

Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.

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www.wildonesrrvc.org



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All articles for the March 2019 newsletter, must be submitted to:
Constance@wildonesrrvc.org
by February 23, 2019.

*Take a Closer Look:
A Photographic Prairie Walk
Thursday, February 21, 2019*

Location: Rock Valley College
Physical Education Center PEC0110 (lower level)
3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, 61114

Time: 7:00 p.m.



Take a break from winter and join us as John and Joyce Mori, each a PhD, take us on a photographic walk through various prairies, revealing their beauty through close-up photography. Both plants and their visiting insects will be featured. The emphasis is on the beauty, delicacy, and uniqueness found on prairies.

John has always been interested in nature and has been taking photos of natural subjects for 50 years. Several years ago he and his wife became interested in prairies. They were living near Peoria at the time. For three years they completed insect surveys on Illinois prairies for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources which included photography.

Upon moving to Rockford they were amazed at the wonderful job the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County is doing in preserving our local prairies. This sparked their interest to visit prairies in northern and central Illinois and to use close-up photography to illustrate the beauty and wonder of these prairies. Both Joyce and John take the photos, arrange them in presentations, and provide them to local nature groups to encourage people to see the wonder of the prairies themselves.

This program is free and open to the public.
For more information, call (779) 537.8939.



Message from the President Constance McCarthy



Constance McCarthy
photo by Tim Lewis

Since the writing of the January newsletter, we have filled several of the openings that remained among our board and coordinators. Please join me in giving a hearty welcome (back) to the following folks:

- *Volunteers.* Bringing experience garnered at NLI, among other places, **Laura Sjoquist** will be our volunteer coordinator. If you didn't return your annual membership survey (mailed to members in December 2018), you can always contact Laura if you are interested in volunteering in any of the many avenues open in our chapter. We would be happy to have you join us, as volunteers are the lifeblood of the chapter.
- *Treasurer.* In this case, we gratefully welcome back **Janet Giesen** to the treasurer role for our chapter. Even though she has said that this stint will not be as long as her previous run as chapter treasurer, we are very happy to have her back on the board.
- *Program committee.* Welcome to **Mark Luthin**, who has joined the ranks of the program committee. This talented group puts their heads together to plan and schedule all the speakers for our monthly meetings at Rock Valley College, and also plans the summer social and yard tour, as well as the annual potluck and seed exchange.

Many thanks, too, to all the chapter members who returned their annual survey and ballot. If you find your survey still laying around your house, you can still return it to the address noted on the form. If you have misplaced your survey, please contact me (contact info on the back page of this newsletter) and I'll be happy to send you another copy. Responses to the survey are one of the main ways that we line up volunteers for chapter activities. Spring is our busiest time of the year, with the plant sale, display of our chapter's booth at various events in the area (e.g., BirdFest), and selling native plants at non-chapter events (e.g., Nicholas Conservatory, Klehm Garden Fair).

Mini Grants Kim Lowman Vollmer, Youth Education and Grants Coordinator

Even though we have a great deal of snow and have been in the deep freeze, spring is just around the corner. It is time to start thinking about planting native plants. The Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones has a "mini grant" program for native planting projects for non-profit organizations. Perhaps your church wants to start a pollinator garden or your school would like to start a butterfly garden. You can find more information about the mini grants on our chapter's website (www.wildonesrrvc.org) under Resources. Applications to purchase plants at costs are due on April 1. If you have any questions, please contact Kim Lowman Vollmer, Youth Education and Grants Coordinator at kim@wildonesrrvc.org or (815) 397.6044



Events of Interest

The following events might be of interest to chapter members and friends.

Joys of Gardening: Annual symposium hosted by University of Illinois Extension – Stephenson County Master Gardeners on *February 16* at Highland Community College in Freeport. Keynote presentation, plus either 2 workshops or 4 workshops, as well as lunch. For more information or to register:

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=19674>

Wild Things Conference. Annual conference hosted by the Wild Things community. Saturday, *February 23* at the Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Keynote speaker plus an amazing number of breakout sessions. At least a few chapter members have attended this event and had very positive things to say about it. For more information and to register:

<http://www.wildthingscommunity.org>.

