

**Promoting Native Plants for Natural Landscapes.**

Inside this Issue:

Message from the President	2
Volunteer Opportunities	2
January Meeting Recap	3-4
Membership	5
Chapter Calendar	5
Chapter Contact Information	6

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



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



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



All articles for the March 2020 newsletter, must be submitted to:  
[Constance@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:Constance@wildonesrrvc.org)  
by February 23, 2020.

*Aldo Leopold, Phenology, and Climate Change*  
*Thursday, February 20, 2020*

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

Time: 7:00 p.m..



Aldo Leopold, best known as the author of *A Sand County Almanac*, was a keen observer of the natural world. Throughout his life he kept daily journals recording observations of seasonal events, especially those occurring at his beloved “shack” on the Leopold farm, the setting for many of his essays. Leopold’s meticulous phenological observations provide an unparalleled record of when plants bloomed, birds migrated, and other natural events took place. Comparing his notes to recent records

helps to understand how climate change is affecting the ecological community.

Stanley A. Temple is the Beers-Bascom Professor Emeritus in Conservation in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He will talk about the lessons learned from Leopold’s journals, and how the records Leopold kept are an invaluable resource for documenting effects on plants and animals from climate change. Dr. Temple is currently a senior fellow with the Aldo Leopold Foundation, where he continues to work on local and global conservation issues. He has received major conservation awards from the Society for Conservation Biology, the Wildlife Society, and the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, among others. He has served as chairman of the board of The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin and has authored more than 300 papers on ecology and conservation.

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*

Our chapter's 2020 is off to a great start! In spite of the serious cold snap, around 90 people attended our January program at Rock Valley College - one of the largest crowds we've had in a long time. Northern Public Radio (WNIJ) even sent a reporter to cover the event, and an article about it appeared on their website. Of course we are happy to have our

message shared with a much wider audience, and thank WNIJ for their support.

Many thanks, also, to all of you who returned your annual membership surveys by mail and in-person at the January meeting. Even if you did not return your survey to indicate events and activities for which you'd like to volunteer, please check out

## Volunteer Opportunities

Spring is right around the corner - the busiest time of year for our chapter.

That means there will be numerous volunteer opportunities coming up. You need not be an "expert" about natives in order to volunteer! If you are interested in helping with any of these events, contact Laura Sjoquist, our chapter's volunteer coordinator (contact info on the back page of this newsletter).

Our chapter's **display booth** will be making an appearance at the following events:

- *Gardener's Pathway*, Saturday, 22 Feb., Kishwaukee Community College, Conference Center, Malta IL; and
- *Gardening for Food, Flowers, and Fun*, Saturday, March 7, NIU Rockford (hosted by U of IL Extension, Winnebago County Master Gardeners); and
- *BirdFest*: Saturday and Sunday, May 9-10, Sand Bluff Bird Observatory (at Colored Sands Forest Preserve).

If you haven't staffed the booth before, you'll be paired with a more experienced chapter member. Staffing the booth involves engaging with folks attending the event and answering questions

the article elsewhere in this newsletter regarding upcoming volunteer opportunities. Spring is when things really ramp up for the chapter, and we will need all the help we can get to make our events a success. Updates will be provided monthly about the opportunities. Please consider giving a few hours of your time to the chapter to help us work in a variety of ways to spread the word about natives.

If you're new to the chapter and don't know many other members, or if you're just beginning to learn about natives, don't be dissuaded from volunteering! I've said it many times before: we are overall a quite friendly and welcoming bunch. Volunteering is a great way to learn more about natives from other members, and to meet other members. Details on volunteering are found in the related article in this newsletter.

There are both weekend and weekday time slots available for volunteering, and a variety of different settings. We would be so happy to have you join us! Many hands make light work!

about chapter events and native plants.

Our chapter's **plant sale** is also around the corner. Details will be provided in the next newsletter, but opportunities will include helping to pull orders (*organizing the orders* that have been placed in advance) on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 5 and 6, as well as *help on the pick-up and public sale days*, Friday and Saturday, May 8 and 9. We will also need volunteers to staff the small tent from which we will be *selling native plants at BirdFest* on Saturday and Sunday, May 9-10 (see above).

