
A Prairie Rendezvous



Grand
Prairie
Friends



Prairie Grove
Volunteers

WINTER VOL 8, No. 1, 2006
.....

MEET THE NEW GPF-PGV BOARD MEMBERS

During the Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers Fall Membership Meeting, September 9th, we elected four new Board members: James Ellis, Paul Marcum, Daniel Olson, and Nate Beccue. Jamie and Paul were re-elected as Board members and Daniel Olson and Nate Beccue are our new elected Board members. Below we provide a short bio for our new Board members.

Nate Beccue (nbeccue@ad.uiuc.edu): Nate is a 2002 graduate of the University of Illinois with a major in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences. He is currently working full time as Natural Areas Manager at Allerton Park in Monticello and finishing his Masters Degree in Forest Ecology. At Allerton Nate is responsible for facilitating research, controlling exotic species, white-tailed deer management and development and implementation of ecological restoration projects.

Daniel Olson (dolson@ccfpd.org): Dan is the Director of Natural Resources at the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. Dan received a bachelor's degree in zoology with an emphasis in psychology from Eastern Illinois University. After graduating, Dan spent many years doing wildlife and agricultural research for the University of Illinois Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences Department around the state of Illinois. Publications include various reptile and amphibian papers in *Herpetological Review* and small mammal work in the *Transactions of the Illinois State Academy of Sciences*. Dan is currently a member of the Illinois State Academy of Sciences, The Wildlife Soci-



Our new GPF-PGV board members interacting with the GPF-PGV members (black lightning bolt: Nate Beccue and white lightning bolt: Daniel Olson)

ety, Illinois Audubon, the Izaak Walton League, and the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles.

A Prairie Rendezvous

P.O. Box 36 • Urbana, IL 61803-0036

Editor: Brenda Molano-Flores
Assistant Editor: Jamie Ellis, Mary Ann Feist, and Lynne Scott
Production Designer: Ray Meredith

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 (2006)
Derek Liebert, Vice-President (2007)
Jim Payne, Treasurer (2006)
Lynne Scott, Secretary (2007)
Betsy Kuchinke (2007), Nate Beccue (2008), Paul Marcum (2008), and Dan Olson (2008)

One board position is vacant and unfilled with the departure of Patrick Hubert.

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: Dan Busemeyer, Betsy Kuchinke, Paul Marcum, and Dan Olson
Education: Lynne Scott
Publicity: Derek Liebert
Land Acquisition: Dan Olson and Jim Payne
Fund Raising: Derek Liebert and Lynne Scott

Submission Deadlines

☞ **Winter Issue 05-06** (Dec., Jan., Feb.): **November 1**
☞ **Spring Issue 06** (Mar., Apr., May): **February 1**
☞ **Summer Issue 06** (June, July, Aug.): **May 1**

Printed on Recycled Paper

FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Jamie Ellis, President GPF-PGV

Rain pours from a gray November sky. Autumn wanes as winter approaches. Even with a prolonged warm spell, the leaves have finally turned colors and dropped free from the trees. Prairie plants have shed their seed and died back. Little blue-stem has turned a warm, coppery bronze. Beautiful!!!!

Well, now what do we do with ourselves when it seems that we may be confined more in than out-of-doors with the cold gray weather? Plenty, you say with the end of the year holiday crazy season upon us. But do you continue to get out and enjoy natural areas you care about? Do you take time out of the busyness to continue to participate with organizations that need your time, talent, and money? This organization knows you're generous people, but in this winter season when some of life's joys get pushed to the side, I encourage you to continue to participate in what you believe and enjoy.

In Champaign County we all need to participate in "big. small. all. Champaign county" (www.bigsmallall.cc), a process that will guide future decision making in the county, and your environmental voice needs to be heard. GPF-PGV also will have opportunities for you to participate in the stewardship of our natural areas in 2006 as well as volunteer to help with the spring plant sale and at other events.

I witnessed participation in action at the Rattlesnake Master Run for the Prairie earlier this month. Wow—lots of volunteer and lots of runners and walkers out on a blustery November day. Why? We wanted to raise money and awareness of GPF-PGV and our

(Continued on page 9)

RESEARCH CORNER: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR PRAIRIE RESEARCH

by Prairie Biotic Research, Inc.

