



SEEING NACHUSA

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

VISION



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY BERNIE BUCHHOLZ

Tallgrass prairie provides the ultimate Rorschach test — not with inkblots, but with rolling hills and wildflowers. In describing what you see, you reveal a bit about yourself. When we look at Nachusa, we all see something different...and therein lies the opportunity.

Where one person sees a landscape that challenged European settlers, another sees hope that the American landscape can be restored to an earlier beauty. One may see an intriguing scientific research opportunity, while another sees an ark for saving native species. Where one sees a quiet refuge from the daily hustle of modern life, others see a welcoming community of volunteers. What do you see?

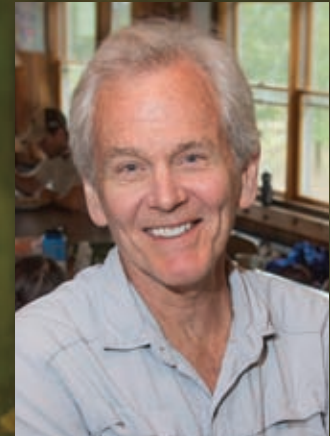
I often pose that question to visitors. Prairie first-timers sometimes struggle to respond, except to say, “It’s beautiful.” Some may reluctantly answer that they don’t quite understand the audacious idea of restoring a landscape. But most seem to like what they see, especially if the bison amble by.

While I now approach the question primarily from an ecological perspective, I often wonder if the visitor sees the great diversity of species, or just a field of plants. Do they notice where vegetation changes due to soil or hydrology? Where non-natives prevail? Where bison have grazed? Vision and appreciation grow with the time spent in the field.

This annual report offers different takes on “seeing Nachusa” from people who clearly understand what they see. Regular volunteers, a scientist, a donor, a photographer, and a dragonfly monitor each tell us what they see and how that makes them feel. Each takes the Rorschach test and reveals a bit of themselves.

Experiencing Nachusa through their eyes is an opportunity to grow our understanding of the grasslands and maybe even to find something that can connect us as a community.

Come see for yourself what the rolling hills and wildflowers reveal.



SILENCE

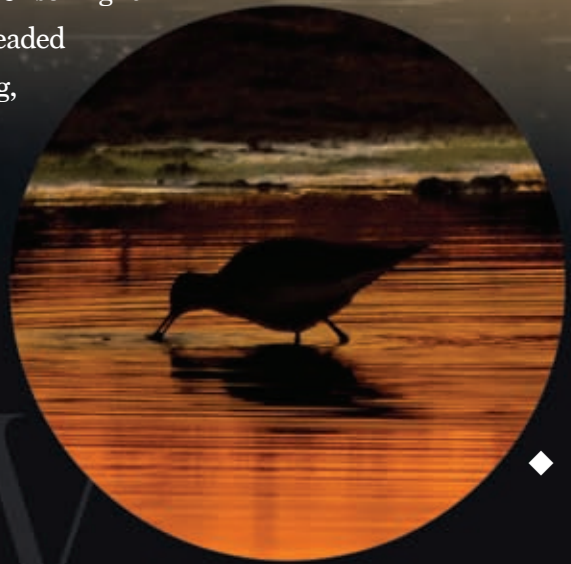
THE GRASSLANDS SLEEP

BY GREG BAKER, VIDEOGRAPHER



Fumbling in the dark and heading out in freezing temperatures is mind numbing. The darkness hides all forms, all colors. The grasslands sleep. The cold feels like needles at any exposed flesh. The dry, frigid air bites at my throat and lungs. It's difficult to swallow. My coffee has already gone cold. Time slows, stretched by the cold, darkness, and silence. The faint warbles of the morning birds are absent. First light can't come fast enough. The eastern sky shows no spectacular

images this time, but the first rays of sunlight will be on time. A fat raccoon, headed home after a night of scrounging, shuffles by without giving me a second look. A gaggle of geese sporadically honk, hidden in the mist hanging over the water. A slight breeze touches my cheek. The usual bouquet of pungent smells seems absent.



