
A Prairie Rendezvous



Grand
Prairie
Friends



Prairie Grove
Volunteers

FALL VOL 9, NO. 1, 2007
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THANKS TO THE SUMMER INTERNS

by *Christina Huck, Jason Bern, Tiffany Bone, and Jamie Ellis*

The GPF-PGV summer internship program has been going strong for over 10 years. For the summer of 2006, we hired three very enthusiastic and capable interns—Christina Huck, Jason Berner, and Tiffany Bone. Together they put in more than 520 hours of stewardship at 16 sites. They pulled weeds, cut brush, and sprayed herbicide. Along the way they learned a thing or two. Let's here how they spent the summer...

Christina Huck

I am so grateful for having had the opportunity to work with GPF-PGV. To everyone who taught me the names of native plants and to notice the visible history of the land, thank you. I'll try not to forget. The other interns and I had many chances to learn plants, stewardship techniques, etc., but we spent most of our time working. We pulled wild parsnip and sweet clover at Buffalo Trace and Prospect Cemetery for what seemed like weeks. We also spent time spraying herbicide on mulberry and other woody species at Prospect. We pulled garlic mustard at Jasmine Hollow and donated a bit of blood to the mosquitoes there. We sprayed multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle, and autumn olive in the fields and woods at Horseshoe Bottoms. We made some discoveries, too: a nest of baby redwing blackbirds, thickets full of ripe blackberries. Even the most experienced herbicide applicators sometimes have mishaps. Prairie cicadas never ceased to startle me with their sudden racket and alarming size. At Paxton Railroad Prairie and at Shortline Prairie we weeded and collected seeds. Seed collecting was my favorite job, because it allowed the most peaceful prairie walks. For a few weeks I did some work alone, which was unforgettable. Particularly vivid are

memories of pulling parsnip at Loda, Wells, and Pelleville Cemetery Prairies. At Wells my thighs were perforated by a thick understory of brambles, but I drove home grinning at the end of the day because I was so pleased with myself for clearing the site of parsnip. I'm proud of the work Jason, Tiffany and I did, but I wish we could have accomplished more. How frustrating to find the dried seed-heads of weeds in areas we didn't have time to work on,



poised to replace themselves innumerable next spring! I like to think about folks like Phil Hult waging a quiet war against armies of giant wild parsnip stalks, and Jim Payne stalking methodically back and forth, combing his woods for garlic mustard. I know in five years you'll still be out there because the parsnip and garlic mustard won't be gone; ten years might not even be long enough to win that fight. That's what has impressed me so much, and what I'll always remember: faith in the ability of land-

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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 P.O. 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 the GPF -PGV P.O. Box (above).

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: 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

☞ **Spring Issue 07** (Mar., Apr., May): **Feb. 1**

☞ **Summer Issue 07** (June, July, Aug.): **May 1**

☞ **Fall Issue 07** (Sept., Oct., Nov.): **Aug. 1**

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Jamie Ellis, President GPF-PGV

Autumn slips slowly into winter as I write this piece. On second thought, autumn has bumped, screeched, and skidded into winter with our alternating warm then cold then wet weather. I hope you've had a chance to get out into a prairie or forest natural area this fall to enjoy the beautiful sunny days and at least appreciate the cold, gray, wet ones.

I've managed to get out and collect some prairie plant seeds from some railroad prairie remnants as well as assist with a prescribed burn at Sibley Grove. My supervision of the summer internship is over, and I was very pleased with the enthusiasm and hard work of our three summer interns. The weather and turnout was great for the Rattlesnake Master Run. Three cheers for volunteers and participants. I'm already thinking of the spring plant sale, but I hope to get out on some more burns this winter and spring.

Soon we'll be asking you once again for your commitment to this organization. You show that by your membership donation and your presence at volunteer events. Natural areas in east-central Illinois need our continued management to maintain the biodiversity we deem important. I have made my commitment to GPF-PGV for 2007. I hope you will, too.

