

## Friends of Nachusa Grasslands 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes July 29, 2023; Updated September 5, 2023

**Present:** Elizabeth Bach, Bernie Buchholz, Cindy Buchholz, Marilyn Carr, Michael Carr, Sammy Dalati, Bob Gross, Teresa Haggstad, Heather Herakovich, Betty Higby, James Higby, Dee Hudson, Eric Kingery, Linda Kuhns, Charles Larry, Chandra Martinez, Mary Meier, Tim Mescher, Tim Ngo, Stewart Pagenstecher, Joe Richardson, Mike Saxton, Paul Soderholm, Emmylou Studier, and Mary Vieregg

The meeting took place at the Nachusa Grasslands Headquarters and also via Zoom.

**Exhibits:** Links to the exhibits shared during the meeting are posted on the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands 2023 Annual Meeting web page (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/friends-annual-meeting-2023.html>) Note that these and other hyperlinks don't always work on the PDFs uploaded to the Friends website – request a personal copy if you want one.

- [2022-2023 Treasurer's Report](#)
- [Budget Overview: FY 2024 - FY24](#)
- [Revenue and Distributions Designations](#)
- [Cash Flow Diagram](#)
- [2022-2023 Donors and Donations](#)
- [2023 Board Candidate](#)
- [Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Audit Findings Letter – 02/13/23](#)
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- [Social Media Report – Team Members and Website Statistics](#)
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**Opening:** President Bernie Buchholz called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

- Attendees introduced themselves.
- Bernie Buchholz noted that The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has owned and operated Nachusa Grasslands since 1986.
- Our non-profit organization exists to promote and protect the preserve in cooperation with TNC.
- Bernie announced that Friends is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> year, as the corporation was founded in 2008.
- He reviewed our mission: to build endowments that will help defray the cost of natural areas management, staff and operating expenses; conduct and encourage stewardship; support education and scientific activity; and fund land acquisition at the preserve.
- For details on our goals, see the [Mission and Leadership](#) page on the Friends website.

- Bernie also stated that the Friends Bylaws establish that we are a strong Board-led organization. The voting members elect the Board of Directors, and then the Board makes all the decisions affecting the group by a majority vote, after listening to the views expressed by the members.

**Quorum:** A quorum (10% of the 53 potential voting members) was established.

- Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Voting Member Description from Bylaws: Any person may become a voting member who has either (i) been a volunteer at the Preserve for the full calendar year prior to the Annual Meeting, has contributed at least forty (40) hours during that year and has paid the annual dues; or (ii) been a volunteer at the Preserve for at least three (3) years of the preceding ten (10) years with a minimum contribution of forty (40) hours in each of those years and has paid the annual dues.
- The members have decided that a donation of any amount qualifies as dues.

**2022 Annual Meeting Minutes:** The 2022 minutes were approved as presented.

**Board of Directors Election:** The membership unanimously elected Betty Higby to a two-year term (2023-2025).

- A description of Betty's involvement at Nachusa is provided in the "2023 Board Candidates" document on the Annual Meeting web page.
- Bernie thanked Charles Larry for serving his two-year term (2021-2023).
- Mike Carr and Heather Herakovich will continue as directors for another year.

**Election of Officers by Board of Directors:** The Board elected the following officers for one-year terms: President: Bernie Buchholz; Vice President: Mike Saxton; Treasurer: Eric Kingery; and Secretary: Mary Meier.

**Cash Flow Diagram:**

- To help members and supporters better understand the sources and utilization of Friends income as well as the role of the Board of Directors in directing the money to the appropriate funds, Eric Kingery presented the updated Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Cash Flow Diagram.
- The document is appended to the end of the minutes.

**Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Treasurer's Report 2022-2023:** Eric presented a revenue / disbursements / expenditures report covering July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023.

- He pointed out key details and highlights of the Treasurer's report, which is appended to the end of these minutes. Note that the "Financial Reports" document was amended after the meeting to include information about contributions to our three endowments.
- Significantly, Friends is in a unique position, as we don't have to establish a target income goal to stay in business. As we are an all-volunteer organization with expenses of about 4% of our budget, almost all of our revenue can go toward science grants and endowments.

