




FRIENDS OF
NACHUSA
GRASSLANDS

2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Then & Now



"Grass is where I began my journey,
and in grass I will end it."

– Annick Smith,
Big Bluestem: Journey into the Tallgrass

Message from the President



BERNIE BUCHHOLZ ★

As Nachusa's first bison stomped off the cattle truck in early October, a long-time steward observed expectantly, "This changes everything!"

Indeed, much has changed over the 28 years leading up to this milestone moment. It is an ideal time to look back to where we came from.

Consider Ralph Burnett's story. In 1986 he bought the first Nachusa parcel at auction. He was a successful farm broker, and admits he was thinking about compensation when he purchased the parcel, not conservation. Ralph had no idea of Nachusa's potential. But what he witnessed, he said, was "almost like magic" when overgrown remnants rebounded in native flowers, and cornfields became prairie.

Now 91 years old, Ralph still visits Nachusa once or twice a year. He says he is "amazed at the phenomenal" work that has been accomplished. He considers the restoration of Nachusa one of the "great satisfactions of my life." Now, Ralph is working to permanently protect part of his family's 100-year-old farm, even planting the trees his mother used to dream of seeing there.

Ralph's open-mindedness led to a rich appreciation of Illinois prairie. His story is only one of many stories of change in our "Then and Now" themed annual report. We're still writing our story of change, most recently with the reintroduction of the bison. Why do bison "change everything"? Bison will nudge Nachusa closer to the fully functioning prairie that once covered this region. Bison will increase the diversity of birds, insects, amphibians and plants. And – at least when we aren't safely in a pickup truck – bison will reduce man's unchallenged dominance over this historic landscape.

Enjoy these stories, images, and reflections about change at Nachusa. And remember that despite the changes, one thing remains unaltered: the commitment of the staff and volunteers to restore this threatened and majestic landscape.

May your role in this effort be one of the great satisfactions in your life.

Bernie Buchholz

President, Friends of Nachusa Grasslands
November 2014



... "almost like magic" ... ✂

RALPH BURNETT



THE BISON HAVE ARRIVED. +



JOHN HENEGHAN ★



MIKE CARR ★



MIKE ADOLPH ★

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BACHTOLD MOWER: ROD SCHICK AND JAY STACY, 1995 ✪

ROD SCHICK IN THE LOADER TRACTOR, 1994 ✪



TODD BITTNER IN THE MINI-TRACK HOE WITH GATOR, 1995 ✪



ROAD GRADER, 2012 ✪



TOOLS IN THE BARN, 2014 ★

Tools of the Trade

Bill Kleiman

My first day at Nachusa Grasslands was the 1993 Autumn on the Prairie event. I shook

hands. I learned names. I also handed out a wish list of equipment. In this photo, behind the new tractor, is our old Headquarters Barn. It was a corncrib. The center aisle of the concrete floor was recessed two feet for loading grain into a wagon. At that time, our set of tools fit in a barrel that served as our shop table in the barn. Within a few months, we had installed lights, outlets, two big shop tables and shelving. The barn had a cramped loft. We filled it with all the seed we could pick. When we built the new Headquarters Barn, it had more room. Our handpicked seed harvest doubled the first year, and it has doubled a few more times since.

There's an old blue pickup behind the tractor in this photo. Jeff Meiners dropped this truck off a few weeks after I joined Nachusa and suggested that it – rather than my Honda sedan – might be better for stewardship work. Although this truck was on its second motor, it ran for several years.

Before long, the barn was stuffed with equipment. We were hard on our tools in order to accomplish the work we needed to do. On the back of that new tractor, we had a new Woods six-foot mower. I would lift the mower so high that you could see the blades if you stood behind it. Then, I would back over the brush and lower the mower onto shrubs. The brush disappeared – with a lot of banging noise! The process worked quite well. It did eventually kill the mower after several years.

We were as enthused about stewardship then as we are now. We just had less equipment. If you look over photos of the last two decades, you can see the gradual increase in the size of tools we used to get the job done as we took on bigger and bigger projects.

Back then, I did stewardship most of my day – every day. Now I sometimes feel like a general contractor as I run around supporting the staff, volunteers, and stewards who are doing stewardship.



BILL KLEIMAN ✪

We were as enthused about stewardship then as we are now. We just had less equipment.