SHADOW

Setting up gear is arduous in this cold. Bulky gloves make camera manipulations nearly impossible. Frustrated, I pull off a glove and fondle the cold metal to the proper settings. My toes are stiff and aching. Should have worn heavier socks. I do a little jig to keep the cold at bay, bringing a smile to my face. Onlookers might think I'm senile, but there is no one to see. Solitude. What usually feels like serenity now feels like captivity and isolation. I think about all the prairie animals, how they adapt to the cold. The first rays of sun-

light break the horizon. Directional light gives shapes, textures, highlights and shadows. Eye candy, I can't shoot fast enough. I no longer feel the cold. A couple video clips and a few good shots. The last of the geese take to the air for the empty cornfields. All the morning birds have joined the choir. Pack up the gear and take one last long look into the morning light. Tears form at the corners of my eyes. Is it the sun, the cold, or an emotional rescue? I head back for the warmth of the truck heater. It's good to feel alive.

SOLITUDE



TRAILS

SEEING NACHUSA: A WILDLIFE PERSPECTIVE

BY RICHARD KING, PHD RESEARCHER



A map of Nachusa Grasslands is a network of lines: roads, streams, fence lines, the boundaries of restoration units, land ownership, and governmental agencies. To the organisms living at Nachusa, most of these lines are meaningless. The challenge to a biologist trying to understand how organisms respond to restoration is to see Nachusa as its inhabitants do. Where are the corridors that allow shrews, snakes, and

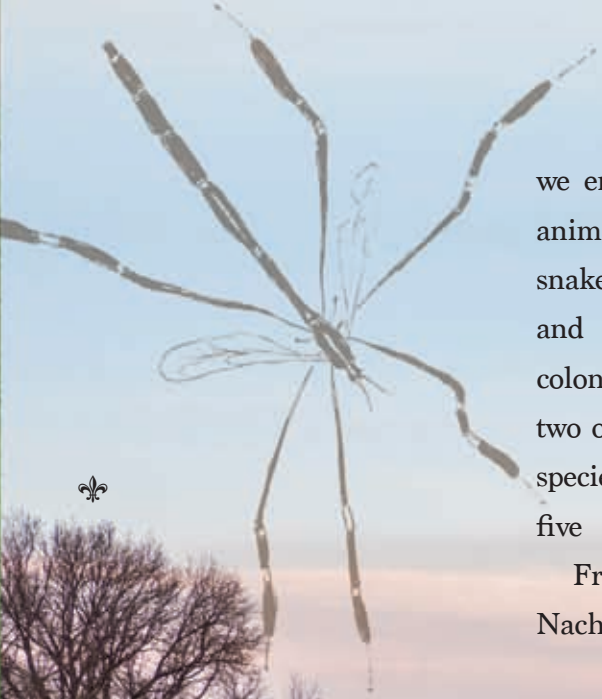
salamanders to colonize and navigate what was once a desert of corn and soybeans? And where are the barriers to such movements?

For some species, travel routes are clear. Deer trails, and now bison paths, crisscross the landscape, but are missing from our human-centric maps. And if you drop to your knees, you might see the grassy tunnels of mice, voles, and ground squirrels—some descending below ground into an unseen network. For others, no such evidence of their travel routes is apparent.

How wildlife see Nachusa is partly a function of their body size. Deer and bison, like humans, can see across the landscape — at least until August, when even our sight lines are blocked by a sea of big bluestem. But for many of Nachusa's smaller residents, the vistas that

FENCES





we enjoy are unknown. Even for these smaller animals, navigation is size dependent. Among snakes, medium- and large-bodied species (plains and common gartersnakes, fox snakes) have colonized restoration units rapidly, often within two or three years. In contrast, more diminutive species like the Dekay's brownsnakes may take five or more years to find restoration units.

Frustratingly, the Blanding's turtles at Nachusa pay no heed to land ownership, moving

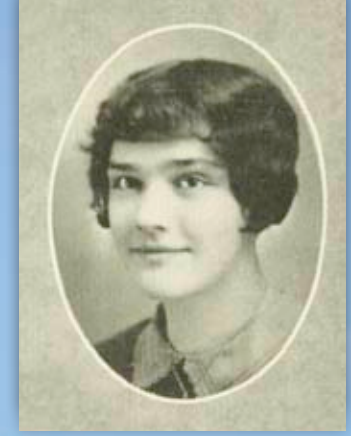
unimpeded between TNC lands and neighboring privately owned land. For a biologist tracking a radio-equipped turtle, Franklin Creek and the briars that thrive on its banks are impediments to travel. But the creek serves as a corridor for Blanding's turtles, providing them with access to the wetlands and oxbows on either shore and with deep pools that persist even during periods of drought. And those thorny plants don't even register!

