

*Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.*

Inside this Issue:

President's Message	2
Native Plant Sale News	2
Plant Sale Volunteers	3
Conference Recap	3
February Program Recap	4
Membership	5
Chapter Contact Information	6

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram



[www.facebook.com/wildonesrockrivervalley](https://www.facebook.com/wildonesrockrivervalley)

@wild-ones-rrvc



Scan with your Smartphone for more information about Rock River Valley Wild Ones

[www.wildonesrrvc.org](http://www.wildonesrrvc.org)

All articles for the April 2023 newsletter, must be submitted to: [icrowmermel@gmail.com](mailto:icrowmermel@gmail.com) by March 21, 2023.

*Illinois' Wild and Wonderful Early Bloomers presented by Cindy Crosby*

**Thursday, March 16, 2023**

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

**Zoom: <https://bit.ly/WO-March-Meeting-2023>**



**Cindy Crosby**

There's nothing like a blast of beautiful wildflower color after a long winter! Hear stories about our earliest spring wildflowers and their uses throughout history by Native Americans and early settlers as groceries, medicine, and even as love charms.

Discover some of the ways these wildflowers inspired art, poetry, and literature. Enjoy beautiful photographs of Illinois' wild and wonderful early bloomers and be inspired to add some of Illinois' native wildflowers to your own garden.

Cindy Crosby is the author, compiler or contributor to more than 20 books. Her most recent book is *Chasing Dragonflies: A Natural, Cultural, and Personal History* (Northwestern University Press, 2020). Cindy earned her master's degree in natural resources/environmental interpretation from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. She is a Master Gardener, a steward for the Schulenberg Prairie at The Morton Arboretum and a dragonfly steward at Nachusa Grasslands, a Nature Conservancy site with bison in Franklin Grove, IL. When she's not out working in her garden, she speaks and teaches on natural history topics in the Chicago region. Cindy blogs each week on Tuesdays in the Tallgrass at <https://tuesdaysinthetallgrass.wordpress.com/> and you can find her classes and events at [www.cindycrosby.com](http://www.cindycrosby.com).

This Zoom-only program is free and open to the public. This event can be streamed online through the Zoom link above or by clicking here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85115482575?pwd=QXpKcTZrZ25ub1NRNS9ZZ1VpMnYvQT09>. For more information, call (779) 537-8939. **Please note, there will be no recording of this month's presentation.**

## Message from the President Jerry Paulson



**Jerry Paulson**

At our last meeting, the Board of Wild Ones Rock River Valley chapter voted to make a dozen donations to other groups in northern Illinois and to the national office of Wild Ones to help support the planting and protection of native plants and natural areas. These funds come from our Native Plant sales, which are our major

funding source for our programs and operations (website, newsletter, speakers, etc.). Because we did not hold in-person meetings for most of the past three years during the COVID pandemic, we had extra money to give to other groups. These are the groups that WORRV made donations to this year:

- **Severson Dells Education Foundation**  
[www.seversondells.com](http://www.seversondells.com)
- **Sand Bluff Bird Observatory**  
[www.sandbluff.org](http://www.sandbluff.org)
- **Nature at the Confluence**  
[www.natureattheconfluence.com](http://www.natureattheconfluence.com)
- **Midway Village & Museum Center**  
[www.midwayvillage.com](http://www.midwayvillage.com)

- **Middle Rock Conservation Partners**  
[www.middlerockconservationpartners.org](http://www.middlerockconservationpartners.org)
- **Friends of Nachusa Grasslands**  
[www.nachusagrasslands.org](http://www.nachusagrasslands.org)
- **Angelic Organics Learning Center**  
[www.learn-grow-connect.org](http://www.learn-grow-connect.org)
- **Natural Land Institute - Save Bell Bowl Prairie**  
[www.naturalland.org](http://www.naturalland.org)
- **Sara Dykman - Monarch Education Project**  
[www.beyondabook.org](http://www.beyondabook.org)
- **Wild Ones Jo Daviess Co. Seedling Chapter**  
[www.jodaviesscounty.wildones.org](http://www.jodaviesscounty.wildones.org)
- **Wild Ones Seeds for Education**  
[www.wildones.org/seeds-for-education/](http://www.wildones.org/seeds-for-education/)
- **Wild Ones Natural Landscaping**  
[www.wildones.org](http://www.wildones.org)

I encourage you to check out these organizations and consider making your own donation. Make your plans for expanding your own native plantings and order your plants for the upcoming plant sale. Remember, by purchasing your native plants from our chapter, you are also helping to support the protection and restoration of native plants and wildlife throughout the region.

## 2023 Native Plant Sale News

We are excited to announce that the native plant sale brochure should be available both in print and as an online order form that can be submitted in early March. We've 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 *Lobelia cardinalis* (Cardinal flower) and *Penstemon hirsutus* (Hairy penstemon), we will be offering some new species this year, including *Claytonia virginica* (Spring beauty) and *Podophyllum peltatum* (May apple). There will also be over 30 additional plant species at the sale that will not be on the brochure.



**Lobelia cardinalis**

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.

