
A Prairie Rendezvous



WINTER VOL.17, No..4, 2015
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Remembering Ansel Anderson

by Jamie Ellis

Earlier this year, Grand Prairie Friends said good-bye to a dear friend—Ansel Anderson. His wife, Janet, as well as a son, Alan (Brenda), and grandchildren, survive. Ansel, known as ‘Andy’ to some, was a quiet yet stalwart member of the natural areas conservation community of East Central Illinois. Many people knew him from his leadership roles with the local chapter of the Izaak Walton League, or on the Board at the Champaign County Forest Preserve District, or during the formative years of the East Central Illinois Master Naturalists, or from his recent tenure on the Board of Directors for Grand Prairie Friends. And this was all after retirement from the University of Illinois!



Ansel and Janet Anderson volunteer at the November 2013 Rattlesnake Master Run

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Fall Fete -- Fun & Fabulous!

by Jamie Ellis

On Saturday, October 3, members and friends gathered at Embarras Ridges Land and Water Reserve for the 2nd annual Fall Fete. The skies were a bit gray and the wind was cool, but that didn't keep close to 50 folks from enjoying the great outdoors. Dave and Dianda Easter kept a bonfire going outside as friends gathered. Carol and Topper Steinman worked the grill to cook hamburgers and hotdogs for all. Everyone contributed something to the feast. GPF's little barn at Embarras Ridges with its old wood siding and concrete floor isn't fancy, but it gave us a nice spot to gather. It does have electric lights, space for tables and chairs, and a wood stove that cuts the chill on a cool day.



Enjoying the fire and the company at the Fall Fete

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*by Jamie Ellis, President,
GPF Board of Directors*

As the seasons change in central Illinois, Summer slowly gives way to Fall. A time of the year I love. Temperatures cool and humidity wanes as daylight hours give way to dark hours. I love the crunch of dry oak leaves as I walk through the forest. I love the chirp and trill of grasshoppers and crickets in the prairie. Do they know that their songs will end with the first hard frost?

As we near the end of 2015, I can start to look back on the year. We changed some of the ways we run the annual spring native plant sale, and it was a success. We welcomed new Board members—Carol and Craig and Ed. We thanked another—Ruth—for her service. We said final farewells to dear friends—Ansel Anderson and Doris Westfall. We raised the money needed to buy and protect and restore 90 more acres of nice forest in Coles County. We hired two hard-working summer interns. We kept working—with help from David Mott and Jeff Peyton—on clearing sugar maple and invasive species at Embarras Ridges. We started dreaming about a trail through our Coles County properties. We learned about prairie chicken conservation in Illinois from Bob Gillespie at the Winter Meeting. We learned a lot more about crickets and grasshoppers and katydids from Sam Heads at our Fall Meeting. We celebrated being outside and in the woods and with friends at the Embarras Ridges Fall Fete. We cheered on runners and walkers on a beautiful Fall day at the Rattlensake Master Run for the Prairie.

So what's next? For now we'll do many of these things again in 2016. Some things we'll re-think and re-do or do better. Others we might let go for a while.

Either way, we'll need you—to volunteer your time and talent as well as contribute what your budget will allow. We're always looking for good people who believe in our conservation mission and who are willing to step up and lead.

Peace,

Jamie Ellis

A Prairie Rendezvous

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A Prairie Rendezvous is a publication of Grand Prairie Friends for the restoration community of East Central Illinois.

A Prairie Rendezvous is published quarterly. Article submissions should be sent electronically to the editor at melgrove@gmail.com or by mail to the GPF P.O. Box 36, Urbana, IL 61803. Member submissions are gladly welcomed.

Grand Prairie Friends 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 P.O. Box listed above.

GPF mission is to preserve and restore natural communities in east-central Illinois and promote an understanding and appreciation of natural resources.

