



# PRAIRIE SMOKE

Nachusa Grasslands Newsletter  
Issue 15 November 1992

## TOURS A BIG SUCCESS AT THIRD ANNUAL AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE

ATTENDANCE AT 600 - 700



by Bob Parenteau  
Autumn on the Prairie  
Coordinator - 1992

Early on the morning of Saturday, September 19th, there was promise for a beautiful day. High atop a hill at Nachusa Grasslands intense activity soon began.

Five tents were quickly raised and tied down by the efficient crew of Rock River Rent A Tent. Tables and chairs, furnished by the Ashton and Franklin Grove High Schools, were brought to the site and set up by Rich Pettit and Earl Thomas with help from FFA members. They later returned them to the schools. Use of the tables and chairs was greatly appreciated. The area had been mowed by Richard Welch, an area farmer. Big Johns were set up off to the side in advance.

When visitors arrived parking was handled expertly by Mike Adolph and his crew. Parking was entirely at the program site this year. The arrangement worked very well. A minimum of cars parked on Lowden Road. Mr. Stanley Eich, township road commissioner, arranged to have several road signs installed to help control traffic.

As visitors arrived they signed in at the Welcome tent, a very busy place. Hazel Reuter lead the way there. Many people signed up to do volunteer work at Nachusa Grasslands in the future. Items for sale were T-shirts and scarves, Nachusa Grasslands buttons, and raffle tickets. Raffle prizes included a framed picture, T-shirt, fireplace wood from brush

demonstration, books, Nachusa Grasslands mugs, prairie plants, and numerous other interesting articles.

The Gene Rod family of Mendota supplied a golf cart to assist people who had difficulty getting around. Nearby was the Red Cross vehicle with personnel ready to assist with any medical emergencies. Fortunately, emergencies were not a big thing of the day.

Tours drew large crowds. Our special guest tour leader was Floyd Swink, whom Sally Baumgardner had the honor of introducing. He lead three tours which were greatly appreciated by large groups. Other tours were led by Sally Baumgardner, Ellen Baker, Chris Bronny, John Bivins and Steve Packard.

Max Baumgardner announced tours so visitors could attend the tour of their choice. John Bivins, a neighbor of the Grasslands, topped off the day with a tour on birds.

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Floyd Swink, front with hands extended, leading a tour on Sept. 19th, at Autumn on the Prairie.

Steve Packard took Clarence Heinkel on a special tour. Clarence was an honored guest - he donated 110 acres of farm land in McHenry County to the Conservancy. The property is to be sold to enable the purchase of 180 acres to add to Nachusa Grasslands, bringing the total acreage to 933 acres. A big step forward in enlarging Nachusa Grasslands. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Clarence Heinkel.

Three demonstration were held. The prairie burn planned by Mike Crowe didn't do any more than sputter. The weather had dampened the vegetation. It did demonstrate, however, the importance of proper conditions for a good burn. The seeding demonstration, under the direction of Dennis Lubbs and Kathy Motto, was done by hand this year instead of mechanically with a drill as done in the past. Assistants were selected from among the visitors. This method reflects the usual means used when seeding large areas. Ed Pleskovitch conducted the brush demonstration. Two trees were cut down. Ed was assisted by his nephew.

Three of the tents contained displays and items for sale. One tent held art displays and photos of Nachusa Grasslands activities. The photos were taken by Gene St. Louis. Gene also took pictures of the days activities. John & Shelia Holbo and Mary McKay displayed art work. John Yunger's display of various animal pelts created much interest. Many of the animals are present in the area but not often seen. Al & Thelma Dahlberg had an interesting display of American Indian artifacts which they discussed with visitors. Indian lore was also presented.

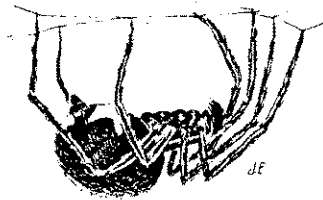
Genesis Nursery had a display and seeds of prairie plants were sold. "Nachusa Grasslands" mugs were available, as well as other similar items. Dot Wade had a very successful day selling nature books. Sales increased over last year.