**Orders due:** Friday, April 28

**Member's only pickup:** Thursday, May 11, 3:00-7:00 pm

**Order pickup & public sale:** Friday, May 12, 3:00-7:00 pm

**Order pickup and public sale:** Saturday, May 13, 9:00 am-2:00 pm

**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 or 815-762-5912

## Wanted: Plant Sale Volunteers

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 plant species

not listed on the brochure, get outside, build your native plant knowledge, 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



**2022 Volunteers**  
Photo by Janet Giesen

schedule closer to the plant sale dates. Please contact Cynthia Nelson at [cnelson18@niu.edu](mailto:cnelson18@niu.edu) or 815-758-8978 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

## "Toward Harmony with Nature" Conference Recap **Nicki Seaton**

I was recently lucky enough to get the opportunity to attend the Wild Ones Fox Valley Area 26th annual conference titled, "Toward Harmony With Nature," on January 28th, in Oshkosh, WI. It was comprehensive, informative, and interesting.

The first keynote speaker, Stanley A. Temple, focused on Aldo Leopold, land health and the resilience of nature. Much of what Stanley touched on came from excerpts of *A Sand County Almanac*, a collection of Aldo's essays. Aldo liked to use the concept of metaphors to help people understand concepts of conservation. For instance, he would use the phrase "capacity for self-renewal" instead of resilience when referring to land health. Other interesting ideas of his are the land-health and land-sickness concepts which basically can help gauge what a specific area of land needs or doesn't need. Some signs of land-health include stability, integrity, productivity or function and beauty. On the other end of the spectrum, land-sickness can include the decline of productivity, a decline or disappearance of species (endangered), reduced biodiversity, and shortened food chains among others. There are four requisites for land health: cease throwing away its parts, handle it gently, recognize that it transcends economics,

and don't let too many narrow special interests tinker with it.

The next speaker was Jennifer J. Wilhoit, who is a Spiritual Ecologist that gave a wonderful presentation on "Native Species and Ecotones. We Can't Do Without Them".

Wilhoit described an ecotone as a region of transition between two biological communities. After briefly supplying us with some examples, indicators, and characteristics of ecotones, she had us perform a couple exercises to help familiarize the audience with each other and also ecotones in our everyday lives. Jennifer showed the connection of native plants with ecotones as well as their importance.

After the lunch break, David Stevens took to the speaker's podium with "Native Shrubs and Trees, for the Bees and Birds". David gave a lot of great information about "Living Landscapes". He explained how a natural landscaped yard mimics nature, for example, choosing a variety of trees and shrubs of varying heights to mimic natural forest structure as to provide optimal habitat for a diverse array of species in our backyards. David also provided a "Pollinator Syndrome Traits" chart

*Continued on page 4*

## *Lessons Learned from a Backyard Prairie* Jerry Paulson February Program Recap

Fred Delcomyn, professor emeritus of the School of Integrative Biology at the University of Illinois, and James Ellis, Natural Areas Coordinator for the University of Illinois, shared the lessons they learned by restoring a tallgrass prairie on 2.5 acres of a former crop field in central Illinois in Fred's backyard. The property is located south of Champaign-Urbana in the middle of some of the richest farmland in Illinois. Both Fred and James are volunteers with the Grand Prairie Friends, a local conservation group that helps restore and manage prairies in central Illinois.



**Photo of Fred and James taken by L. Brian Stauffer**

Fred and James said when converting farmland to prairie you need to: 1) Have a vision of what you want to accomplish to guide you in selecting what species to plant. 2) Set realistic expectations; it takes several years to establish a healthy prairie and takes a lot of work and money. 3) Make a plan based on the soils, moisture, regional ecotypes and management needs like firebreaks. 4) Ask local experts for help especially in selecting what species to plant.

Some of the basic principles that Fred and James followed in establishing the backyard prairie were: 1) Keep soil disturbance to a minimum to control annual weeds; use a seed drill or frost seeding to plant seeds. 2) Plant seeds as heavily as you can and include a mix of grasses, forbs, rushes, and sedges. 3) Include 3-5 species of flowering plants for spring, summer and fall blooms that support pollinators. 4) Seed in late fall-winter or early spring.

### *Conference Recap, cont.*

that showed colors, odors, and flower shapes that appeal to particular types of pollinators. One of the resources that David provided was the National Wildlife Federation NativePlantFinder (<https://www.nwf.org/nativeplantfinder/>). This resource generates a list of plants by category according to zip codes along with what species of butterflies and moths, among other things, these plants attract. Another wonderful resource provided by David was the Illinois Wild Flowers Trees Index (<https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/>).

"Making Your Yard Wildlife Friendly" was the topic discussed by Randy Powers. Randy discussed the

Management of annual weeds during the first few years is important. Annual weeds will fade out, but persistent or perennial weeds, like Canada thistle, need to be controlled by cutting, burning, or spraying. After two or three years, the native prairie species will dominate and crowd out the weeds while putting down deep roots. Management using prescribed burns will maintain a healthy prairie, control invasive and non-native weeds and woody plants, and recycle nutrients in the plant litter. Fire was part of the prairie ecosystem, but you need training, permits, equipment and a burn plan to use it correctly.