**2022-2023 Revenue and Disbursements (unaudited):**

- Total revenue from all sources was \$1,121,909, including donations, investment income, grants, endowment distributions, and CRP payments.

- Total expenses were \$309,280. The main expenditures included a land purchase, science grants, and development (fundraising, donor management, various publications, the annual meeting, and the Prairie Potluck).
- Fund and endowment contributions totaled \$681,002, honoring all donors' donation designations.

**2022-2023 Proposed Budget:** Eric reviewed the proposed budget overview.

- Income of \$564,190, and expenditures of \$369,500 are projected, so the net revenue would be \$197,902.
- The budget was approved by the Board of Directors.

**Audit:** In the State of Illinois, a certified audit is required if a nonprofit has annual gross revenue that exceeds \$300,000.

- Our audit for the year ending June 30, 2022, had very positive results, including the conclusion that we achieved an unqualified audit, which means that the auditors confirmed that the information we presented was accurate and properly adhered to accounting standards.
- Bernie and Betty Higby thanked Eric for improving our recording and reporting efforts over the past year.
- See the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Financials section of the [About Friends](#) page for a link to the audit.
- Our tax return, IRS 990, is also linked to the Financials section. Mary M. mentioned that the schedule listing amounts and contact information for our major donors is redacted on our copy, but other entities could possibly post those pages online if they are provided directly from the IRS.

**Endowment Balances and Distributions:** Friends has three Endowments, all with permanent principal.

- Each of the endowments follows similar investment strategies.
- Annual distributions are 4-to-5.3% of each endowment balance, based on historical multi-year balances. Distributions will continue to grow as the principal increases.
- The Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment was set up in 2009 through an agreement with The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The June 30, 2023, unaudited preliminary balance was \$804,413, and the 2022-2023 fiscal year distribution was \$42,268, which TNC paid to itself for Nachusa operation expenses.
- The Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands, held and managed by the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL), was established in 2014 at the request of donors who prefer local control of their gifts. The June 30, 2023, unaudited balance before investment results was \$ 2,615,666, and the 2022-2023 fiscal year distribution was \$97,378.
- The Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science, held and managed by CFNIL, was established in 2020. As of June 30, 2023, the balance before investment results was \$631,496, and the 2022-2023 distribution was \$7,005.

**Cash Flow Designations:**

- Because (1) the two CFNIL endowments generate dramatically higher returns than the TNC endowment and (2) the CFNIL distributions are controlled by Friends, the Board has adopted the following policy:
- After donor designations are honored and expenses are paid, all remaining revenue will be directed to either the CFNIL endowments or to the Land Protection Fund. All CRP receipts will also go to the CFNIL endowments.
- We intend that revenue will be allocated to the two CFNIL endowments and the Land Protection Fund such that progress toward the goals for those accounts (stated above) will advance in a roughly proportional manner from year to year.
- Current year Science Grants will be funded as an expense before distributions to CFNIL endowments and the Land Protection Fund.
- The annual endowment distribution from the Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands (CFNIL) will be paid to TNC for operations at NG. The distribution from the Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science (CFNIL) will be paid to Friends to fund science grants

**Community Science:** Elizabeth reported on various community science projects that are taking place at Nachusa, including stream, dragonfly, frog, and butterfly monitoring. All of these efforts have been ongoing for several years and contribute to our scientific understanding of Nachusa's ecosystem.

- Cindy Crosby sent a list of the 14 current dragonfly/damselfly monitors.
- Mary Vieregg reported that a large group of stream monitors sampled four streams this year.
- Susan Kleiman trained two new calling frog monitors, who are volunteering along with her and Paul Swanson.
- New monitoring programs involve dragonfly nymphs, stream bank erosion, and regal fritillaries.
- See [Community Scientists at Nachusa Grasslands](#) for additional information.

