

*Promoting Native
Plants for Natural
Landscapes.*

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information about
Rock River Valley
Wild Ones

www.wildonesrrvc.org

All articles for the
February 2024 newsletter,
must be submitted to:
serendipitree@gmail.com
by January 20, 2024.

*Looking Forward to a Livelier Landscape:
Native Plant Landscapes, The Best is Yet to Come*

Thursday, January 18, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

**Cherry Valley Library
755 East State Street,
Cherry Valley, IL**

Zoom: <http://wildonesrrvc.org/>

***Pre-registration for Zoom now required.
See website for details.***

Having nature close by enriches our lives. This program provides ideas on how to bring more nature into our landscapes while capturing the spirit of your place. Discover some keystone plants to nurture more insects and create a more sustainable landscape. Learn about maintenance that embraces nature to create a flourishing ecosystem and what it takes to have a diversity of birds, bees, butterflies, and moths in your yard. Lastly, understand that plants migrate, and know if you plant it, they will spread.

Alan Branhagen is the new (since July 15, 2023) Executive Director of the Natural Land Institute in Rockford, Illinois, one of the nation's first land trusts. NLI has been responsible for protecting more than 18,000 acres of natural land, mainly in Northern Illinois.

Previously, Alan was Director of Operations at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in suburban Minneapolis-St. Paul (America's 15th largest public botanical garden) from 2017-2023. From 1996-2017, Alan was Director of Horticulture at Powell Gardens, Kansas City's botanical garden.

Alan's career began at the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County in Rockford, Illinois, where for almost a decade he was in charge of all forest preserve planning, development, and management. He was part of the beginning of the Klehm Arboretum which launched his public horticulture career. Alan's career has now come full circle back to Rockford.

Alan has a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from Iowa State University and a Master of Landscape Architecture from Louisiana State University. He is the author of 3 books: *The Gardener's Butterfly Book*, *Native Plants of the Midwest*, and *The Midwest Native Plant Primer*.

Alan will be available to sign copies of his books before the program. The program is free and open to the public.



Alan Branhagen
Photo by Jill Keenay

Message from the President Jerry Paulson



Jerry Paulson

This will be a busy year for our Wild Ones chapter as we celebrate our 30th anniversary as a chapter of the national organization devoted to promoting natural landscaping and native plants. We start with a program by Alan Branahagen on planting native plants to attract bees, butterflies, other insects, and birds to your yard. Alan, the new director of the Natural Land Institute and long-time member of Wild Ones, is a landscape architect, birder, and author of two books on native plants and natural landscaping. He will be available to sign copies of his books.

In February we hear from Rebecca Olson about setting up a rain garden. Peggy Doty, a favorite speaker and educator, will talk about wildlife in your yard in March, and Chris Benda, the Illinois Botanizer, will talk about ferns found in Illinois in April. In May our Native Plant Sale returns with hundreds of plants to purchase and

put into your yard to add beauty and improve habitat for birds, bees, and butterflies following the advice given us by Alan Branahagen.

On July 20th we will celebrate our 30th anniversary at the place where we started, Jarrett Prairie Forest Preserve in Byron, with a picnic, a historical display, and tours of the prairie in full bloom. We've invited our founding members and staff from the national Wild Ones office to join us for the occasion.

Plans for the fall include programs on food forests and pollinator gardens and our Native Tree & Shrub sale. A special program is planned for Saturday, October 19th about using native plants to create fall color and winter interest, and fall garden management strategies by Benjamin Vogt, author and environmentalist, along with an anniversary reception from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Our annual meeting on November 21st will honor long-time members, past officers and board members, and our conservation partners.

I look forward to celebrating nature and native plants with you all year in 2024 as we mark our thirty years promoting natural landscaping.

In My Yard Jane Evans

Historically, people believed that if a plant looked like a certain part of the body, it could be used to treat that body part. Many people believed that the leaves of boneset looked like broken bones fused together. Therefore, it was used to treat conditions related to bones by supposedly increasing blood flow to the thin tissues surrounding bones to help with broken bones and osteoporosis. Since it had antiviral properties, it was also used to treat diseases like dengue or breakbone fever. I could find no record of this working or not, but at that time without modern medicine, people were doing the best that they could.

One thing that we can be sure of though is that boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*) is a high-value host plant for pollinators, including butterflies, and is suitable for rain gardens. Growing to about 4 feet tall, it likes full sun and moist soil. As a late-season bloomer, it pairs well with jewelweed, cardinal flower, different sedges, pink turtlehead, small early sunflower, and early goldenrod.

Increase the conservation value of your garden with boneset.



Boneset Photo by Jane Evans

Annual Meeting Recap

On November 16th, 2023, our local chapter of Wild Ones gathered at the Cherry Valley Public Library for our annual meeting and seed exchange. Members enjoyed snacks and beverages provided by the Rock River Valley Chapter, while they exchanged seeds, chatted, and listened to the program; which included highlights from the year, native plant gift certificates to chapter volunteers, and updates on the Rockford Public Library's new seed library. Area resident and gardener Rebecca Beneditz spoke about initiating the seed library earlier in 2023 and introduced RPL Marketing Assistant Lara Griffin to talk more about the project located at the Hart Interim Library.

