

# A Prairie Rendezvous

A joint publication of:



Prairie  
Grove  
Volunteers



Grand  
Prairie  
Friends  
of Illinois

Fall 1999

## Fifth Central Illinois Prairie Conference

September 18 - 19, 1999  
Parkland College  
Champaign, IL

INTERPRETING  
THE PRAIRIE  
EXPERIENCE

LIVING AND  
WORKING IN THE  
PRAIRIE

RESHAPING  
COMMUNITY  
ATTITUDES

RESTORATIVE  
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PRAIRIE ECOLOGY  
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PRAIRIE

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Sponsored by Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois, Parkland College, Champaign County Forest Preserve District with additional support from Conservation 2000 and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources

## Fifth Central Illinois Prairie Conference

**D**on't miss the upcoming Prairie Conference which will be held at Parkland College on September 18-19, 1999. This year's conference offers a broad range of talks, hands-on workshops, and field trips. Sign up now. Online at [www.prairienet.org/gpf](http://www.prairienet.org/gpf) or with the attached form.

The conference is organized around the theme: "People and Prairies: Caring for Where We Live." Previous conferences emphasized preservation and restoration of the Illinois Tallgrass Prairie. Since salvation of prairie remnants and creation of prairie habitats require heavy human involvement, this conference will consider how the experiences of prairie have impacted people and the benefits to be gained from understanding the prairie as a shared landscape. Conference activities include five workshops, five field trips, a planetarium show, and approximately two dozen presentations organized in several sessions.

A Prairie Rendezvous  
PO Box 36 • Urbana, IL 61803-0036  
[www.prairienet.org/gpf](http://www.prairienet.org/gpf)

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

A Prairie Rendezvous is published approximately on a bimonthly basis. Article submissions should be sent electronically to the editor at [d-chien@uiuc.edu](mailto:d-chien@uiuc.edu)

GPF is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to prairie preservation, restoration, and education in east central Illinois. Inquiries and tax-deductible donations should be sent to: Grand Prairie Friends, PO Box 36, Urbana, IL 61801.

The PGV is part of The Nature Conservancy's Volunteer Stewardship Network. Its stewards help coordinate volunteer workdays at native prairie, savanna, wetland, and woodland remnants. Inquiries and tax-deductible donations should be sent to: Prairie Grove Volunteers c/o The Nature Conservancy, 301 S.W. Adams St. #1007, Peoria, IL 61602.

We are very pleased to announce that Jack White, a local prairie ecologist and historian who was instrumental in the 1978 Illinois Natural Areas Inventory, will be speaking on "People and the Illinois Prairie: From Prehistory to the Future," plus the new chair of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, Guy Fraker, will present "Conservation in Illinois and the Role of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission" at the Saturday evening banquet beside the Parkland prairie.

This year's conference also offers local members of The Nature Conservancy/Prairie Grove Volunteers the opportunity to learn first hand about some of the initiatives underway in other parts of the state. One of the most exciting is the Mackinaw River Project. Bill Davison will speak about this predominantly farming community and private land based conservation effort and how it has changed attitudes.

From Chicago, Sarah Fretzin, the new Director of the Chicago Wilderness Mighty Acorns Expansion Program, will speak about this innovative youth stewardship education program. This program is in the second year of a major expansion and is reaching children across northeastern Illinois.



For the most up to date conference schedule or more information check out the GPF web site at [www.prairienet.org/gpf](http://www.prairienet.org/gpf) or call Kristina Hubert at (217) 896-2455 or [nature@net66.com](mailto:nature@net66.com).



# Conference Schedule Of Events

Parkland College  
2400 West Bradley Avenue  
Champaign, IL

Saturday and Sunday, September 18 - 19, 1999

Saturday: Presentations, Exhibits, Workshops, and Banquet

Sunday: Field Trips to Prairie Sites

## Saturday, September 18, 1999

### REGISTRATION, WELCOME, & PRESENTATION

7:30 am Registration

8:45 Welcome & Announcements

9:00 Keynote Presentation: Jack White, Prairie Ecologist and Historian "People and the Illinois Prairie: From Prehistory to the Future"

10:00 - 3:45 Concurrent Sessions

### PRAIRIE BIOLOGY AND ECOLOGY

10:00 What is Quality Prairie? - Bill McClain, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