Gardener's Pathway: Annual gardening symposium hosted by University of Illinois Extension – DeKalb County Master Gardeners on Saturday, *February 23* at Kishwaukee College in Malta. Two keynote presenters, plus two breakout sessions and lunch. Look for our chapter's booth! For more information or to register: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=19569>

Gardening for Food, Flowers and Fun: Annual gardening symposium hosted by University of Illinois Extension – Winnebago County Master Gardeners, on *Saturday, March 2* at NIU – Rockford. Keynote presentation, plus 3 breakout sessions and lunch. Look for our chapter's booth! To register: go.illinois.edu/GFFF2019.

Sinnissippi Audubon annual dinner. *March 28* at 6:30 p.m., location TBA. Featuring keynote speaker Michael Kienitz, a nature photographer. For details, contact: sinnissippiaudubon@gmail.com.

For those starting to plan their summer fun already (a fine way to take our minds off harsh winter weather!):

- **Apostle Islands Kayak and Camping Trip.** Organized by Severson Dells Nature Center, *August 8-11*. More info on the Severson Dells website: www.seversondells.com
- **Severson Dells summer camps:** Many options to choose from. More info on the Severson Dells website: www.seversondells.com
- **Angelic Organics Learning Center farm camp:** Day camp and overnight farm camp at Angelic Organics Lodge; five sessions to choose from. Camp open house Saturday, *March 9*, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. More information on the Learning Center website: www.learn-grow-connect.org.

Volunteer Corner

If you have not already indicated an interest via the annual membership survey, and are interested in volunteering at the upcoming chapter events, contact volunteer coordinator Laura Sjoquist at sjoquist.laura@gmail.com:

- Staffing our chapter's display booth at Gardener's Pathway (*Feb. 23*) and/or Gardening for Food, Flowers, and Fun (*Mar. 2*).

Watch this space for future volunteer opportunities. Volunteering is a great way to meet fellow chapter members and others from like-minded organizations.



The January meeting audience listens to Arthur M. Pearson

photo by Tim Lewis

Recap January Meeting Constance McCarthy



Arthur M. Pearson

photo by Sallie Krebs

Arthur Melville Pearson, author of *Force of Nature: George Fell, Founder of the Natural Areas Movement*

While Jerry Paulson has suggested that a tree be named for George Fell, according to our speaker, Arthur Pearson, a tree should be named for Jerry and for Lee Johnson, and for others in the room tonight. He thanked all of us for what

it was sold it to Dr. Ransom, who ran a clinic/sanitarium, especially for the treatment of alcoholics and addicts. George Fell grew up on the grounds of the Wilgus sanitarium because his father was a doctor who treated patients there.

The father-son relationship was a complicated one. George loved his father, who was a prominent professional, but not an overtly warm or loving father. Dr. Fell liked to go off on his own and botanize (identify plants) when he had free time. The south side of river in the 1930s was rather undeveloped with tracts of forest land and gravel hill prairies where they found many wildflowers. George said that his father took him a few times to go identify plants, and he learned to love what his father loved. He majored in botany at the University of Illinois. He met Dr. Victor Shelford, a leading US ecologist who became a father figure for George. Dr. Shelford was adamant that academics had to apply their knowledge and research to actually protect land. After all, it is difficult to study birds and flowers if there is no natural land. He then founded the Ecologists Union in order to use knowledge to save land.

George went to grad school at the University of Michigan. He met and studied with Aldo Leopold, even though Leopold was at the University of Wisconsin. George really fell under the spell of Leopold. According to Leopold's Land Ethic, we have an ethical responsibility to each other, as well as to plants, birds, bugs, and the land. George took away the idea to elevate land preservation to a moral/ethical plane.

George went out into the world, wanting to protect land. But he graduated just as World War II was breaking out. He was a conscientious objector, which was a difficult decision for a young man at that time. The War was a popular one (i.e., widely supported by the public), and George's father had served with distinction in World War I and then in World War II. This didn't help George's relationship with his father. George spent five years in civilian public service camps, and during his free time he would botanize and send plant samples home to his father. They began to reknit their relationship over a shared love of native plants.

After the war, George came back to Rockford and met Barbara Garst. She studied botany at Rockford High School. George described their relationship as an alliance between them. They married and honeymooned at a gravel hill prairie

we do for natural areas.