Stay in touch with the GPF community through the website (www.grandprairiefriends.org), facebook (www.facebook.com/grandprairiefriends) or the ecostewards e-mail list (lists.communitylists.org/listinfo.cgi/ecostewards-communitylists.org).

GPF Board of Directors (term ends):

Jamie Ellis, President (2018)
Dave Easter, Vice President (2016)
Carol Steinman, Secretary (2017)
Ed Wilhite, Treasurer (2018)
Pam Leiter (2018)
Craig Milling (2017)
Rob Stanton (2016)
Fred Delcomyn (2016)
Vacant (2017)

Board meetings are regularly scheduled for the fourth Monday of each month (except August and December) at 5:30 PM in the Forbes Building (1816 S. Oak St., Champaign).

GPF Committees:

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

Finance: Ed Wilhite
Publicity: Derek Liebert
Land Acquisition: Dan Olson and Jim Payne
Fund Raising: Terry Rathgeber and Jamie Ellis

Submission Deadlines

- Summer Issue (June, July, Aug.): May 1
- Fall Issue (Sept., Oct., Nov.): Aug. 1
- Winter Issue (Dec., Jan., Feb.): Nov. 1
- Spring Issue (Mar., Apr., May): Feb. 1

(REMEMBERING ANSEL ADAMS...)

After earning a PhD in physics from the University of Illinois in 1961, Dr. Anderson worked for the UI Department of Physics from that time until his retirement in 1992, serving the last six years as department head. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and a Fellow of the American Physical Society. In 1966, he was the recipient of a Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and a Fulbright-Hays grant for the purpose of establishing a now-renowned low-temperature laboratory at the Institute of Technology in Helsinki, Finland. His family lived with him in Helsinki during that year. He held consulting positions with the U.S. Air Force, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Batelle Memorial Institute, and Borg Warner Corp. He authored more than 200 research papers in the field of low-temperature condensed-matter physics.

In his retirement, besides being actively engaged with environmental conservation groups, he was an active wood carver, traveled extensively with his wife, and enjoyed ballroom dancing.

Even in the fairly short time I knew him, I will always remember Ansel for his quiet determination and good work ethic. He didn't always say much at meetings, but he could always be counted on for delivering his promises. I could always rely on Ansel to do tasks—like reading through GPF's insurance policy—that others weren't willing to do. He was an important donor to GPF. He truly believed in the summer internship program and made donations to keep it going. He was on the Board when GPF made the big decision to raise over \$400,000 to buy the land that became Embarras Ridges. This project was very important to him.

Ansel requested that memorial contributions be made to Grand Prairie Friends and the Champaign County Forest Preserve Friends Foundation for the Kickapoo Rail Trail. Ansel's reach was far and wide—over 30 friends contributed over \$1800 to GPF in his memory. This money will be used in the future to help further GPF's conservation mission and to help with natural areas acquisition.

Grand Prairie Friends and Janet Anderson, Ansel's widow, sincerely thank all of the individuals and organizations who contributed money in memory of Ansel Anderson:

Anonymous
 Dennis Anderson
 Neil Belles
 Astrid Berkson
 Eileen Borgia
 Jane Brichford
 Fred Christensen
 Phyllis Cline
 Michael Daab
 Celia Elliott
 Robert and Mary Espeseth
 Jeremy Grace
 Ruth Green
 Beverly Heiden
 Heidi Howard
 Larry Johnson
 Laura Keller
 Robert Lacey
 Fred Lamb
 Anthony Leggett
 Pamela Leiter
 Jasper McKenney
 Esther Patt
 Jean Peters
 Terry Lee Smith
 Mary Kay Solecki and John Taft
 Harvey Stapleton
 Carol Steinman
 Ruth Walker
 Methodist Federation For Social Action IL-
 Great Rivers Chapter
 Citadel Club



Terry and Ansel sticking labels

(FALL FETE...)