10:45 Influence of Large Herbivores on Diversity of the Tallgrass Prairie - Roger Anderson, Illinois State University

11:30 Birds of the Savanna - Jeff Brawn, Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS)

12:15 Lunch

1:30 Soil Microarthropods - John Peters, McHenry County Conservation District

2:15 Mycorrhizae And Actinorrhizae - Jeffery Dawson, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

3:00 The Importance of Plant Breeding Systems in Prairie Restorations - Brenda Molano-Flores, INHS

### LIVING AND WORKING IN THE PRAIRIE

10:00 Prairies of Illinois and the Midwest: A Primer - Ken Schaal, Big Bluestem Nursery

10:45 Conservation Opportunities for Illinois Landowners - Mary Kay Solecki, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

11:30 Non-DNR Conservation Opportunities for Illinois Landowners - Mark Cender, Natural Resources Conservation Service

12:15 Lunch

1:30 Aldo Leopold's "The Farmer as a Conservationist" - Curt Meine, International Crane Foundation

2:15 Prairies, Birds, and Golf Courses - David Ward, Olympia Fields Country Club

3:00 Using Native Plants in the Landscape - Sandy Mason, Illinois Cooperative Extension

### RESTORING AND CREATING PRAIRIES

10:00 When to Do Little: Old and New Techniques in Community Restoration - Bill Handel, INHS

10:45 Site Selection, Seed Bed Preparation, and Planting Dates - John Wilker, IDNR

11:30 Species to Use, Planting Methods, and Seed Rates - Dennis Lubbs, Genesis Nursery

12:15 Lunch

1:30 Weed Control and Prescribed Burning - Bob Szafoni, IDNR

2:15 How to Burn Safely - Bill Glass, IDNR

3:00 Problems and New Innovations in Natural Areas Management - Randy Heidorn, IDNR

### RESHAPING COMMUNITY ATTITUDES ABOUT PRAIRIES

10:00 Impossible Prairies of Illinois - Fran Harty, IDNR

10:45 Conservation Education Resources for the Public -

11:30 Conservation Education Resources for Educators - Robbie Berg, Earth Partners

12:15 Lunch

1:30 Prairie Crossing: Making Prairies a Part of a Community - Victoria Ranney, Prairie Crossing

2:15 How Does the Mackinaw River Project Reshape Community Attitudes? - Bill Davison, The Nature Conservancy

3:00 Mighty Acorns Children's Stewardship Program - Sarah Fretzin, The Nature Conservancy

**RESTORATIVE ENVIRONMENTS**

- 10:00 The Value of Nature in Communities - Bill Stewart, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
 10:45 The Benefits of Volunteering - Irene Miles  
 Managing Volunteers at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie - Portia Blume, U.S. Forest Service  
 11:30 Labors of Love: The Doris Westfall Nature Preserve - Doris Westfall and Lynn Fosbender  
 12:15 Lunch  
 1:30 PrairieWatch - Justin Fuller, Illinois RiverWatch  
 2:15 The Nature Conservancy - Kim Bauer, Prairie Grove Volunteers  
 Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois - Ruth Green, Grand Prairie Friends  
 3:00 Chicago Wilderness - Laura Riley, Brookfield Zoo  
 Seed Production at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie - Erick Ulaszek and Portia Blume, U.S. Forest Service

**INTERPRETING THE PRAIRIE EXPERIENCE**

- 10:00 Prairie Plants Close-up - Ken Robertson, INHS  
 10:45 Gardens of the Region - Terrence Harkness, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign  
 11:30 Natural Dyes from Native Plants - Barbara Anderson  
 12:15 Lunch  
 1:30 The Prairie as Recorded in Pioneer Diaries - Bruce Hannon and Sharon Dorsey  
 2:15 Native American Perspectives -  
 3:00 Prairie Tales - Patricia Powell