Memories... Tim Keller

In July of 1970, I contracted with George Fell to do vegetation work on the "Schafer 80" which includes what is today known as Schafer Knob. In September of 1972, I met Doug and Dot Wade in Manhattan, Kansas, at the North American Prairie Conference. One of the most important moments for the preserve was the discovery of the prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*). After the burns it started coming back. That influenced the right people and showed that with good management, it could recover. It convinced people that there's hope.

1970



YELLOW HOUSE ♦

Full House

Susan Kleiman

It was a happy and exciting time. When I first arrived at Nachusa Grasslands in the fall of 1993,

I was a bit in awe of living on a prairie and helping with restoration. I loved the fact that volunteers at Nachusa were responsible for most of the efforts on the preserve. Bill and I encouraged more volunteerism.

Back then, we lived in the Yellow House, which was also Nachusa's headquarters. The office and our living room were one and the same. We even squeezed in a folding ping-pong table! Bill and I would work outside all day, and then continue working at our desks in the evening. I enjoyed sharing the Yellow House at lunchtime with volunteers, seasonal crew, and student interns. Everyone gathered to eat around our little oval table. The small space made our time together more intimate and personal than it is today in the Headquarters Barn.

During fair weather, we often took our lunch outside to a picnic table behind the house under a large, spreading hackberry tree. If it was hot, there was always a breeze and some shade. Sadly, that tree is dead and gone now. In colder seasons, volunteers brought large thermos bottles of coffee to share. I wasn't much of a coffee drinker. But we eventually bought our first coffee pot in order to have more! I took pleasure in hearing about the work accomplished each day and delving into plant identification.

Occasionally, volunteer stewardship groups from the greater Chicago area would come out to work for the weekend. They would pitch their tents west of the house and barn. We would have campfires and go for sunset walks with them. The view was so grand! I remember once or twice delighting in simultaneous full moonrise and sunset in opposite sides on the horizon

Today, when I see the Yellow House, I warmly remember all the folks who have made this preserve so special by their heartfelt efforts to help keep our little corner of nature healthy and thriving. We continue to work for the noble goal of restoring a landscape. It's the glue that binds us together.



SUSAN KLEIMAN ♦

...I warmly remember all the folks who have made this preserve so special...



GENE MILLER, MIKE ADOLPH, TODD BITTNER, JAY STACY, DAVID EDELBACH, AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS ENJOY LUNCH OUTSIDE THE YELLOW HOUSE ❁



BILL AND SUSAN KLEIMAN, 1993 ❁



THE YELLOW HOUSE IN THE DISTANCE, 1992 ❁

Memories... Sean Collins-Stapleton

My daughter was born in April. For her first birthday, I wanted to take her someplace that radiates the season's energy. We chose Nachusa and have returned year after year, adding another daughter to our expeditions. I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard to recreate Nachusa's magnificent prairie wilderness. My hope is that my daughters will share Nachusa with their children.

2014

Orchestrating Orchids

Bruce Marlin

In 1995, Todd Bittner learned that June Keebler and other volunteers of The Nature Conservancy were hand-pollinating and attempting Chicago area introductions of the eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*) in an effort to

increase the population and diversity of this federally threatened species. Armed with the knowledge that this lovely, delicate plant had been known to spontaneously appear in old farm fields of suitable ecology, Todd drew up a proposal of nine sites at Nachusa, based on soil type and associated vegetation. It was determined they would acquire seeds from Wadsworth and Lyons Prairies in Lake County, Illinois. Todd and others helped hand-pollinate the donor plants and collected the seed in August of 1996.

At the time of seeding, the Prairie Potholes Unit, a previously cultivated wetland with a few prairie remnants, had just been graded after the removal of its drainage tiles. Todd remembers, "It was 40-50 percent dirt; the whole place was just trashed. But we figured the lack of competition might be advantageous, and we decided to go for it." Seed was mixed with sand and broadcast at the nine selected venues; and what do you know? Since that serendipitous and eminently prescient series of events, the population at the Prairie Potholes Unit of Nachusa has increased from three individuals in 2003 to an astounding 200-plus specimens in 2014 – one of the largest populations of all 45 known sites in Illinois.

