

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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www.wildonesrrvc.org



www.facebook.com/wildonesrockrivervalley



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All articles for the March 2022 newsletter, must be submitted to: Jerry Paulson at paulsonjerry@aol.com by February 21, 2022

The Flora and Fauna of Bell Bowl Prairie and Other Gravel Prairies

Thursday, February 17, 2022

**Time: 7:00 p.m.
via Zoom**

Ed Cope, former Ecologist with the Natural Land Institute, will discuss the flora and fauna of gravel prairies in the Rock River valley, using Bell Bowl Prairie as a specific lens through which to bring the bigger picture of this unique ecosystem into focus. He will review the origin and history of gravel prairies in the area, then discuss the plant and animal species that inhabit them. Particular focus will be given to those species who have disappeared, and those that teeter on the cusp of extirpation. Bell Bowl Prairie is the last local refuge for a large number of species, and its destruction would doubtlessly seal their fate.



Ed Cope

Ed is a popular speaker on the flora of Winnebago County. From Roscoe, Illinois, he is currently the Plants Program Manager & Restoration Project Manager at Coos Watershed Association in Coos Bay, Oregon. He learned about the local flora working for the Forest Preserve District and as the restoration ecologist with the Natural Land Institute. He graduated from Montana State University in 2013 with degrees in land rehabilitation and wildlife habitat ecology and management.

The program is presented by the Wild Ones Rock River Valley chapter. The zoom link will be posted on the WORRV chapter website, (www.wildonesrrvc.org) and on Facebook. The program is free and open to the public. For information contact Jerry Paulson, 815-222-4414.

Message from the President Jerry Paulson



Jerry Paulson

As we suffer through the bitter cold in Northern Illinois, orders for plants for our annual Native Plant Sale have already been made. The sale isn't until May, but a lot of planning goes into making the sale happen every year. The plant sale coordinators, Janet Geisen and Jane Evans have an article in this newsletter announcing the sale dates and order deadlines and

asking for volunteers to help with all aspects of the sale. This is our biggest outreach and educational event of the year and is also the Chapter's largest fundraiser. Please take a minute to volunteer to help with the sale, and start thinking about all those plants you will be adding to your yards this spring.

If you have been paying attention to the fight to stop the Greater Rockford Airport Authority from destroying the ancient Bell Bowl Prairie, you will not want to miss this month's program about the flora of Gravel Hill Prairies by former Rockford resident, Ed Cope. Ed has studied the plants and animals found at Bell Bowl Prairie and the other gravel hill prairie remnants along the Rock River valley. His programs on local botany have been informative and enjoyable.

Ed Foster, our newest member of the WORRV chapter board, wrote a recap of the video-taped interview with local naturalist Lee Johnson for this newsletter. Ed is a life-long gardener and has been using native plants in his yard and planting them at his church for forty years.

He learned about our local prairies, including Bell Bowl Prairie, from Norah Bourland, who started the prairie at the Rockford Unitarian Church.

Ed is a Rockford native, graduated from East High School, Knox College, and NIU and taught elementary education in local schools before going to work with severely



Ed Foster

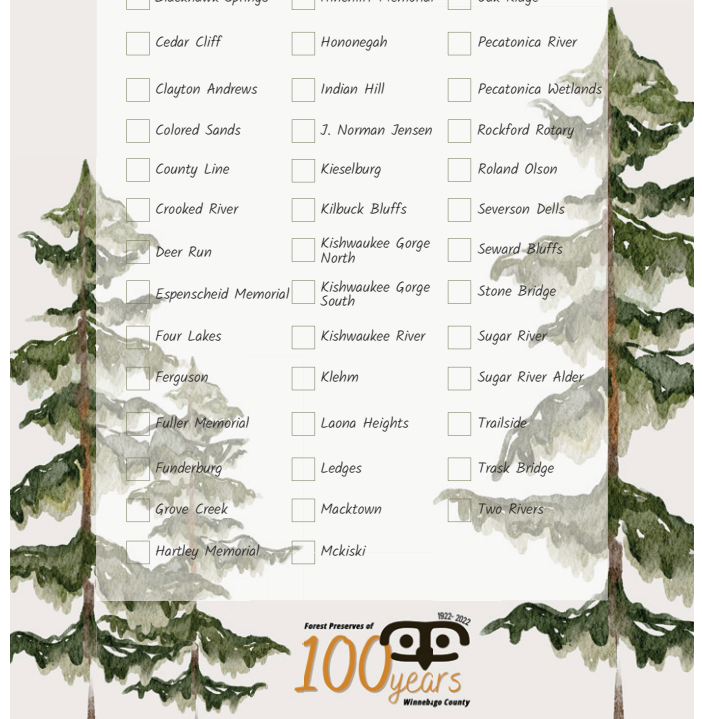
emotionally challenged students with Streamwood Behavior Hospital's school in Roscoe. He retired from teaching in 2014. Ed danced with Rockford's Vasa Swedish Dance group and a Scottish Country dance group until the dancing was stopped by COVID 19. He helped set-up our speaker system for our monthly programs when we were meeting at RVC before COVID stopped them.