Fred said that the prairie has become a haven for many insects, birds, and animals, including dragonflies, bugs, beetles, butterflies, moths, bees, spiders, and an occasional coyote. The lessons learned from reconstructing the prairie are: Be patient--it takes time and effort to establish a healthy prairie. It's beautiful in all seasons including the vistas, sky, clouds, and sunsets. The prairie offers an abundance of lessons about natural history and the interdependent web of life. Look closely and then look again and again.

The backyard prairie restoration effort has been chronicled in their 2021 book, *A Backyard Prairie: The Hidden Beauty of Tallgrass and Wildflowers*, published by Southern Illinois University Press. The book can be ordered from SIU Press at: <http://www.siupress.com/books/978-0-8093-3818-4>. Use Promo Code SIUP20 for a 20% discount on your order.

many different wildflowers that bloom at different times of the year so that our yards always have some food sources for the different species of wildlife that visit our properties throughout the entirety of the year.

The last speaker of the conference was Ryan Wallin who touched on "The Exotic Invasion of our Native Landscape". He recommended checking out the website SEWISC (<https://sewisc.org/>).

***Thank you for the recap, Nicki! Stay tuned for Dawn Skupien's thoughts on the conference next month.***

## *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](http://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!

### 172 memberships as of February 20, 2023

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

Brian Hale, Sycamore

Mark & Laurie Luthin, Belvidere

### Welcome to our new members:

Paul & Lisa Sikes, 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:

15 Years:

Meryl Domina, DeKalb

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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!**



**Get more involved with your Wild Ones Chapter!**  
We are looking for people to offer their talents and time with the following positions:

**President (in 2024)  
Treasurer  
Booth Coordinator**

**Mentor Coordinator  
Board Member-at-Large**



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 03/1/2023, 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.

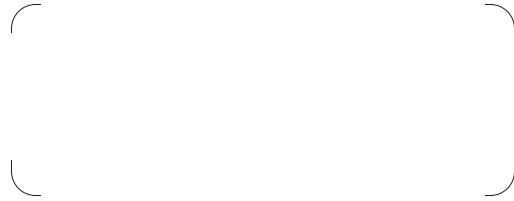
Mail your renewal to:

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*

Our regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month. We are live streaming the programs over ZOOM and posting recordings on YouTube. 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](mailto:janetgiesen@gmail.com).

### *Rock River Valley Chapter Board and Coordinators*

#### **BOARD**

*President:* Jerry Paulson

(815) 222.4414 [paulsonjerry@aol.com](mailto:paulsonjerry@aol.com)

*Vice President:* Linda Tabb Ricker (217)

649.3966 [greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com](mailto:greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com)

*Secretary:* Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865

[catjohn\\_22@yahoo.com](mailto:catjohn_22@yahoo.com)

*Treasurer:* Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912

[janetgiesen@gmail.com](mailto:janetgiesen@gmail.com)

*Board members:*

Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044

[kimlowvol@aol.com](mailto:kimlowvol@aol.com)

#### **APPOINTED COORDINATORS**

*Booth coordinator:* [open position]

*Facebook coordinator:* Dawn Skupien

(815) 262.7864 [dawnskupien@gmail.com](mailto:dawnskupien@gmail.com)

*Library coordinator:* Ginnie Watson

(815) 398.0138 [vswatson47@aol.com](mailto:vswatson47@aol.com)

*Membership coordinator:* Sallie Krebs

[membershipworrvc@gmail.com](mailto:membershipworrvc@gmail.com)

*Mentor coordinator:* [open position]

*Merchandise coordinator:* Cynthia Chmell

(815) 969.7435 [cynthiachmell@gmail.com](mailto:cynthiachmell@gmail.com)

*Native plant sale coordinators:* Janet Giesen (as to the left)

Jane Evans (815) 494.7731

Ginnie Watson (as above)

Cynthia Nelson [cnelson18@niu.edu](mailto:cnelson18@niu.edu)

*Newsletter editor-in-chief:* Jerry Paulson (as to the left)

*Newsletter editor and production:*

Jessie Crow Mermel (815) 955.0653

[icrowmermel@gmail.com](mailto:icrowmermel@gmail.com)

*Plant rescue/seeds coordinator:* Mary Anne

Mathwich (815) 721.5187 [mprairiedock@aol.com](mailto:mprairiedock@aol.com)

*Program coordinators:* Lisa Johnson (779) 537.8939

[lejohnson3804@outlook.com](mailto:lejohnson3804@outlook.com)

Mark Luthin (815) 543.7412

[m.luthin@comcast.net](mailto:m.luthin@comcast.net)

Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)

*Publicity coordinator:* Dawn Skupien (as to the left)

*Show Me/Help Me coordinator:*

Linda Tabb Ricker (as to the left)

*Tree & shrub sale coordinator:* Brian Hale

(815) 289.2384 [treeandshrubsale@gmail.com](mailto:treeandshrubsale@gmail.com)

*Volunteer coordinator:* Cynthia Nelson (as to the left)

*Website coordinator:* Janet Giesen (as to the left)

*Youth education & grants coordinator:* Kim

Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)