We Are Prairie Biotic Research, Inc. is a Wisconsin nonprofit established in 2000 to foster biotic research in prairies. One of the ways we do this is through a Small Grants Program that funds grants up to \$1000 for the study of any grassland taxon in the USA. We are especially eager to support independent researchers (individuals lacking institutional support), but anyone may apply. Since 2002, we've awarded 22 grants worth over \$20,000 to researchers in nine states to study insects, plants, mammals, reptiles and spiders. Many of these grants supported graduate student research. In 2006, we expect to fund seven or more grants of up to \$1,000 each, including geographically restricted funds for research in southeastern Wisconsin and Iowa.

To Apply for a Grant: Contact Michael Anderson at Prairie Biotic Research, Inc., PO Box 5424, Madison, WI 53705, or by email at pbr-grants@tds.net for a 2006 Grant Application Form. Proposals must be received by January 13, 2006.

Our Supporters: We have received gifts in support of the 2006 Small Grants Program from: J. & S. Baylor; BioLogic Environmental Consulting, LLC; Bison Belly Futures; Russell J. Blattner Charitable Trust; C. Brabant; K. Christoffel; R.

Christoffel; R. & N. Dott; T. Felden; P. Kellogg; M. Leach; the Reva and David Logan Foundation; the Fred Maytag Family Foundation; T. Orwig; C. Gimse-Owen & R. Owen; the R. D. and Linda Peters Foundation; U. Petersen; G. & P. Shackelford; J. & R. Sime; the Arthur W. Strelow Charitable Trust; and G. Teschendorf.

To Become A Supporter: Please make a donation to support PBR and our Small Grants Program. Any amount is welcome. PBR is run entirely by volunteers and we maintain no offices so our overhead is very low. You may specify that your entire tax-deductible donation be given to researchers through our Small Grants Program. You may also specify: a geographical region in which the research is to be done; research in one of three taxa (plants, invertebrates or vertebrates); graduate student research; or our endowment fund to support our Small Grants Program.

Thank you, the Board and Scientific Advisors of Prairie Biotic Research, Inc.: Michael Anderson, Rebecca Christoffel, Douglas LeDoux, Eric Metzler, Ursula Petersen, Dennis Schlicht, Scott Swengel, David Voegtlin, Andrew Williams and Daniel Young. "We Foster Curiosity"

GPF-PGV UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter Membership Meeting

Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers annual Winter Membership Meeting. Please join us at the Anita Purves Nature Center (1505 N. Broadway, Urbana) on Friday **March 3 at 7pm** for food, fellowship, and an educational speaker (TBA). The meeting will start with a dessert potluck to be followed by organizational announcements, and then the featured speaker. Please bring your favorite desserts and goodies to share. Drinks and eating utensils will be provided.



Woods, Weeds, Water, Wildlife--Managing Your Natural Resources

Landowners and anyone else interested in managing and enhancing the natural resources of their property are encouraged to attend this half-day event. Sessions will be offered on subjects including managing your woodlot, urban tree care, rain gardens and backyard ponds, living with wildlife, invasive species management, and prairie establishment. (Saturday, March 11, 2006, at 4-H Memorial Camp, Monticello, IL (near Allerton Park); Time: 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Registration: \$10.00) Sponsored by Champaign and Piatt County Extension Units along with GPF-PGV, IDNR, INPC, and INHS. For more information, call Piatt County Extension at 762-2191 or Rick Larimore at 244-6716.



Prairie Grove Volunteers
and
Grand Prairie Friends
Activity Calendar



Grand
Prairie
Friends



Prairie Grove
Volunteers

WINTER 2005-2006

Winter/Early Spring burns 2005/2006: Burns may be scheduled in late October through early December and in March through mid-April for several sites. Burns are needed at these sites to discourage the competing non-native species and encourage growth of native plants. Wear natural-fiber, non-flammable clothing (long pants, longsleeves, boots, and gloves); no synthetic fabrics. Burn safety equipment will be provided. Bring drinking water and snacks. Contact Dan Busemeyer (244-2470) or Jamie Ellis (jamese@inhs.uiuc.edu, 244-5695) for more information.