2022 is the 100th anniversary of the Forest Preserve District of Winnebago County. As part of the year-long celebration, the District is encouraging residents to visit all 44 forest preserve in the county. They range from the oldest preserve, Hononegah to the newest (and largest) Funderburg Forest Preserve. Included in this newsletter is a handy checklist of the preserves for you to use as you visit them. Remember to stop by the FPWC headquarters to get your free calendar that has much information about the forest preserves.

Visit all 44 Forest Preserves in 2022

CHECK OFF THE PRESERVES AS YOU GO!

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atwood Homestead | <input type="checkbox"/> Headquarters | <input type="checkbox"/> Millrace Isle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blackhawk Springs | <input type="checkbox"/> Hinchliff Memorial | <input type="checkbox"/> Oak Ridge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Cliff | <input type="checkbox"/> Hononegah | <input type="checkbox"/> Pecatonica River |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clayton Andrews | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian Hill | <input type="checkbox"/> Pecatonica Wetlands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colored Sands | <input type="checkbox"/> J. Norman Jensen | <input type="checkbox"/> Rockford Rotary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Line | <input type="checkbox"/> Kieselburg | <input type="checkbox"/> Roland Olson |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crooked River | <input type="checkbox"/> Kilbuck Bluffs | <input type="checkbox"/> Severson Dells |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deer Run | <input type="checkbox"/> Kishwaukee Gorge North | <input type="checkbox"/> Seward Bluffs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Espenscheid Memorial | <input type="checkbox"/> Kishwaukee Gorge South | <input type="checkbox"/> Stone Bridge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Four Lakes | <input type="checkbox"/> Kishwaukee River | <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar River |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ferguson | <input type="checkbox"/> Klehm | <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar River Alder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fuller Memorial | <input type="checkbox"/> Laona Heights | <input type="checkbox"/> Trailside |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Funderburg | <input type="checkbox"/> Ledges | <input type="checkbox"/> Trask Bridge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grove Creek | <input type="checkbox"/> Macktown | <input type="checkbox"/> Two Rivers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hartley Memorial | <input type="checkbox"/> Mckiski | |



2022 Native Plant Sale News

We are excited that the native plant sale brochure is almost completed and should be in print and online mid to late February. We've worked hard with our four wholesalers and ordered a wide selection of over 6,000 plants ideal for woodland and prairie locations. In addition to many of the popular species such as *Echinacea pallida* (Pale Purple Coneflower) and *Liatris pycnostachya* (Prairie Blazingstar), we will be offering some new species this year, including *Caltha palustris* (Marsh Marigold) and *Gentianopsis crinita* (Fringed Gentian). There will also be a few plants at the sale that will not be on the brochure.

We encourage you to place your orders early – they will be filled on a first come, first received basis and early birds get the best selections. This year we will not be able to order plants after the due date or during the sale dates. If you choose to order at the last minute, it's possible that you might not receive the plants that you wish.

Sometimes the plants that we order may not be available due to crop failure (due to weather, germination rates, plant size, etc.). If you order a plant that is not available, you will have a choice

of a replacement or refund. Most customers select different plants at the sale as replacements.

Orders due: Friday, April 22

Member's only pickup: Thursday, May 5, 3-7 p.m.

Order pickup & public sale: Friday, May 6, 3-7 p.m.

Order pickup & public sale: Saturday, May 7, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Pickup location:

Paulson Farm
4601 Paulson Road
Caledonia, IL 61011

Feel free to contact either of the plant sale coordinators with questions about the sale:

Jane Evans: 815-494-7731

Janet Giesen: janetgiesen@gmail.com,
815-762-5912

Plant Sale Volunteers Wanted

We are looking for individuals who would like to help with the plant sale. New volunteers will have the opportunity to work with those who have experience – it's a team effort that's lots of fun! Benefits of volunteering at the sale include being able to shop early for those plants



not on the brochure and selecting other plants at the sale. Plus, volunteering is a great way to get outside, build self-esteem, visit with fellow Wild Ones members, and enjoy some snacks and beverages too.