STREAMS



NACHUSA REMEMBERED

BY MARTHA SANTEE WETZEL, FRIENDS OF NACHUSA GRASSLANDS DONOR



HISTORY

My mother, Irene Weyant Santee, was born in the village of Nachusa in 1910 and moved to Dixon, Illinois when she was 8. She was a lifelong resident of Lee County and was always interested in history, genealogy, nature, and conservation. She collected historical and genealogical memorabilia and loved bird watching and wild flowers. She could name most of the area plants and followed the development of Nachusa Grasslands, hiking the area frequently as long as she was able, taking any

available family members along with her, telling stories about the families who had resided there, and identifying the plants. She lived actively to the age of 100. A memorial in her honor to the Grasslands seemed a most appropriate way to remember her. Although she never got to see the bison arrive, her extended family continues to visit at least yearly, usually during the Memorial Day weekend, both to decorate her grave and to follow the progress of the Grasslands. We can feel her approval as we do.



HONOR

STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN

BY DON PANOZZO, VOLUNTEER



WORK

There is something about seeing open land that allows me to relax. So it was propitious that my first drive to Nachusa Grasslands included such space and led to the conclusion that the Grasslands were vast, varied, and beautiful. After later visits I think of Nachusa in different ways at different times.

Nachusa can be quiet. This stillness can be had by doing a solo walk, which then leads to contemplation. Suddenly there is an outdoor

cathedral whose spires are oak trees and whose bell tower's tintinnabulation is the birds chirping.

Nachusa can be a beehive too. It is a place where the staff and the stewards work hard and long hours. They collect and plant seeds, and they do prescribed burns. They spend significant amounts of time eliminating unwanted plants and trees. The motto seems to be that if a thing is not of the prairie, it should not be on the prairie.

The Grasslands are definitely a school. See or hear something you don't know: a flower name, a bird sound? Ask the staff member or steward next to you, but be prepared for a discourse, part of which could be in Latin.

BEAUTY

A VISION OF HOPE

BY JOYCE GIBBONS, DRAGONFLY MONITOR

SIGHTS

It is so easy to feel a sense of despair when I think about the enormity of the global damage we have caused to our natural environment. But when I pull back from the big picture and consider what is being done closer to home, like here at Nachusa, it does help me to be less anxious about the planet and grateful for the efforts of those who are working to improve and protect their own little corner of the world. I see hope for the future while exploring Nachusa. I look forward to each visit where I can witness the result of years of effort by dedicated persons who do care and are working to make a positive impact on the environment. I can wander here and enjoy the native plant communities and the wildlife they support and lose myself in the natural world.

I can stand at the edge of Clear Creek, listening to the running water as it winds its way downstream. Tempted by the cool water, I can kick off my shoes and wade barefoot across the creek, pausing midstream as sandhill cranes fly overhead. I can watch dragonflies alight on overhanging branches and green frogs prey on tiny insects. I can find respite from the hot sun in the shady areas of Stone Barn Savanna and visit with the songbirds. At Meiners Wetland, I can admire beautifully patterned phantom crane flies floating among the tall marsh grasses, while a great blue heron wades in the distance. Nachusa makes it so easy to get lost in the sights, sounds, and scents of nature, to see hope for the future, and to be reminded that there are so many good things on which to dwell.



SCENE

NTS



SCIENCE GRANTS

Laura Adamovicz, DVM, PhD graduate student, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. “Continued Health Assessment of Nachusa’s Ornate Box Turtles.” Dr. Adamovicz is going to continue her last two years’ work assessing the health of the ornate box turtles (*Terrapene ornata*) at Nachusa. This work will help direct conservation strategies for the species at the preserve. It will also provide baseline data for use with other populations of this species in other preserves. This grant will specifically pay for the measurement of erythrocyte sedimentation rate, which is a measure of inflammation (\$2,227).

