

# PRAIRIE SMOKE

Nachusa Grasslands Newsletter

Issue 11

November, 1991

## AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE REPORT

A FANTASTIC day! First we must express our gratitude to the many, many people who made it such a memorable day.

THANK YOU - local press: Dixon Telegraph; Oregon Republican Reporter; Ashton Gazette; Daily Dispatch Rock Island; Rockford Register-Star; Rochelle News Leader and the Amboy News.

THANK YOU - Franklin Grove and Ashton High Schools for tables and chairs.

THANK YOU - Franklin Grove Fire Department for emergency hack-up during the controlled burn demonstration.

THANK YOU - Crest Foods for use of office machines.

THANK YOU - local artists.

THANK YOU - Rod family for golf cart and driver.

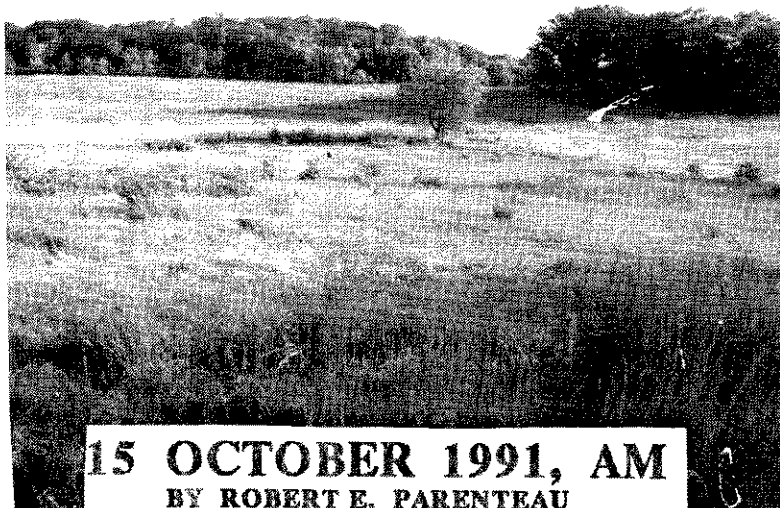
THANKS, too, to our story teller, Susan Warden.

And to our many volunteers who worked many hours to make the day a success.

We also appreciate the local business participants -- Snow White Bakery and Deli, Dixon; Rock River Rent-A-Tent, Sterling; Sauk Trails, Inc., Dixon; Big John Portable Toilet Rental, Polo; and Rod's Golf Cart Rentals, Mendota.

The estimated attendance was between 500 and 600. Citizens from many local, as well as distant, towns signed-in. Other states represented were Florida, California, Ohio, Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota.

The weather was beautiful to add to our fantastic day. See page 2 for pictures of the event taken by Gene St. Louis.



15 OCTOBER 1991, AM

BY ROBERT E. PARENTEAU

Oh! What a beautiful day  
The sun is shining, and  
The sky is blue,  
with white puffs of cotton clouds.

A brisk breeze is blowing  
Out of the west.

A hawk hovers over the lowlands  
But hunting seems not to be good.  
Crows are working over a bean field.  
Gleaning what man has left behind.  
Chinese bandits\* are raising  
a ruckus in the distance.

Trees to the west are  
displaying their gorgeous fall colors.  
Nature is in her glory  
On the beautiful fall day!

\*Clue: Unwanted alien avian species!