Swink & Wilhelm deems it "a characteristic prairie orchid. C = 10." Indications are that Nachusa has a healthy population of the fiendishly ethereal, nocturnal sphinx moth (*Sphinx eremitus*) that most often pollinate the plant. This moth has evolved in a symbiotic relationship with the eastern prairie fringed orchid, much as it has established an apparently indispensable commensal relationship with a whole suite of mycorrhizal soil fungi that provide key nutrients for germination and early growth of the stripped-down, microscopic seeds.

On June 30, 2014, I helped Cathy Pollock of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service collect pollen from our orchids for distribution to other Illinois orchid populations. Cathy hopes to expand and diversify our genetic stock and keep these lovely prairie denizens from joining the ever-growing ranks of endangered or extirpated grasslands plants. My hat is off to Todd Bittner, Bill Kleiman, Chris Hauser, and all the other far-seeing, dedicated naturalists who brought this little gem to our little patch of ground. I am humbled and honored to be one of their stewards.



BRUCE MARLIN

I am humbled and honored to be one of their stewards.



EASTERN PRAIRIE FRINGED ORCHID



CHRIS HAUSER EXAMINES THE EASTERN PRAIRIE FRINGED ORCHID



EASTERN PRAIRIE FRINGED ORCHID

Memories... Ann Haverstock

1989

I first visited Nachusa in 1989. I selfishly love all the wild sounds: insects, birds and mammals. By far, my most memorable moments at Nachusa had to do with my ability to wander Nachusa and never hear or see another person. The growth of Nachusa has been phenomenal. This proves that there are more than a few people who see the beauty and value of this area. It had a slow start, but with Bill's leadership and vision, Nachusa blossomed literally and figuratively. I love Nachusa.

Building on the Past

Mike Adolph

As soon as The Nature Conservancy created Nachusa Grasslands in 1986, we got to work.

Volunteers took down fences and attacked invasive shrubs and trees. Prescribed burns began in earnest after Bill Kleiman arrived in 1993, and we obtained the necessary equipment. We also began planting crop fields to native prairie.

At first, we had so-so results in the plantings. When Jay Stacy achieved excellent results in his Naylor Road planting, we realized we needed to use more pounds of seed per acre. We now have results that are “amazing,” according to Gerould Wilhelm, a leading botanical authority in the Midwest.

Many of our original volunteers have moved on. Today, Mike Crowe, Kevin Kaltenbach, Sally Baumgardner and I still happily put in hours at Nachusa. Soon after 1994, Jay Stacy, John and Cindy Schmadeke, Jim and Mary Vieregg and Tom and Jenny Mitchell became stewards. They have put in countless hours of volunteer work here. Becky and Hank Hartman have been major contributors for over a decade. Mary and Al Meier, Bernie and Cindy Buchholz, John Heneghan, and David Crites have been active nearly that long. While some of the faces are now new, much of our work remains the same as it was then, in the beginning. We learn to recognize native plant species and help them thrive, while working to eliminate non-natives. We harvest, dry, and process seeds. Then, we broadcast them over the soil to overwinter. Prescribed burns are still a major part of our stewardship.

Now bison are here. Restoration Ecologist Cody Considine, Damian Considine, David Crites, Mike Saxton, and Mike Carr – along with many others – put in the bison fence for the North Unit, a huge undertaking. We will build an even longer fence for the South Unit next year. There are plenty of new challenges ahead. Yet, even as things have changed since the beginning of the preserve, one thing remains constant: volunteers have real ownership of Nachusa Grasslands.



WILD COLUMBINE ✧



JOE BOISE AND HEATHER BAKER ✧



RAY DERKSEN, SEED COLLECTING. ★

Prairie of Big Shoulders

Mike Saxton

While the longest journey begins with a single step, every undertaking is usually preceded by an idea, a vision, or a dream.

In the early 1980s, the land that would become known as Nachusa was a patchwork of crops, fencerows, and drain tiles. Yet, there remained isolated knobs – rocky and cedar-covered – that sheltered prairie remnants and the promise of the future. Nachusa, propelled by the relentless work of visionary leaders, was born in 1986. Today, the fledgling dream of those who took those first steps has been realized.