After the meal, Dr. Jill Deppe, biology professor from Eastern Illinois University, and two of her students, Jena Nierman and Calista Olmstead, gave a report about bat surveys at Embarras Ridges, Warbler Woods, and other properties in Coles County. They were able to answer many questions about bat natural history and ecology. They're still working on a final tally of what they found with mist netting surveys as well as acoustic detector surveys. GPF will pass on that report when they're finished.



Cooking up a storm!

Local steward David Mott then lead a large group of folks through the forested ridges and ravines of Embarras Ridges. David is a wealth of knowledge about birds and forests of Coles County. He also reported on the vegetation management work he's been doing thanks to a grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. David has cut down hundreds of little sugar maples and invasive species to improve the health of the oak and hickory forest.

Thanks also to Jeff Peyton who worked hard to clean the dust and cobwebs from the barn and to gather firewood before the event. And thanks to everyone who came out to make this a special afternoon. Let's do it again next year!



What a feast!

CU Native Plant Map

By Caitlin Lill

A few months ago I had an idea. I love that East Central Illinois has a dedicated and proactive conservation group for our larger natural areas, but I've always been worried about what's happening on the smaller scale in our urban corridors.

When I bought my house off of downtown Champaign I pledged to only plant native or food-producing species and I've been delighted each summer by my bugs and bees and birds. But I found myself lacking the sense of community and connection that I felt when working on large-scale conservation, and looking around my neighborhood (and the

native plant sale) I saw so many examples of people investing in urban native plants. But how to connect with them?

Thus was born the **CU Native Plant Map**. Stealing an idea from the similarly named CU Fruit Map (which tracks fruit available on public land), the CU Native Plant Map is a place to share and track where native plants are in our urban community. Your neighbor who has monarda, the business that's planted little bluestem around their parking lot, or maybe your own patch of solomon's seal and mayapples – all of those belong on the map!

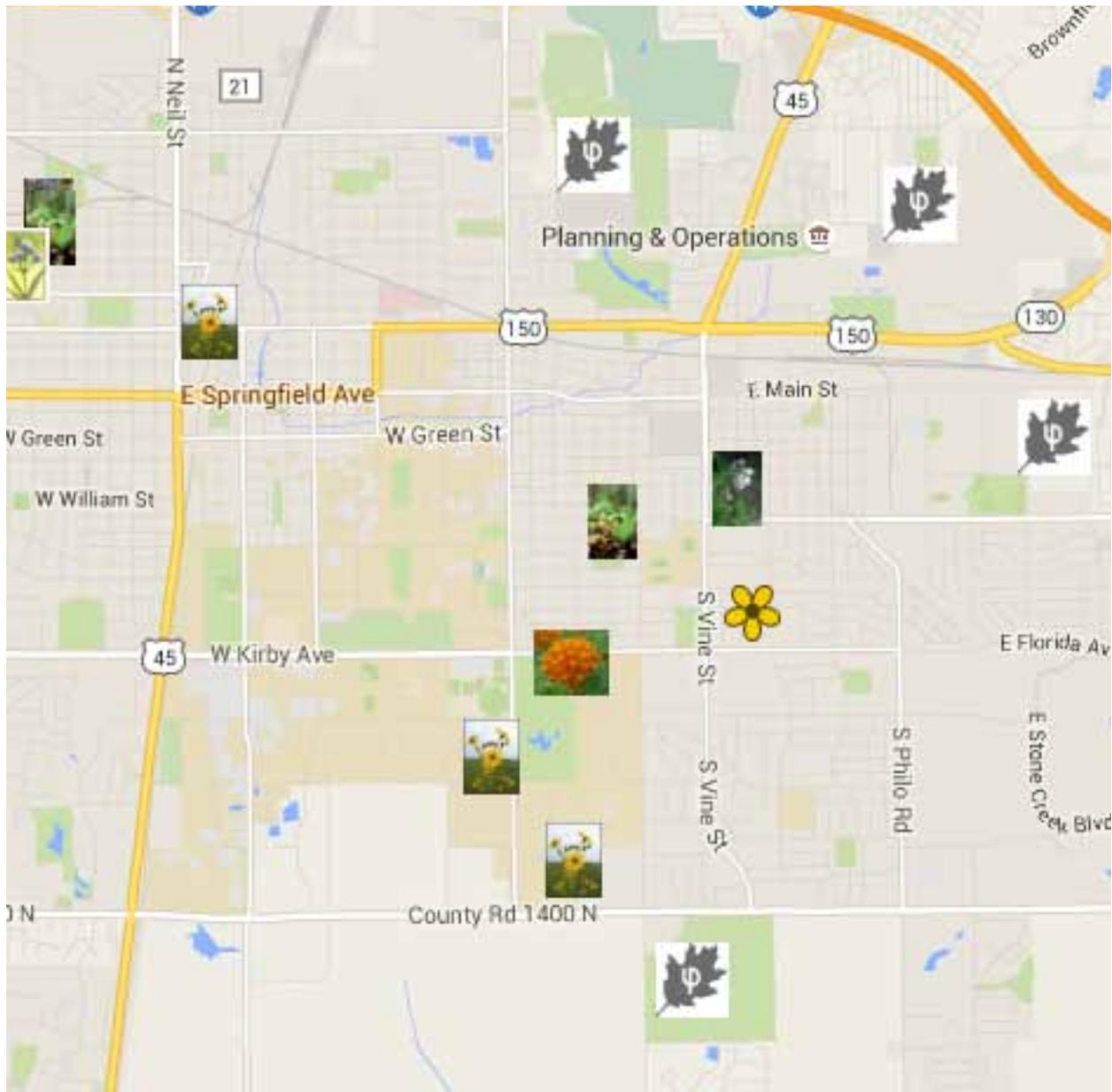
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(CU NATIVE PLANT MAP...)