Seed cleaning 2006: GPF-PGV will be cleaning seeds this winter for the 2006 plant sale. Contact Jamie Ellis (jamese@inhs.uiuc.edu, 244-5695), Paul Marcum (pmarcum@inhs.uiuc.edu, 333-8459) or Brenda Molano-Flores (molano@inhs.uiuc.edu, 265-8167) if you would like to volunteer.

Seed planting and transplanting 2006: GPF-PGV will be growing prairie plants in the greenhouse once again next year, and we need volunteers to assist in cleaning seeds, planting seeds in flats and then transplanting seedlings into pots. These volunteer worknights will take place in February, March, and April, so stay tuned. Contact Brenda Molano-Flores (molano@inhs.uiuc.edu, 265-8167) or Jamie Ellis (jamese@inhs.uiuc.edu, 244-5695) if you would like to volunteer.

Exact dates for seed cleaning/planting/transplanting and burning will be announced on the ecostewards listserv. You can sign up for the listserv on this website: <https://mail.prairienet.org/mailman/listinfo/ecostewards>.

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 Paul Heiberger (pheiberger@uiuc.edu) or Michael Avara (avara@uiuc.edu) for more information.

Saturday January 21: Ems Tract Brush Clearing. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center at 1:30 p.m. to car pool out to this site east of St. Joseph where we are developing a prairie nursery garden. Wear warm clothes and be ready to haul cut woody brush. Drinks and snacks provided. For more information, call Jamie Ellis 244-5695.

Reminder - Workday reminders and updates will be posted on the ecostewards 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.

- 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 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.
- 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!

STEWARD SPOTLIGHT: PAUL TESSENE

by Brenda Molano-Flores and Jean Mengelkoch

Paul grew up in Wisconsin and did his undergraduate work at Ripon College (Ripon, WI) where he got a bachelor degree with a major in biology and a minor in mathematics in 1979. After getting his bachelor degree in Wisconsin, he then moved to Minnesota where he got a M.S. degree in plant biology with a minor in plant ecology at the University of Minnesota in 1988. In 1990, Paul got a job at the Illinois Natural History Survey as a wetland botanist. As part of this position, Paul does wetland delineation/monitoring and research across the state of Illinois. Paul and his wife Peggy Waltershausen have two kids Patrick and Michael and they live in Urbana, IL.



Paul is very active in prairie conservation and restoration. For example, he is the steward of Pellville Cemetery Prairie (see Site Spotlight in this issue of the newsletter) and in 2004 he donated prairie and wetland plants from his yard that were relocated to the Point Pleasant Wetland Restoration, a project by the Champaign County Forest Preserve District that is trying to restore the hydrology and vegetation to the Point Pleasant Wetland at the Middle Fork River Forest Preserve.

(Continued from page 10)

to mature the acorns.

The white oaks are the sweetest, and the two that taste the best include post oak (*Quercus stellata*) and chestnut oak (*Q. prinus*). Other good white oaks include: bur oak (*Q. macrocarpa*), white oak (*Q. alba*), and swamp white oak (*Q. bicolor*). The red oaks are edible but are more bitter. Some examples are pin oak (*Q. palustris*), black oak (*Q. velutina*), and red oak (*Q. rubra*).

Collect ripe acorns when they have fallen to the ground, but watch out for wormholes. All acorns are bitter because they contain tannin. Happily, this

is readily soluble in water. Remove their shells and boil the whole kernels for 2 hours, changing the water every time it becomes tea-colored. Keep a large pot of water boiling and use this for replacements. When the water stays almost clear, the acorns are ready to roast in a 350 degree oven for 1 hour. They can be eaten plain or ground into flour. Toast the flour in the oven for ½ hr. – it will be very dark-colored with a sweet, nutlike flavor.

Now you're ready to make these delicious griddle cakes; even my husband loved them, and he's always skeptical about my "wild" recipes!

(Continued from page 7)

Pheasants Forever planted a grassland restoration using native grasses of non-local genotype adjacent to the high-quality prairie remnant at Pellville Cemetery Prairie. Since that time, all interested parties worked out an agreement to replace the existing grass planting with locally collected prairie grass seed. Mary Kay Solecki led the seed collection effort.