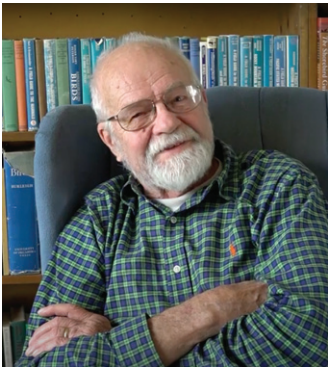
Volunteer shifts range from about two to three hours in the morning or afternoon on days before

the sale and during the sale dates. You can select just one spot or sign-up for more. We will have a complete schedule closer to the plant sale dates. Please contact Janet Giesen at janetgiesen@gmail.com if you are interested in helping with the plant sale this year. **We'd love to have you join us!**

Duties for plant sale volunteers include:

- Unpacking plants from trucks as they are delivered
- Placing ID tags in each of the plant containers
- Pulling customer pre-orders and making them ready for customer pickup
- Working with customers as they pick up their pre-orders
- Assisting customers as they select plants on sale dates (we'll have resources available)
- Watering plants and tidying up the pickup location

A Naturalist's Life: Lee Johnson Ed Foster



Lee Johnson

In honor of his 90th birthday, Wild Ones President, Jerry Paulson, and videographer Chuck Johannsen sat down for a far-ranging interview with well-known naturalist, Lee Johnson to discuss the changes he has witnessed in the local environment during his lifetime. An edited version of the interview was preserved on

January 20, and is archived on the WORRV chapter website, www.wildonesrrvc.org. This is a recap of the interview.

In 1838 Lee Johnson's great-grandparents walked from Chicago and settled by the Pecatonica River in Harrison, Illinois. At that time and for many years afterwards, the Rock River ran clear. Lee was born in 1931. During his early years, he often wandered around in nature and greatly enjoyed the ponds, creeks, streams, and rivers near his home.

On January 1, 1943 Lee started his first "year's list" of birds he had seen. Lee's sister was the better birder, as Lee preferred reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic creatures. By 1961, Lee had visited all 48 of the lower states looking for birds.

Colored Sands has exposures of Saint Peter's sandstone and sand deposits that were washed downstream by the Sugar River. It was a very open area with areas of open sand, but currently it is a black oak forest.

Lee first visited the Colored Sands area along the Sugar River in the 10th grade (1948). Most of the prairie had never been plowed. He bought the acreage and later sold it to the Winnebago Forest Preserve District with two stipulations:

- 1) They establish a nature preserve.
- 2) Folks could continue to band birds there.

Nets were first used to snare birds in 1966. Years ago, when they used 20 nets, 8,000 to 12,000 birds were caught each year. Recently with 100 nets, the average is only 4,000 per year.

Burpee Museum

Lee and his sister's first visit was amazing. The two

youths spent so much time enjoying the over 400 mounted birds on the 3rd floor that Milt Mahlberg, the museum's director, wondered what had happened to them. Mr. Mahlberg was soon a mentor to Lee and asked if he'd become his assistant. Years later Milt recommended to the museum board that Lee be the next director. Approved!

Changes in the Natural Landscape

Over the last 80 years or so, Lee has observed our local natural world disappearing. There are fewer native plants. Two former vernal ponds have disappeared. One at Highcrest and Alpine had many frogs. The other at Sandy Hollow and Alpine was home to lots of tiger salamanders. East of Alpine was "wilderness." Rockford's footprint has been steadily increased.

Shorewood Park in Loves Park was one of the best bird watching spots until the underbrush was cleared. The Rock River was a major clamming area for years. In most streams, the once plentiful aquatic life is gone. Land snails are almost gone from Winnebago County. Spring peepers (frogs) are rarer now. The cricket frog was the most common in Winnebago County. There are none now. The common garter snake is less common anymore. Yellow butterflies used to explode out of fields like clouds, but not anymore!

Birds in Winnebago County

Warblers have decreased the most. Small birds' numbers have declined while large birds have done better. Grassland birds are greatly diminished. Bobolinks and western meadow larks are gone. Bald eagles are becoming more common than red-tailed hawks. Prairie Chickens were seen until 1948.

Some southern birds have come north. Some populations have increased recently like orchard orioles, wild turkeys, and sand hill cranes.

What can we do?

We can create habitats in our own yards. Thickets, grass, bushes, and good, insect friendly trees will welcome other plants, animals and insects. According to Lee, Burr oaks can support more than 280 species, while a common maple tree supports only about 40 species.

This interview ended with pictures of Lee Johnson's many awards.

Membership Updates Sallie Krebs, Membership Coordinator

A membership e-form and our membership brochure describing the benefits of membership are both available on the chapter website (www.wildonesrrvc.org). Click on Join/Renew under the Membership tab. You can renew (or join) with any major credit card through PayPal (no PayPal account required) by using our website. We appreciate your support!

194 memberships as of December 27, 2021

Special thanks to our members who made contributions above the basic \$40 dues!

