



PRAIRIE SMOKE

Nachusa Grasslands Newsletter

Issue 21

June 1, 1994

Environmental Conservation Award

By Sally Baumgardner

"Lone voices with vision can create wonderful results but it can take years to catch hold. Because of Doug and Dot Wade's and Tim Keller's persistence, the shining jewel of The Illinois Nature Conservancy, Nachusa Grasslands, at Franklin Grove near Dixon came to be. Since the mid 1960s, these individuals were the lone voices that brought the needed attention to save this remnant of Illinois' heritage.

"In memory of Doug and in honor of Dot and Tim, Garfield Farm Museum is proud to present them with the 1994 Environmental Conservation Award."

These words were delivered at the awards ceremony following a lovely dinner in Wayne on April 20. Of course, Tim and Carolyn were there, as well as Dot and her good friends Vivian and Bob Maxson. Several other friends of Dot pleased and surprised her by attending. We thank Ann Haverstock for making reservations.

Anthropologist Margaret Mead has been quoted as saying: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Tim commented that in 1974 he was "...out there by myself...", out looking at the last remnants of prairies in northwest Illinois. Dot said people thought our natural areas were "just a wasteland..."

If there are any more who think along those lines, let's invite them to Nachusa Grasslands in late summer when the profusion of wildflowers and butterflies are at their peak.

Next time you see Dot or Tim, thank them for all those decades of dedication! Without them and The Nature Conservancy, Nachusa Grasslands would, indeed, be a wasted land.

Close Up - Nachusa's Birds 1993 Breeding Season

By Ann Haverstock

For the past few years I have begun the bird breeding season with a review of the previous season. I hope this will give you some understanding of the life cycles and habits of the featured species.

The extremely wet weather of 1993 affected our ground nesting species. Add the usual raccoons, feral cats and dogs, and you can imagine the stressful problems these grassland species must overcome.

After one rugged June downpour, many singing species were once again singing in mass, just as they did in early spring. This suggested that many lost their first nests, eggs or broods. Of course, any change in an environment is beneficial to some species and costly to others. These observations and the many questions that arise just make me wish I lived closer and could spend more time at Nachusa.

Rainfall in Lee County¹:

Average rainfall	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
	3.90"	3.75"	4.60"	4.50"	3.90"
1993 rainfall	5.85"	3.85"	10.25"	3.10"	6.50"

Great Blue Heron - A pair was seen throughout the summer using Wade Creek. On 11 June, after an especially rough storm, one bird was seen carrying twigs toward the creek. Dan Patterson, a summer intern, said he saw a small rookery where Wade Creek meets Franklin Creek. This would be a good project for a volunteer to verify this summer. Call me if you are interested.

Turkey Vultures - Again these birds were seen throughout the summer. The high count was on 19 June with seven vultures circling the area.

Northern Harrier (Illinois Endangered) - It was a great year for the harrier. If you recall, the summer of '92 had a single female present, but this summer (1993) gave us a pair. On 19 June we watched the male harrier pounce on a snake. He left it for the female harrier who picked it up and carried it away. We never discovered the nest or young on Nachusa property, but they may have nested just east of Lowden Rd. This success story may help prove that we are headed in the right direction with Nachusa management.



From the Preserve

Manager Bill Kleiman

Nachusa Grasslands has been subdivided! - into eleven management units. We have signed up stewards and costewards for most of these units. We are excited about this new concept of volunteer stewardship that will allow more attention to each area of the preserve. These new volunteers stewards have already done significant work in just the few weeks since signing up for their own units.



Mike Adolph has begun eradicating the multiflora rose from one piece of his unit and will be searching for the reed canary grass patches to do them in too. Gene St. Louis has already found the small RCG patches on the Dot & Doug unit and has sprayed them with Roundup. Mike Crowe has drawn up a map of his unit and already has a progressive management vision that includes rescuing a burr oak grove from a strangle of brush. Kevin Kaltenbach has been showing off the fruits of his fine brush clearing in the fen unit to other stewards where native sedges and forbs are already awakening from their shade induced slumber. Sally Baumgardner is predicting when the prairie smoke and other native plants are ready to harvest and where she will plant the seed on the Northeast unit.