The knobs of Nachusa tell stories of our humble beginnings. Doug's Knob (Wade), Dot's Knob (Wade), Isabelle's Knob (Johnson), Tim's Half Knob (Keller) and Leopold Knob pay tribute to some of our early leaders. Our units bear the names of many of our prairie benefactors without whom our preserve would not be possible: Meiners, Heinkel, Hamill-Winter, Carpenter, Walkup, Larson, and Holland. Many of

these giants are still with us. Some are gone. Yet their legacy flourishes, as we continually work to realize that early vision of a restored landscape.

Today Nachusa encompasses 3,800 acres. Bison now roam through 400 acres of tallgrass. Botanists mistake our prairie plantings for remnants – and many of our target species do not seem to notice, either! Our dedicated volunteer community is renowned, envied, and emulated. The graduates of the “Nachusa School” – our seasonal interns – have gone on to become PhDs, project managers, environmental lawyers, heritage biologists, and wildland firefighters. They take with them the knowledge and experience that continues moving our collective cause forward.

Twenty-eight years ago, our journey began. Today, we are carried on the shoulders of those early giants. We continue to benefit from their ideals and vision. A stalwart volunteer community carries the banner into the future, supported by committed staff and energetic seasonal crews. Nachusa demonstrates what is possible when we work together. It offers us hope for the future.

The Power of Fire...and Patience



SALLY WITH LITTLE BLUESTEM, 1991 ❁

Sally Baumgardner

It was late winter in 1990, and we planned to burn the little patch of prairie we owned adjacent to Nachusa Grasslands.

We knew the value of fire. But we had few resources. Our equipment consisted of matches and a leaf rake. Our flapper to extinguish flames was a metal snow shovel. For firebreaks, we had a two-track road and farmland full of empty soil. Our fire crew was made up of two people: me and my husband, Max.

Our plan was to burn a long, narrow rectangle of brome grass and weeds. First, we raked clear a safe place, from the harvested crop field to the two-track on the north. Then, we ignited the grasses.

The fire burned a very short distance to the two-track. It worked! Elated by our success, we realized that our now-burned area would serve as a firebreak. We raked another space and ignited from the west. The fire burned east and into a blackened area. Stopped. More success.

We inched along westward, our hearts pounding because we were very close to dry pine trees. Television coverage of wildfires out west made us cautious. Eventually we

progressed all the way to the Thomas' property on the west. It took all day.

Max and I were still living in Darien, IL, and could only visit "our prairie" on nice weekends. When spring came, we hurried to out to see what vegetation benefitted from our controlled burn. We drove up over Indigo Lane's little rise and there we saw a solid, brilliant display of lush green foliage dotted with round, golden flowers, all alike, and evenly spaced. It was the most beautiful, most robust display you could ever imagine.

Of dandelions.

That was then. Now, in the summer at Nachusa Grasslands, after repeated burns over the past 20 years, you will find the rare prairie fameflower (*Talinum rugospermum*) growing in that very place, along with flowering spurge and little bluestem. It's a tribute to the power of fire. And of patience.



SALLY GIVES THE BURN TWO THUMBS UP, 1990 ❁



1993 FIRE CREW – BILL KLEIMAN, STEPHEN PACKARD ❁



2010 FIRE CREW ❁

Memories... Mary and Al Meier

2002

When we began volunteering at Nachusa Grasslands in 2002, we had to hunt far and wide for many prairie species. We spent quite a bit of time figuring out where to find patches of prairie coreopsis, pale Indian plantain, prairie blazing star, smooth blue aster, and sky blue aster. Even the supply of pale purple coneflower was limited. Today, as more acres are acquired, restored, and periodically burned, we now collect seeds from numerous successful plantings as well the original remnants. We end each season with an abundance and variety of native seeds, thanks to the efforts of Nachusa's dedicated staff and volunteers.



TOM AND JENNY MITCHELL

Listening and Learning

Tom Mitchell

In May of 1997 or 1998 we visited Meiners Wetlands on Naylor Road

where my wife, Jenny, and I sat on a rock and listened to the bobolinks and meadowlarks. A couple of weeks later we discovered the main unit and saw an upland sandpiper. Hiking around we came across a man deep in the brush who was smoking a cigarette. We chatted with him, and he invited us out again on any Saturday for a workday. His name was brother Jay Stacy, doctor of the prairie.

