are a favorite food for winter birds!

The leaves may be gathered from April through October but are at their best in

- 1 c. cooked, chopped dock
- 1 c. sautéed mushrooms and onions
- Oregano & thyme
- ¼ c. grated gruyère and/or cheddar
- 1 c. milk
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 tbs. Flour
- Salt & pepper
- Rice shell, prebaked
- OR pastry crust, unbaked



April & May or early fall. Dock leaves are rich in vitamins A & C, containing more A than carrots. Boil them in a small amount of water for 5-10 minutes; if they're bitter or old, the water should be changed once or twice.

Here is a great way to enjoy dock as a quick and delicious main dish!

Dock Quiche

To prepare a rice shell, press 1½ c. of cooked rice and a sprinkling of fresh parsley into a pie pan & bake in a preheated 375° oven for 5 min. or until dry.

For the filling: combine the dock, mushrooms & onions, herbs, and cheese, then pour into the rice shell or casserole. If you're using a pastry crust, sprinkle the cheese onto the crust and then spoon on the filling. **Next**, beat the eggs, milk, salt & pepper, and pour over the filling. Bake at 375° for 35 minutes or until set & browned.

Use good judgment when collecting wild foods. Never take an entire stand, and be **positive** of correct identification.

Note: although Dock resembles the Burdocks, *Arctium sp.*, they are prepared differently. Dock leaves are smooth on both sides & Burdock leaves have velvety undersides.

Coming next issue: Wappato Salad.

A Prairie Rendezvous

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In this issue...

- ✧ Annual meeting
- ✧ Intern update
- ✧ Prairie Chef recipe
- ✧ Research corner
- ✧ Site spotlight
- ✧ Steward spotlight

... and more