Finally, along with Forest Preserves of Winnebago County, our chapter is co-sponsoring **Nature Fiesta** on Saturday, May 16 at Severson Dells (tentative location). This event is targeted at the Hispanic community in our area. We will be selling native plants and offering nature-related children's activities. There is a special need for Spanish-speaking volunteers and those who enjoy working with kids.

Watch the newsletter for more information on our many upcoming volunteer opportunities. We can accomplish nothing without our volunteers, and are grateful to those of you who are willing and able to help us achieve our goals!

## January Meeting Recap Cathy Johnson

*photo by Sallie Krebs*

### Native Plants: Seed, Root, Division and Cutting Propagation



The Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones opened its 2020 program year with a presentation by Peggy Redington discussing the basics of growing prairie plants from seeds, roots, divisions, and cuttings, and the process of vernalization. Peggy is a graduate of Kishwaukee

College, with an AAS Horticulture degree in greenhouse management and certificates in greenhouse production and garden center management. She has more than 20 years of experience in the horticulture industry in such positions as greenhouse management, nursery management, display gardens, landscape design, and cannabis production. Peggy was formerly the greenhouse manager of the Kishwaukee College horticulture program, where her emphasis was to support the instruction of all the horticulture program students, while also creating, maintaining, and beautifying the campus display gardens.

Today, Peggy and Bryan Redington own and operate Country Road Greenhouses (CRG), a native plant nursery with 11 greenhouses on six acres near Rochelle, Illinois, and two acres of prairie which are currently being expanded to allow for more seed collection. The focus at CRG is to provide native prairie plants, grasses, sedges, and rushes to forest preserve districts, park districts, and others for use in environmental restoration, native landscaping, wetland mitigation, streamside and lake bank stabilization and enhancement, environmental education, and sales and distribution to groups that promote the use of native plants, including the Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones.

At CRG, around 90% of the plants are grown from seed or cuttings which are collected on the property, and they are currently working on providing a source of native trees and shrubs. They maintain a hive of over 10,000 honeybees and are

always looking for more ways to support native plants, pollinators, and wildlife in our region. You can learn more about Country Roads Greenhouses at [www.prairieplugs.com](http://www.prairieplugs.com).

Peggy began her presentation with a list of the top five most popular plants at Country Road Greenhouse in 2019:

- Blue flag iris (*Iris virginica shrevei*)
- Water willow (*Justicia americana*)
- Marsh milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)
- Lizard tail (*Saururus cernuus*)
- Pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*).

CRG uses a process of vernalization in plant propagation, which simply means exposing seeds to conditions which attempt to replicate those they would undergo in nature. Not all plants require vernalization, but using this process of controlled growing speeds up the propagation process and stimulates plants to induce flowering in spring and summer. Many people spread seed in snow over the winter, but when snow is very light, like this year, using a vernalization process can be especially beneficial.

Peggy described the process to use with a few specific prairie plants, but there are many additional resources for information about native plant propagation of other species, including books such as *Making More Plants: The Science, Art, and Joy of Propagation*, by Ken Druse, which can be found in the chapter's library during monthly programs at Rock Valley College. Many other resources can be found online, including:

- National Seed Laboratory [www.fs.usda.gov/nsl/](http://www.fs.usda.gov/nsl/)
- Reforestation, Nurseries and Genetics Resources (RNGR) [npr.rngr.net/propagation/techniques](http://npr.rngr.net/propagation/techniques)
- Prairie Moon Nursery [www.prairiemoon.com/blog/faqs](http://www.prairiemoon.com/blog/faqs)
- [theplanthunter.com.au/howto/propagating-native-plants-with-nancy-shaw/](http://theplanthunter.com.au/howto/propagating-native-plants-with-nancy-shaw/)

#### **Seed Propagation**

CRG collects about 90% of the seed they harvest for propagation from their own prairie. Seed from other sources comes primarily from the DeKalb County Forest Preserve District and Prairie Moon Nursery. The vernalization techniques used vary by species. Not all natives benefit from controlled growing, but many do. Peggy provided a brief overview of the process:

- Seeds are placed in a propagation mix in a 288-cell plug tray. Each plug is around the size of

## January Meeting Recap (cont'd)

your thumb nail.