### **Volunteer Development:**

#### ***Hamill Family Foundation (HFF) Volunteer Hours Challenge:***

- In 2022, 8,430 total volunteer hours were recorded and reported to the Hamill Family Foundation.
- Because we exceeded 8,000 hours, we earned a \$100,000 grant, which was received in January 2023.

#### ***New Volunteers:***

- From January 1, 2022, to July 29, 2023, at least 67 new volunteers participated in workdays, served as docents, did community science activities, or helped with Autumn on the Prairie.
- For workdays alone, almost 50% of our volunteers were new.
- *Prairie Primer* booklets can be given to new and regular volunteers.

#### ***Volunteer Workday Leaders:***

- Steward leaders should sign up via SignUpGenius, using the link on the Friends website home page.

- We need many more leaders for the upcoming months.
- Leading workdays can be challenging, but it's rewarding and benefits Nachusa.
- Regular volunteers who aren't stewards can also lead workdays. Consult Dee or other staff members for possible tasks and locations.

***Guided Hikes:***

- Heather Herakovich has been hired as the Nachusa Grasslands Summer Interpreter.
- She is leading hikes in different Nachusa units on various days and at various times.
- Of the 20 people who attended in July, 90% were new to the preserve.
- During the hikes, she points out various volunteer opportunities.

***Public Bison Tours***

- Joe Richardson shared that he leads many of TNC's public bison tours, showing guests the herd, the corral, and the entire preserve.
- The tours, overseen by TNC, are very popular, and two were offered in June, July, and August with one in May, September, and October.
- Leaders can encourage volunteering and can also accept donations designated for either TNC or Friends.
- Undesignated cash donations should be discussed with a staff member.

***Autumn on the Prairie:*** Dee announced that Autumn on the Prairie will take place on September 16, 2023.

- Susan, Bill, Dee, Jinny Swedberg, and John Schmadeke are on the committee.
- The raptors will return.
- Headons Fine Meats will provide a food truck.
- Hiking and bison tours will be offered, similar to previous years.
- John has finalized the hike schedule, featuring a variety of topics, and Susan has sent out a SignUpGenius for volunteers.

***Volunteer Appreciation Potluck:*** Sometime this fall, TNC will host an event thanking our Nachusa volunteers.

- Last year's event was very successful.
- Activities will include a potluck lunch and tours.
- Watch for an invitation in September.

***Volunteer Recruitment Research:*** Eric and a donor with a marketing background are going to investigate new recruitment options as well as ways to encourage new volunteers to become regulars.

***Plant ID Workdays:*** Mike C. offered several woodland and savanna plant ID workdays during the spring.

- They were very popular and resulted in volunteers identifying several species new to our plant list.
- Several participants returned for additional workdays.

- He suggested that other workday leaders consider incorporating plant identification in their activities.

**Lunch after Workdays:** Bob Gross asked about extending stewardship opportunities for workday volunteers.

- Before Covid, workday participants were welcome to join the staff and other volunteers for lunch at the barn.
- Volunteers who travel from a long distance may be more likely to attend if they can also get to know people and perhaps do stewardship after lunch.
- A steward would have to agree to take them out into the field.
- This invitation has again been included in workday publicity.

**The Grand Plan – Supporting Franklin Creek State Natural Area and Lowden Miller State Forest/Castle Rock State Park:** Bernie proposed that we expand our thinking about maximizing the success of Nachusa Grasslands by including the other natural areas in our vision.

- Bill K. already does this by fostering prescribed fire, helping with grants and equipment, encouraging acquisitions, providing seed and plantings, and so on.
- When other preserves prosper, so does Nachusa.
- In the future, these areas may be connected physically. See the map linked to the Annual Meeting web page.
- Paul Soderholm recommended including Pine Creek watershed protection considerations as well.
- Mike S. noted that collaboration with natural areas leaders and supporters could be positive, but just serving them without reciprocal partnership is not advisable.
- Heather suggested that members of the other projects should be invited to visit Nachusa.
- Mike C. described an area at Franklin Creek with several native plants that needs major brush clearing.