George Fell was a real pack rat when it came to paper and documents, which are now archived at University of Illinois. While this has obvious downsides, it ultimately helped Arthur to write the book. When this book project was just getting started, Arthur went to the NLI offices and saw a large table covered with bankers boxes stuffed full of information – already an impressive sight. They then went upstairs to a walk-in closet full to the ceiling with boxes. Now he was really impressed. But they weren't done yet. On to the basement, where there were shelves lined with boxes, books, and antique printing presses. George knew how to use the presses and printed the first newsletters of the Nature Conservancy with them.

Arthur started reading the materials and learned how complex George Fell and his wife, Barbara, were, and the legacy they have left. In his presentation to our chapter, Arthur has added to George's story, as there are things that didn't make it into the book.

Arthur first spoke of the Rosendahl water cure. In the 1870s some enterprising Swedes found a mineral spring near Sinnissippi Park and thought that they would build a resort/spa there. However, it was not a commercial success. After 10 years,

Recap January Meeting (cont'd)

in the Rockford area. They committed their lives to saving these plants.

George began keeping a journal during their marriage about how to protect plants. They went all over the state to search for remaining natural areas. Illinois has 36 million acres of land, 22 million of which were originally tallgrass prairies. In 1978, only 2,500 acres remained: 0.0001% prairies and natural areas 0.0007% (including woodlands, wetlands, etc.). It was very challenging to find what was left.

After identifying these areas, George introduced a bill in Illinois to protect them. George didn't have money, connections, and other things that one needs to succeed in the political realm, but still managed to get the bill introduced. But it didn't fly at that time. Undeterred, he went to Washington DC to see if he could get the bill passed by Congress. He had one thing going for him in 1948-49: the U.S. National Trust for Historic Preservation was formed to protect important assets. He wanted something similar just for nature. However, the bill didn't go anywhere. If anything, he was persistent!

He turned to the Ecologists Union, the band of academics who wrote position papers to the government, but had never protected a single acre of land. George convinced them to form a nonprofit called the Nature Conservancy in 1950. Barbara and George worked full-time to do the articles of incorporation and bylaws to form the organization. They figured out how to structure the organization and develop memberships. George was earning no money, so Barbara was the breadwinner; she also volunteered as his assistant to make this all happen.

Soon, they actually started protecting land. They helped to protect the Mianus River Gorge in New York - the first land protected by the Nature Conservancy. The Volo Bog was the first land acquisition by the Illinois chapter, and George negotiated the deal. Several years later, it became a dedicated nature preserve. George spent 10 years with the Nature Conservancy. He then returned to Illinois to protect lands here.

He introduced another bill in Illinois, but the governor vetoed it. At the time, the Illinois legislature met only every other year. He reintroduced the bill, and it failed again. The Department of Conservation (the forerunner of the DNR) passed a version of the bill that the governor felt comfortable signing it. The Illinois Nature Preserves Commission actually put nature on the offensive. George was proactive and had a system

in place to slap ironclad protection on the land to preserve it. Almost every state now has a similar system based on the Illinois model.

George started going after natural areas to protect them in Illinois. There are over 400 nature preserves in Illinois; it is not a lot of land today, but it is strategic, high quality land. One third of all state listed threatened and endangered mammals, as well as 48% of all threatened and endangered plants are found in dedicated nature preserves. Nature preserves are the last refugia in the entire state for 10 animal species and 40 plant species. The nature preserves are almost like arks, functioning as a place of safety in the face of destruction.

Arthur and his wife are on a quest to visit all 400 nature preserves in Illinois. They have been to 100 so far, including the Greenlee Cemetery Prairie, Munson Township Cemetery Prairie, Kinnikinnick Creek Nature Preserve, Flora Prairie Preserve, Temperance Hill Cemetery, Amboy Marsh (protected by Audubon Illinois), Nachusa Grasslands, and Castle Rock State Park.

George was responsible for the entire Castle Rock State Park. His father loved to botanize there and found many special ferns there. George collected enough options on land to cobble together to make a state park. He needed to get 1,000 acres to create the park, which now has over 3,000 acres.