Finally, Paul Tessene (see Steward Spotlight in this issue of the newsletter) is the current steward for this site and he welcomes you to visit Pellville Cemetery Prairie during the spring, summer, and fall. Pellville Cemetery Prairie is located near the town of Rankin (see map). From Urbana, drive north on Hwy 45 to Hwy 9 in Paxton. Then turn right onto Hwy 9 and drive east to the county line between Champaign and Vermilion. From the county line, drive east for 0.4 miles to a gravel road on the right side of the road (You will see a the large grassland (wildlife planting) in the field on the right side of the gravel road.). Turn right and drive north about 0.2 miles up the gravel road. Please, when walking around the prairie pay attention to the headstones (and do not disturb them), they will provide additional historical information about the site since it is a pioneer cemetery.

STATEWIDE ROADSIDE PRAIRIE INVENTORY

by William C. Handel

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) requested an inventory of roadside prairie in 2001, which was then conducted during a three-year period from 2001 to 2003. During the survey, 30,000 miles was logged during the inventory and approximately 170 field days were spent on this project. The geographic information system (GIS) was utilized during the first phase of the study. Areas where roads and railroads run parallel often provide protection from destruction of native prairie. Using the information, maps were generated to locate potential areas in the state where prairie might still exist. Areas where roads ran parallel within 400 feet of an existing railroad were delineated on GIS maps. By using these GIS maps, searching for prairie remnants could be accomplished in a relatively quick and efficient manner. A follow-up map was created for each of the nine IDOT districts to be used to help preserve and manage existing roadside prairie and savannas.

During the field season, data were collected on roadside prairie and savanna. The evaluator(s), date, and county were recorded for each site. GPS readings for starting and ending points were taken at the sites. A quality rating of 1, 2, or 3 was assigned to the remnants, with number 1 being the highest quality and 3 being the poorest quality. Some remnants included two or more quality classes. The type of plant community or communities that were present was noted. Width, distance to edge of pavement, and length of each remnant were recorded. Evidence of management or signs indicating management of prairie vegetation was noted. The status of the railroad and presence of prairie habitat on the side away from the highway also were recorded. Threats to each remnant were recorded, including exotics, woody invasion, or man-made disturbances such as mowing, cultivation, or spraying. Finally, a species list was generated for each remnant. All roadside prairies were inventoried even if they were of extreme low quality. In my opinion, low quality prairie is of equal importance for the protection of the overall preservation of the remaining prairie ecosystem as some

of the high quality remnants that are currently under protection. Some of the reasons for this rationale are as follows:

1. They provide cover and dispersal corridors for prairie flora and fauna.
2. With the decrease in prairie habitat and the increased need for habitat reconstruction and restoration, remnants provide an invaluable source of seed of local ecotypes.
3. They provide refugia for species that have been eliminated from the nearby landscape and they sometimes link areas of higher quality prairies, allowing for the dispersal of species and genetic exchange from one remnant to another.
4. Because they are often linear in shape, they may cross several soil types and moisture gradients, creating a community of high floristic and faunistic diversity throughout a given landscape.
5. Practical benefits to highway departments include the potential for a reduction in the cost of roadside maintenance and increased erosion control when native vegetation communities are present.
6. Native prairie remnants that are managed correctly can also reduce the presence of exotic and noxious weeds along highway corridors.
7. Prairie remnants provide habitat for game species. Millions of dollars are spent each year on creating habitat for species such as Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) and Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*). Often this artificial habitat consists of one or two prairie grass species. These plantings may provide emergency cover from harsh winter weather, but they are inferior to the native remnants that provide not only cover, but also high concentrations of food from plant seeds and insects that exist in these natural remnants.
8. In areas of the state where habitat has disappeared because of development or intensive agriculture these remnants are often the only natural communities of any type that remain on a regional scale.

(Continued on page 7)

SITE SPOTLIGHT: PELLVILLE CEMETERY PRAIRIE

by Brenda Molano-Flores and Jean Mengelkoch

Pellville Cemetery Prairie is a small high quality prairie remnant (1 acre) located in Vermilion County (Latitude: 40.46111, Longitude: -87.92417) and is owned by the Butler Township Board. At this site you can find a wide range of prairie species including prairie dropseed, little bluestem, blue-eyed grass, bottle gentian, prairie phlox, purple prairie clover, rattlesnake master and sawtooth sunflower. This site was managed with periodic mowing until 1989 and now is managed with annual or biennial spring burning to suppress woody species encroachment and to encourage prairie species. Also, herbicide applications are conducted to control several invasive species such as day-lily, cemetery spurge, star-of-Bethlehem and lilac.

