



GRAND PRAIRIE FRIENDS

Winter 2025 Newsletter



New GPF Board President

Craig Milling

New Year, New GPF Officer Roles

Get to Know President, Craig Milling

As a veteran board member since 2015, Craig Milling has deep roots in the mission and vision of Grand Prairie Friends. Craig has been excited to participate in the internal transformation to make GPF a stronger non-profit entity over the last decade including policies, staff additions and the recent two-year process of accreditation application. “Adding professional staff, alongside a highly active policy-driven Board, has been key to the overall success of the organization over the last eight years”.

With a lifelong passion for adventuring outdoors, Craig references the healing and nurturing effects of nature as one of his key motivations and considers any time spent on GPF properties as time well spent. Following his childhood exposure to nature exploration with his parents, Craig continues this tradition today with his own family.

Being part of the team involved with the vast expansion of GPF protected land over the last ten years has been extremely fulfilling. Craig is grateful that he could be involved in the process of land acquisition, landowner family communications, and the decisions involved for Warbler Ridge Conservation Area, Prospect Cemetery Prairie and Burnett Land & Water Reserve. Craig recalls one of his fondest moments during the first bat habitat installations at Warbler Ridge in 2018. “To experience first-hand the building of habitat for an endangered species, and then seeing the successful reproduction now of the bats is an amazing experience”.

Craig is looking forward to recruiting new voices to GPF’s Board and membership to ensure the long-term stewardship of these important spaces. Thank you, Craig, for serving Grand Prairie Friends!

[Donate to Grand Prairie Friends!](#)

New Ways to Help at Warbler Ridge

Expanded opportunities to lend a hand at Warbler Ridge!

- Docent Leader for Senior Van Tours
- Ridge Rover Trail Steward Team
- Electric Fence Maintenance Team

Tools, supplies, script and training provided.



[Role Descriptions](#)

Upcoming Events

1000 Hours Outside!



Saturday, January 11 9am-Noon

Douglas Hart Nature Center
Mattoon, 2204 Dewitt Ave E, Mattoon, IL 61938, USA

In partnership with Grand Prairie Friends, The Douglas-Hart Foundation welcomes you to the Douglas-Hart Nature Center to meet other community organizations, groups, or clubs that can help you get 1000 hours outside in 2025! This free event is intended for Adults/Teens.

[Video explanation of 1000 Hours Outside](#)

Register Now!

Training Sessions for New Volunteer Roles

Saturday, March 22

Our Staff will provide the information and training you need to fill new roles at Warbler Ridge. Register for the training(s) you plan to attend.

Enlist a friend to join you!

9am - 11am **Docent Leader for Senior Van Tours**

12pm-2pm **Ridge Rover Trail Steward**

3pm-5pm **Electric Fence Maintenance**

Training at Warbler Crossing, 17487 Bypass Rd, Charleston, IL 61920

Register Now!
Trail Steward

Register Now!
Docent Tour Leader

Register Now!
Electric Fence Maintenance

2025 Spring Membership Meeting

"Monarch Magic: A World Class Phenomenon"



Saturday, April 5 3pm

Champaign Public Library

Featuring Michael Jeffords

Sr. Professional Scientist and Entomologist, Prairie Research Institute,
University of Illinois

Learn about the global natural history phenomenon that is the monarch butterfly and its annual migration to Mexico. Discover what you can do to make sure this epic migration continues.

Free public event; Membership meeting and reception to follow.

Register Now!



Stewardship Saturdays

**First Saturday of Every Month,
9-11am**

Warbler Crossing

17487 Bypass Rd

Charleston, IL

- All ages and abilities are invited to help with general site maintenance and invasive plant removal

- Tools, treats, and training!
- Next dates: Feb 1, Mar 1

Invasive Strike Team

Third Saturday of Every Month,
9-11am

Location Warbler Ridge, specific
site TBD - visit website or
facebook

- Help our forests and prairies by
manually pulling, tugging and
cutting invasive plants, planting
trees and more!

- You bring enthusiasm and we'll
bring the tools!

- Next dates: Jan 18, Feb 15, Mar
15



NATIVE PLANT SALE



Online sale - early May

Plant pickup - mid May

The Plant Sale Committee has started planning for our annual native plant sale. Details to come at www.grandprairiefriends.org by March, 2025.

If you are interested in joining our committee, we would love to have more team members. It is great fun and a significant fund raiser for Grand Prairie Friends. Contact dianeed@sbclglobal.net if you want to learn more.



BLAZING STAR SOCIETY
GRAND PRAIRIE FRIENDS

Looking for a way to take your support of GPF to the next level? Join our Blazing Star Society!

Blazing Star Society members donate unrestricted, annual gifts to Grand Prairie Friends at \$1,000 and above. Members will be recognized at events, in the newsletter, annual report, and more. Additionally, Blazing Star members will be invited to **exclusive members-only gatherings and events** throughout the year!

[Join Now!](#)

Board Meetings

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

All Grand Prairie Friends Members are welcome to attend Grand Prairie Friends Board Meetings

United Way Office
5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy, IL 61874

Jan 27
Feb 24
Mar 24



Grand Prairie Friends

PO Box 36, Urbana
Illinois, United States of America



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