Donations from these sales and food sales plus items sold at the Welcome Tent were sufficient to cover expenses and there was a net gain. Food was catered by Sno-White Bakery of Dixon. The food van and the grill trailer needed two tries to get up the hill because the ground was damp due to recent rains. But they were soon installed and preparing food for hungry visitors and volunteers. The pork sandwiches were very popular. Hot dogs and brats could be had also. The grill was constantly kept busy. Fruit, desserts, drinks, and misc. food items were also available. The fresh home-grown tomatoes were especially delicious.

Some of the very tired volunteers finished off the day with a meal at the Eagle's Nest in Franklin Grove, following which they headed home, thankful the long anticipated, big event was over. Planning is already under way for the 1993 Autumn on the Prairie!

A grateful thank you to the following volunteers, all of whom contributed to the success of the day. The list is alphabetical.

Mike Adolph, Ellen Baker, Brad Barrett, Max & Sally Baumgardner, David & Jon Benson, John Bivins, Chris Bronny, Debra Carey, Shane Coers, Mike Crowe, Al & Thelma Dahlberg, Howard Fox, Ann Haverstock, Jeanette Heesaker, Kevin Keltenbach, Penny Kendall & Angela, Andy Jackson, Robert & Dorothy LeVin, Dennis Lubbs, Mary McKay, Jeff Meiners & Erica, Karl & Carol Merbach, Doug Miller & Amanda, Mary Kluz, Kathy Motto & Billie Jo, Gina & Andrea Nichols, Steve Packard, Bob Parenteau, Rick Pettit & FFA members, Ed Pleskovitch, American Red Cross, Hazel Reuter, Gene, Diana, & Alyssa Rod, Cassandra Rodgers, Bill Rogers, Gene St. Louis, Floyd Swink, Earl Thomas & FFA members, Robert Voorhies, Dot Wade, Dean Weidman, Richard Welch, John Yunger - over 70 people in all.



## THE SPIDER: AN AMAZING CREATURE

by Deb Carey

Can you imagine a fiber that is stronger than steel, won't rust or decay, and is more elastic than nylon? No human-made fiber has these marvelous qualities, but one natural fiber - spider silk - does!

In autumn the orb weaver spiders, those startlingly large black and yellow creatures, are spinning their webs in tall grasses and low bushes. If you disturb this species, you'll see it drop and disappear into the grasses but it always has a dragline attached and will quietly climb back up to its web when the commotion is over. Interestingly enough, each night the old web is totally replaced by a new one, spun completely in the dark by the orb spider.

Arachnologists (spider scientists) have intensively studied spiders and their amazing silk. Spiderspin is composed of an edible (to spiders!) protein call fribroin. Spiders often eat their own web which is certainly an example of perfect recycling! Plus nourishing windblown grains of pollen that stick to the web are consumed and digested.

(con't. page 3)

Birds recognize the usefulness of spider silk. Species such as goldfinches and vireos use the silk as "glue" to hold their fragile nests together.

Humans also use spider silk. We have created stockings (a creepy thought!), handbags and even crosshairs for telescopes from spider spin.

There actually have been attempts made to farm spiders commercially for their silk. The problem is quantity; it takes 5,000 huge spiders to create enough silk for just one dress.

Historically, the ancient Greeks used cobwebs to staunch the flow of blood from wounds. In some countries, even today, spider silk is used for fishlines which entangle the teeth of fish.

But of course, spiders themselves are the most ingenious users of their own product. Draglines, traps to capture prey, mating chambers, nursery webs, trapdoors, camouflage, temperature control; the list goes on of the imaginative ways spiders use their silk.

During the magical days of Indian summer, you often see spiders sailing through the air. This behavior, called ballooning, is the result of a spider releasing a small amount of silk and then taking flight on the brisk autumn winds. Spiders on ballooning journeys have been found 10,000 feet up in the air and also far out at sea.

Don't automatically squash the next spider you see! These amazing creatures are an integral part of nature and fill many important ecological niches in our world. There are more than 35,000 named species of spiders in the world.

In North America we have over 3,000 different spiders. Most lay eggs in silken sacs that they attach to leaves or twigs. Baby spiders are appropriately called "spiderlings." Spiders are considered very beneficial because they consume many insects that are pests to mankind.

## WEED WATCH

by Christopher Bronny

There are two alien/non-native herbaceous plants that are becoming increasingly common to the northern Illinois region, especially along roadsides and dry, disturbed sites that we should be on the look-out for at Nachusa Grasslands. They are spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) and leafy spurge (*Euphorbia escula*). Both plants are masters at outwitting our best efforts at control.