The seasonal restoration technicians (interns) started mid-May and will be assisting the stewards this summer and during holiday breaks from college. Some of the stewards work during the week, some on the weekends. They will be making detailed management maps and beginning to work on their top priorities. There are a few steward positions still available and we would like to see each unit have five or so members that work together as a team. Restoring Illinois is important work and the comradery is joyfully shared. Just show up at one of the scheduled workdays or give me a call if you are interested in helping us out.

Management UnitStewards & Co-Stewards

Meiners wetland Jeff Meiners
Kittentail West Chicago Prairie Stewards
The Fen Kevin Kaltenbach
..... Chris Matson
..... John Holbo
West Heinkel You?
Big Woods Earl Thomas, Jim Lahman
Dot & Doug Gene St. Louis, Chris Bronny
Northeast Sally Baumgardner
Coneflower Mary Ann Hoeflinger, Hazel Reuter
Main Mike Adolph, Andy Jackson
East Heinkel Mike Crowe, Greg Wermers
Schafer Paul Harmon

Work projects that need you:

If you're interested in participating in the work at Nachusa and want a special project to call your own, then you need to see page 7.

Wish List for Nachusa Grasslands

Prescribed Burn Gear:

- 300 + gallon tank to store water
- Stand to hold above tank
- 10 - 50 gallon water tank
- Agricultural herbicide sprayer for spraying water lines
- Pulasky or McCleod hand tools
- Plastic safety helmets
- Nomex fire retardant suits
- Pickup or jeep sized fire truck

Special Thanks To:

- Dave Schonefelder-Removing old tree stands
- Mike Adolf-Building a nice 8' seed dryer
- Gene St. Louis-Creating a killer slide show
- Dave Clark-Overlay of 1830 survey notes onto an aerial photo
- Matt Sawyer-Cutting trees-Schafer's Knob
- Dennis Lubbs-Leading plant identification tour
- Gene St. Louis-Leading the cleanup of the Autumn on the Prairie site
- Dave Derwent-clearing fencerow brush on the Main Complex

If your tour group is visiting the Grasslands, please contact Ellen Baker, 1742 Reynolds Road, Franklin Grove, IL 61031 (815)456-2283, with an estimate of the number of people in your group. Thank you!

Franklin Creek State Park picnic area (shelter, water & restrooms) is three miles south. Bring lunch to enjoy at the park or the Grasslands if desired-nearest restaurant is in Franklin Grove (approx. 6 miles).

Biodiversity Sited at Nachusa:

