

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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www.wildonesrrvc.org



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All articles for the June 2022 newsletter, must be submitted to:
paulsonjerry@aol.com
by May 21, 2022.

Identifying the Unknown: Practical Tips to Help You Identify Trees and other Woody Plants

Thursday, May 19, 2022

Time: 7:00 p.m.
via Zoom

It's a Bird Cherry... It's a Planetree... It's a Superform Maple! We have all encountered unfamiliar plants before. Our curiosity leads us to learn more about them. This presentation will help with the first step, identification. We will start by highlighting several botanical features used to identify trees and shrubs. Then, we will introduce some woody plant identification resources that are available for both beginners and experts.



Travis Cleveland

Travis Cleveland is an Extension Specialist within the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois. His primary responsibilities include conducting certification training programs, developing training materials, and revising publications for the University of Illinois Pesticide Safety Education Program. He provides subject matter expertise in landscape horticulture, woody plants, and plant pathology.

This presentation will be presented via Zoom. Information on how to connect to the Zoom presentation will be posted on the Chapter website (www.wildonesrrvc.org) and Facebook page, and distributed via email to members prior to the meeting. The program is free and open to the public. For more information call (815) 222-4414.



Message from the President Jerry Paulson



Jerry Paulson

This year the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Forest Preserve District. A petition for the creation of a forest preserve district, the third in the state, was submitted to Judge Robert K. Welsh on October 24th, 1922, and was approved by the electorate at the election of November 7,

1922. A total of 13,901 voters said yes to forming the district and Judge Welsh ordered the district organized on November 15th, 1922.

Though the District was officially organized in 1922, it did not become a reality until 1924 when the first forest preserve, Hononegah Forest Preserve, was acquired for the price of \$22,000. Stephen Mack, the county's first permanent white settler, had been operating a trading post on the site prior to 1835. The property was named after Stephen Mack's Native American wife, Hononegah. Three more preserves were purchased that year: Laona Heights Forest Preserve, Kilbuck Bluffs Forest Preserve, and Trailside Forest Preserve. Laona Heights is the highest point in the county and supports old-growth forest, Kilbuck Bluffs is the site of the first

sawmill in the county, and Trailside was a wayside for motorists on U.S. Highway 51 in New Milford.

Today the forest preserve district encompasses 44 preserves that total 11,500+ acres, including 3 golf courses, campgrounds, picnic shelters and play fields, several nature preserves, miles of hiking, biking and equestrian trails, fishing lakes, and thousands of acres of natural woodlands, wetlands, prairies and rivers that provide important habitat for our native songbirds, waterfowl, raptors and other fish and wildlife. It also includes Severson Dells Nature Center, Klehm Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, and Macktown Living History Center and historic village. About 1,760 acres of the land has been donated to the district by private citizens, community groups and the City of Rockford.

A celebration of the centennial of the District will take place on May 14th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Hononegah Forest Preserve near Rockton. A detailed history of the District from 1922 through 1979 written by David Bishop and Craig G. Campbell is posted on the forest preserves website: [History of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County](https://www.winnebago.org/History_of_the_Forest_Preserves_of_Winnebago_County).

Jerry Paulson is an appointed Commissioner of the Board of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County.

Volunteers Needed at Klehm Garden Fair

Jane Evans & Janet Giesen

We're looking for a few people to help sell native plants at the 2022 Klehm Garden Fair in June. Volunteers will work with Jane Evans at the RRVC booth. Please contact Jane at 815-494-7731 if you are interested in participating in this event. The dates and times are listed below.

Saturday, June 4

11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. (one volunteer)
2 to 5 p.m. (one volunteer)

Sunday, June 5

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (one volunteer)
12 to 2 p.m. (one volunteer)
1:30 to 4:30 p.m. (one volunteer)



100th Anniversary Celebration
Saturday, May 14, 2022 | 10am-2pm
Hononegah Forest Preserve
80 Hononegah Rd, Rockton, IL

Celebrate a century of protecting and enhancing Winnebago County's natural heritage at the FPWC 100th anniversary event. Enjoy interactive activities, food, and giveaways at Hononegah Forest Preserve.

www.winnebagoforest.org/events

Illinois Owls...Masters of Illusion and Silence Linda Ricker

On April 21, 2022, Wild Ones Rock River Valley was pleased to have University of Illinois Educator Peggy Doty present a program on Illinois Owls. As usual with Peggy, her presentation was full of great information and relatable experiences regarding the often silent and unseen birds.

We learned that while there are 19 species of owls present in North America, Illinois is home to or visited by only eight. Four of these are year-round residents, and four are present during the winter only. Those present year round include the Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Barn Owl, and Eastern Screech Owl. Those here during the winter only include Short-Eared and Long-Eared Owls, Snowy Owl, and Northern Saw-Whet Owl. Each species has its own set of calls for specific purposes, except for the Barred Owl.

Male and female owls nearly always have the same plumage, the exception being the Snowy Owl where the male is white. Females tend to be about 1/3 larger than their male counterparts. As a predator, they are at the top of the food chain. They are territorial and will kill and sometimes eat other owls. Mostly nocturnal by nature, there are some who can be seen hunting during the daytime, such as the Short-Eared Owl.

Owls perform a great ecological service by hunting things like rodents to keep their populations under control.

Owls have quite a variety of tools they can use. Talons with vice-like grips, some that can apply up to 500 pounds of pressure per square inch; satellite-dish faces that help them capture the sounds of prey to hone in on dinner; a swiveling neck that can turn almost 250 degrees or more, which allows them to turn the satellite dish face, as their eyes do not move side to side; are a few of these tools.