**Soon we learned...
which plants were weeds,
so we started taking
them out too.
Addition by subtraction.**

We kept coming out on Saturdays for a couple years, and eventually Bill and Susan Kleiman asked us if we would like to be roadside stewards – picking up trash along Lowden, Naylor, and Stone Barn Roads. That was our beat: bagging bottles and cans. Soon we learned – thanks to Jay and Bill – which plants were weeds, so we started taking them out too. Addition by subtraction.

I was lucky enough to be at Nachusa the day that Bill sent Jay, Susan, and me over to Carthage Road to look at a parcel that was up for sale. We stepped over a barbwire fence into a cedar-infested prairie that would become our unit: Carpenter Prairie. Bill gave me and Hank Hartman our first chainsaw safety lesson at a workday there. We stopped counting the cedars we cut and burned when the number reached one thousand.

Now I would say the single distinguishing feature of Nachusa is the quality of its plantings. Nobody does it better... anywhere....

Then & Now

Hank and Becky Hartman

In 2001, the two of us tackled the 51-acre Big Woods Unit: 22 acres of brome, interspersed with Indian grass and big bluestem. There were few forbs. Now, in 2014, native plants and forbs such as cardinal flower are gradually replacing the brome. Progress!



Then

Lots of brome, with trees that will later be cleared by a forestry mower in 2004.



Now

August 2012, native plants which have replaced the brome.

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands

Nachusa Grasslands is a leader in restoring one of the world's most endangered ecosystems.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) owns and operates Nachusa Grasslands. The Friends of Nachusa Grasslands (Friends) is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization founded in 2008 by volunteers dedicated to providing for the long-term care and management of the project.

Over the past twenty-eight years, hundreds of concerned people have invested thousands of hours protecting and restoring remnant prairie at Nachusa Grasslands. Although many more years of effort lie ahead, Nachusa is already one of the most successful restorations in the world. We have now begun to provide for its long-term survival.



FRIENDS OF NACHUSA GRASSLANDS ANNUAL MEETING 2014 ★



Mission

At Nachusa Grasslands, rare and endangered remnant prairie, woodlands, and wetlands are being reconnected through habitat restoration

to create one of the largest and most biologically diverse grasslands in Illinois, protecting native grasses, wildflowers, birds, insects, amphibians, reptiles and mammals.

The mission of the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands is to build endowments that will help defray the cost of natural areas management, staff and operating expenses; conduct and encourage stewardship; and support education and scientific activity at the preserve.



THEN: OLD HEADQUARTERS BARN, 1998 ☼



NOW: NEW HEADQUARTERS BARN ☼

Build Endowed Funds

Permanently endowed funds will support the conservation and preservation of native plants, animals and natural communities by providing funding for long-term stewardship. The Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment is managed by The Nature Conservancy and the Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands is managed by the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois. Both endowments fund operations at Nachusa.

ACCOMPLISHMENT: This fiscal year, the Friends donated \$259,000 to the endowments. Total endowed funds reached \$489,908. Within the endowments, we exceeded our \$250,000 goal for bison reintroduction.

NEED: Our goal is to permanently endow \$3 million, with annual distributions going primarily toward operations at Nachusa Grasslands.



WINTER OVERSEEDING ✧

Support Friends

Restoration Benefactor – \$5,000 or more
Conservation Champion – \$1,500 to \$4,999
Supporter – \$1 to \$1,499

- Become a Voting Member by volunteering 40 hours annually and making a financial gift of your choosing.
- Giving options include checks, one-time credit card charges and recurring online sustainer donations, stocks and mutual funds.
- See the Friends' web site for details at <http://www.nachusagrasslands.org/Donate/donate.html>
- Be a "Prairie Perennial" by giving at a consistent or higher level each year. Contribute to Friends through your employer's corporate giving or matching gift program.
- Include Friends in your estate plan or as a beneficiary of a life insurance or retirement account. To designate Friends, we should be named as Friends of Nachusa Grasslands, a nonprofit corporation, organized and existing under laws of the State of Illinois, with the name and address of:

NAME: Friends of Nachusa Grasslands

ADDRESS: 8772 S. Lowden Road
Franklin Grove, IL 61031

Tax identification number: 26-3303031



JOHN AYRES ★

Conduct & Encourage Stewardship

Stewards and other volunteers are the heart and soul of prairie restoration at Nachusa. Whether it's planting, harvesting, educating, monitoring, photographing, repairing, or advocating, we have a role that fits your passion and schedule.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Friends had 40 Voting Members, as well as 195 additional donors, committed to conserving Nachusa Grasslands. Volunteers gave an amazing 15,000 hours.