Did you know that Pellville Cemetery Prairie has been used as a research site? Several research projects have been conducted at Pellville Cemetery Prairie and resulted in scientific publications. For example, "Genetic Diversity and Competitive Abilities of *Dalea Purpurea* (*Fabaceae*) from Remnant and Restored Grasslands" by Danny J. Gustafson, David J. Gibson, and Daniel L. Nickrent (*International Journal of Plant Sciences* 163[6]: 979-990. 2002.). In this project, *Dalea purpurea* seeds were collected at Pellville Cemetery Prairie and were used as part of a population genetics study to determine genetic diversity of this species in native and restored prai-

ries in Illinois.

Did you know that seeds from Pellville Cemetery Prairie have been used for habitat restoration projects? In 2002 several pounds of seeds from prairie grasses (0.6 lbs.) and forbs (6.89 lbs) from Pellville Cemetery Prairie were collected to assist in the restoration of



the Barnhart Prairie Restoration (Champaign County). Brett Barnhart planted the seeds collected in 2002 and 53.6 lbs of grass and forb seed collected in 2001 from other sites in Central Illinois at the Barnhart Prairie Restoration in November 2002. Thus approximately 17 acres of former cropland was planted with prairie seed.

Did you know that during the mid 1990's Pellville Cemetery Prairie was the center of a short-lived habitat restoration controversy? From the Minutes of the 145th Meeting of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission that was held at Goose Lake Prairie State Park October 25, 1994, we found out that IDOC and

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 6)

Searching for prairie remnants throughout Illinois was one of the most rewarding experiences I've had during my 14

years at the Illinois Natural History Survey. So after three years and more than 170 field days working on this project, it is my hope that the existing roadside

prairie and savannas within the nine IDOT districts will have a better chance of being preserved and managed.

GRAND PRAIRIE FRIENDS – PRAIRIE GROVE VOLUNTEER HAPPENINGS

by GPF-PGV Board



Our speaker, Bill Handel.

GPF-PGV Fall Membership Meeting

Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers annual Fall membership meeting was held at the Anita Purves Nature Center (1505 N. Broadway, Urbana) on Friday September 9 at 7pm. During this meeting we elected four GPF-PGV new board members (see article: *Meet our new GPF-PGV Board members*) and William Handel, botanist from the Illinois Natural History Survey, gave a talk entitled *Status of Illinois Roadside Prairie: Can They Be Saved?* a three-year survey of roadside prairie across the state of Illinois. For more information about this project see article *Statewide Roadside Prairie Inventory* in this issue of the newsletter. The GPF-PGV would like to thank all the people (about 40) that attended this event.



GPF-PGV members enjoying the desserts and conversation.



GPF-PGV President Jamie Ellis welcoming everybody to the Fall meeting.



GPF-PGV members enjoying the desserts and conversation.

Rattlesnake Master Run

The run was a success! GPF-PGV hosted the **Rattlesnake Master Run for the Prairie**, Sunday, November 6th. Thanks to all the volunteers and participants for making this event a success. In the next issue of the newsletter we will have an article about the race and photos. Results and photos have been posted on GPF-PGV web page.



GPF-PGV Quilt

Just a reminder that the GPF-PGV quilt is still on display at the Urbana Free Library. Get over and see it if you haven't yet. For more information about the quilt go to <http://www.prairienet.org/gpf/quilt.html>



TRAINING WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITY

THE VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP NETWORK PRESENTS: HERBICIDE TRAINING & TESTING WORKSHOP 2006

Saturday, January 28, 2006, 8:15 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Organized by The Nature Conservancy
and Co-sponsored by the Brookfield Zoo

Interested in becoming certified and licensed to use herbicides on public lands? All volunteers are invited to attend this annual one-day weekend clinic that includes General Standards training (for Operator's license) in the morning and (Operator's and Applicator's license) testing in the afternoon. Please pass the word on to any volunteer who might be interested.