As far as I know, these plants are currently absent from the preserve (that's the good news). However, should a colony succeed in establishing a beachhead at the preserve, it may be virtually impossible to eliminate either of the two, and the ecological integrity of our native plant communities could become severely compromised and degraded (that's the bad news). Areas to watch would be any of the newly seeded dry prairies, and the dry, gravelly areas of the high quality and recovering prairies found throughout the preserve. It may be worth mentioning that as people collect seed from degraded prairies throughout the region for restoration/reconstruction purposes, they should be extremely careful to avoid accidentally collecting seed of unwanted species such as spotted knapweed.

I will not go into specifics as to how these two species work at being so successful in colonizing a site (with a bit of research and inquiry, you can obtain information on the life history and management recommendations from your local IDOC Natural Heritage Biologist regarding these and other problematic species), but their potential impact on our recovering native plant communities merits, I believe, a high level of vigilance by us as stewards to ensure that our prairies have a "fighting chance" at recovery.

### \*\* CALENDAR \*\*

Nov. 21 - Tour - leader Bob Parenteau - meet at 10:00 am - Nachusa Grasslands sign

Nov. 28 - Fence Line Trimming at Kittentail Knob - Ed Pleskovitch - 10:00 am  
- meet at Yellow House - Naylor Road

Dec. 5 - SECOND ANNUAL STONE SOUP HOLIDAY GATHERING AND AWARDS  
(10:00 AM - 2:00 PM)

Dec. 25 -

**MERRY CHRISTMAS NACHUSA GRASSLANDS VOLUNTEERS AND ALL THE PRAIRIE  
SMOKE READERS!**

# THE PANZER REPORT

## NACHUSA GRASSLANDS INSECT TRANSLOCATION PROJECT COORDINATOR: RON PANZER 1988 - 1991

(Your editor will attempt again to gleam some information from this formidable report to keep our reader up-to-date on this on-going insect project. "His (Ron Panzer) work is starting a whole new chapter in ecological restoration", states STEVE PACKARD. So here goes....)

**BUNCHGRASS GRASSHOPPER** - July 1, 1988 - released 25 adult pairs at Doug's Knob  
1989 - unable to locate this species  
July 11, 1990 - 40 pairs released at Doug's Knob  
July 19, 1990 - 35 pairs released on same Knob in pouring rain  
1991 - unable to locate any bunchgrass grasshoppers at Nachusa Grasslands  
1992 - plan to bring in another 100 pairs  
**GREAT PLAINS FROGHOPPER** - June 22, 1989 - released roughly 200 adults on Doug's Knob  
June 27, 1989 - approximately 200 individuals released at same site  
June 28, 1990 - 12 adults captured atop Doug's Knob within a few minutes  
300 more pairs released at Doug's Knob  
115 pairs released at Shafer's Knob  
June 26, 1991 - 5 on Shafer's Knob and 6 on Doug's Knob captured and released during a 30 minute sweep survey  
June 27, 1991 - 50 pairs released on each hill  
1992 - plan to census around Doug's and Shafer's Knobs  
**GORGONE CHECKERSPOT** - July 3, 1989 - translocated 24 females and 20 males on Doug's Knob

July 5, 1989 - 20 females and 24 males released at Shafer's Knob  
Aug. 10, 1989 - captured a freshly emerged male on Shafer's Knob  
July 1, 1990 - 15 pairs transferred to Doug's Knob  
July 3, 1990 - 20 males and 26 females transferred to Shafer's Knob  
July 5, 1990 - 27 pairs released at Shafer's Knob  
June 17, 1991 - 10 to 12 freshly emerged individuals sighted atop each hill  
June 18, 1991 - released 40 pairs at Doug's and 30 pairs on Shafer's  
June 20, 1991 - 20 pairs on Doug's and 18 pairs at Shafer's  
June 24, 1991 - 20 pairs release atop Doug's  
1992 - thorough search on and around both Doug's and Shafer's Knob. Plan to bring 50 more pairs to each hilltop.  
**OTTOE SKIPPER** - June 28, 1990 - 1 pair released atop Doug's Knob  
July 1, 1990 - 5 males and 1 female released at same site  
July 5, 1990 - 7 pairs release same site  
July 11, 1990 - 1 egg found attached to a purple coneflower head  
1992 - plan a thorough search on and around Doug's Knob for this species - considering a plan to translocate 30 - 40 pairs  
**PRAIRIE DOCK MOTH** - Sept. 20, 1991 - 11 females, 7 males, and 2 pupae released atop Shafer's Knob (pupae were buried 2 inches beneath the soil)  
Sept. 24, 1991 - 9 females and 7 males released at same site  
1992 - search on and around Doug's Knob and release another 20 - 30 pair (as well as some larvae) half will be released in a restoration area  
**LEAFHOPPER** - July 17, 1992 - captured and transferred 76 individuals to the southwest section of the preserve  
Aug. 1992 - search for species, transfer 200 individuals regardless of findings