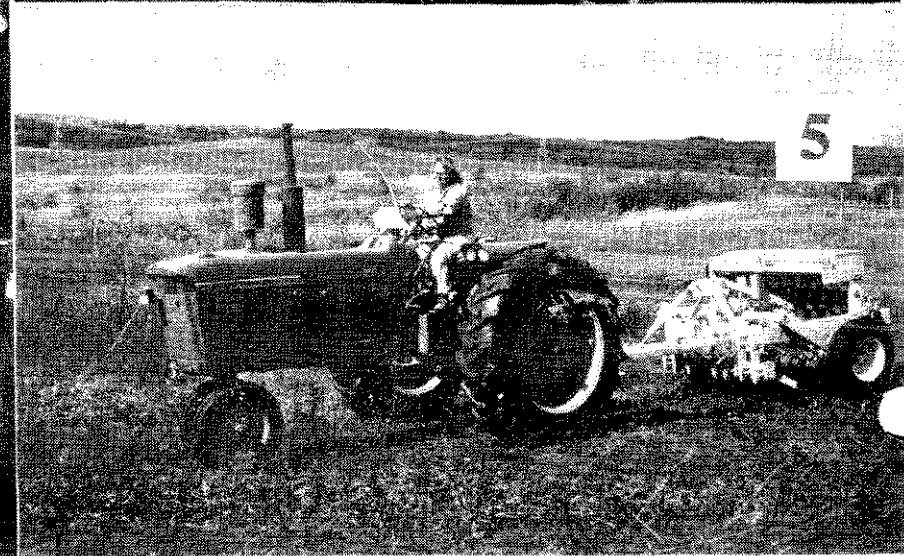
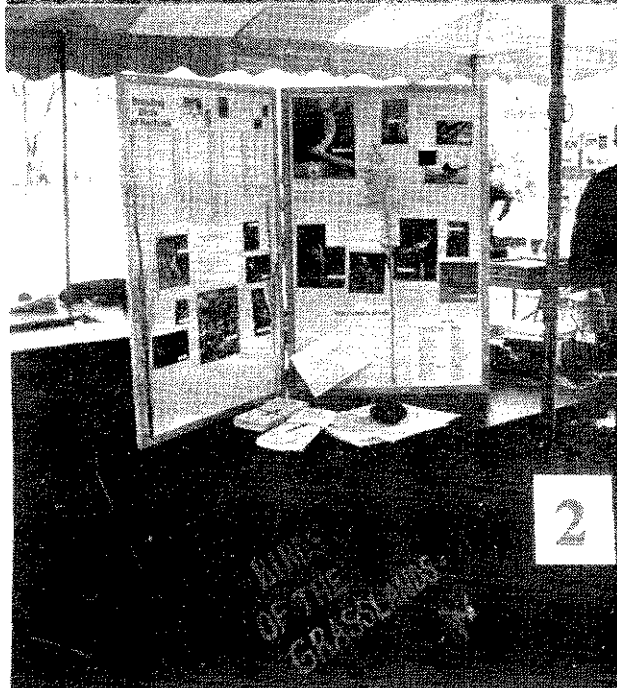
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Illinois Field Office, 79 West Monroe,  
Chicago, IL 60603 -- Phone 312/346-8166

# Autumn on the Prairie

Sept. 21, 1991.....photos by Gene St. Louis

1. Tim Keller dousing the controlled burn demonstration. A very educational program for those who watched.
2. Ann Haverstock's Bird display attracted much interest.
3. "We didn't catch any Monarch butterflies!" Brandon and Erika Meiners with Sally Baumgardner.
4. Bob Parenteau with his map display. A young Bear fan learns about the land use and history of the Grasslands.
5. Kathy Motto's planting demonstration.



# NOTICE - WARNING

WE CAUTION ANYONE VISITING NACHUSA GRASSLANDS TO WEAR RED OR BLAZE ORANGE DURING THE HUNTING SEASON. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO SPECIFIC HUNTING ALLOWED ON THE SITE THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU SHOULD NOT BE CAREFUL. BE PARTICULARLY CAUTIOUS DURING THE FIREARM DEER SEASON - NOV. 15 -17 AND DEC. 12 - 15; MUZZLELOADING RIFLE DEER SEASON - DEC. 20 - 22.



## ANN HAVERSTOCK REPORTS

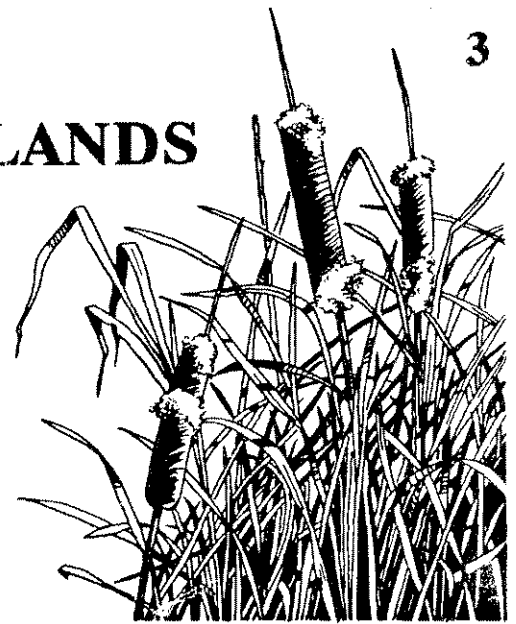
In a recent report Ann let us in on some of her latest information. Two separate surveys were carried out in the 1991 season.