**Annual Fundraising Results:**

**Total 2022-2023 Donations to Friends Recorded in NeonCRM: \$780,590**

• Undesignated	\$295,225
• Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment (TNC)	\$7,475
• Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands (CFNIL)	\$65,660
• Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science (CFNIL)	\$338,633
• Friends Fund for Science	\$59,747
• Friends Land Protection Fund	\$13,850

Increase in Donations from 2021-2022: \$154,470 (+20%)

Note that these amounts deviate from what is in the Treasurer’s Report, due to differences in fees deducted and recording methodology.

**Donation Tender Types:**

- Check/Cash Donations: \$468,767/241 [2021-2022 – \$537,681/255]
- Credit Card/E-Check/Wire/Stock-Securities Donations: \$311,823/457 (many recurring) [2021-2022 –\$88,430/306]

**Donors:**

- Total Donor Households 2022-2023: 311 [2021-2022 – 338]
- New Donors 2022-2023: 61 (26 Tributes) [2021-2022 – 63]

**Donor Tiers:**

- Restoration Benefactors – \$5,000 or more: 18 [2021-2022 – 19]
- Conservation Champions – \$1,500 to \$4,999: 23 [2021-2022 – 20]
- Supporters – \$1 to \$1,499: 270 [2021-2022 – 299]

**Prairie Perennials** Donors who have given to the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands in consecutive years [July 1 through June 30] at the same or a higher level: 164 [2021-2022 – 177]

**Recurring Donors:** 33 [2021-2022 – 33]

**Charity Navigator and GuideStar/Candid Ratings:**

- The Charity Navigator rating for Friends of Nachusa Grasslands is 100! We have fulfilled all the necessary requirements for the best rating possible.
- GuideStar is now called Candid, and we have a 2022 Gold Transparency rating.
- Links to both profiles are included in the Friends “Mission and Leadership” and “Donate” pages.

**Grants Received:** Friends worked on several grant projects last year:

- Hamill Family Foundation: Friends received \$105,000 in grants from the Hamill Family Foundation in 2022-2023. The Foundation recently ceased operations having distributed all of its assets through donations to conservation-related entities.
- TAWANI Foundation: We are in the second year of a very stringent matching challenge for scientific research funding. Our first installment of \$20,000 and an additional \$5,000 gift were received in June 2023.
- Illinois Clean Energy Foundation (ICEF): In April 2023, we received \$9,000 for our most recent Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation’s Community Stewardship Challenge Grant Program – the Stewardship at Stone Barn Savanna - West Holland Savanna Project.
- John R. Flanagan Charitable Foundation: Friends received a \$25,000 unrestricted grant from this private foundation in April 2023.
- Etnyre Foundation: In 2023, Friends was awarded \$3,940 from the Etnyre Foundation for or equipment and material supporting our docents at the Nachusa Grasslands Visitor Center. Thank you to Susan Kleiman for assisting us in the grant application.

**Heritage Heroes Legacy Giving Project:**

- Heritage Heroes is a Friends initiative that encourages legacy giving among Friends donors and other individuals or households.

- To date, 28 couples or individuals have named or are committed to naming Friends in their estate plans or as a beneficiary of life insurance or retirement accounts – an increase of 3 in the past year.
- We have set a goal of developing 40 Heritage Heroes during the next several years.
- One of our Heritage Heroes, Harriet Choice, recently died, and we are waiting to learn the details of her bequest to Friends. Harriet was passionate about grasslands and committed to our legacy program in 2017. We gratefully acknowledge her support.

#### **Land Acquisition:**

- Friends' participation in land protection is intended to ensure that sites are acquired at the quickest possible pace and, thus, support the timely realization of the project's geographic goals.
- Working cooperatively with The Nature Conservancy, Friends supports land protection opportunities on a case-by-case basis.
- Friends purchased 6.5 acres just north of the Headquarters Barn in May 2023.
- TNC was very interested in Friends obtaining this critical habitat, especially as a home might have been built on it by the current or new owners.
- It is possible that we will sell the property to TNC in the future, but no binding obligation currently exists.
- Initial stewardship will include removal of honeysuckle and pines using a forestry mower and a feller buncher, followed by hand spraying of the remaining invasive weeds and shrubs.
- Prairie restoration of the tract is the ultimate goal, as remnant plants had previously been identified.
- With Board approval, Friends is engaged in another confidential negotiation for 13 acres near the preserve. Contact Bernie for details if you are interested.