Most insect species are placed in containers which are then placed in ice chests for transportation. Ideally butterflies are offered a concentrated sugar solution to "recharge" him (or her) before release. Since the gorgone checkerspots were released after dark they were not treated in this manner. These animals do not feed after dark. Upon arrival at the release site animals are placed on host plants. The Prairie Dock Moth are easy to locate and capture, both as adults and larvae. The larvae are placed into freshly-drilled carrots where they readily feed. They are transferred to a new carrot every 4 - 5 days until they cease feeding. Roughly one week later they leave their carrot and pupate within the soil. Adults emerge 21 - 28 days later.

The translocation technique for the leafhopper is somewhat different. The donor site is visited a few days in advance and several specimens are captured and taken to the lab to be sexed. If a significant proportion are females, the site is revisited within the next few days to gather inductees.

These small critters are very difficult to catch. Sweep nets are used to dislodge and capture duff-dwelling insects by beating the bases of the prairie grasses. After 50 - 60 sweeps the contents of the nets are examined, each individual is gently aspirated into a cotton-filled aspirator bottle. The bottles are then placed in an ice cooler for transport. Upon arrival at the site the catch is released atop a clump of prairie grass. (Isn't this interesting "stuff"? Ed.)



## HERBICIDE LICENSING WORKSHOP

General standards training in the proper and safe use of herbicides will be provided by an instructor from the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service. The all-day workshop, at Chicago Botanic Garden, is Saturday, Dec. 12th. Pre-registration is required before Dec. 9th. There is a small fee. For details, call Sandi at 312/346-8166.

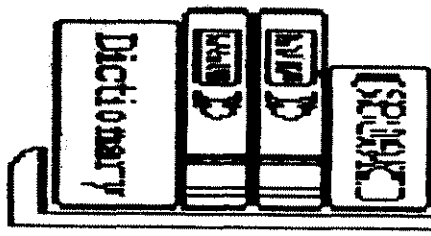
## A WORD FROM MEL

by Mel Hoff

**SEPTEMBER 1 -- Nachusa Workday/Field Trip (8:30 - 11:30)** Bob Claus, Mel Hoff, Joe Houle and Kevin Lubbe cleared mainly Cherry, Multiflora Rose, and Rubus encroaching on the (Benson) road back to Kittentail Knob in preparation for next Sunday's workday. Then botanized the sand spring fen, west boundary trail, Doug's Knob, Coyote Point, and the main complex.

**SEPTEMBER 6 -- Nachusa Workday/Field Trip (7:00 am - 5:00 pm)** Ruth Baird, Herb Demmel, Mark Fondrk, Scott Hensey, Mel Hoff, Dave Jagodzinski, Herm Jensen, Jeanette McBride, and Phil Sajdak from the West Chicago Prairie Stewardship Group and Steve Bubulka, Tony Dancik, Rich Hyerczyk, Cara & Roger Keller, John Marlin, Liz Meyer, Jim O'Connor, Debra Petro, and Vicki Shinn from the Palos Restoration Project cut, stacked, and stub-herbicide (Garlon 3A) regrowth from the area southeast of Kittentail Knob and then continued in the area east of the Knob from the lower slope and the fence row to north of the power tower (9:00 am - 12:00 noon). Then took a field trip covering the Sand Spring Fen, the main complex, and Doug's Knob. (1:00 to 3:30).

(These tireless workers deserve a resounding round of applause for their faithfulness and hard work at Kittentail Knob! That's 57 hours of labor in one day! And they donate from one to four work days per year! **THANK YOU, FROM THE GRASSLANDS!**)



## SOMETIME IN SEPTEMBER



...(from our guest book at the entrance)

"We're writing in this journal after dusk. We've enjoyed this place so much. Mary has painted and drawn here. Christina and I have joined her here tonight. Sundown is spectacular from the knobs (or are they buttes?). We thought about saber-toothed tigers sitting there, and later, Indians.