This idea will only work if people get involved! Winter's the perfect time to contribute, while we wait for our gardens to come back to life.

Here are a few ways to help:

- Visit the map to see what native species are already being tracked – www.tinyurl.com/cunativeplantmap
- Like “CU Native Plant Map” on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/cunativeplantmap>
- Add your plants to the map (instructions available on Facebook)
- Submit your native plant sightings online and we'll add them to the map – www.tinyurl.com/nativeplantsubmissions



New GPF Directors & Treasurer

A nine-member Board of Directors leads Grand Prairie Friends. These volunteers are responsible for raising and spending money in support of our conservation mission. They both lead and do the work to keep GPF going!

Each year at the Fall Membership Meeting in September, GPF members are given the opportunity to nominate and elect a new slate of Directors. Generally there are three open positions. Directors are elected to serve three-year terms.

This year the members gathered elected and re-elected three Directors—Ed Wilhite, Pam Leiter, and Jamie Ellis. Officers for the Board are elected from within the Board at the Board meeting immediately following the Fall meeting. Jamie Ellis and Dave Easter remain President and Vice President, and the Board welcomes two new officers—Carol Steinman as Secretary and Ed Wilhite as Treasurer.

GPF sincerely thanks Ruth Green who recently stepped off the Board and also ended her tenure as Secretary. Ruth is long-time as well as a life member of GPF. She served as President in the mid-1990s.

GPF also thanks Fred Delcomyn for his many years of service as Treasurer. Under his watch GPF developed and implemented fiscal and financial policies as well as growing GPF's investments. Fred still has one more year in his term on the Board.



Ed Wilhite

Ed was born and raised in small town, Illinois. He attended graduate school at the University of Illinois, moved away for a couple of years, and then moved back for good in 1978. His career in business included stints as financial officer for two

multi-state companies. He is a Master Naturalist, class of 2009, and he and his wife joined GPF that fall. On a good day, he can recognize as many as seven prairie plants with only minimal coaching, and, if “one-kay ower-flay” counts, he's got the Latin names down pat.