#### **Communications:**

***A Prairie Calling Newsletter:*** *A Prairie Calling (APC)* is a newsletter covering various topics related to Nachusa Grasslands aimed at a popular, broad audience.

- It approaches the subject matter in a less scientific way, with an emphasis on images.
- Currently, the *APC* comes out three times per year: February, May, and August.
- The publication is a team effort with Charles Larry as editor-in-chief, Dee Hudson as layout designer, and James Higby as editor.
- The past year's issues have focused on the bison roundup; landscape fire history; and bryophytes and lichens.
- The August 2023 issue written by Cindy Crosby is on ethnobotany, the study of how people can use native plants for medicinal and other purposes.
- The newsletter is snail mailed to Friends supporters and several other people interested in our organization.
- Links to digital copies are emailed to donors as well as researchers, volunteers, and crew members.
- See <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/digital-prairie-newsletter.html> for links to PDF versions of the newsletters.



- The newsletter has received very favorable responses from recipients, and the group also praised the quality of the newsletters.

**Donation “Asks” in Publications:**

- The June *APC* included a request for donations in support of the Friends’ science grant program. A remitter was enclosed.
- From June 11, 2023, to July 18, 2023, we received \$2,655 – 17 donations split between the Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science and Friends Fund for Science.
- Our primary donation solicitation is a feature of the Annual Report in the fall.
- Whether to include remitters in all mailings was discussed, and several attendees opined that they would resent being frequently asked for money.
- Adding a QR code that links to our “Donate” web page was suggested and will be considered by the editorial team.

**Annual Report:** Our 2022-2023 Friends Annual Report theme will be related to our organization’s 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

- Past accomplishments as well as future aspirations will be highlighted.
- Contact Bernie for details.

**Thank You Notes:** Emmylou reported that she sent 337 handwritten thank you notes to all of our donors (once each summer to recurring donors).

- Turnaround time from when Mary M. sends a formal donation acknowledgment is now about 1.09 days.
- Emmylou was commended for her amazing timeliness and personalization of each note.

**Appreciation Books for New Donors:** Marilyn continues to mail *The Prairie – Swell and Swale* book by Torkel Korling to first-time donors.

- This year, she mailed 22 books.
- Note that we don’t send them to people who give amounts under \$50, company matches, memorials, or appreciations, as well as those who don’t provide their addresses.

**Social Media Team:** The Social Media Team consists of Dee Hudson, Mary Meier, Joy McKinney, Heather Herakovich, Erin Rowland-Schaefer, and Chantelle Edmunds.

- Charles Larry doesn’t attend our Zoom meetings, but he continues to contribute marvelous photographs to our social media platforms.
- We welcome new members, especially ones interested in helping with our Twitter, Instagram, and Blog posts.

**Website ([www.nachusagrasslands.org](http://www.nachusagrasslands.org)):** Mary M. noted that the Friends’ website receives quite a bit of traffic and is continually under development.

- In the past year, we had about 66,000 page views by 30,000 unique visitors.
- New website pages include Teacher Resources for various grade levels (3rd to 5th grade example: <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/3rd-5th-grades.html>); specific

plant family info linked to QR codes on Visitor Center trail signs (Rose Family example: <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/rose-family.html>).

- Updated pages include Exploring Nachusa Grasslands on Your Own (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/exploring-nachusa-grasslands-on-your-own.html>); Friends Mission, Leadership, Objectives, and Financials (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/mission-and-leadership.html>); and Donate (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/donate.html>).
- The most popular pages are Home, Bison, Directions, Bison Tours, and Hiking Destinations.

**Facebook:** Mary M. reported that the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Nachusa>) has about 7,500 followers, reaching thousands of users each month, as people share various posts.