Nathalie Baena-Bejarano and **Catherine Dana**, PhD graduate students, Illinois Natural History Survey, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. “Documenting Rare and Habitat-Specific Orthopterans and True Bugs in the Nachusa Grasslands.” The purpose of this study is to survey the presence of habitat-specialized orthopterans (with an emphasis on pygmy grasshoppers and pygmy mole crickets) and true bugs (with an emphasis on cicadas) at Nachusa. In addition to the survey, molecular techniques will be used to measure the populations’ genetic divergence from other populations in the state. This study will fill a void in the knowledge of insect species known to exist at Nachusa and serve as a baseline for future comparative studies (\$5,000).



Bethanne Bruninga-Socolar, PhD graduate student, Rutgers University. “Native Bees of Restored Tallgrass Prairie: Impacts of Management Actions on Diversity and Species Abundances.” Funding for this year will be used to complete the data analyses and publications using the 2013-2017 dataset (funded in part by Friends Science Grants in 2015 & 2016). Long-term data collection on the diversity and abundance of native bees at Nachusa by this researcher is anticipated, and this five-year dataset provides the baseline for that anticipated data collection (\$1,598).

Xiaoyong Chen, PhD and **Mary Carrington**, PhD, Governors State University. “Quantifying Soil Organic Carbon Fractions under Main Land Use/Land Cover Types in Nachusa Grasslands.” Drs. Carrington and Chen and their graduate students will be measuring soil organic carbon in the varied habitats of



Nachusa. Soil organic carbon is an important indicator of soil quality, health, and productivity, and it has not been measured in previous soil studies at Nachusa. This study will provide a better understanding of the influence management practices have on soil health (\$3,000).

Anna Farrell, MS graduate student, Northern Illinois University. “Effects of Management on Functional Diversity in Restored Tallgrass Prairie Plant Communities.” Funds from this grant will be used to analyze C and N content in leaf samples for 10 species at 15 sites varying in age and management regimen. Measuring C and N content will provide functional trait data that relate to ecosystem processes, including primary productivity and nutrient cycling, providing insight into restoration management strategies. This study is part of the NIU ReFuGE Project initiated by researchers at Northern Illinois University encompassing long-term ongoing research at Nachusa (\$1,500).

Megan Garfinkel, PhD graduate student, University of Illinois at Chicago. “Prairie Birds in Agriculture: Examining the Use

of Surrounding Agricultural Habitat by Birds That Live in Prairies.” This ongoing study provides insight into the pest control services and disservices prairie birds provide in nearby agricultural fields. This year’s work will focus on when birds move from prairies to forage within nearby crop fields, how far they go into the fields, and what they eat while there. This grant will help support the unique and novel DNA analyses of bird fecal samples being developed at UIC for this study (\$3,000).

Sean Griffin, PhD graduate student, Michigan State University. Two projects: 1) “Landscape Genetics of Prairie Bees at Nachusa Grasslands” and 2) “Uncommon and Previously Uncollected Bee Species at Nachusa Grasslands.” This grant will support 1) the completion of lab work from Mr. Griffin’s 2017 study of native bee genetics at Nachusa, and 2) the collection of sample bees using active methods from target sites at Nachusa in the hope of finding uncommon bees that may have been missed in previous sampling over the last five years. He will be collaborating with Laura Anchor of the Forest Preserve District of Cook



County in this second effort. Both of these studies will provide information important for management decision-making regarding native bee pollinators at Nachusa (\$2,918).

Sheryl Hosler, MS graduate student, Northern Illinois University. “Dung Beetle Functional Traits Related to Restoration Management Practices in Tallgrass Prairies.” This ongoing project is examining how restoration management practices such as prescribed fire, grazing, and mesopredator (coyotes, raccoons, etc.) exclusions affect dung beetle functional traits. The results will provide insight into how management techniques inhibit or promote dung beetle functioning within the ecosystem. This study is part of the NIU ReFuGE Project (\$1,000).



SCIENCE GRANTS (Continued)

Richard King, PhD, Northern Illinois University, **Thomas B. Anton** and **David Mauger**, independent researchers.