One, the atlas project which determines the base line breeding species diversity on the site and the criteria for determining breeding status. Two, the census project which calculates the density of specific populations and the habitat associations of specific populations.

A total of 30.75 hours were devoted to the census and 75.25 to the atlas. A total of 3,285 miles were traveled by Ann and Jim Chiropolos on their trips to Nachusa. Ann's was a 135 mile round trip each time and Jim's 180 miles. Ann put in another 41.25 hours in related activities such as tours, slide shows, field trips, committee meetings, etc. "This one is the killer", states Ann of the 63 hours in transit to the Grasslands. This is just a sample of the hours of volunteer time that goes into a venture like restoring, managing, and inventorying a site like Nachusa Grasslands.

But isn't it exciting to be a part of such a pioneering project?

## WETLANDS



## Meiners.....

The survey is completed along Franklin Creek. A berm and spillway across the two draws are planned on paper at this time.

Jeff Meiners has contacted two contractors for bid information. When the bid information comes in the plan can be finalized and the permit application be finished and submitted. Hopefully, construction can begin in the spring of 1992. Jeff has done an excellent job on this project.

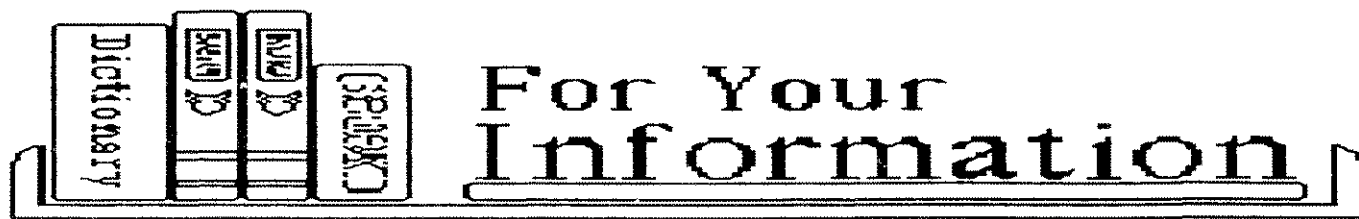
## Main Complex.....

It was suggested by Steve Zwicker, another Nachusa volunteer, that we approach this larger project in a different way. Steve suggested the group contact a wetland specialist. A free objective assessment of the property starting with a historical plant review and soil profile would be assembled

After which a written estimate would be reviewed by the Steering Committee for approval, subject to The Nature Conservancy's agreement.

By getting an outside opinion we may be able to bring all the activities together. Breaking tile and seeding in a random manner may not be the correct way to proceed.

**THE ARTISTRY OF GENE ST. LOUIS IS FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE OF PRAIRIE SMOKE. ALL THE PHOTOS YOU ARE ENJOYING WERE TAKEN BY GENE. THEY ARE EVEN MORE EXCITING IN COLOR!**



## Debt paid.....

**BIG NEWS** - Steve Packard announced at the Oct. 12th tour that Nachusa Grasslands is all paid for!! In response to this announcement, which was made to the assembled group on a knob overlooking one of the bean fields, all broke into spontaneous applause. Frightened by all the commotion, a large deer with beautiful antlers, bounded out of the bean field and raced across the prairie.

## TIME magazine.....

By now I suppose it is old news that Nachusa Grasslands and our own Sally Baumgardner made the Oct. 14 issue of Time magazine! It contains a beautiful picture of Sally and a group of children scattering seeds at Nachusa. Congratulations, Sally! (We heard a rumor she bought 15 copies of the issue.)

## New species reported.....

A new, I should say discovered or recovered, species has been recorded at Nachusa Grasslands! Ann Haverstock discovered the Prairie Dandelion, endangered in Illinois, on the main complex this year. It is known from only four sites in Illinois.