As a native Missourian and farmer in my teenage and college years I helped my family fight multiflora rose. We had embraced the m. rose as a fence row in the 1950's, but due to bird's scattering the seeds, have had to dig it out by the roots. It can simply take over a field.

We would be glad to help eliminate the multiflora rose next summer. We come out from New York City to Illinois and Missouri each summer.

Thank you for such a great amenity and legacy left to people. Brent, Mary and Christina Porter"

From Libertyville, IL - "Great area - Hurrah for Volunteers!"

Geneva, IL - 8/28/92 - "Beautiful day! Lots of Monarchs."

Chicago, IL - "My third time here and I am more certain of how special this is."

Orland Park, IL - "I am so glad that someone is saving and restoring an entire prairie not just parts of one. This is a very special place."

## AN ORCHID SAGA

by James B. Long

The yellow Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus*) once grew in Lee County. If you check the known flora of Lee County, however, you will not find the species on the list.

In 1955, I found a single plant growing in a bed of ferns on a wooded slope. It had six stems and six flowers and was very beautiful among the ferns. I resolved to

save my money and buy a good camera and come back the following year and photograph my discovery.

The following June I returned to the woods to see if the Lady's Slipper was ready to be photographed. The flowers were not all in bloom so I decided to wait a week.

A week later when I returned to the "fern-bed" the orchid was gone. Searching the area I found a single leaf on the stubs on the plant stems. Something had eaten my precious plant! On leaving the woods I saw the tracks of a stray cow.

I have visited this woods many times since but I have seen neither yellow Lady's Slippers nor stray cows.

Now you know one reason the yellow Lady's Slipper is not credited to Lee County.

## AN INTERESTING CARNIVORE

by James B. Long

I have seen pictures of the Venus Fly Trap and I have seen Pitcher-plant and Sundew's in the Michigan bogs. They are carnivorous plants that can capture, digest, and adsorb the nutrients of an insects body. Lee County doesn't have the first two but we do have a Sundew (*Drosera intermedia*).

The plants consist of rosette's of one-inch long leaves lying almost flat on the ground. The long-stalked leaves are spatulate and covered with gland- tipped bristles which exude a drop of sticky fluid that glistens in the sunshine like a drop of dew. When an insect becomes trapped in the sticky fluid they seldom escape.

They are most conspicuous in July when in full bloom. Flowering stalks are about four or five inches tall and bloom for a week or more. The flowers are white.

I have found the Sundew in four locations. It grows most abundantly locally at Five-Points.



Thanks also to Jill Flexman of the Popular Creel Prairie Stewards who organized a seeds collecting afternoon in exchange for a camping overnight on nearby private property.

As of late October, we were well ahead of the volume of seeds we had a year ago. As Dot Wade put it, "You can't ever have enough" seeds when you are reconstructing a prairie.

LATER --October 17 & 19 were **BIG DAYS** for Nachusa Grasslands! "Countless" numbers of native seeds that were picked off site were delivered. Dave Derwent delivered 40 bags and a carton containing seeds collected from Pecatonica Prairie Path east of Freeport. Thank you to Dave Derwent and Commonwealth Edison for granting permission to pick.

Mike Crowe delivered 10 -12 bags collected north of Nachusa. Mike also created pounds of good will by donating fresh garden produce! It was placed at the TNC sign and offered to the many visitors we had that day. There were several very happy families who took squash and sweet peppers home to enjoy. Thanks, Mike.

Dot Wade and Judy Snyder came down from Oregon with a great number of species of natives picked on Dot's prairie hillside. Thanks for your continued loyalty.

The dedication of these folks should be a model for all of us. Even in the winter, we can gather seeds off site, with landowners permission, from prairie remnants near where we live. Why not activate yourself and get a bit of exercise this winter? Call Sally at 815/456-2083 to get directions on where to deliver seeds. Want to pick seeds **ON SITE**? Call Sally for what to look for and where.



## SEED COLLECTING FALL 1992

by Sally Baumgardner

This fall, we are trying to collect as much seed as we possibly can from high-dry areas. This seed will be planted in the field we refer to as "The Meiners Uplands" -- a field on Naylor Road currently planted in an agriculture crop. It is located uphill and east of Franklin Creek and the Jay Meiners Wetlands.