Janaan Lewis, Rockford
 Carrie Meyer, Silver Spring MD
 Jerry Paulson, Caledonia
 Ted Ross, Arlington Heights
 Paul & Carol Soderholm, Mount Morris
 Cindy Torrisi, Belvidere
 Diana Wiemer, Durand
 Teresa Wilmot, Rockford

Welcome to our new members!

Jennifer O'Bannon, Roscoe
 Nancy Olson, Roscoe
 Nicki Seaton, Machesney Park
 Teresa Wilmot, Rockford

New members are identified with a green ribbon on their meeting name badges. Please introduce yourself to them and help us welcome all new members to our great chapter!

Anniversaries:

5 Years:
 Brian Hale, Sycamore

It is preferred that renewal memberships be submitted through the Member Center online rather than by check for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. To renew your Wild Ones membership [Log in](#) or contact support@wildones.org for more information. Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter above your name on the label. You will receive several emails from the Wild Ones national organization prior to your expiration date. If you want to join Wild Ones as a new member go to the [Member Center](#). Remember that your dues include membership in both National Wild Ones and our chapter. If you need to mail a check, please use the address below:

WILD ONES
 ATTN: MEMBERSHIP
 2285 BUTTE DES MORTS BEACH RD
 NEENAH, WI 54912-1274

A portion of all dues paid is returned to the chapter by National Wild Ones to support our chapter activities. National Wild Ones provides liability insurance for our meetings and events. All dues and donations are fully tax deductible.

Please send address and email address changes to the Membership Coordinator: Sallie Krebs Email: membershipworrvc@gmail.com or call (815) 540-4730 if you have any questions about membership.

Wild Ones Annual Memberships:

Household \$40,
 Limited Income/Full-Time Student \$25,
 Affiliate Non-Profit Organization \$90,
 Business \$250

Thank you for your continuing support!



POLLINATOR PALOOZA

SEVERSON DELLS NATURE CENTER

Visit a variety of booths - including Wild Ones of Rock River Valley - to learn how your actions can support native pollinators. Learn how to design a pollinator garden that will impress the neighbors as well as the bees. Our pollinator-themed games and craft stations entertain visitors of all ages.

Saturday, April 23, 2022
 10 AM to 3 PM
 Sevenson Dells Nature Center

FREE

For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/pollinatorpalooza>

8786 Montague Rd. | Rockford, IL
 (815) 389-8455

[f](#) [o](#) [y](#)



NATIVE PLANTS. NATURAL LANDSCAPES

ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Sallie Krebs
1643 N. Alpine Rd., Suite 104
PMB 233
Rockford, IL 61107

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 02/1/2021, this is your last chapter newsletter and you have received your last *Wild Ones Journal* until you renew your membership. National Wild Ones drops expired memberships the first week of the expiration month, so please don't be late! See the *Membership Update* for renewal information.

Mail your renewal to:

WILD ONES

ATTN: MEMBERSHIP
2285 BUTTE DES MORTS BEACH RD
NEENAH, WI 54912-1274

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Wild Ones Mission

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

Rock River Valley Chapter Meetings

Due to COVID 19 restrictions on gatherings of more than 50 people we are not holding our regular meetings on the third Thursday of the month at Rock Valley College. Instead, we are meeting over ZOOM or posting videos on YouTube of the program. Links to the meetings and programs are posted on our website and our Facebook page, and sent to members via email the week of the meeting. If you want to receive the link send an email to: janetgiesen@gmail.com.

Rock River Valley Chapter Board and Coordinators

BOARD

President: Jerry Paulson
(815) 222.4414 paulsonjerry@aol.com
Vice President: Linda Tabb Ricker (217)
649.3966 greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com
Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865
catjohn_22@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912
janetgiesen@gmail.com
Board members:
Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044
kimlowvol@aol.com
Ed Foster (815) 654-3441 thistletwo@aol.com

Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson
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Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs
(as to the left)
Mentor coordinator: [open position]
Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell
(815) 969.7435 cynthiachmell@gmail.com
Native plant sale coordinators: Janet Giesen
(as to the left)
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Newsletter: production: Jessie Crow Mermel
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Plant rescue/seeds coordinator: Mary Anne
Mathwich (815) 721.5187 mprairedock@aol.com

Program coordinators: Lisa Johnson
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lejohanson3804@outlook.com
Mark Luthin (815) 543.7412
m.luthin@comcast.net
Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)
Publicity coordinator: Dawn Skupien
(815) 262.7864 dawnskupien@gmail.com
Show Me/Help Me coordinator:
Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)
Tree & shrub sale coordinator: Brian Hale
(815) 289.2384 treeandshrubsale@gmail.com
Volunteer coordinator: [open position]
Website coordinator: Janet Giesen (as to the left)
Youth education & grants coordinator: Kim
Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Booth coordinator: [open position]
Facebook coordinator: Sallie Krebs (815)
540.4730 membershipworrvc@gmail.com