George spoke at the dedication of the 200th nature preserve, Mississippi Palisades State Park, on October 11, 1991. Although he stated his ambition to write the history of the natural areas movement, he died in 1994 without having written it. This is a critical part of our history. Arthur believes that George is as important as John Muir. George left in place systems that will continue long-term; this is his legacy.

The Nature Conservancy is the largest such organization in the world. George was instrumental in the conservation district movement/model (for states that didn't want forest preserve districts). The Natural Areas Association (NAA) is the umbrella group for all people who are professionals working in the natural areas movement.

When George was in his 70s, he was thinking about how the NAA should be in the future. However, people disagreed with George's vision. George actually agreed to go down that different path; he didn't fight it, and let others run with it. When the organization faced financial challenges, George found a wealthy donor to loan money

Recap January Meeting (cont')



Arthur M. Pearson signs his book, *Force of Nature: George Fell, Founder of the Natural Areas Movement*.

photo by Tim Lewis

to the NAA. George was suspected to be the person; however it was not a loan he made, but rather a gift. At the end of his life, he chose to support the long-term view.

Jerry Paulson noted that George could be challenging to work for, and Arthur agrees with that assessment. But the type of person who could have succeeded in doing what George did, needed to have George's "my way or the highway" attitude.

Arthur wrote the book because he hopes that

the memory of George will live on. We now stand on George's big shoulders.

The audience had several questions for Arthur.

While there have not yet been any attempts to write a children's book about George, Arthur says he would like to discuss this with Jerry Paulson.

What exactly is meant by "protected"? A nature preserve can also be on private land. There is a legal covenant that goes with the land which protects land from development for any other purpose. Protecting the land for nature is the best and highest purposes for the land. This idea goes back to Roman law, which believed that it is important to have land for the public good. Although the federal government could seize protected land by an act of condemnation, there are so many steps to be taken that it is virtually impossible. No nature preserve anywhere in the country has ever been challenged.

Lynda Johnson added that Lee Johnson helped George get the nature preserves bill passed. Lee testified before the legislature in support of the bill. Paul Simon even remembered Lee when they met again in the 1990s. It was very challenging to get the bill passed. Sometimes there are personality conflicts about who will be in charge and who will manage things. George didn't want to be under the thumb of government control, and this was a constant tension and major struggle for George. In fact, the Nature Preserves Commission functioned very well and with a high degree of independence. George wanted to make that permanent because he knew he wouldn't live forever. George sacrificed a lot in this ongoing struggle, and fought many heartbreaking battles.

There is a George Fell Nature Preserve in Castle Rock State Park.

Social Media and Blog Corner

The following blogs and social media accounts might be of interest to chapter members and friends.

Cindy Crosby, who spoke at one of our meetings in 2018 (and will be speaking again in 2019), can be found at the following places:

- Tuesdays in the Tallgrass: a blog exploring landscapes through the tallgrass prairie.
www.tuesdaysinthetallgrass.wordpress.com
- Facebook: cindy.crosby.944
- Twitter and Instagram: phrelanzer

Strategies for Stewards from Woods to Prairies: blog about the Somme Prairie Nature Preserve, written by Steven Packard:
woodsandprairie.blogspot.com

Instagram accounts of note, all featuring photos of regional flora and fauna:

- BrownSignGal

- CornellBirds
- Nachusa
- IllinoisConservation
- DiscoverMCCD (McHenry County Conservation District)
- NLI1958
- INHSillinois (Illinois Natural History Survey)
- il_native_plant_society_ne
- SeversonDellsNatureCenter
- illinoisbotanizer (another 2018 speaker at one of our monthly meetings)

If you'd like to share any favorite blogs or social media accounts that you follow related to native plants and the natural world, please forward the information to Constance McCarthy (contact info on the last page of this newsletter).

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!!

215 memberships as of January 22, 2019

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

Jim & Sallie Krebs, Cherry Valley
 Thomas Mangan, Clare
 Karen Matz & John Skowronski, DeKalb

Welcome to our new member!

Paulette & Rachel Olson, Machesney Park
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!