The dandelion, *Microseris cuspidata*, is found on dry prairies and stony hills in the Midwest. This member of the daisy family blooms April to June. Flowerheads of yellow ray flowers only are borne singly atop leafless stalks. The leaves are straplike, often with wavy edges, clustered at the base. The leaf margins also tend to be woolly with fine, white hairs.

## News from Mel Hoff.....

Prairie Smoke received the following information from Mel Hoff: "Here is my log entry for our recent workday on Kittentail Knob: September 1 -- Workday (9:00 - 12:00) At Nachusa Grasslands. Bob Claus, Dick Claus, Scott Hensey, Mel Hoff, Dave Jagodzinski, Herm Jensen, Karen McMackin, JoAnn Monge, Margo Owano, Maryann & Joe Skvara and Jean St. Paul (from DeKalb) cleared, stacked and stub-herbicide (GARLON 3A) Cherry, Rubus and Multiflora Rosa from the saddle between the two high points at Kittentail Knob. Also girdled and herbicide the girds on 5 - 6 Red Cedars.

Field Trip (1:00 - 4:00) Some of the group, led by Mel Hoff then visited the large fen (the spring is still flowing quite well), one of the Main Complex Knobs and Dot's Knob, where we were rewarded with Prairie Gentian in full bloom."

The group consisted of members of both the West Chicago Prairie Stewardship Group and the DuPage Volunteer Stewardship Group.



**Mel and his co-workers**

Nachusa Grasslands volunteers return a hearty **THANK YOU!**

## Second visit.....

NOVEMBER 5 -- Nachusa Workday

(9:00-2:30) Mel Hoff, Joe Houle and John Hleder met with Carol Merbach and Ed Pleskovitch from the Nachusa group for a workday at Kittentail Knob. Cut and stub-herbicide (Brush-Wacker and Garlon 3A) the cherry regrowth in the large open area south and east of the south knob, the cherry regrowth and multiflora rose in an open area north of the power tower, and the Rubus and cherry regrowth along the path and on the upper areas of the south knob. One Brush-Wacker operator could cut fast enough to occupy four herbicides with Walk-Wicks.

.....by Mel Hoff

(Editor's note: we appreciate these news items. So many people volunteer at Nachusa Grasslands that we never hear about, and thus have no opportunity to thank. We hope everyone realizes that all work done, whether large or small, is very much appreciated.)

## Insect success.....

Another exciting report comes from Ron Panzer, after three years of trying. Ron has succeeded in reintroducing the gorgone checkerspot (*Chlosyne gorgone*), butterfly to our 730 acres grassland. The prairie frog hopper, *Lepyronia gibbosa*, was reintroduced last year. Exciting things are happening at Nachusa Grasslands!

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SPOTTED JEWELWEED (*Impatiens capensis*), that Isabel mentioned, found at Wade Creek on September 1, 1991. The plant contains a soothing fungicide that helps ease the burning of nettle stings and inflammation from Poison Ivy. Happily, they often grow in the same area and attract hummingbirds!

## Hummingbirds..... 5

by Isabel Johnston

We can see the ruby throated hummingbird. The male and female are iridescent green above and whitish below. The female has a white throat. The male in good light has a carmine throat. In poor light his throat is black. The male's tail is forked while the female's is blunt and white tipped.

Ruby throats are the usual hummingbird east of the Mississippi River. All hummingbirds eat insects and nectar.

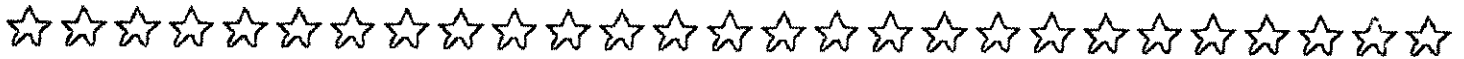
Flowering chestnut trees in spring may have many hummingbirds. In the fall jewel weed may be alive with these tiny birds. As they feed, plants get pollinated.

Some people plant for hummingbirds and put up feeders with red sugar water to attract the tiny hummers.