- Mary M., Dee, and Charles update the page frequently with beautiful photos, workday news, blog posts, and links to other items of interest.
- We are always careful to project a good impression of what happens at Nachusa and highlight Friends involvement as appropriate.
- In the past year, the Social Media Team developed detailed Facebook posts with several photos and captions. The most recent one on bison calves was very popular, and others included winter hiking, woodpeckers, controlled burns, and early spring blooms. More are planned for the coming months.
- Thank you to Charles Larry, who posts marvelous photos on Facebook every Wednesday.
- Charles is the administrator for the Photography at Nachusa Grasslands Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/356617574475489/?ref=bookmarks>).
- He has about 1,700 followers who post a variety of photos of flowers, birds, landscapes, and bison.

**MailChimp *Prairie-Updates* and Workday Emails:** Friends has a free MailChimp subscription.

- The *Prairie-Update* has about 1,400 subscribers.
- Mary M. is the editor. She sent 2 newsletters in November 2022 and May 2023.
- Time constraints and fresh subject matter are the main obstacles to the development of more newsletters.
- This is an excellent opportunity for some new to get involved. Mary would like to relinquish this important task.
- Mary also uses MailChimp to send workday/guided hike emails to about 400 recipients.

**Instagram** (Nachusa; <https://instagram.com/nachusa?igshid=aq74ny20ov>): Dee reported that Instagram has a total of 1,881 followers.

- Fifteen posts were made since the last annual meeting.
- See the report linked to the annual meeting web page for details on our 2023-2024 goals, follower analytics, and the most popular posts.

**Blog** (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/nachusa-blog.html>): This year 3 blogs were posted, a decrease from last year.

- Dee is the blog coordinator, and James Higby is the editor.
- Dee's main goals for 2023-2024 are to find a new coordinator and to publish one blog per month.

**Twitter (@Nachusa; <https://twitter.com/nachusa>):** Twitter has gained another 162 followers, for a total of 1,644.

- A new Twitter coordinator is needed.
- See the Annual Meeting web page for additional goals.

## **Science at Nachusa:**

**Science Grant Program:** Mary V. introduced Linda Kuhns, as our new Science Grant Chairperson. She has been a RiverWatch volunteer and brings many skills to the role.

- Mary V. has developed statistics regarding the 120 Friends grants totaling \$410,335 awarded from 2011 to 2023 (interestingly, this amount is almost exactly 10% of our total donations over the years). See the detailed analysis linked to the Annual Report web page.
- \$75,000 has been budgeted for the 2024 awards.
- Mary V. encouraged attendees to review the list of potential research projects posted on <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/potential-research-topics.html> and make additional suggestions, so they can be included in future grant applications.
- Email suggestions to [nachusafriendsscience@gmail.com](mailto:nachusafriendsscience@gmail.com).
- In 2023, Friends funded 16 researchers with a total of \$73,000 in grants. For details on these projects, see <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/science-grants-2023.html>.
- Mary M. read a tribute to Mary V. for her contributions to science at Nachusa:
  - Mary has been involved in the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Scientific Research Grant program since its inception in 2011 and served as chair of the committee from 2013 to 2023.
  - Over the last decade, her many responsibilities included communicating year-round with Elizabeth Bach, other staff members, researchers, committee members, and the Social Media Team regarding grant guidelines, applications, and awards.
  - She has also worked with Elizabeth on the annual science symposium format, solicited presentation and poster abstracts, and developed the program for the event.
  - In addition, Mary continues to serve as Nachusa's Community Science RiverWatch coordinator, overseeing monitoring of four streams on the preserve for water quality.
  - Mary has helped make Nachusa Grasslands a world-class center for scientific endeavors, and Friends of Nachusa Grasslands is exceedingly grateful for all her contributions.
- Mike S. mentioned that the annual increases in grant amounts are a bold investment that has been very effective for enhancing science at Nachusa.