NEED: Friends provide opportunities throughout the year, inside or out, working with flora and fauna and administration. Your stewardship will make an important difference.

Encourage Education & Science

In 2013-2014, Friends awarded \$10,000 in Scientific Research Project Grants to:

Tom Anton, Michael Dreslik, and David Mauger

Survey for Illinois mud turtle, population estimate of Blanding's turtle, additional documentation of 2013 survey – \$1,600

Kimberly Elsenbroek Microbial analysis in remnant, restored, and failed prairie restorations pre- and post-bison – \$2,800

Heather Herakovich Study of grassland bird density and survivorship relative to habitat quality pre- and post-bison – \$2,000

Kimberly Schmidt Ongoing study of the population characteristics and habitat use of ornate box turtles in restored and remnant prairie via mark-recapture and radio-telemetry surveys – \$800

Jason Willand Forage quality study in remnants and different age restorations, pre- and post-bison – \$2,800

In 2015, Friends may award grants of up to \$15,000 to qualified candidates conducting scientific research significant to Nachusa Grasslands. Details on the application process can be found at http://www.nachusagrasslands.org/Science/Science_TOC.html.



HEATHER HERAKOVICH 🐢

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Donors

July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014



MEIER FAMILY IN WAGON ★

Memories...

Ronald Ingraham

My first visit to Nachusa was in the summer of 1996 at the urging of my friend Joe Houle. Jay Stacy and Gene Miller allowed me to work with them on West Heinkel Prairie. Over the years, I've been impressed by the increase in the number of species of birds and butterflies as the quality of the prairie improved. I have spent many enjoyable hours birdwatching with Joe as well as butterfly watching.

1996



MORNING CLOAK +

FOX SEDGE ◇

Restoration Benefactors

\$5,000 or more

Bobolink Foundation*
c/o Wendy Paulson
Bernie and Cindy Buchholz*
Crest Foods
c/o Erika Meiners
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Bison Campaign Challenge Grant
Jay Stacy*
In honor of Bill Kleiman
Anonymous*

Conservation Champions

\$1,500 to \$4,999

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Pete Fenner Employee Match
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Datin Tan Fui Lian*
Patricia McMillen
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In memory of our Conner,

McGonigle, and Fagan Families

Bob and Sherry Piros

Joseph S. and Dona M. Popp*

In memory of deceased family members

Tom and Karen Pulver

In honor of the wedding of

Amy and Steve

Daniel and Rita Randecker

Renae Rebechini

Red Planet Inc.

c/o Bruce Marlin

River Prairie Group, Sierra Club

In appreciation for a tour by

Hank and Becky Hartman

Cassandra Rodgers*

Kevin Rohling

George B. Rose*

Chuck and Belle Rosenberry

Edwin and Barbara Rossow*

In honor of James and Mary Vieregg

John and Barbara Rutherford*

Martha and Zink Sanders*

Kate Saxton*

Joanna Saxton

Mike Saxton

Juergen and Meredith Schroerer*

In honor of Dr. Angelo Capparella

and his wife, Gretchen Knapp

Richard Schutter*

Tim Sherck*

Bob and Joyce Shone*

Jim Shotsberger

Dale Shriver

Kathy Siperly*

In memory of John Siperly

Judy Snyder*

Jeanie and Tim Sullivan*

Les and Pat Szewczyk*

Tawani Enterprises*

Lisa Lanz Employee Match

The Bishop Family Fund*

On behalf of Ralph Bishop



FRINGED GENTIAN OPENING ☆

Daniel Thompson*

Debbie Thompson

Kathleen Tollaksen

Bruce and Kathy Vickrey

Jon and Ann-Marie Vignano

Gerry Voelliger

Mr. and Mrs. John S. Wineman, Jr.