Of the four full time owls of Illinois, only the Barred Owl is not threatened with a decline in their numbers, while the Great Horned, Barn, and Eastern Screech Owls are all either threatened or actually listed as endangered (the Barn Owl) due to habitat loss. Cutting of old dead trees, where three of the owls like to nest (the Barn Owl prefers old buildings like barns as its name suggests), has reduced nesting area habitat and hence the number of owls produced is declining.

Preferring old tree cavities or woodpecker holes, owls generally breed during the winter months beginning courting in November for the Great Horned Owl,

on into February for the Barred Owl. Nesting on 2-7 eggs depending on the species, incubating for around 30 days, and in early spring the puffy owlets begin fledging or branching.

The Long-eared and Short-eared Owls, the Saw-Whet Owl and the Great Snowy Owl are only in Illinois for the winter. The long-eared owl sometimes is found living in small groups called parliaments, and is a strictly nocturnal owl. The Short-eared Owl will hunt during the day and nests on the ground in the Dakotas and the West. It also can be found in parliaments. The Northern Saw-Whet Owl is the smallest of the owls and is also a cavity nester in mixed conifer and deciduous forests. The males of the Snowy Owl species is nearly all white; this species is also a ground nester and prefers tundra, bogs, mixed forests and farm fields.

To find owls, there are several keys to do so successfully. You must know the habitat they prefer. Look for them at dawn or twilight. The presence of white stains from the uric acid they excrete can be a clue to where an owl has been roosting. Knowing their calls is helpful. Looking for pellets on the ground may locate a tree with an owl living nearby. The owls eat their prey: fur, feathers, bones and all. When the gizzard is full they will throw up the pellets, much like fur balls in cats, which contain the parts that couldn't be digested.

Helping to improve the habitat for owls is fairly simple. Try to mow less leaving more prey for the owls to hunt things like mice and voles. Leave trees with all their limbs even dead ones which provide great nesting cavities. Use rodent snap traps instead of poisons and leave the dead rodents out as "bird food" for these hunters to find. Planting native plants, trees, and shrubs helps support the bottom of the food chain to provide food for the owls. Wild Ones Rock River Valley offers natives plants in spring and trees and shrubs in the fall during our plant sales. See our website at wildonesrrvc.org for more information.

For those who are interested in building owl boxes, The Cornell Lab of Ornithology offers great ideas on building owl boxes with specifications based on the owls you are hoping to assist. You can find that information at <https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/>

If you missed Illinois Owls, you can look for the recorded program on our [website](#) under the meetings tab for 2022. Thanks again Peggy, for a great program.

July Member Tour and Luncheon **Linda Ricker**

On Saturday, July 16, we will be visiting the restoration prairie and wildlife habitat that RRVC member Ken Keilsmeier has been working on for several years. The prairie restoration is located on the farm of Ken's friends Mark and Joyce Long in Leaf River. They have been restoring a previous cornfield to a native prairie and adding shelter belts of native trees and shrubs to provide wildlife habitat near the prairie. Ken will take us on a tour of the project, giving us a prairie-schooner-like view of the prairie and wildlife habitat area he has been working on.

The wagon tour will run from 10:00 AM until about noon, after which we will enjoy a luncheon catered by the chapter and served by Ken's group of volunteers. Bottled water will be available. All you need to bring is a lawn chair, your own table service, and your camera for taking pictures of the beautiful prairie!

After lunch Ken will be available for questions and you will be free to walk the prairie on your own if you would like.

This event is free and open to all Wild Ones members and a single guest. If you would like to attend but are not yet a member you can easily join by going to this link and following the instructions <https://wildonesrrvc.org/Membership.html>

Please note that this year's tour will take place on a Saturday to accommodate more of our members' schedules. Look for more details about this event on the RRVC website and future newsletters.



Ken's Wagon Tour

Pollinator Palooza



Kim Lowman Vollmer & Linda Ricker, amazing volunteers for Pollinator Palooza at Severson Dells Nature Center on Saturday, June 23, 2022.

Happy recipient of the fun at Wild Ones Booth.



Our Conservation Partners: Friends of Nachusa Grasslands

Thank you for your donation of \$500.00 to Friends of Nachusa Grasslands designated for the Friends Fund for Science.



See <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/science-grants-2022.html> for information on this year's recipients and projects.

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands is powerfully responding to the opportunity to fund critical scientific research. We appreciate your being an active partner in exploring the wonders of Nachusa Grasslands.

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands

www.nachusagrasslands.org

Membership Update 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!

191 memberships as of April 25, 2022

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

Glenna Anderson, Roscoe
 Rick & Jane Hoffman, Monroe Center
 Thomas & Nancy Mangan, Clare
 Wendy Mertes, Oregon
 Deanne Pierson, Rockford
 Joanne Thompson, South Beloit
 Cynthia Chmell, Rockford
 Judy Letourneau, Rockford
 Mark & Laurie Luthin, Belvidere

Welcome to our returning member(s)!

Gordon Eggers, Rockford

Anniversaries:

15 Years:

Glenda & Craig Shaver, Rockford

10 Years:

Tom & Chris Hartung, Orangeville

Carla James, Rockford

Karen Retzke, Belvidere

5 Years:

Perry & Debbie Gay, Rockford

Linda & Robert Hess, Rockford

Ken & Jodi Kielsmeier, Oregon

Lora McClelland & Michael Simmons, Rockford

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!





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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 05/1/2021, 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:
Sallie Krebs
Wild Ones Rock River Valley
7492 Renfro Rd.
Cherry Valley, IL 61016



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

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Show Me/Help Me coordinator:
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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)