“Development and Implementation of Blanding’s Turtle Management Strategies within the Franklin Creek Corridor.” Using inventory methods to determine population status, radio-telemetry to monitor habitat use, and nest protection to promote juvenile recruitment of Blanding’s turtles at Nachusa and

adjacent properties within the Franklin Creek corridor, this ongoing effort is designed to develop and implement on-the-ground management strategies to promote the persistence of Blanding’s turtles within the Franklin Creek corridor and north-central Illinois more generally (\$4,500).

Emma Leavens, MS graduate student, Northwestern University/Chicago Botanic Garden. “Impacts of Mycorrhizal Fungi Abundance and Diversity on Establishment of *Comandra umbellata*.” The purpose of this study is to investigate the possibility of a correlation between specific mycorrhizal fungi with the growth and establishment of *Comandra umbellata* (Bastard toadflax). This species of plant is found in remnants but has been nearly impossible to grow in restorations, so this study’s outcome will be of great interest to Nachusa stewards (\$5,500).

Melissa Nelson, MS graduate student, Northern Illinois University. “Ground Beetle Trophic Function in Restored and Remnant Tallgrass Prairies.” This study will quantify the impacts of



prescribed fire and bison grazing on ground beetle communities and their roles as seed and arthropod predators in tallgrass prairie. Specifically, Ms. Nelson will look at how the beetles’ diet preference changes in response to restoration age, fire, and bison, and how those changes may influence restoration processes. This study is part of the NIU ReFuGE Project (\$1,800).

Michele Rehbein, PhD graduate student, Western Illinois University. “Identification of *Culex* and *Aedes* Mosquito Microbiomes from Wetland and Lower Order Stream Habitats.” Analyzing DNA from the midguts of trapped female mosquitoes, this research will identify the microbiome (fungi and



bacteria populations) living in the mosquitoes of the wetland and stream habitats of Nachusa. There is very little known about this topic generally. This study will also document the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of these aquatic habitats, adding to our knowledge of Nachusa's aquatic environments, and it will expand our knowledge of Nachusa's insect inventory by identifying mosquito species that live on site (\$3,170).

Nicholas Steijn, MS graduate student, Northern Illinois University. "Small Mammal Monitoring and the Effects of Invasive Plant Removal." This will be Mr. Steijn's second year investigating the effects of invasive plant removal via herbicide application on the abundance and diversity of small mammals and the seeds they consume. The study will provide insight into how this management technique may change community composition and population dynamics of these primary consumers in the ecosystem. This study is part of the NIU ReFuGE Project (\$1,500).

John Vanek, PhD graduate student, Northern Illinois University. "Prairie

Engineers: Investigating Species Associations of Burrows in a World Class Prairie Restoration." Using infrared, motion-detecting camera traps, Mr. Vanek will be discovering which species are creating, maintaining, and using the numerous burrows found at Nachusa. This study will answer many questions stewards and visitors have about the burrows, and it will provide important baseline data on the diversity of the mesocarnivores (badgers, foxes, etc.) and other burrow-dwelling species on the preserve (\$1,847).

Katherine Wenzell, PhD graduate student, Northwestern University/ Chicago Botanic Garden. "Low Pollination of State-Endangered Downy Paintbrush: A Problem for Restored Prairies or for Illinois?" This study is a follow-up to the work done on downy paintbrush (*Castilleja sessiliflora*) in 2017 which found low fruit set and no observed pollinator visitation in the populations of this Illinois endangered plant at Nachusa. The same observations were made of another northeastern Illinois population, suggesting low

pollination as a possible threat to population persistence across the state of Illinois. To investigate whether low pollinator visitation may lead to low reproductive success and the potential for species decline in Illinois, this study will compare pollinator visitation rates at populations of downy paintbrush in Illinois (at Nachusa) to other populations in the region, in states where downy paintbrush is not considered endangered (\$1,440).



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to preserve, protect, and advocate for the restoration of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem—grasslands, savannas, woodlands, and wetlands. We care for the birds, bison, wildflowers, grasses, insects, and reptiles that are irreplaceable parts of the whole.