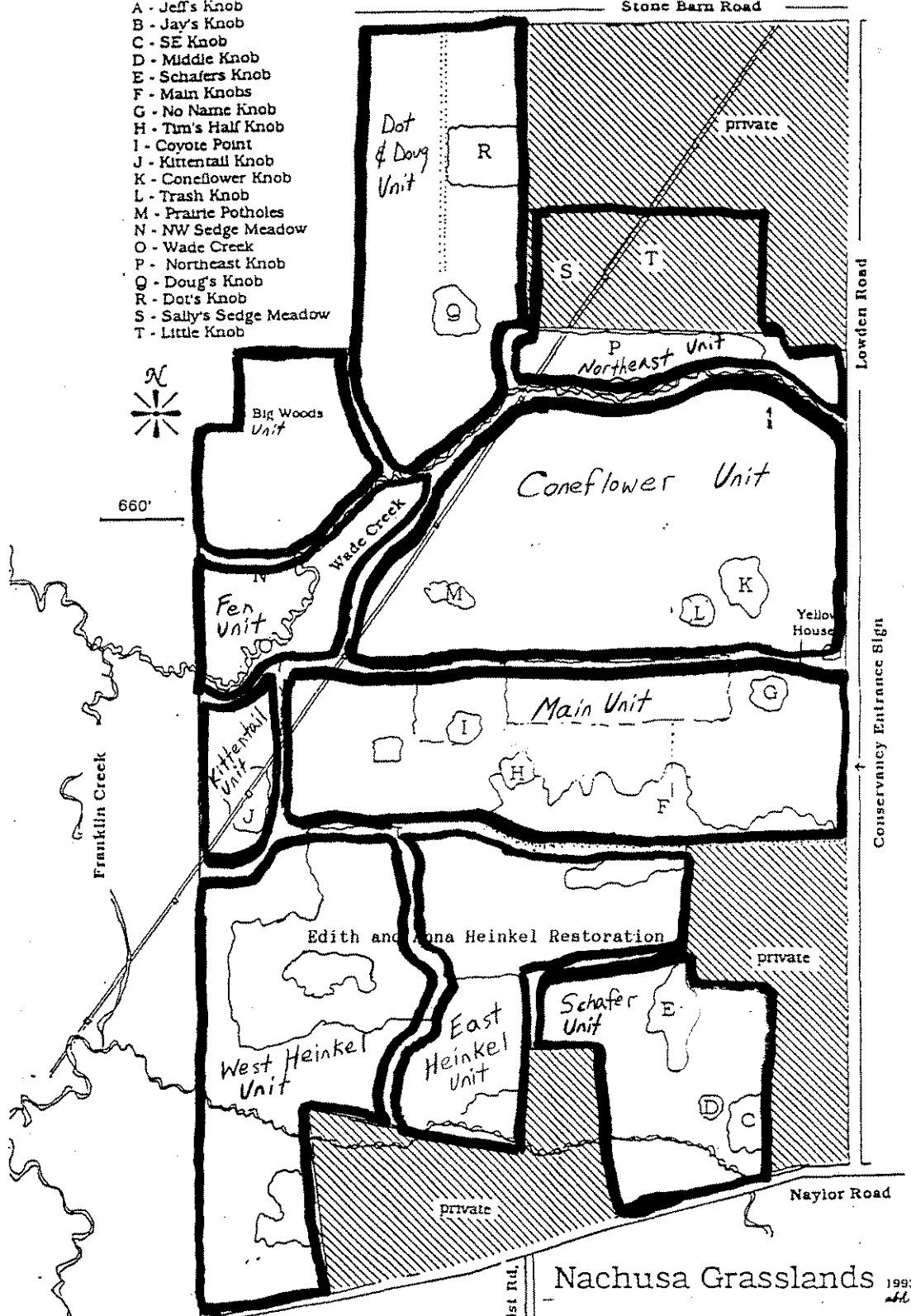
- Two sandhill cranes spent an overnight on the Bivins property in mid-April
- Virginia rail seen at Bivins' pond in early May
- Bobolinks arrived around May 7
- Mockingbird sighted on May 15
- Four badgers
- Five turkeys
- Upland sandpiper & Northern Harrier (Both IL endangered species requiring large habitat)

- A - Jeff's Knob
- B - Jay's Knob
- C - SE Knob
- D - Middle Knob
- E - Schafers Knob
- F - Main Knobs
- G - No Name Knob
- H - Tim's Half Knob
- I - Coyote Point
- J - Kintental Knob
- K - Coneflower Knob
- L - Trash Knob
- M - Prairie Potholes
- N - NW Sedge Meadow
- O - Wade Creek
- P - Northeast Knob
- Q - Doug's Knob
- R - Dot's Knob
- S - Sally's Sedge Meadow
- T - Little Knob

Stone Barn Road



660'



Lowden Road

Conservancy Entrance Sign

private

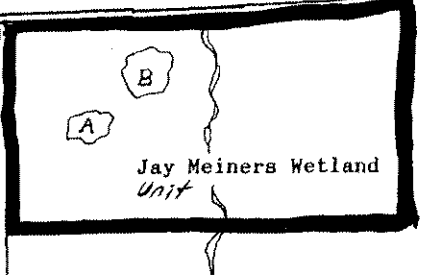
private

Naylor Road

Nachusa Grasslands 1993
adl

power lines & towers

Robbins Road





Howard Fox restoring the second seed stripper
Thank You Howard!