**Science Symposium:** Elizabeth Bach reported on this year's in-person Science Symposium that took place last April.

- About 80 people attended, which was almost capacity at the barn.
- The quality of the presentations and posters was excellent.
- Thank you to Cindy Crosby, who offered an optional webinar to participating scientists on science communication, which was very helpful.
- Feedback was very positive.
- The next symposium is scheduled for April 20, 2024.

**Researchers at Nachusa:** This year Elizabeth approved 30 research permits for scientists from 20 different institutions.

- We had fewer researchers, but more universities represented.
- She tries to recruit researchers interested in supporting projects that answer questions posed by Nachusa staff and volunteers.

### **TNC-Nachusa Grasslands Update by Elizabeth:**

**HQ Renovation:** Modifications to the Headquarters Barn, including expanding gathering areas and remodeling the offices, are underway.

- Phase One: Renovation of the loft, is in progress – a small meeting room, work area, and storage space are under construction. It will be air conditioned.
- Phase Two: The old seed processing area (which needs a new name, so suggestions are welcome) now has heat and fans. It will become the break room with a kitchenette. Improvements will include audio-visual enhancements, but no air conditioning.
- Phase Three: The current lunchroom will be used for larger offices for staff and crew members.

**Juanita Williams Tract:** Nachusa is engaged in wetland restoration by removing tiles and creating berms.

- Bernie asked about the scientific basis for a such a project.
- Mike C. mentioned that we are trying to replicate pre-settlement conditions.
- Elizabeth replied that farmers previously leveled the ground, so we are trying to bring back more natural hydrology by creating ponds from surface water.

### **Administrative Items and New Business:**

**Policies:** As required by our Bylaws, the Directors and Officers acknowledged that they had all read and were in compliance with the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Conflict of Interest Policy.

- Friends also has a Donor Confidentiality Policy, a Whistleblower Policy and a Document Retention Policy.
- Digital records and paper files that have been scanned can be stored in Friends' Dropbox folders if desired.

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):** The Federal government reimburses landowners for reserving tillable acreage for wildlife habitat and soil conservation.

- Mike C. administers the CRP program.

- Within the next month, Friends will no longer lease CRP acres at Clear Creek, Clear Creek Knolls, and Hotchkiss in anticipation of building fences for bison grazing there sometime in the future, which is not permitted on CRP land.
- We acquired some land from Middle Rock Conservation Partners and will hopefully also find more acres to lease.
- In 2024, we will have 183.38 acres in CRP, which is less than 2023, so the amount of funds we receive from the USDA will be reduced.
- Mike reported that the areas have been swept for noxious weeds and woody shrubs, so we are in compliance with management obligations.

**Friends T-Shirt Initiative:** Heather Baker coordinates our t-shirt program.

- Her 2023 design features a sphinx moth and eastern prairie fringed orchid on the front and our Friends logo on the back of each shirt.
- Friends sells the shirts at cost, so taxes do not have to be collected.
  - Moth/Orchid, Badger, and Bumblebee shirts are \$8.
  - All older shirts are \$5.
- The shirts can be purchased at Autumn on the Prairie.

**2024 Annual Meeting:** The next Friends Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, July 27, 2024.

**Group Photograph:** Thank you to Dee for taking the photo below.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Meier, Secretary  
September 5, 2023



## Financial Results

2023 (unaudited)

2022 (audited)

### Statement of Activity

<b>Support &amp; Revenue</b>		
Donations	\$560,899	\$348,570
Investment Income	\$234,284	-\$338,700
Endowment Distributions	\$104,383	\$127,077
Grant Income	\$167,940	\$261,810
Other Income	\$54,403	\$50,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,121,909</b>	<b>\$345,223</b>

<b>Expenses &amp; Land Purchases</b>		
Science Grants and Symposium	\$73,385	\$66,394
Auditing, Insurance, and Professional Expenses	\$9,590	\$6,655
Stewardship	\$98,479	\$89,248
Nachusa Operations	\$1,250	\$69,949
Endowment Fees	\$11,509	\$3,035
Development Expenses	\$16,641	\$15,141
Grant Spending	\$11,887	
Grants to Other Organizations	\$4,000	\$4,000
Land Purchases and Maintenance	\$79,226	
Other Expenses	\$3,313	\$7,481
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$309,280</b>	<b>\$261,903</b>