ENCOURAGE STEWARDSHIP

Volunteers are the heart and soul of Nachusa. Our volunteers harvest seed, manage invasive species, clear brush, plant new prairie, as well as conduct

prescribed burns. They monitor species from blooms to insects to birds. Some volunteers lead hikes. Others share their photography, art, or writing. E-mail us at nachusagrasslands@gmail.com for a volunteer opportunity that will both fit your passion and have an immediate impact.

BUILD ENDOWED FUNDS

We are approaching two-thirds of our goal of three million dollars in principal for our two endowments, which will permanently help defray the costs of stewardship. We

can't do it without you! In recognition of your support, we will send you our Annual Report detailing the progress you make possible. Friends of Nachusa Grasslands is a 501(c)(3) organization.

SUPPORT EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

We support critical scientific research that expands our understanding of grasslands, savannas, and wetlands, and improves our management and restoration practices. Since 2011 we have awarded \$124,000 in grants to researchers, and we will award \$42,000 more this year. We believe that research is crucial to the long-term protection of the tallgrass prairie.



HERITAGE HEROES

Meet Heritage Hero Daniel Thompson

HOME: Galesburg, Illinois

EDUCATION: BA in biology, Carleton College; teaching certificate from University of Texas

WORK LIFE: worked under a beetle expert at the Smithsonian Institution; researched golden-cheeked warblers in Central America; conducted prescribed burns; taught high school biology

PIVOTAL EVENTS: visited Nachusa Grasslands 20 years ago; returned to Galesburg in 2007 and was astonished at the level of interest in prairie; became the sole guardian of the Scotch Cemetery Prairie in Knox County

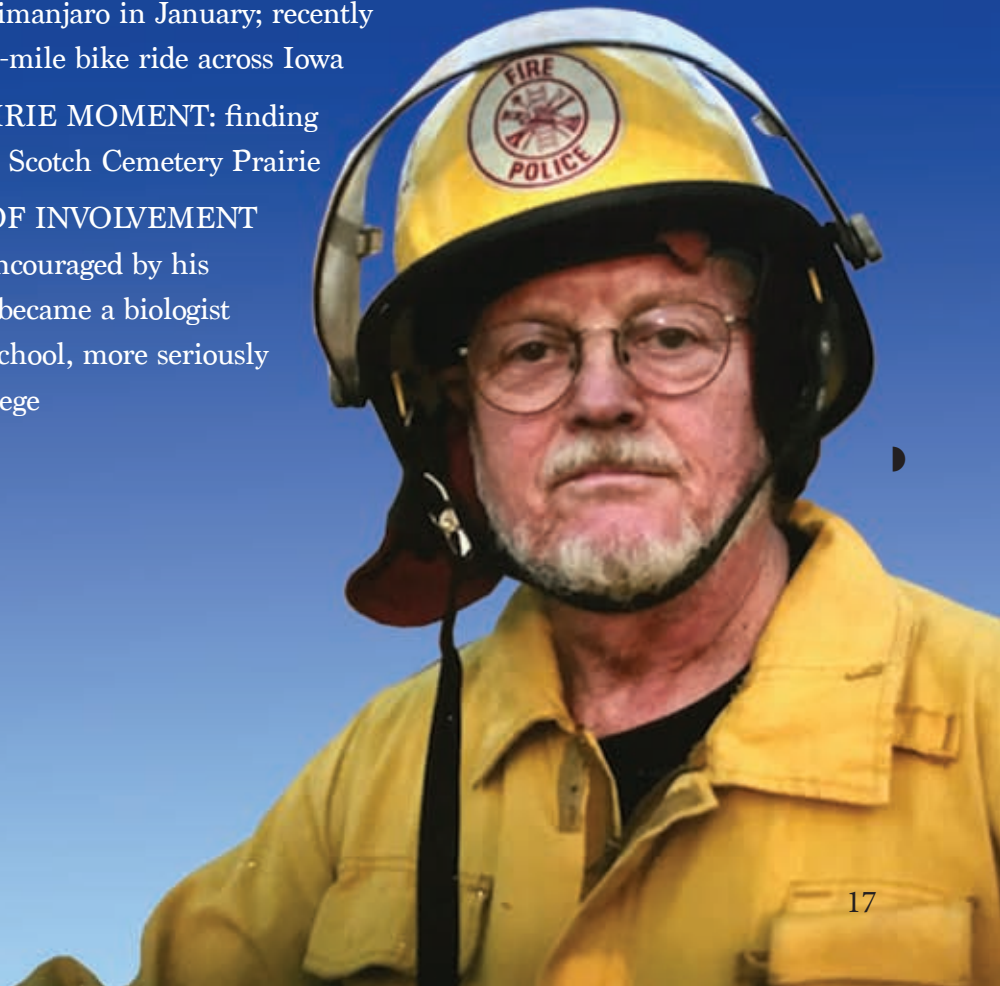
LEGACY COMMITMENT TO NACHUSA GRASSLANDS: honors the volunteers' dedication to Nachusa and their many successes; supports the Friends' enthusiastic funding of scientific research