Susan Bill Eric Mike
Nachusa Grasslands Summer
Restoration Technicians



Burn crew taking a well deserved

Northeast Unit Stewardship Report

By Max Baumgardner

It's easy to become enthusiastic about the future of Nachusa Grasslands when given an opportunity to take an early morning walk on it. The sun is shining gloriously, the birds are chirping everywhere, and last night's animal diggings are strewn across the landscape. The smells, sounds and sights are better than any Disney creation.

I recently witnessed great changes throughout the grasslands, and these will continue (with effort by Sally and other volunteers). We are planning and carrying out the necessary management of our area, the Northeast Unit. We want this unit to become a premier attraction and to continue its journey toward what it was in the early 1800s.

This "rambling" is to make you aware of some of those efforts we've initiated to fulfill our commitment as stewards of this unit. (I'm Sally's assistant, she's the unit steward.) I do brush removal. Come and see Barn Hill as it changes from a former sheep grazing area (shaded by very young floodplain trees), to a spectacular hill prairie. Sally planted over 100 species of native plants here and we're anxiously looking forward to its "crop". Ask HER to name them—better be prepared for a botanical eruption. She spends many hours removing aliens and nearly loses her Christian upbringing when she spots something that "shouldn't be there".

Then there's Buckboard Hill, one of the finest knobs in our unit. This was identified many years ago as a high quality prairie remnant, but perhaps it was "too small" for anyone to bother with. It has had several great fires, the cherry trees have been slain (again), much of the Multiflora Rose has been removed, including the crowns. These disturbed areas have been seeded with prairie species, and this knob is recovering beautifully. (We once were going to put a house there; now it's a greater joy to see it in its natural state.)

We had a successful burn season with much appreciated help from Bill & Susan, Eric Thomas, Curt & Tim Braughn, Josh Skolnick and even by our son and daughter-in-law from Cincinnati. The results of this are showing up already!

Drop by and see these improvements! We're the unit with the only known patch of Pasque Flowers at Nachusa Grasslands. Come and visit and learn; better yet, join us in our restoration efforts—parental guidance not required!

Public Showers - You're All Invited!

The Perseid meteor showers will be visible in the night skies again this August. Join us for another evening of "Oohing and Aahing" under these so-called shooting stars. Watch area newspapers for details.

In Search of Karner Blue

by Mike Adolph and Gary Tollaksen

A recent article in the Nature Conservancy magazine described Ron Panzer's attempts to translocate insects to Nachusa. Panzer, of Northeastern Illinois University, has set up a butterfly monitoring program for several Illinois preserves. Last summer we began our rookie season as butterfly counters at the Grasslands.

We are especially on the lookout for species tied to the health of the prairie plant communities. He has put seventeen species in each of three categories: A, B, and C. Species on the A list are rare; in the last two years monitors of twenty-six places reported finding only seven species on the A list.

There are about another fifty species that we might see, so there are almost a hundred insect species we possibly deal with. We identified thirty-six species this past season. In contrast, there are 340 species of plants at Nachusa and ninety-five birds.

A high point for us this season is our contribution to the rare A list, the little copper (or American copper). We have seen this butterfly often on our route, and in other parts of the Grasslands. It is usually less than an inch across, bright orange on the upper forewing, with another stripe of the same color on the hind wing, and otherwise it's largely brown. On the underside it is grayish, with some small black spots and a row of orange spots near the base of the hind wing. Be on the lookout for these from May into September. [Become an assistant monitor yourself!]

A relative of the copper is the Karner blue, which was identified by the writer Vladimir Nabukov. This rare species depends upon lupine plants for food. We have a few lupines here, so this butterfly is a possible candidate for reintroduction, as was done with the gorgone checkerspot.