On Oct. 19th, a total of 35 volunteers in three different work parties collected seeds of 20 species of native plants at Nachusa Grasslands. These two-legged animals splayed out over the prairie like a herd of buffalo, but instead of eating the plant tops with their mouths, they used their "front feet" to gather seeds. Instead of warm, moist digestive systems, the seeds went into paper bags for winter storage away from seed eating mice and birds. (We didn't pick ALL the seeds of the prairie -- there's loads left for the wildlife!)

Much thanks goes to Volunteers who continued to pick seeds of native plants on dry Saturdays and dry Sundays in October



# A TOUCH OF COLOR

by James B. Long

8

In August we can find the most insignificant of "wild flowers". It has the pleasing name of Yellow Bartonian (*Bartonia virginica*).

If you can imagine a six-inch green, slightly flexuous "wire" growing from the moist sand bordering a sand-hill pond, and on the "wire" you see two to four pairs of tiny, yellow drops of "paint", then you have visualized the Yellow Bartonian. The yellow drops are the flowers. All you need to add is a few pairs of tiny scales for leaves and you have all there is to Yellow Bartonian.

The plant, a member of the Gentian family, is fairly common in the sandhills of Lee County but its habitat is restricted to wet sand flats. It is not found without a sharp eye for tiny dabs of yellow.

## THE HORSETAILS OF LEE COUNTY

by James B. Long

The scouring rush (*Equisetum hyemale*) is well named. In the days before modern cleansers and pads it was often used to scour pots and pans. The stems are coated with silex which is much like a flexible glass and the rough surface of the stems, when rolled into a ball, make a very good scouring pad.

It is found most abundantly on the ditch banks that now drain the old swamps. It grows in great masses and almost pure stand which may cover an acre or more. Stems are tipped by a fruiting cone, two or three feet tall and evergreen.

All horsetails have jointed stems. I remember as a boy being curious about the joints of *Equisetum kansanum* growing in vacant lots. Could they be pulled apart and put back together without harming the plant? No, they can't, I never tried however!

This species will grow about anywhere on undisturbed land; common along roadsides and railroad tracks. They do not grow in solid masses like the former, although they look the same. In the fall they freeze back to the ground for the long winter.

Three species have whorled branches about their stems, the above two do not. First the water horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) found in most of our natural ponds. It has a few whorled branches and a terminal cone.

Along railroad tracks we find an abundance of *Equisetum arvense*. These bushy little green plants with numerous whorled branches produce a very pale fruiting stem in the early spring. It withers as soon as the spores are shed, followed by the green plants we see all summer.

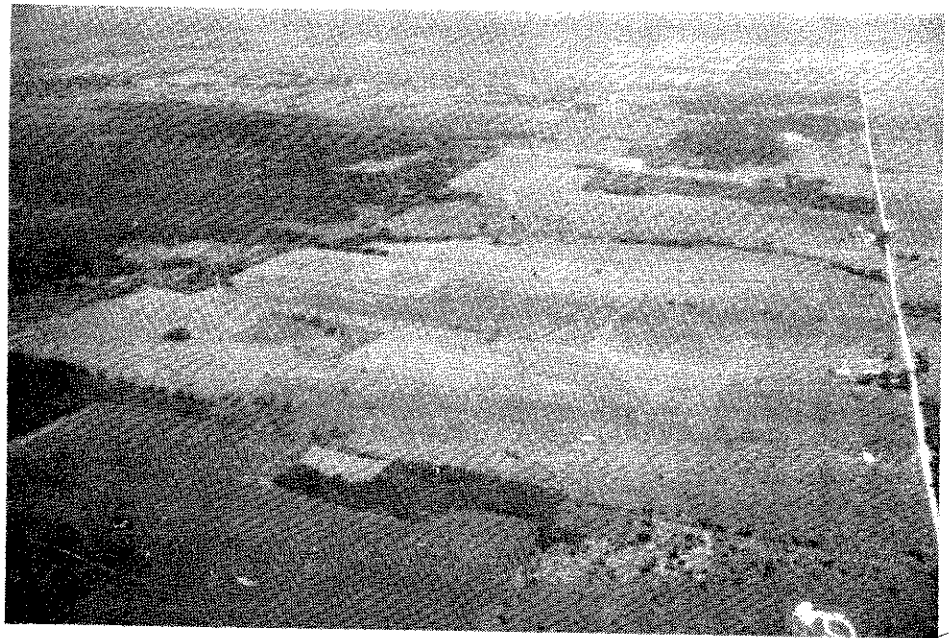
The last species is a new addition to the flora of Illinois, all horsetails are propagated by spores, spores are tiny and can be carried hundreds of miles in the atmosphere. As proof of this, I discovered *Equisetum sylvaticum* growing on a seeping bank near Shady Oaks golf course in 1991. It is from the "north woods", its natural home. Whorled branches that curve down distinguish it from the others. They have a unique appearance in early spring; everyone should see them. Here on the seeping bank the spores found a cool soil much like the "north woods" and called it "home".