FRANKLIN'S GROUND SQUIRREL

by Jean M. Mengelkoch and Paul B. Marcum

Franklin's ground squirrel (*Spermophilus franklinii*) has a mottled gray-brown back, grayish head and tail, and yellowish belly. They are also referred to as gray gopher or whistle pig because of their vocalizations. They can be distinguished from the only other ground squirrel in Illinois, the thirteen-lined ground squirrel (*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus*), by the Franklin's larger size and lack of stripes. It superficially resembles the eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), but Franklin's ground squirrel has smaller ears, a tail that is both shorter and less bushy, and has more of a salt and pepper coloring.

Franklin's ground squirrel is historically a mammal of mid-grass and tallgrass prairies. In present-day Illinois it can also be found in railroad rights-of-way, un-mowed roadsides, prairie-woodland edges, fencerows, un-mowed old fields, and cemetery prairies. Essentially, these small mammals use areas with tall, dense vegetation consisting of a mixture of forbs, grasses, shrubs, and trees. They do not inhabit mowed areas, such as golf courses and mowed roadsides, like the thirteen-lined ground squirrel.

The range of the Franklin's ground

squirrel extends from northwestern Indiana, northern and central Illinois, and southern Wisconsin west to northern Kansas, Nebraska, North and South Dakota in the United States and Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta in Canada. Their numbers are declining throughout much of their range in the United States. They are state-threatened in Illinois. Locally, they have been found at Barnhart Prairie Nature Preserve (<http://barnhart.naturepreserves.org/prairie/>) and along a couple of railroad rights-of-way in Champaign County. Much of the decline of this species is attributed to loss of habitat from agricultural and urban development. In addition, as with other ground squirrels they have been persecuted as agricultural pests. Ironically, there is little evidence that they will eat row crops.

Franklin's ground squirrel is an omnivore – it eats both vegetable and animal matter. It consumes seeds, fruit, and various parts of green plants. In addition, they will eat invertebrates, bird eggs, small birds, and small



Photo from INHS Report, Summer 2002, *What Happened to the Franklin's Ground Squirrel?*, by Jason Martin

mammals.

The squirrel is diurnal and is most active on clear, bright days. They spend most of their time in their burrows; it has been estimated that they spend less than 10% of their life outside their burrows. They build extensive, deep burrows and leave only a small mound of dirt at the 3-inch wide burrow entrances. A yearlong inhabitant of burrows, Franklin's ground squirrel is limited by suitable burrow habitat. The burrows must be in well-drained soil deep enough to remain cool in summer and not freeze in winter. Thus, burrows are often located in embankments to facilitate drainage.

Adult Franklin's ground squirrels hibernate extensively and are only aboveground from mid-April to August; juveniles do not enter hibernation until September to November. They mate in the spring and have 6-8 young on average. The young are weaned at about 40 days old. After weaning, they remain with their parents for another few weeks before dispersing to find their own territories.

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ited them and realized that each prairie is unique in some way. Overall, the internship enabled me to learn about the dynamics and rules that govern the tallgrass prairie, forest, and wetland areas of East-Central Illinois. I also gained a broader understanding of what is involved in the proper management and care of these areas. I truly enjoyed working with all of the stewards who offered a wealth of information, enthusiasm, and hope for the lands they manage.

More Thanks

A word of thanks also goes to many individuals who gave time to spend with the interns teaching them plants, management techniques, or some natural history of our landscape. Those who helped include Paul Marcum, Rick Larimore, Paul Tessene, Nate Beccue, Jim Payne, Bill Handel, Phil Hult, and others who we may have forgotten. Keep up the good work.

Yes, we'll be offering the summer internship once again in 2007. Watch for details in the next newsletter and on our website.



The Steward's Luncheon is set for Saturday
February 17, 2007, at Urbana's Crystal Lake Park
lakehouse, (tentative)

Prairie Grove Volunteers
and
Grand Prairie Friends



Activity Calendar



Grand
Prairie
Friends



Prairie Grove
Volunteers

WINTER 2006-2007

Volunteer Stewardship Activities

Winter/Early Spring burns 2006/2007: Burns may be scheduled in early 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 **Paul Marcum** (pmarcum@inhs.uiuc.edu, 333-8459) or **Jamie Ellis** (jamese@inhs.uiuc.edu, 244-5695) for more information.