OTHER INTERESTS: track and field fan; birder; climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro in January; recently completed a 428-mile bike ride across Iowa

SPECIAL PRAIRIE MOMENT: finding bottle gentian at Scotch Cemetery Prairie

BEGINNING OF INVOLVEMENT IN NATURE: encouraged by his mother, Daniel became a biologist while in grade school, more seriously intrigued in college

Our Heritage Heroes initiative offers the opportunity for you to make a lasting contribution to prairie protection by naming Friends of Nachusa Grasslands in your will or estate plan. Sixteen individuals or families have enthusiastically embraced this legacy program.



OUR DONORS

JULY 1, 2017 TO JUNE 30, 2018

*Prairie Perennials

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

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+Heritage Heroes

Donors who have committed to including the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands in their estate plans

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In honor of Jacqueline and Robert Wisniewski

Michael Studier*

Jeanie and Tim Sullivan*

Paul Swanson

Les and Pat Szewczyk

The Wine Merchant
c/o Barbara Bowers

Cara Therrio

Daniel Thompson+

Kathleen Tollaksen*
In honor of Mike Adolph

Tom and Gwen Troxell

U.S. Cellular*
Jeff Cologna and Rochelle Boersma, employee matches

Marie Van Tuyl

Cornelius Vanderkolk*

Bruce and Kathy Vickrey*

Jeff and Regina Walk

Clara Orban and Elliot Weisenberg*
In honor of Sheri Orban

Wildflower Garden Club

Diana March and Norm Wilkinson

Jason Willand*

Merlin Willard

Bethany Wiltshire

Gail and Michael Winfrey*

Lucinda Winterfield*

Evelyn Young*
In honor of Alan and Mary Meier

Dan Zellner*

Anonymous

HERITAGE HEROES NOT LISTED ABOVE

Anonymous (2)

Harriet Choice

George and Marylou Farnsworth

Mark and Cecilia Hochsprung

Robert J. Miller, Jr.



FINANCIAL RESULTS

	2017-2018		2016-2017	
Beginning Balance	\$ 21,630		\$ 25,393	
Revenue				
Cash Donations	206,111	71%	204,551	77%
CRP Annual Payment	56,990	20%	50,000	18%
CFNIL Endowment Income	15,079	5%	5,233	2%
Grant Income	10,000	3%		
Amazon Smile Income	91	<1%	110	<1%
T-Shirt Revenue	3,625	1%	5,135	2%
Total Revenue	291,896	100%	265,029	100%
CFNIL Matching Grant			50,000	
Direct Gifts to Endowments	9,538		14,178	
In Kind Donations	57		249	
Total Support from all Sources	301,491		329,456	
Disbursements				
In Direct Support of Our Mission				
Gifts to TNC Endowment	22,000	8%	45,000	17%
CFNIL Nachusa Endowment	184,000	66%	170,000	63%
Science Grants	40,000	14%	32,871	12%
Nachusa Operations via TNC	15,079	5%	5,233	2%
Stewardship	2,932	1%	1,852	<1%
Grants to other Organizations	2,500	1%	1,242	<1%
T-Shirt Expense	2,306	1%	1,383	<1%
Subtotal	268,817	96%	257,581	96%
Expenses				
Banking Fees	526	<1%	526	<1%
Government Fees	50	<1%	70	<1%
Insurance	3,474	1%	3,422	1%
Development	7,834	3%	7,194	3%
Subtotal	11,884	4%	11,211	4%
Total Disbursements	280,700	100%	268,792	100%
Ending Cash Balance	\$ 32,826		\$ 21,630	

ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCE June 30, 2018

Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands (CFNIL*)	\$ 760,960
Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment (TNC**)	\$ 700,432

Total Endowment Funds **\$ 1,461,392**

ENDOWMENT DISTRIBUTIONS (net of fees) June 30, 2018

	Current Year	Since Inception
CFNIL*	\$ 15,079	\$ 23,232
TNC**	\$ 15,089	\$ 36,756
Total Distributions	\$ 30,168	\$ 59,988

Distributions primarily fund operations at Nachusa.