- Most seeds are covered lightly with vermiculite and watered well.
- Most species are then wrapped in black garbage bags and put into a refrigerated environment. At CRG they use a walk-in cooler, but it could be a home refrigerator or other cold environment.
- Plants are left in the cooler for prescribed amounts of time and checked periodically for progress.
- Following the cooler, they are moved to a heated greenhouse or similar environment where they begin to warm up.
- Sometimes bottom heating is provided by mats placed below the plants when they come out from the cooler.
- Regular misting helps to prevent the plants from drying out. After germination, misting can be reduced.
- When the plant has reached an appropriate size, it is transplanted to a 5" plug.

Some examples of this process were provided for specific plants.

### **Queen of the prairie (*Filipendula rubra*)**

Place seeds in a propagation mix in a 288-cell plug tray and cover lightly with vermiculite. Water well and cover with a black garbage bag. Place in cooler for 90 days. In early spring, move to a heated greenhouse with bottom heat source. Mist regularly while germinating. This plant can be hard to propagate from seed and can be divided instead.

### **Shooting star (*Dodacatheon meadia*)**

This plant can be difficult to propagate from seed and can also be divided. Place seeds on propagation mix, but do not cover. Wrap in a garbage bag and place in a cooler for 21 days. In early spring, supply bottom heat. This plant likes cooler growing conditions to germinate. It takes 2-3 years to produce a nice plant.

### **White wild indigo (*Baptisia leucantha*)**

Place seeds, in an amount that would cover about the size of a dime, in a baggie and cover with water. Place in freezer and use a freeze/thaw process to simulate outdoor conditions until spring to weaken the seed covering. In early spring, sow in an open flat and move to a greenhouse with bottom heat. Mist regularly. It can take two years to produce a nice plant.

### **Bottle gentian (*Gentian andrewsii*)**

Sow on propagation mix but don't cover. Water well, wrap in a garbage bag and place in cooler for

60 days. In spring, apply bottom heat in greenhouse and mist regularly until germination. (Here is a link to a slightly different process for propagating this plant. [www.everwilde.com/store/Gentiana-andrewsii-WildFlower-Seed.html](http://www.everwilde.com/store/Gentiana-andrewsii-WildFlower-Seed.html))

### **Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)**

Propagate using the same process as for the gentian.

### **Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)**

Sow seeds on propagation mix and cover well with vermiculite. Water well, wrap tray with a garbage bag and place in a cooler for 30 days. Place on a bottom heater in a sunny, warm growing spot and mist regularly until germinated.

### **Compass plant (*Silphium laciniatum*)**

Place seeds on an open flat of growing media. These seeds grow fast, so a propagation mix is not necessary. Cover so all seeds are covered. Water well and place in a garbage bag. Place in a cooler for 60 days. In spring, place on a bottom heater to germinate. Keep under regular mist until germination begins.

### **Blue Flag Iris (*Iris virginica shrevei*)**

Wild iris is best germinated by spending 120 days in the cooler immersed in a bag of water. When spring arrives, place seeds on an open flat of propagation mix. Cover with media and keep moist. Germinate by placing on bottom heat. Mist regularly until germination begins, then reduce watering.

### **Root Propagation**

Collect roots as they develop. Plant them in soil and keep them moist. This can be used with plants that are hard to collect seeds from, such as pussytoes

### **Propagation by Cuttings**

For propagating shrubs/softwood and hardwood, take fresh cuttings in fall. Cut just below a node. Dip cutting in a rooting chemical, such as Dip n Grow. Insert in a hole in sand (sanitized), or well-draining soil. Keep outside protected or in a cooler at 38-40 degrees. Keep moist until roots develop, which should be about a week.

### **Propagation by Division**

Many plants can be divided, including iris, pussytoes, prairie smoke, wild indigo, shooting star, queen of the prairie, and blue eyed grass. Plants benefit from being divided, and it will increase the stock. This is a good alternative to propagation for plants with seeds that are hard to collect.