One of the prized plants here at Nachusa is the bird's foot violet. One species on the A list is the regal fritillary, which lays its eggs under this violet and others. Sad to report, no monitor has reported seeing this species in the last two years.

Biodiversity Reading Group

Enjoy lively discussion on the Pulitzer prize winning E. O. Wilson's The Diversity of Life, Belknap Harvard Press, 1992. Available in paperback. Dot Wade will be joining us and she can order books 815-732-6890. Discussion date to be made later.

Call Max Baumgardner at 815-456-2083.

Close Up - Nachusa's Birds - continued

Cooper's Hawk (Illinois Endangered) - One was seen in 22 April by me, and 26 June by butterfly monitor, Mike Adolf. These were the only dates brought to my attention. I would love a volunteer to take on this species and seek out more information.

Wild Turkey - A couple of female birds were seen around the northwest savanna during May and June.

Northern Bobwhite - They were seen throughout the summer in the main complex near the entrance sign. They survived their first winter after their 1992 release by a local resident. This 1994 winter may have been too cold for their survival.

Upland Sandpiper (Illinois Endangered) - We only observed this species on the site a couple of times. I am not sure if their nest or young were destroyed during the bad weather. Their seemingly late arrival to Nachusa, 5 May instead of 20 April, could suggest that bad weather prevented an earlier arrival. One was accidentally flushed from the ground on 6 June. It takes 30-31 days of incubation after the last egg is laid, until the precocial chicks are hatched. If this pair was nesting on the site, they may have had problems. A pair was seen flying together on 11 June. No other sightings were noted or brought to my attention.

Great-horned Owl - I heard one young owl screeching for food on a mid-June evening.

Long-eared Owl (Illinois Endangered) - Nachusa neighbors, Sally Baumgardner and Rob Sickler, made this season one of mixed joy and sorrow. On 19 May a dead long-eared owl was found. This female owl had a brood patch on her belly which meant that she had a nest nearby. Sally sent the owl's remains to Dr. Angelo Capparella at Illinois State University to study and perform a possible autopsy.

Whip-poor-will - This nocturnally vociferous species was heard on many evenings in Nachusa's savannas. As many as 4 males were heard on one June night. Although this species has been present each summer, we have not confirmed its breeding. I'm just pleased that we have suitable oak openings to keep them returning each year.

Least Flycatcher - Early on the evening of 18 June, I was very pleased and surprised to hear and see 2 male least flycatchers singing within few feet of one another. The intense competition reminded me of "Star Search". These birds are found in forest and forest edges. They choose the oaks west of Doug's Knob to perform. Recently, the IL Dept. of Conservation listed this bird as highly sensitive to forest fragmentation.

Sedge Wren - One species which seemed to have benefited from our very wet summer was this small wren. I found as many as 7 singing males in one large area. Because of time constraints and their cryptic habits, I was able to locate only one active nest. I am assuming others were also successful.

Eastern Bluebirds - Still a great addition to the music and color of Nachusa.

Veery (Illinois Threatened) - This state threatened thrush was noticeably missing. His song along Wade Creek was never noted. Anyone who would like to concentrate on the birds along Wade Creek give me a call. This could be another census route.

Northern Mockingbird - Although we have all three members of the Mimidae (Mimic) Family at Nachusa, the northern mockingbird creates the most interest. It is not a common sight in this part of its range. This bird has been present and singing for the last three or more years and finally this summer it was seen feeding a fledgling. We may have two pairs nesting on or near Nachusa. One pair is around Schafer's Knob and one pair is near Coneflower Knob.

Bell's Vireo - only one pair was noted in 1993. Cowbirds are known to parasitize their nest.

Yellow-breasted Chat - At least one pair present.

Scarlet Tanager - One male seen once in mid-June. *Point of Interest:* Cornell Lab of Ornithology is conducting "Project Tanager" this spring. A continent wide, volunteer-based study. The volunteer will conduct point count twice during the breeding season, and search for nests. Anyone interested call me and I will get you the information necessary. What a great way to "bird with a purpose".

Dickcissel - Present, but in smaller numbers than '92.