**AS PROMISED-----**

-- In the August issue of Prairie Smoke you were promised a "hawk's view" of Nachusa Grasslands from the flight on August 1. Here, as promised, a photo by Gene St. Louis. Looking north - Lowden Road on the right.

**MISC.**

All the photos used in this issue were provided by Gene St. Louis. THANK YOU, Gene. On page 5, the Children's Tour at AOTP led by Sally Baumgardner. On page 7, we find Dot Wade, upper left, one of our faithful "seed-pickers". Center, Sally as we usually see her, with a seed bag in hand. Lower right, some of the volunteers on Oct. 19th, State-wide Seed Collecting Day. Page 8, Floyd Swink leads another tour at AOTP.

**BURNING** - Carol Merbach says, "Now that we have had a hard freeze, conditions are good for burning. Once a burn time has been established, the phone tree will be activated. In other words, you could be called the night before, or the morning of a burn. Why don't we all just watch the weather and try to predict the ideal conditions and plan to be there. If you are not sure whether you are on the phone tree, call either Carol Merbach at 815/284-1505 or Sally Baumgardner at 815/456-2083."

As 1992 draws to a close your editor has many persons to thank! First, to **Crest Foods, Inc.** and **Chris Pfoutz** for labels - without these faithful folk our readers wouldn't receive their Prairie Smoke. Thanks too, to dependable reporters and writers like **Sally Baumgardner, Carol Merbach, Ed Pleskovitch, Ellen Baker, Deb Carey, Chris Bronny, James B. Long, Gene St. Louis, Isabel Johnston, Carol Jackley, Judy Hill, Amy Prossor** and special articles from **Steve Packard, Ed Collins, and Anne Haverstock**. Also the interesting information from **Ron Panzer!** Special thanks to **Bill Rogers** for art work. We hope you enjoy Prairie Smoke and you find it interesting, educational, and informative. We are always happy to receive suggestions on ways to improve. **Merry Christmas and Best Wishes in the New Year! .....**Your Editor

The  
Nature  
Conservancy

brings you **Prairie Smoke**, the Nachusa  
Grasslands Newsletter.  
Illinois Field Office, 79 West Monroe,  
Chicago, IL 60603 -- Phone 312/346-8166

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# STONE SOUP! PROCESS SEEDS! SPREAD SEEDS! STORE SEEDS!

by Sally Baumgardner

Are we allowed to have all that fun in the same day, AND give recognition to the Volunteers who worked hard and showed initiative and leadership? Wow! Let's try it! Arrive EARLY on December 5 at the Yellow House. (Well, 9 a.m. is early enough.) Dress for the outdoors. We will:

- \* Process wetlands seeds using knowledge and equipment generously supplied by Dennis Lubbs and Kathy Motto of Genesis Nursery in Walnut,
- \* Scatter those seeds on the recently disturbed areas of The Meiners Wetlands (repeat: Dress for the outdoors!),
- \* Bag seeds of high dry areas in gunny sacks for winter storage and spring planting,
- \* Hope enough ingredients are donated to the soup that will be simmering while all this activity is mingling, brewing and buzzing around the Yellow House,
- \* Have the heat turned on so we can warm our fingers and toes after the outside work is done,
- \* Recognize our Outstanding Volunteers and their efforts in 1992,
- \* Review the major events of the previous year.

You will need to bring a chair, a bowl and utensils for eating, a donation to the traditional soup, warm clothing, and beverage. We'll start the coffee early.

This will be another BIG WORK DAY for the restoration of Nachusa Grasslands, and we really do need your help. Many hands make light work, and there will be indoor jobs for those who wish to avoid December's chill.

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