In honor of Nancy Hotchkiss

Evelyn Young*

In honor of Mary and Al Meier

Nancy Youngblut

In memory of the life of Frieda Zinke

Weitzel of Mendota, Illinois

Anonymous

Honoring, with great gratitude our

dear friends, Emmylou Studier

and Charles Larry

Anonymous*

In honor of Mary and Jim Vieregg

Anonymous*

Anonymous

In-Kind Donors

Betsy Bowron-Komerska

Hank and Becky Hartman

Illinois Math and Science Academy

(IMSA) Student Volunteers

Lutheran Volunteer Corps

* Prairie Perennials

Donors who have given to the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands in consecutive years at the same or a higher level.



NOT JACK AND THE BEANSTALK –
IT'S JAY STACY AND THE PRAIRIE DOCK! 2001 ❖

1986

Memories...
John Santucci

I was involved with the initial property acquisition that established Nachusa in 1986, working with folks including Ralph Burnett and Stephen Packard. What hasn't changed has been the continued momentum surrounding the project and the involvement of incredibly dedicated people.

FINANCIAL RESULTS

	7/1/13 - 6/30/14 2014 RESULTS		7/1/12 - 6/30/13 2013 RESULTS	
		%		%
BEGINNING BALANCE	\$	11,689	\$	20,872
Redeemed CD	\$		\$	10,000
REVENUES				
Cash Donations	\$	228,226	\$	61,212
CRP Income	\$	47,345	\$	13,791
Interest Income	\$	0	\$	69
Total Revenues	\$	275,571	\$	75,072
		100%		100%
DISBURSEMENTS				
In Direct Support of Our Mission Statement				
Gifts to TNC Endowment	\$	150,000	\$	80,000
CFNIL Nachusa Endowment	\$	100,000	\$	0
Science Grants	\$	10,000	\$	5,500
Stewardship	\$	126	\$	137
Grants to other Organizations	\$	200	\$	0
Subtotal	\$	260,326	\$	85,637
		97%		91%
Expenses				
Banking Fees	\$	80	\$	62
Government Fees	\$	28	\$	25
Insurance	\$	3,653	\$	2,432
Development	\$	4,883	\$	6,100
Subtotal	\$	8,644	\$	8,619
		3%		9%
Total Disbursements	\$	268,970	\$	94,256
		100%		100%
ENDING BALANCE	\$	18,290	\$	11,688

BALANCE SHEET AS OF JUNE 30, 2014

ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
Cash	\$ 18,290	Liabilities	\$ 0
		Funds Balance	\$ 18,290
Total Assets	\$ 18,290	Total Liabilities	\$ 18,290

ENDOWED FUNDS BALANCE

Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment	\$	380,867
Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands	\$	109,041
Total Endowed Funds	\$	489,908



AUTUMN ✱

To Learn More

SAVE THE DATES

FRIENDS SCIENCE GRANTS 2015:
Applications due November 30, 2014;
grant recipients announced February 1, 2015

FRIENDS PRAIRIE POTLUCK: June 20, 2015

FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING: July 25, 2015

TNC's AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE CELEBRATION:
September 19, 2015



GOLDEN ALEXANDER ✧

RECOMMENDED READING

Big Bluestem: Journey into the Tallgrass
by Annick Smith

*Buffalo for the Broken Heart: Restoring Life to a
Black Hills Ranch* by Dan O'Brien

*Grassland: The History, Biology, Politics, and
Promise of the American Prairie* by Richard Manning

Grass Roots: The Universe of Home by Paul Gruchow

Journal of a Prairie Year by Paul Gruchow

PrairyErth: A Deep Map by William Least Heat-Moon

*The Tallgrass Prairie Center Guide to Prairie Restoration
in the Upper Midwest* by Daryl Smith, et al

The Tallgrass Prairie Reader by John T. Price

HOW TO CONTACT US

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands
8772 S. Lowden Road
Franklin Grove, Illinois 61031
708-406-9894
nachusagrasslands@gmail.com



ALAN HARRISON SHOWS CHILDREN
HOW TO GRIND CORN AT
AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE ★



DEE HUDSON
CAPTURING
THE MOMENTS
★

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR WRITERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS AND ILLUSTRATOR

who contributed to this annual report by capturing
the beauty of Nachusa Grasslands and the mission of
Friends. Each copyrighted photo or illustration is
marked with a symbol indicating the photographer's or
illustrator's name.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