The annual seed share is one of the many benefits of having a Wild Ones membership, as purchasing native seeds and plants can be expensive. The counter was piled with envelopes and bags containing a variety of native plant seeds collected by members in 2023 to share. The seed exchange is a great way to add more diversity to our landscapes and support more native plants in our area. In addition to members gathering seeds to take home to plant in 2024, Wild Ones of Rock River Valley also collected an assortment of seeds to send along to the Rockford Public Library for their new seed library. If you are interested, more information on the Rockford Public Library's seed library can be found in our October 2023 Newsletter on page 4: https://wildonesrrvc.org/2023/10_October/October2023.pdf

Thank you to everyone for making 2023 a great year for our chapter. We look forward to some wonderful programming in 2024.



Lara Griffin accepts seeds for RPL's Seed Library from Jerry Paulson



Rebecca Beneditz explains sprouting the idea for the seed library.



Members Seed Exchange



Annual Meeting. Photos by Jessie Crow Mermel

Wild Ones New Logo and National Website

You may have noticed a new look to the Wild Ones logo and website.

At the end of 2023, Wild Ones national announced the results of the rebranding campaign. This brand update includes a modernized logo, refreshed graphics, and targeted messaging that clearly defines the mission; all accompanied by the launch of a new and improved website!

Wild Ones Board President, Loris Damerow shared her support stating, “The brand refresh brings clarity and focus to our mission. I am enthusiastic about the rebranding style guide and appreciate the careful thought that went into creating this relevant new look for our important environmental message. Wild Ones does connect people and native plants for a healthy planet!”



Evolution of the Logo



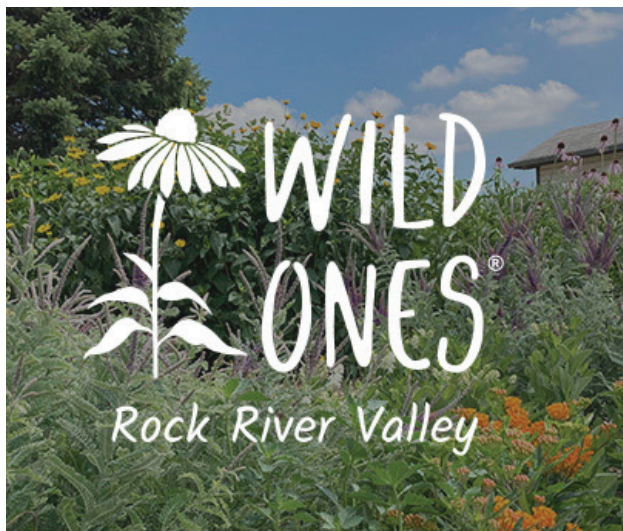
1988 - 1995



1995 - 2000



2000 - 2023



The New Website:

Along with the new logo, Wild Ones also launched a new website at the end of 2023.

Key Features of the New Website:

User-Friendly Interface: The redesigned website boasts a user-friendly interface, making navigation intuitive and enjoyable for everyone.

Mobile Responsiveness: Recognizing the prevalence of mobile browsing, the website is fully responsive, ensuring a seamless experience across all devices.

View the changes on the national organization's website: <https://wildones.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!***

189 memberships as of December 23, 2023

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

Elaine Hutchcroft, Rockford

Diane Kane, Clinton WI

Josh & Mollie Krecklow, Leaf River

Janaan Lewis, Rockford

Karen Matz, DeKalb

Welcome to our new member(s)!

Gary & Robin Anderson, Rockford

Chris French, Rockford

Lara Griffin, Rockford

Howard Knodle, Rockford

19 attended the November Meeting in person, and 3 via Zoom

A big thank you to our November meeting volunteers!

Greeters: Linda Ricker

Refreshments: Linda Ricker, Kim Lowman Vollmer, Cathy Johnson

Zoom: Janet Giesen

Meeting Recap: Jerry Paulson

Photographer: Jacquie Rheame

Seed Exchange tables: Kim Lowman Vollmer, Cathy Johnson

Anniversaries:

25 Years:

Josh & Mollie Krecklow, Leaf River

Upcoming Events

January 18 - Looking Forward to a Livelier Landscape with Alan Branhagan

February 15 - Setting up a Rain Garden with Rebecca Olsen

March 21 - Wildlife in Your Native Garden with Peggy Doty



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
Plant Sale Volunteers**

Contact Jerry Paulson to learn more and get involved: (815) 222.4414, paulsonjerry@aol.com



NATIVE PLANTS. NATURAL LANDSCAPES

ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

c/o Cathy Johnson

2205 S. Perryville Rd. PMB 191

Rockford, IL, 61108

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 01/01/2024, 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.



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.

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

catiohn_22@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912

janetgiesen@gmail.com

Board members:

Kim Lowman Vollmer (815) 397.6044

kimlowvol@aol.com

Carrie Meyer (301) 466.8754

Cmeyer@gmu.edu

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Booth coordinator: [open position]

Facebook coordinator: Jessie Crow Mermel

(815) 955.0653 serendipitree@gmail.com

Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson

(815) 398.0138 vsatson47@aol.com

Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs

membershipworrvc@gmail.com

Mentor coordinator: Barb Kober

kittykat1951@comcast.net

Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia Chmell

(815) 969.7435 cynthiachmell@gmail.com

Native plant sale coordinators: Janet Giesen

(as to the left)

Gloria Powell glrpowell610@yahoo.com

Ginnie Watson (as above)

Cynthia Nelson cnelson18@niu.edu

Newsletter editor-in-chief: [open position]

Newsletter editor and production:

Jessie Crow Mermel (as to the left)

Plant rescue/seeds coordinator: Mary Anne

Mathwich (815) 721.5187 mprairedock@aol.com

Program coordinators: Lisa Johnson

(779) 537.8939

lejohnson3804@outlook.com

Mark Luthin (815) 543.7412

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

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)