Seed planting, transplanting, and cleaning 2007: 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>.

Volunteer Stewardship Website: For additional stewardship opportunities, please see the Urbana Park District web site, <http://www.urbanaparks.org/>. Click on *parks* then *natural areas*.

- 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!



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 9, 2007 at 7 p.m. 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.

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scapes to recover; belief that even the smallest, tamest wild places are worth saving; patience and strength to work at the same problem for seasons, for years. I hope you'll always have plenty of help.

Jason Berner

Hello GPF-PGV folks! I'm glad to talk a little bit about the work I did as an intern this past summer '06. To tell you the truth, we did a lot of cool things, and it seems like a distant memory with all this darn school work. Things started off with a lot of garlic mustard pulling at Jasmine Hollow and



near Kickapoo State Park. At the beginning of the summer Tiffany and I were able to help out with plant installation at the St. Joe wetland. It was a lot of fun to see a site change by planting so many different kinds of wetland plants. Jamie also gave us a lesson or two with helping out with native plants at the greenhouse. We soon moved onto wild parsnip and sweet clover control. A lot of our parsnip time was spent at Buffalo Trace. Phil showed us how to kick some parsnip butt. We collected a lot of seed from Shortline Prairie on cool summer afternoons after working hard at Loda or Prospect.

Christina refreshed us on how to drive stick, and the GPF-PGV truck is one sweet ride in the summer. We definitely made a lot of progress at Prospect and Loda prairies. Prospect was a lot of work, removing mainly sweet clover and wild parsnip. We also managed some woodlands, including Horseshoe Bottom and Allerton Park. We took out multiflora rose and Japanese honeysuckle. We also helped collect a lot of

seeds towards the end of the summer. Throughout the summer I took about 100 pictures of different places we worked at and visited. If you're interested in looking at any of the pictures check out this website (download any that you'd like): <http://new.photos.yahoo.com/jaylogger/albums>. We were fortunate enough to see some very large prairie restorations including Nachusa Grasslands and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Jamie was kind enough to teach us a lot of native plant identification skills and we learned through many others about prairie grasses and site management history of many GPF-PGV sites.

Thanks for letting me get more hands-on experience with managing natural areas in east central Illinois.

Tiffany Bone

Working as an intern with Grand Prairie Friends–Prairie Grove Volunteers over summer 2006 was a great opportunity. I was able to work in the tallgrass prairies, forests, wetlands, and park areas in east-central Illinois, and I learned to recognize each of these systems while observing how each operates. I was also able to observe problems faced by these systems, understand what effects these problems have, and learn the best management techniques used to deal with these problems.

A lot of the time was spent working with several knowledgeable individuals, including the stewards of the sites and other volunteers. They taught us how to identify prairie, forest, and wetland plants and provided advice and guidance about the types of management required to maintain healthy systems. Learning the names of the native and non-native plants was essential for this job. It was required for the control and eradication of invasive species, as well as for the conservation of native species. The majority of our time was spent controlling invasive species, but we also worked in the greenhouse transplanting native prairie plants, collecting seed from the field, and taking several field trips to familiarize ourselves with different prairies.

The internship provided a valuable learning experience. Never before had I had the chance to visit the prairie remnants in this area and I was very happy to have this opportunity. I gained a greater appreciation for the diversity of these areas as I vis-

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RUN FOR THE PRAIRIE - 2006 RATTLESNAKE MASTER RUN

by Derek Liebert

The 2006 Rattlesnake Master "Run for the Prairie" enjoyed the participation of 105 individuals: 51 5K runners, 33 10K runners, and 21 walkers. Thanks to these participants and our sponsors, the race is expected to gross approximately \$1,150.