- ✿ Nachusa Grassland Archives
- ✿ Baumgardner Archives
- ✿ Burnett Family Archives
- ✿ Cindy Crosby
- ✿ Dr. Laurie Eberhardt
- ✱ Steve Eykamp
- ★ Kirk Hallowell
- ♥ Becky Hartman
- ◇ Betty Higby
- ✦ Don Homer
- ✦ Dee Hudson
- ★ Bill Kleiman
- ✦ Leah Kleiman
- ✦ Susan Kleiman
- ✦ Charles Larry
- ✦ Bruce Marlin
- ✦ Mike Saxton

ILLUSTRATOR

- ◇ Betty Higby

MEMORIES (WE REMEMBER)

Compiled by Mike Saxton

Front cover photo by ✦ Charles Larry
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Inside front cover inset photo by ★ Kirk Hallowell
Inside back cover photo by ✦ Charles Larry
Back cover photo by ★ Kirk Hallowell

Friends annual report creation by
Betsy Bowron-Komerska, *graphic designer*
and Cindy Crosby, *editor*.

Editing assistance provided by Mary Meier,
Bernie Buchholz, and Ron Deters.

♻️ Paper contains 30% recycled post-consumer fiber.

Grazing 101: From Cows to Bison

...Nehru was grazing a mile south of the barn. I saw what looked like a dead cow!



NEHRU, 2001 ❁

Bill Kleiman

Does grazing influence the prevalence of certain species at Nachusa? Around 2001, we decided to find out.

Prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*), is a federally threatened species that only occurs in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. When The Nature Conservancy purchased Nachusa Grasslands in 1986, our number of prairie bush clover plants was the highest in Illinois. Without grazing, however, the numbers declined. Observers had noted that this plant seems to do well under livestock grazing, but also needs a rest from grazing.

Just over a dozen years ago, our neighbor, Bruce Scherger, knew a farmer who was willing to rent us a gentle Jersey cow named Nehru. Bruce told me Nehru was trained to a halter. He also said she would not eat little bluestem. When Nehru arrived, I walked her out to the study plots, tied her rope to a tree, and gave her a tub of water. Then, I went back to my office at the new Headquarters Barn to take care of some paperwork.

After a while, I used binoculars to check on where Nehru was grazing a mile south of the barn. I saw what looked like a dead cow! I quickly drove back and found Nehru completely tangled in her halter, her legs up in the air like a cowboy had just roped her. I figured this was as a fluke, so I stood her up, shortened the tether rope, and went back to my office. Within a few minutes my binoculars showed the same upturned cow, her legs turned skyward.

I called Bruce for help. He brought over a car battery, fence charger, and some wire so we could set up a small grazing enclosure. It worked! Nehru stayed within a single electric wire "fence" for three days without incident. Then, we moved her to two other test plots with the rare bush clover to graze.

Ecologists Pati Vitt of the Chicago Botanic Garden and Todd Bittner of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources gathered data about Nehru's grazing influences on the clover. Despite what we were told, Nehru did eat little bluestem. She looked healthy. Yes, there was a slight flush of young bush clover plants, evidence that grazing would likely be good for this species at Nachusa.

And yes – even then, we were thinking *bison*, not *cows*, as the better grazer that would eat the grass, allowing this rare plant to thrive. Now, we'll see.



BISON, 2014 ❁



CODY CONSIDINE AND MIKE CARR,
BUILDING FENCE ★



CODY CONSIDINE AND DAVID CRITES ★



Ghosts

**We learn to weld fences
melt metal together
to bind you to the tallgrass again.
Sparks fly, then the posts, complete,
are set in concrete
to check
your instinct to be free.**

**We say a prayer
that the power of the past
is not completely gone upon this landscape.
Can we resurrect ghosts?
Why is it that we had to lose you
to recognize your worth?**

**Bison bison
discarded long ago.
A hole in our hearts that refused to heal
told us of our mistake,
of the cost of our careless disregard.
Are these fences strong enough to contain
our hopes —
our desire for reparation, for restoration —
the vision for a generous future
where people, alone, do not reign supreme?
Or do our dreams represent only a whim?
Can that which was once erased
return and live again?**

— Cindy Crosby



nachusagrasslands.org