<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	\$812,629	\$86,941
<b>Net assets, end of year (June 30)</b>	<b>\$4,387,589</b>	<b>\$3,574,960</b>

### Statement of Financial Position

<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and Investments	\$258,980	\$172,320
CFNIL General Endowment *	\$2,615,666	\$2,392,855
CFNIL Science Endowment **	\$631,496	\$226,666
TNC Endowment ***	\$804,413	\$783,119
Protected Land	\$77,034	\$0
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$4,387,589</b>	<b>\$3,574,960</b>

<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,387,589</b>	<b>\$3,574,960</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,387,589</b>	<b>\$3,574,960</b>

## Fund Report

<b>Fund Balances</b>		
Land Protection Fund ****	\$48,511	\$77,559
Yellow Farmhouse Fund *****	\$48,332	\$0

<b>Fund Contributions</b>		
Land Protection Fund ****	\$47,986	\$77,559
Yellow Farmhouse Fund *****	\$50,000	\$0.00
CFNIL General Endowment *	\$120,000	\$287,350
CFNIL Science Endowment **	\$366,842	\$141,650
TNC Endowment ***	\$96,174	\$89,248
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>\$681,002</b>	<b>\$595,807</b>

<b>Endowment Distributions</b>	<b>Current Year</b>	<b>Since Inception</b>
CFNIL General Endowment *	\$97,378	\$322,975
CFNIL Science Endowment **	\$7,005	\$11,113
TNC Endowment ***	\$42,268	\$185,833
<b>Total Distributions</b>	<b>\$146,651</b>	<b>\$519,921</b>

\* Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL) General endowment established May 14, 2014; Distributions fund operations at Nachusa.

\*\* Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL) Science endowment established December 1, 2020; Distributions fund our science grants and symposium.

\*\*\* The Nature Conservancy (TNC) endowment established September 1, 2009; Distributions fund operations at Nachusa.

\*\*\*\* Land Protection Fund Established June 30, 2021; Funds for strategic land acquisitions.

\*\*\*\*\* Yellow Farmhouse Fund Established June 28, 2022; Funds for repairs that will extend the house's useful life.

## Friends of Nachusa Grasslands

### Budget Overview: FY 2024 - FY24 P&L

July 2023 - June 2024

	TOTAL
Revenue	
4010 Donations - Cash	150,000.00
4022 Donations - Fund for Land Protection	12,000.00
4023 Donations - Science Grants and Symposium	30,000.00
4050 Donations - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands	50,000.00
4051 Donations - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science	50,000.00
4121 Investment Income - Yellow Farmhouse Fund	500.00
4123 Investment Income - Science Grants and Symposium	750.00
4150 Distributions - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands	96,173.70
4151 Distributions - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science	21,266.58
4310 Grant Income	100,000.00
4312 T-Shirt Income	3,500.00
4313 CRP Annual Payments	50,000.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$564,190.28</b>
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>\$564,190.28</b>
Expenditures	
5022 Expenses - Land Protection Fund	130,000.00
5023 Gifts - Science Grants and Symposium	76,500.00
5080 Gifts - to Other Organizations	4,000.00
5110 Stewardship	100,000.00
5160 Nachusa Operations	2,000.00
5250 Fund Expenses - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands	11,000.00
5251 Fund Expenses - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science	1,500.00
5300 Other	500.00
5310 Grant Spending	10,000.00
5312 T-Shirt Expenses	3,500.00
5420 Auditing Fees	10,000.00
5430 Insurance.	2,500.00
5440 Development	18,000.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$369,500.00</b>
<b>NET OPERATING REVENUE</b>	<b>\$194,690.28</b>
Other Expenditures	
Reconciliation Discrepancies	-3,211.64
<b>Total Other Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ -3,211.64</b>
<b>NET OTHER REVENUE</b>	<b>\$3,211.64</b>
<b>NET REVENUE</b>	<b>\$197,901.92</b>



# Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Cash Flow Diagram