Mr. Hummel found a new walnut sized nest of webs and lichen high up in another apple tree. This nest was built by the same hummers although the two babies were still being fed in their first nest.

West of the Mississippi there are 14 known species and south of the Rio Grande - 330 species are known. These include straight bills, curved bills, and short bills depending on corollas and flower sizes. Many sizes of hummingbirds are in the 344 known species, too. Males fly south before females.





## Emily Oaks Nature Center Visit.....

On October 13, twelve "apostles" came from the East to Nachusa Grasslands with a deal I couldn't turn down: They'd pick seeds for us if I'd give 'em a tour. They did and I did. At times they call themselves The Picnickers, but other names include Ecology Gypsies (I like that!). (Ross Sweeney and Bev Hansen were among them.)

Species harvested were: Mint, Monarda, Indian grass, Agrimony, Coffeeplant, Thimbleweed, and very common Blue Vervain that grows in dry areas, and a sprig of White Vervain. If we mixed all the seeds together in one bag, the volume would be level with the top of a standard grocery bag. A very nice measure! The amount of fun we had just can't be measured! I send a great amount of gratitude to these folks as well as an invitation to come back! Details later!

Ross Sweeney was one of the people who helped scatter seeds in the planting done 4 or 5 years ago, so we made a point to go there and show him the results.

## October 20 .....

Over the weekend, lots of people gathered loads of seeds for our restoration project. We still need more of everything, but we are making larger the piles of seedbags.

First the people to thank: Ed Pleskovitch, Bob Parenteau, Mary Adams, Sally Baumgardner, The Eighth Grade Social Studies Class for Madison School in Dixon, Ann Haverstock and Mike Crowe.

Seeds collected in widely various volumes were: Common or hoary vervain, round-headed bush clover, some milkweeds, a little tick trefoil, Indian grass, Big bluestem, yellow coneflower, Canada wild rye, common evening Primrose, stiff goldenrod, Monarda or Bergamot, Mint,



sneezeweed, butterfly weed, compass plant and a tiny amount of Canada milk vetch. Various wetland seeds were gathered from Sally's sedge meadow, and they include wetlands vervain, juncus, many goldenrods and asters.

Mary Adams donated Indian grass, dropseed and purple coneflower from the Sandwich area as well as putting in a full day on the Grasslands, both with the school group and by herself. Thanks, Mary!

Mike Crowe and Ann Haverstock came up with the Greater St. John's Wort from two different locations. Nice work!

Leadplant and dropseed had been picked by Bob and Sally two weeks earlier at the North Knobs and were left to dry in the house.

Just to show that our infant volunteer organization is WORKING: Dennis specifically asked for stiff (or rigid) goldenrod at that morning's Committee Meeting, and Mary went out and got it after lunch, a full grocery sack of it!

Thanks to all of you. Leaders are always being sought for seed collecting trips. Concentrate on species that like low, wet areas, please.

.....by SALLY BAUMGARDNER

# GOOD BYE, AMY!

7

(Editor's note: Here is a copy of Sally and Max's letter to a group of volunteers.)

Dillip Das	Norm & Marilyn Ellison
Billie & Lew Ludwig	Laura Ann Welch
Marj & Dick Walls	Sue Schuler
rnelia Carleton	Carol Way
Billie Baumler	

Dear Friends/Guides,

You lived up to our Morton Arboretum rule: "We go, no matter what the weather!" Even though Sunday, October 27, was dark, gloomy and threatening, you dressed for the conditions. We descended on the West Sedge Meadow of the Baumgardner Easement adjacent to Nachusa Grasslands to collect wetland species. What fun!

We hope you enjoyed the walks up to Doug's and Dot's Knobs -- two of Illinois' last remaining sizeable tracts of lightly grazed, original and recovering prairies.

Our results were: THIRTEEN GROCERY SACKS filled with seed heads! That's the largest "take" I've ever seen in one day! On behalf of The Nature Conservancy, THANK YOU!

The seeds were spread on newspapers to dry in the extra bedroom and nearly the entire floor is covered. (Now I know how one of those unusual grassland insects get into the house!)

Can we make this an annual event? Let's look at late August for next summer, when you can see the summer blossoms as you pick sedge seeds.