He has organized cashiers at the Plant Sale and Rattlesnake Master Run for the Prairie for the past few years, and he has served on the Finance Committee for four years. As treasurer, he will do his best to protect GPF's financial assets and to provide financial information to the Board as GPF adapts to owning and managing 500 acres of natural land in East Central Illinois.



Pam Leiter

Pam's passions include gardening, birding, prairie and woodland restoration, and green space conservation. She is the Assistant Director of the Museum & Education Department at the Champaign County Forest Preserve District, where she works with

staff throughout the department to interpret the story of the Grand Prairie—its natural and cultural history. Pam has served on the GPF Board of Directors for the past three years. She also serves on the Board for the Champaign County Audubon Society.

Her educational background includes a Master's degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in Human Dimensions of the Environment and an undergraduate degree in Biology from Bethel College in Indiana. Pam is excited to continue to help support Grand Prairie Friends as it moves forward with its goals!



Jamie Ellis

Jamie works as a botanist and plant ecologist at the Illinois Natural History Survey, and he has been curious about prairie conservation and restoration since his first exposure to prairie remnants as an undergraduate at the Uni-

versity of Illinois. He earned a B.S. from the U of I and an M.S. from the University of Michigan. He lives in Urbana with his wife, Mindy, two children, and two cats.

(NEW GPF DIRECTORS AND TREASURER...)**New Board members recently appointed to fill open terms**

Over the past year, the GPF Board of Directors, within its powers, has appointed two new Directors to fill vacant positions. Please welcome Craig and Carol!

**Craig Milling**

Craig has always enjoyed the outdoors – fishing, camping, hiking, and just being in nature. In 1993 he came to Urbana-Champaign for graduate school in physics. He got married and his wife got a faculty position, so they bought a house in 2003 and settled in as townies. For one of his early landscaping projects he bought several plants from the GPF plant sale, and he's been hooked on prairie ever since. After continued expansions of his little patch of prairie and many trips to the plant sale, he started to get more involved in the plant sale and GPF sponsored talks and other events.

With the recent land acquisitions in Coles County, GPF has provided meaningful space for wildlife and nature lovers in East Central Illinois. Craig hopes that by becoming a director he can contribute to GPF and the development of wild places in East Central Illinois.

**Carol Steinman**

Carol retired from Parkland College in 2006 after serving 30 years in a variety of staff and administrative positions, concluding her tenure at Parkland as Vice President for Student Services.

Four years after retiring, she uncovered a passion that had been placed on the back burner—nature in the East Central Illinois area that she grew up in—and became a Master Naturalist.

Carol completed the Master Naturalists program in the fall of 2010. In 2012, she was elected to the ECIMN Advisory Board. She served as the Board Vice President for two years and then President for a third and final year.

During the last three years, she has become familiar with GPF and the remarkable work they are doing in preserving, restoring, and maintaining natural areas in Illinois. She volunteered for the Native Plant Sale and the Rattlesnake Master Run for the last three years.

Carol has lived in Champaign since the mid-1970s. She has an A.A.S. from Danville Area Community College, a B.S. in Health Education, and an M.S. in Community Health Education from the University of Illinois. She taught health education and earth science at Jefferson Middle School for three years. After completing her M.S. degree, she took a position at Parkland where she remained until retirement.

Carol and her husband Topper have two adult married children and three grandchildren, who all live in Champaign. In addition to spending a lot of time with family, they like to hike, exercise, and travel.

One Small Link

Autumn is a time
for tidying up the garden:
trimming the dead grass
around the edges and
raking the leaves into
ladybug beds.

It means grasping brown stems
and shaking seeds into envelopes,
burying bulbs under dark soil,
each act a different way of
sending flowers to spring.

Autumn receives
what summer gives,
throws what spring
will catch, a cycle in
which the gardener
is but one small link.

~ Elizabeth Barrette

From *Nature's Patient Hands:
A Collection of Poetry*