The race would not have been a success without the help of over 35 volunteers. Key among these were Lynne Scott and Derek Liebert who acted as co-race coordinators and assisted with so much of the early race organization, Jesse Kurylo who was the race announcer and registration coordinator along with Mike Avara of Red Bison, Brenda Molano-Flores who was the course set-up coordinator, Connie Carroll-Cunningham who provided the initial course layout and was the food and beverage coordinator, and Betsy Kuchinke

who was the awards coordinator. Other volunteers included Molly McNicoll and Stacey James who along with 20 parkland students provided on course direction, Grant Cunningham, Dan Olson, and Kevin Saylor who assisted Jed and son from Body n Sole with timing and tending the fire circle, the Red Bison team of Mike Polito, Lara Bredberg, Justin Meiseen, James Kraus, and Eric Johnson who assisted Jesse and Adam with registration, Kannan Puthuval of the IMC Bike Project who provided the 10K pace bike lead, Lori Kae Schwab who provided general race assistance, Mindy Ellis who provided the t-shirt design, and Tom Rice who provided the registration flyer



layout. Many, many thanks to all who helped out!

The race also benefited from the support of **20 sponsors:** Body n Sole, Campus Sportswear, Macks Recycling, Mike

and Molly's, Jupiters, HDC Engineering, Rick Orr, Esquire, Red Bison, Strawberry Fields, Dandelion, Kinkos, Curtis Orchards, Aroma, WildCountry, Great Harvest, Midwest Potty House, Premium Brands, Road ID, and Cliff Bar. HDC, Aroma, and Great Harvest, were new sponsors, and Premium Brands returned after a one-year hiatus.

Photos and race results will be posted on the GPF-PGV web page.

Thank you !!!! Thank you !!!! Thank you !!!!

GPF-PGV SITE UPDATE: EMS TRACT UPDATE

by Jim Hoyt and Jamie Ellis

We are at a turning point in our ecological and cultural history. You are by now very well aware of the loss of genetic diversity of our native plants. You have been deluged by terrible news of how we are losing our ecological remnants and their dwindling plant populations.

We still have a chance to collect the seeds and develop native plant nurseries which will nurture future prairie restoration and prairie plantings. We are learning to preserve and restore the insect pollinators to our restorations. As they grow our preserves are attracting grassland nesting birds.

My hope is that you will help support Grand Prairie Friends-Prairie Grove Volunteers in its efforts to create a nursery of prairie plants at a tract of land donated to GPF-PGV by Ms. Frieda Ems Tract. This 1.7 acre parcel of land was given to our

group in 2000. It is an old field that sits along I-74 and CR 2500E between St. Joseph and Ogden.

Our progress of converting this piece of land into a prairie nursery garden has been slow. Some weedy trees have been cut down, stumps sprayed with herbicide, and brush piles made. We still need to burn the brush piles, brush mow the site, spray herbicide to kill back the brome and fescue, and till some ground in preparation for seeds or seedlings. We thank all of the volunteers who have helped in this effort and those who donated money to dedicate this prairie nursery to Mary Hruska.

We still need your help. If you live in the St. Joseph or Ogden area or you just have a desire to see this project happen, please contact **Jim Payne** (344-7840) or **Jamie Ellis** (244-5695) to see how you can help.

OUR MISSION, OUR DREAM

by Daniel J. Olson

When Martin Luther King announced, “I have a dream...” he was poetically referring to a nation-wide mission statement. But how far would his philanthropy have carried if he announced, “I have a mission statement...”? No matter what you call them, mission statements are a crucial part of any organization’s uniqueness and purpose. With your help, we hope to formally adopt a mission for GPF-PGV that will let the world know who we are. The GPF-PGV board has been hard at work revisiting our by-laws, our purpose, and other mission examples, in order to bring you three mission statements for your consideration (listed below). Our ultimate goal is to have three mission statements at the Spring Membership Meeting *for you to vote on*. Your attendance at that meeting is crucial to the future of GPF-PGV!! If you have any comments on the three proposed statements, please send them to dolson@ccfpd.org. Until then, take some time to consider the following characteristics and reflect on the proposed mission statements.