In closing, Peggy said that group tours are welcome at CGR in the spring and summer and suggests that you contact them if you are interested in scheduling one.



# 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!!

## 207 memberships as of January 23, 2020

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

- Mike & Kathy Crandall, Winnebago
- Janet Giesen, Sycamore
- Brian Hale, Sycamore
- Thomas & Nancy Mangan, Clare
- Karen Matz & John Skowronski, DeKalb
- Steve Symes, Belvidere

### Welcome to our new member(s)!

Pablo Toral, Beloit

*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!*

90 attended the January meeting, including at least 13 guests

A big thank you to our January meeting volunteers!

- Greeters:* Judy Letourneau
- Refreshments:* Anita Johnson
- AV/Sound Equipment:* Bob Arevalo
- Meeting Recap:* Cathy Johnson
- Photographer:* Sallie Krebs
- Library Assistants:* Cathy Johnson, Jacqueline Rheaumer

### A special thank you to:

The Northern Public Radio (WNIJ) team (Connie, Jocelyn & Sam) for covering the meeting and for the excellent article!

### Anniversaries:

#### 5 Years:

- Sylvia Parson, Loves Park
- Brian & Kathryn Sewell, Rockford

### In Memoriam:

In memory of our former Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter members  
Kathie Ayres - Member 1999-2019

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](mailto: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!

### Events of Interest

#### Gardening for Food, Flowers, and Fun

Sat., Feb. 22 • NIU Rockford, 8500 E. State St.  
This day-long conference is sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension - Winnebago County Master Gardeners. There will be a keynote speaker and three break-out sessions, plus lunch. Registration fee is \$40. For more information and to register, visit the Extension's website at <https://extension.illinois.edu/jsw>.

# 2020 Chapter Programs and Events

<b>February 20</b>	Climate Change & Phenology	<b>Dr. Stanley Temple</b>	Rock Valley College Phys. Ed. Center
<b>March 19</b>	Sedges: Not Just Some Kind of Grass	<b>Andrew Hipp</b>	Rock Valley College Phys. 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 2s/1/2020, 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](mailto:constance@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Vice President:* Jerry Paulson  
(815) 222.4414 [jerry@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:jerry@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Secretary:* Cathy Johnson (815) 978.0865  
[cathy@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:cathy@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Treasurer:* Janet Giesen (815) 762.5912  
[janetgiesen@gmail.com](mailto:janetgiesen@gmail.com)

*At-Large:* Ken Kielsmeier (815) 289.2812  
[jodikiels@gmail.com](mailto:jodikiels@gmail.com)

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

### **Coordinators**

*Membership:* Sallie Krebs (815) 627.0343  
[membership@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:membership@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Newsletter-Production:* Pambi Camacho  
(815) 332.7637 [pambi@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:pambi@wildonesrrvc.org)

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

*Volunteers:* Laura Sjoquist  
[sjoquist.laura@gmail.com](mailto:sjoquist.laura@gmail.com)

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

*Native Plant Sale:* [open position]

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

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

*Programs:* Lisa Johnson, (815) 965.3433,  
[LeJohnson3804@outlook.com](mailto:LeJohnson3804@outlook.com)

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

*FREC rep., website:* Tim Lewis  
(815) 874.3468 [tim@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:tim@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Booth:* [open position]

*Facebook:* Sallie Krebs (as to the left)

*Library:* Ginnie Watson (815) 398.0138  
[library.rvc@gmail.com](mailto:library.rvc@gmail.com)

*Mentors:* [open position]

*Merchandise:* Cynthia Chmell  
(815) 969.7435 [chmell@wildonesrrvc.org](mailto:chmell@wildonesrrvc.org)

*Publicity:* Dawn Skupien (815) 262.7864  
[dawnskupien@gmail.com](mailto:dawnskupien@gmail.com)

*Show Me/Help Me:* Linda Ricker,  
(217) 649.3966,  
[greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com](mailto:greencreations.lejoi@gmail.com)