**Established June 2014; July distribution based on average year end balance over prior 3 years*

***Established September 2009; June distribution based on average year end balance over prior 5 years*

BALANCE SHEET June 30, 2018

Assets		Liabilities	
Cash	\$ 12,826	Liabilities	\$ 0
Cash Savings	\$ 20,000	Funds Balance	\$ 32,826
Total Assets	\$ 32,826	Total Liabilities	\$ 32,826



LEARN MORE

SAVE THE DATES

Friends Science Grants Announcements: February 1, 2019

Friends Prairie Potluck: June 15, 2019

Friends Annual Meeting: July 27, 2019

Autumn on the Prairie: September 21, 2019

CONTACT US

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands

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DIRECTORS

Mike Carr (2018-2020)

Betty Higby (2018-2020)

Jeff Cologna (2018-2019)

OFFICERS (2018-19)

Bernie Buchholz, president

Mike Saxton, vice president

Mary Vieregg, vice president

David Crites, treasurer

Mary Meier, secretary

With grateful thanks to our writers, photographers, and illustrator who contributed to this annual report.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Each copyrighted photo is marked with a symbol indicating the photographer's name.

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+ Ryan Bromberek

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♣ Casey Grom, RMI Expeditions

* Heather Herakovich

⊛ Betty Higby

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& Genealogical Society

♣ Charles Larry

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Executive Editor: Bernie Buchholz

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Graphic Designer: Cindy Kiple

Printing: Georgene Meyers and RGM Graphics

ILLUSTRATOR: Betty Higby

READING RECOMMENDED BY YOUR FRIENDS

Betty Higby: *Field Notes on Science & Nature*, edited by Michael R. Canfield

Bill Kleiman: *Flora of the Chicago Region: A Floristic and Ecological Synthesis* by Wilhelm and Rericha

Mark Jordan: *The Thing is the Thing is Green* by Peggy Gifford,
In Beauty May I Walk by an anonymous Navajo, and
The Peace of Wild Things by Wendell Berry

James Higby: *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold

Bernie Buchholz: "Strategies for Stewards: from Woods to Prairies," a blog by Stephen Packard

Mary Meier: *The Tallgrass Prairie: An Introduction* by Cindy Crosby

Elizabeth Bach: *1491* by Charles C. Mann and *My Antonia* by Willa Cather

Timothy Ngo: *The Natural Heritage of Illinois: Essays on its Lands, Waters, Flora, and Fauna* by John E. Schwegman.

Mike Saxton: *The Invention of Nature* by Andrea Wulf

Cody Considine: *Grassland* by Richard Manning



SEEING COMMUNITY

BY MARK JORDAN, STEWARD

Emily Dickinson wrote that to make a prairie it takes a clover, a bee, and reverie. Over the last few decades it has taken a bit more to transform cropland, pasture, and degraded habitats into the ecologically rich and diverse Nachusa Grasslands. The intermingling of the colors of the summer flowers, the waving of the autumn grasses, and the breath of the bison on a winter day have become a reality

because of the vision, the dedication, and the labors of many committed individuals and groups working toward a common goal.

Making a prairie takes a volunteer on a Saturday morning collecting the seeds of the prairie coreopsis, a crew member starting a fire on a spring morning, a steward pulling invasive sweet clover, and a graduate student studying the genetics of the prairie bees.

Maintaining the grasslands requires a friendly face welcoming visitors to the prairie, a naturalist sharing a view of the bison, and a photographer lying prone to capture the dew on an emerging shoot of bluestem. There would be no Nachusa without the many hours and contributions of the crew, volunteers, stewards, families, corporations, and others in an effort to make reverie a reality.





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