- To be certified as an **Operator** (a person who uses herbicides and who is "sponsored" by a licensed Applicator), volunteers must pass the *General Standards* test.
- To be certified as an **Applicator** (the person in an organization who has responsibility for all Operators licensed under him/her with regard to the use of herbicides), volunteers must pass both the *General Standards* test and *one or more Category exam*. Those category exams most appropriate to VSN work are listed here; choose the one you think is the most applicable to the herbicide application you will be doing:

Right-of-way pest control: chemical weed control on noncrop sites such as parking lots, along roads, in access rights-of-way, and in fence lines. (*This is the license that most volunteers acquire.*)

Aquatic pest control: herbicide use for weed control in standing or running water.

Please bring a photo ID and calculator for the testing session. The clinic is scheduled for Saturday, January 28, 2006, 8:15 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. The training will run from 8:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (lunch on your own); the testing will run from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. The workshop is located at the Brookfield Zoo in the Discovery Center.

Please register with Karen Tharp, VSN Coordinator, by phone at 866-VSN-LINE (876-5463) or email at ktharp@tnc.org by Friday, January 13, 2006. When registering, please relay the following information: your name and address, phone number, your landowner/sponsoring agency and/or volunteer site, your volunteer title (i.e. Steward, Co-Steward, volunteer, etc.), what test(s) you are taking (if just operator, who is your sponsoring applicator), and if you are planning on attending the morning training session or just the test in the afternoon.

NOTE: the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) will only offer weekend training and testing *if we have at least 50 attendees at this workshop!* So please avail yourself of this excellent opportunity and spread the word to other volunteers! Please note that this workshop is offered for *volunteers of the VSN*; this year it may be possible to open the workshop to agency staff, although volunteers will have first priority.

We recommend that you purchase and review the training materials before the workshop. Study materials are available by phone, fax, or mail order. Call 1-800-644-2123 for phone orders. Fax your order to 217-244-3469. To order by mail, write to the University of Illinois, PAT Program, 1201 S. Dornier Dr., Urbana, IL. 61801. Specify when ordering which study materials you would like (i.e., for the General Standards exam and/or for one of the Category tests). Allow 1-2 weeks for delivery.

(Continued from page 2)

prairie conservation efforts. Thanks to Lynne Scott and Derek Liebert for organizing this event, thanks to all of our volunteers for making it happen, and thanks to Dave Monk for the vision and dedication to get this event started.

Again, I encourage you to participate in the

best way you know how, with money, time, or talent. Take the time do what you enjoy and contribute where you can. Winter does make way for spring, and you can help make the landscape green both figuratively and literally. Ah, there's the sun breaking through the clouds now.

THE PRAIRIE CHEF

by Betsy Kuchinke

Beware little squirrels! We're coming – we'll be collecting acorns with you for our griddle cakes, cookies, bread, and muffins. Don't worry though – we'll leave plenty for you.

To primitive man in Europe, Asia, and America,

acorns were often the "staff of life". However, today they're neglected and in fact a nuisance in most of our yards. So it's time to improve their reputation!

People who use acorns agree they resemble other



nuts in oiliness and flavor. They contain significant quantities of calcium, magnesium, potassium, fat, and protein. Many species of wildlife depend on them: quail devour small acorns, as do deer, elk, and black bears.

Oaks can be divided into two groups: (1) white oaks, which have leaves without bristly terminal points, smooth linings on the insides of the nutshells, and produce edible acorns in a single year; and (2) red oaks, which have bristles at the tips and lobes of the leaves, hairy linings on the insides of the shells, and require 2 years

(Continued on page 5)

Acorn Griddle Cakes

- 1 c. acorn flour
- 1 c. white flour
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 – 3 T. sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 ¼ c. – 2 ¼ c. milk
- 3 T. canola oil



Sift dry ingredients together. Beat the eggs, and then beat in the milk and oil. (Use the larger amount of milk for thinner cakes.) Add this to the dry ingred. and stir just enough to moisten everything. Spoon the batter onto a hot griddle & spread thin. Brown both sides & serve with maple syrup or wild fruit jellies.

A Prairie Rendezvous

PO Box 36
Urbana, IL 61803-0036



Grand
Prairie
Friends



Prairie Grove
Volunteers

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
Paid
Urbana, IL
Permit No. 168

In this issue...

- ✧ *New Board Members*
- ✧ *Steward Spotlight*
- ✧ *Site Spotlight*
- ✧ *Prairie Inventory*

... and more