Characteristics of a Mission Statement:

- ☞ Answers the questions: Who are we? Who do we serve? What do we offer? How do we serve?
- ☞ Brief, memorable and inspiring.
- ☞ Reflects the organizations values and purpose.
- ☞ Gives a sense of timelessness.
- ☞ Serves as a decision making template for the organization.
- ☞ Must be understood by those that are unfamiliar with the organization’s purpose.

Proposed Mission Statements for GPF-PGV (subject to further refinement)

Grand Prairie Friends – Prairie Grove Volunteers...

- ☞ Preserves and restores native lands and waters in east-central Illinois and fosters a healthy sense of community among nature and people.
- ☞ Preserves and restores native lands and waters in east-central Illinois and promotes an understanding and appreciation of the value of our resources.
- ☞ Preserves native plants, animals, and natural communities in east-central Illinois by conserving the lands and waters they need to thrive.

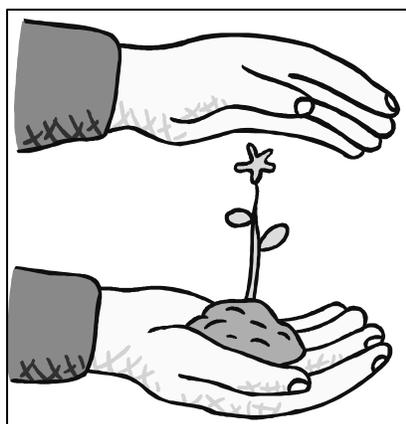
CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR 2007 NATIVE PLANT SALE

by Jamie Ellis

Now’s the time to mark your calendar for next spring’s native plant sale—May 12, 2007. Wild bergamot, purple coneflower, orange butterflyweed, little bluestem, and many other of your favorite

prairie wildflowers as well as a selection of woodland wildflowers will be available. We are tentatively set to hold the sale inside Lincoln Square Village as we have done in years past.

we’ll need to pot them, and we’ll meet each Monday evening in April through the beginning of May. Here’s the schedule: April 9, 16, 23, 30, and May 7. Set-up for the sale needs to be Friday evening May 11 with the sale on May 12. Not only will we need



Volunteers Needed

Before we can actually sell the plants, we need to grow them. We need volunteers to help plant and transplant seeds and seedlings. The first planting date will be Monday February 27, 2007 starting at 6:30 p.m. at the NRB and Pennsylvania in Champaign. Once the plants are growing,

we’ll also need volunteers to help with publicity, make and stick pot labels, transport plants, set-up for the sale, volunteer the day of the sale, and help clean-up afterwards. Please call Jamie Ellis (217-244-5695) or gpf@prairienet.org if you can help.

FIRST MASTER NATURALIST CLASS GRADUATES

by Daniel J. Olson

Congratulations are in order for 40 Master Naturalist interns that have completed their seventy hours initial training for the East Central Illinois Master Naturalist Program. This rigorous two month program combined classroom and outdoor education on a variety of natural resource related topics including botany, geology, archaeology, ornithology and much more. Armed with an understanding and an appreciation of Illinois natural resources, these Master Naturalist interns are now ready to complete 40 hours of natural resource volunteer work in order to become Certified Master Naturalists. This means that the

next time you are assisting in local natural areas management; giving demonstrations or interpretive tours for adults and children; assisting professionals with natural areas inventories; writing newsletter articles or collecting native plant seeds, you may be standing next to a Master Naturalist. So, in typical graduation ceremony tradition, we must say that it is time to spread your wings, leave the nest, plant the seeds of tomorrow, grow with each learning experience, and foster a greater understanding of the world around you. Congratulations!!

The East Central Illinois Master Naturalist Program is spon-

sored by the Champaign County Extension Office, the Champaign County Forest Preserve District, and the Urbana Park District.



To learn more about the Program and upcoming classes, please visit <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/champaign/mn/index.html>

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