3:45 Break

**4:00 Workshops and Special Activities**

- Prairie Skies Program - Parkland Planetarium
- Developing and Maintaining a Successful Volunteer Program - Lelvern Hoff, West Chicago Prairie Stewardship Group
- Hands-on Kid's Stuff for Parents and Teachers - Kristina Hubert, Champaign County Forest Preserve District
- Grass Identification - David Ketzner, INHS
- Prairie Resources on the Internet - Roger Kirkwood, Champaign Co. Forest Preserve District, Heidi Leuszler, Parkland College
- Prairie Restoration: Successes and Disappointments - A Round Table Discussion with Terry Moyer, Don Gardner, and Bob Szafoni. Hosted by Bill Handel, INHS

5:00 Grand Prairie Friends Business Meeting and Elections - see page 7 for more details

5:00 Social

6:00 Banquet

Banquet Presentation: Guy Fraker, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission "Conservation in Illinois and the Role of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission"

**Sunday, September 19, 1999****FIELD TRIPS\***

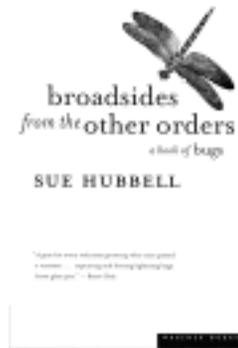
- 7:45 am Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Ruth Green  
 8:45 am Local Grand Prairie Friends and Nature Conservancy Sites. Connie Carroll  
 Middle Fork and other Champaign County Forest Preserve District Sites. Roger Kirkwood  
 Coneflower Hill Prairie and Guzy Tract. Bob Szafoni and Eric Smith  
 Schoolyard prairie gardens. Mike Wallace and Jason Sheperis  
 Wetland & Wildlife Habitat Restorations: Kobberlein, Barnhart, & Heinz and Robbie Berg

\*Assemble for field trips in the parking lot at Parkland College at the times indicated: 7:45 or 8:45 am.

## Writing the Land - Part 2

by Eric T. Freyfogle

The Missouri Ozarks provide the home base for **Sue Hubbell**, whose particular passion is insects—especially bees—and whose delightful writing mixes nature observation with provocative reflections on the human predicament. Her first book is now a classic: *A Country Year: Living the Questions*. Her more recent work is *Broadsides from Other Orders: A Book of Bugs*. To see the world through Hubbell's eyes is to see it on a refreshingly small scale.



Though Illinois has yet to produce top-knotch writers whose work centers on a single place, it nonetheless has turned out writers of great talent. In the front rank until his death in 1995 was **John Madson**, an Iowa native who lived in Godfrey, Illinois, and who was commonly found cruising the nearby Mississippi River in his johnboat, "Cirrhosis of the River." Madson's several books and many magazine articles dug deeply into the region's lands and people. *Where the Sky Began: Land of the Tallgrass Prairie* is a delightful mixture of botany, geology, history, anecdote, aesthetics, and humor. To read this book is to fall in love with the tallgrass. Equally good, and even more filled with colorful characters, is his engaging *Up the River: An Upper Mississippi Chronicle*. Readers who don't drop what they're doing and take

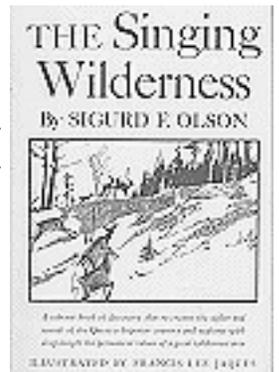
might just move to bottom lands of the Mississippi or Illinois River and become river rats. Meet here the fish that inhabit the river; meet the people who dance with the fish; learn about the days when Illinois was the button capital of the world; watch the soaring eagles; develop a passion for sloughs and sluggish water.

Prairie enthusiasts should also track down **Richard Manning's** wonderful study, *Grassland: The History, Biology, Politics and Promise of the American Prairie*. Manning is not a Midwestern writer; he's roamed the continent,



particularly the forests of the Northwest. Plus, this book covers all extended grasslands of the 48 states, not just the tallgrass. Still, it is so good, and so thoughtful, and so delightful to read, that it cannot be missed. Easily one of the best natural history books of the century, it is a song of joy and pain, a look at, not just the land, but the people who've inhabited the land, the mistakes they've made there, the ideas that propelled those mistakes, and the visions and passions that, taken to heart, might yet bring grasslands back to life. Readers wanting to learn more about Manning should turn to his *A Good House: Building a Life on the Land*.