71 attended the January meeting, including at least 6 guests

Greeters: John & Joyce Mori
Refreshments: Anita Johnson
AV/Sound Equipment: Bob Arevalo
Meeting Recap: Constance McCarthy
Photographer: Tim Lewis, Sallie Krebs
Library Assistants: Cathy Johnson, Linda Ricker

Anniversaries: 10 Years:

Audrey Jansen, Rockford



It is preferred that membership renewals be sent directly to the chapter for quicker processing and to avoid delays in receiving your chapter newsletter. Remember that your dues include membership in both National Wild Ones and our chapter. Please use the address below:

Sallie Krebs
 Wild Ones Rock River Valley
 7492 Renfro Rd., Cherry Valley, IL 61016

Your expiration date is on your chapter newsletter above your name on the label. You will be mailed a renewal reminder from the chapter two months prior to your expiration date with a completed membership form and return envelope for your convenience.

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: membership@wildonesrrvc.org 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!

2019 Chapter Programs and Events

February 21 7:00 p.m.	Take a Closer Look: A Photographic Prairie Walk	John Mori Nature Photographer, Lecturer	Rock Valley College PE Ed Center
March 21 7:00 p.m.	Midwifing the River: the Rebirth of Nippersink Creek	Ed Collins Director of Land Preservation & Natural Resources, McHenry County Conservation District	Rock Valley College PE Ed Center
April 18 7:00 p.m.	Native Plant Gardens	Susan Carpenter Senior outreach specialist, UW-Madison Arboretum	Rock Valley College PE Ed Center
May 16 7:00 p.m.	Beneficial Insects in Your Garden	Jennifer Lazewski Master Gardener, expert in native	Rock Valley College PE Ed Center
June 20 7:00 p.m.	Prairie Ethnobotany: People & Plants	Cindy Crosby The Morton Arboretum	Rock Valley College PE Ed Center

Unless noted, programs are free and open to the public. Programs are subject to change.
 For more information, contact Lisa Johnson at (779) 537.8939



NATIVE PLANTS, NATURAL LANDSCAPES

ROCK RIVER VALLEY

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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

Don't become extinct!

If the expiration date on the mailing label is 2/1/2019, 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

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

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Rock Valley College, Physical Education Center PEC0110 (lower level), 3301 North Mulford Road, Rockford, 61114.

Special meetings, outings, and events are scheduled periodically and sometimes replace the regular meeting. Contact any officer to confirm information about our next meeting.

Rock River Valley Chapter Board and Coordinators

Board

President: Constance McCarthy
(815) 282.0316 constance@wildonesrrvc.org

Vice President: Jerry Paulson
(815) 222.4414 jerry@wildonesrrvc.org

Secretary: Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865
cathy@wildonesrrvc.org

Treasurer: Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912
janetgiesen@gmail.com

At-Large: Doreen O'Brien (815) 985.4064
doreen@wildonesrrvc.org

At-Large: Kim Lowman Vollmer
(815) 397.6044 kim@wildonesrrvc.org

Coordinators

Membership: Sallie Krebs (815) 627.0343
membership@wildonesrrvc.org

Newsletter-Production: Pambi Camacho
(815) 332.7637 pambi@wildonesrrvc.org

Newsletter-Editorial: Constance McCarthy
(as to the left)

Volunteers: Laura Sjoquist
sjoquist.laura@gmail.com

External Plant Sales: Jane Evans
(815) 399.3787 Constance McCarthy (as to the left)

Native Plant Sale: Cynthia Chmell & Bobbie Lambiotte, (815) 969.7435 & (815) 398.6257

Tree & Shrub Sale: Brian Hale, (815) 289.2384,
moyogi2@gmail.com; Jerry Paulson (as to the left)

Plant Rescues & Seed Collection:
Mary Anne Mathwich (815) 721.5187
maryanne@wildonesrrvc.org

Programs: Lisa Johnson, (815) 965.3433,
lisa.johnson@burpee.org

Youth Education & Grants:
Kim Lowman Vollmer (as to the left)

Booth, FREC rep., website: Tim Lewis
(815) 874.3468 tim@wildonesrrvc.org

Facebook: Sallie Krebs (as to the left)

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Mentors: [open position]

Merchandise: Cynthia Chmell
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Show Me/Help Me: Linda Ricker, (217)
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