With gratitude,  
Max & Sally Baumgardner



Dot Wade leading a tour on Dot's Knob 10/12/91. To her left is Judy Snyder, Dot's "wheels"!

Another intern has come and gone. Amy Prosser left shortly after Autumn on the Prairie. A few items from her final report will help you better understand what interns are all about!

One of Amy's prime targets on the Grasslands was eradication of white sweet clover. She mowed and hand pulled volumes of the pesky invader during her time here. She urges us to keep after this intruder next year. Amy left maps of the location for inspection next season.

Collecting seed of kittentails, porcupine grass, June grass, sedges and birdsfoot violet was another accomplishment.

Amy learned about getting out Prairie Smoke by assisting your editor on several occasions. Articles and drawings were submitted by Amy and have been or will be used in future issues. Public relations was expanded by her contacts with local media. New relationships were made with teachers and 4-H leaders. Probably one of Amy's biggest jobs was coordinating Autumn on the Prairie on Sept. 19th. This by no means, includes all of Amy's work, but gives a hint of its scope and benefit to Nachusa Grasslands and to Amy.

She closes her report, "Motivating and organizing volunteers was the driving force behind every accomplishment", she continues, "there have been some really quality people join the volunteer community this year. I have greatly enjoyed the time I spent with Nachusa and its people. There is so much I learned in just four months time that it's almost hard for me to believe. I have tried to record all of it and hope my efforts will serve Nachusa well into the future", she sums up. Good-bye, Amy and Best Wishes!

## LATEST NEWS FROM AMY.....

Amy is working for US Fish and Wildlife Service at their refuge on Adak Island, Alaska! Main duty: work with Outdoor Education developing programs for visitors.

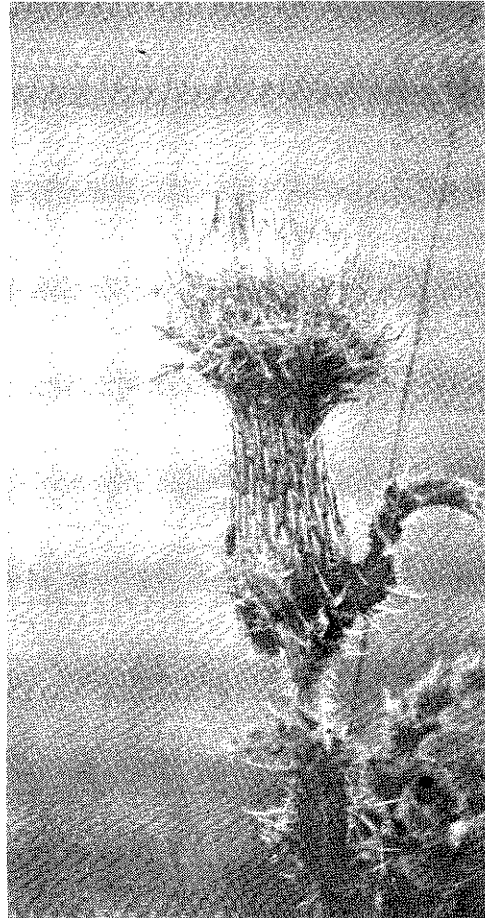
Address: Alaskan Maritime National Wildlife Refuge  
Box 5251 Naval Air Station  
Adak AK  
FPO Seattle, WA 98791-0009

## TOURISM AWARD FOR OUR NEIGHBOR

At the Illinois Tourism Fall Conference, the Franklin Creek Preservation Area Committee (FCPAC) was awarded the Illinois Regional Tourism Council Tourism Award for the northern region. The award was presented at the closing luncheon on October 23rd to Ellen Baker, chairman of the FCPAC.

Nominated under the organization category, the Northern Illinois Tourism Council made the award based on the work the FCPAC has done in developing and promoting the Franklin Creek State Preservation Area, northwest of Franklin Grove. The committee was instrumental in raising the funds necessary to build roads, shelters, paths, and a handicapped accessible trail. Members of the committee are continuing the effort with the proposed rebuilding of the grist mill that once stood on the site.

by CAROL L. MERBACH



Season's Greetings from Nachusa Grasslands! We look forward to a new year of restoration, discovery, and enjoyment.

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