Though the Midwest is best known for its grasslands, it does have forests, particularly in the north, and no writer brought those lands to life like the bard of the Boundary Waters, **Sigurd Olson**. A native of northern Wisconsin, Olson's studies included a stint at the University of Illinois, where he received a master's degree in ecology. But his heart was gripped by the border lakes and he quickly returned north, teaching school during winter and serving as canoe-country guide during summer. After decades of scribbling he finally found his voice, and in his late 50's brought forth his essay collection, *A Singing Wilderness*. It is a magical book, the distilled impressions of decades of exploring and absorbing the sights, smells, feels, and most of all the



sounds of the Quetico-Superior region. From *A Singing Wilderness* turn to his *Listening Point*, which centers around Olson's wilderness cabin on a remote spit of land extending into Burntside Lake. *Runes of the North* displays his lifelong interests in native Ojibway culture; *This Lonely Land* recounts a thousand-mile canoe trip across Canada along fur-trader routes.

If Aldo Leopold is the place to begin, then the place to end is with his near contemporary, better known at the time and still as durable and delightful as a compass plant. Her family home

(continued next page)

she wrote lyrically about the Southwest in her beloved *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, it was the land and people



around her Nebraska home that brought Willa Cather's writing alive. Cather's particular skill was not her observation of detail but her ability to

perceive the land as a whole. She sensed an undivided canvas of life, stretching beyond horizons and far back in time. One of her fictional alter-egos put it this way: "More than anything else, I felt motion in the landscape; in the fresh, easy-blowing morning wind, and in the earth itself, as if the shaggy grass were a sort of loose hide, and underneath it herds of wild buffalo were galloping, galloping."

In a world that honors mobility and rootlessness, these authors supply tools to regain contentment. In a world that honors the fleeting, they exalt the durable. The Midwest remains a fertile land, for corn and bluestem and children and writers. It is a vital, fulfilling home, for those who would embrace it. 🌿

*Eric T. Freyfogle, a native of central Illinois, teaches environmental and natural resources law at the University of Illinois. He is the author, most recently, of Bounded People, Boundless Lands: Envisioning a New Land Ethic and co-editor (with J. Baird Callicott) of the forthcoming book of essays on private-lands conservation by Aldo Leopold, For the Health of the Land, with foreword by Scott Russell Sanders.*

## Particles and Prairies Educational Collaborative Learning Opportunity

by Patricia Franzen

Nearly ten years ago, the educational leaders at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, in Batavia, Illinois, began to develop a dream. Fermilab is home to 1100+ acres of restored prairie. Why couldn't we develop a student learning opportunity in the prairie of one of the world's premier physics research labs? With students in the role of Student Researcher, might we foster engaged learning in the "real" world?

And, so, Particles and Prairies, a mid-level learning program was born. Today, the Fermilab prairie hosts nearly 11,000 students and teachers per year! Students perform a variety of field studies, but the "heart" of the program is the Quadrat Study. Students identify grasses and forbs within one-meter plots and enter the data into a database that has been ongoing since 1992. The project is a resounding success! So successful, in fact, that it is now difficult to accommodate all of the learners that hope to assume the role of prairie "researcher."

It is now time to expand our horizons and add a new technology component to Particles and Prairies. We are in the process of completing a web site that will allow remote entry of data from prairies across the United States. Student research teams will be able to collaborate with students from other schools to answer their own research questions. The engaged learning Website guides students through an investigation in which they have access to student data, a database of prairie forbs and grasses with photos and statistical information, visualization tools, and much more.

We want to develop a cadre of schools, organizations, and individuals interested in such a study. If you believe this initiative might be of benefit to your students, please contact me at [franzen@mtco.com](mailto:franzen@mtco.com). I will forward information to you regarding the Simply Prairie website in time for fall studies. 🌿

*Patricia Franzen is the Particles and Prairies Developer and Instructor*



[www-ed.fnal.gov/ntep/f98/projects/fnal](http://www-ed.fnal.gov/ntep/f98/projects/fnal)

## GPF Annual Fall Meeting

Grand Prairie Friends annual Fall meeting will take place during the Prairie Conference on Saturday, September 18, 1999 at 5:00 PM. The exact room location has not been determined so check at the Conference desk or consult the final Conference program. There will not be a featured speaker, given the stellar lineup at the conference, however your attendance is crucial because it is once again time to elect new members to the GPF Board of Directors.

The Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois is led by a nine member board of directors; each serving a three-year term. One third of the members are elected each fall at the annual meeting. Four members are selected to serve as President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer of GPF and each of the other board members is responsible for one of the following areas: Land Acquisition and Fund Raising, Membership, Publicity, Education, and Stewardship. There are monthly board meetings in Champaign-Urbana; generally the third week lasting about an hour.

During the past few years we've had long time board members step down and some unexpected unfulfilled terms. We have been fortunate to welcome new blood to the Board and would love to have even more. We have some exciting conservation opportunities before us, but they will not happen without active participation from the Board and membership.

Please consider election to the GPF Board of Directors and preserve a legacy for our children. If you are interested in becoming a board member please contact the current board by writing to GPF, PO Box 36, Urbana, IL 61801 or e-mailing [gpf@prairienet.org](mailto:gpf@prairienet.org).

## Fall Seed Collecting

Every Thursday evening in September from 6-8 pm there is a work night at Windsor Road Prairie, a very prominent site. Help pull non-native weeds whenever you have time. Bring gloves and hand pruners.

Fall means seed collecting time. This is an easy and enjoyable activity, so get out and enjoy the fall season. We will be collecting from various sites each Saturday in October. All you need are a pair of gloves!

**SATURDAYS, OCTOBER 2, 9, 16, 23, AND 30**

Seed collecting outings. Meet at the Anita Purves Nature Center, at 8:30 am. For more information, contact Paul Tessene at [ptessene@mail.inhs.uiuc.edu](mailto:ptessene@mail.inhs.uiuc.edu).



## GPF News

### New Membership Renewal Procedures

Have you noticed that you haven't received a membership renewal notice recently? Be assured that you haven't been forgotten. The GPF Board has decided to switch to a uniform renewal period - memberships will be for a calendar year and membership renewal notices will be sent to all members in November.

For many members, part of your 1999 membership is free - unless you would like to send a contribution now or add to your 2000 membership! This change will significantly simplify our record-keeping.

### Storage barn

Now that GPF has a storage shed, you can finally get rid of all the GPF tools and burn equipment that you've been storing in your garages, basements, attics, etc. As you know, tools and equipment are expensive and easily misplaced and often not available when needed. We need to have all of our stuff in one location. Please make arrangements with Ruth Green (217-333-7091) for return of GPF stuff.

### Photos

Have you checked out the GPF internet site lately? Board member Chris Hauser has made many excellent improvements. Currently he is seeking photos of our sites that can be used to illustrate the web site and possibly to develop internet-based virtual tours of some of the sites. Contact Chris at [cehauser@uiuc.edu](mailto:cehauser@uiuc.edu). And check us out at [www.prairienet.org/gpf](http://www.prairienet.org/gpf).

## Fifth Central Illinois Prairie Conference Registration Form

**To register:** fill out this form, or a copy of it, for each person

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- I want to become a member of Grand Prairie Friends  
\$20.00 individual; \$25.00 family; \$15.00 student/low income

\* Workshops have limited space. Please indicate your preference.

- Building Successful Volunteer Organizations
- Grass Identification (limited to 20)
- Internet Resources (limited to 25)
- Parent/Educator/Children Activities (limited to 30)
- Restoration Successes/Disappointments

- Registration fee - \$25.00 (\$15.00 for students)

- Saturday Box Lunch (includes beverage) - \$6.95

- roast beef  ham
- tuna salad  turkey
- vegetarian  salmon over pasta
- chicken breast over pasta

- Saturday Buffet Dinner - \$15.00

- Sunday Box Lunch (includes beverage) - \$6.95

- roast beef  ham
- tuna salad  turkey
- vegetarian  salmon over pasta
- chicken breast over pasta

- Conference Proceedings - \$10.00

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed

**Deadline** for registration is September 7th; late or walk-in registration is \$5 extra (lunch not available for late registrants).  
**Mail to:** Prairie Conference, Champaign County Forest Preserve District, 2573 South Homer Lake Road, Homer, IL 61849.  
**Make checks payable to Grand Prairie Friends of Illinois**

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