Field Sparrow - Nesting in good numbers.

Lark Sparrow - One pair observed at Doug's Knob.

Grasshopper Sparrow - It was very difficult to tell how the stormy weather affected this species. Many males were singing 18 June just as they would in May.

Bobolinks - Two males set up territories in the main sector. I only noted one female.

I know there are many local birders who have had wonderful sightings. In October I thought I had a quick peek at a sharp-tailed sparrow, but I did not have it long enough to be positive. If any of you observed this species or had any other sightings of interest, please drop me a note. I need these sightings in writing, so a quick note will be fine. Every observation helps with the larger picture. Have fun and keep looking up!

¹ 1993 Rainfall information from the *Amboy News*, Amboy IL.

If you bird Nachusa Grasslands and would like to share your observations or would like to be a bird monitor contact me at:

Ann B. Haverstock
724 Hawthorne Lane
Geneva IL 60134

Calendar

June

- *25 Saturday, 9:30 am: Bird Tour-Gill Moreland
- 26 Sunday, 10:30 am: Workday.

July

- 2 Saturday, 10:30 am: Workday
- 9 Sunday, 10:30 am: Workday
- 10 Sunday, 10:30 am: Workday
- 12-15 North American Prairie Conference in Kansas
- 16 Saturday: Workday
- 16 Saturday, 3 - 6 pm: Plant Id. Field trip with Dennis Lubbs
- 24 Saturday, 10:30 am: Workday
- 31 Sunday, 10:30 am: Workday

August

- 1 Fall Prairie Smoke submissions deadline
- 9-14 Ecological Restoration Conference in Michigan
- 13 Saturday, 10:30 am: Workday
- 20 Saturday, 10:30 am: Workday
- 21 Sunday, 10:30 am: Workday
- 27 Saturday, 10:30 am: Workday

September

- 3 Saturday, 10:30 am: Workday
- 11 Sunday, 10:30 am: Workday
- 17 Saturday, 10:00 - 3:00: **Annual Autumn on the Prairie celebration**
- *24 Saturday, 11:00 am Walk/Workday,
- 25 Sunday, 10:30 am: Workday

October

- 1 Saturday, 10:30 am: Workday
- *Reservation required - 312-346-8166

Restoring and protecting native Illinois is fun and meaningful work, join us for a few workdays this summer. Meet at the barn behind the Yellow House, 2055 Lowden Road.

ALL WORKDAYS THIS SUMMER ARE FROM 10:30 - 1:30.....Bring a bag lunch.

Wish list for Nachusa Grasslands:

- seed drill or broadcaster
 - Mower-pull behind a tractor-bigger the better
 - 60 horse power tractor with three point hitch
 - ATV or golf cart
 - Hand scythe
 - fax machine
 - Large toaster oven
 - dolly (hand truck)
 - security alarm for barn
 - 1-2 cu.yd. dumpster
 - small plow 2'-6'
 - four row disk
 - hay rack
 - Flatbed trailer
 - Truck ladder rack
 - shop vacuum
 - steel ramps
 - heavy or light duty utility trailer
 - full size pickup truck cap and/or too box
 - old kitchen cabinets for the shop
 - shop vise
 - agricultural combine
 - vented propane office heater
 - agricultural field gates
 - Snowblower (thinking ahead)
 - VCR/small TV for presentations
 - Riding lawn mower-to mow weeds & fire breaks
 - Large portfolio case - transporting aerial photos
- Donations are tax deductible & greatly appreciated.

Thanks to donors for:

- ✓-SLR camera set with extra lenses
John Santucci
- ✓-Mulching Mower&String trimmer
Michael Rosenzweig
- ✓-Slide projector kit & screen
Steve Pozdro & Vic Becker
- ✓-Leaf Mulcher and accessories
Ira Davis, Harold Neave & John Andes
- ✓-Gas storage tank - Norm Brecker
- ✓-Seed collecting bag prototypes (cloth with shoulder straps!) - Patti Vanbuskirk

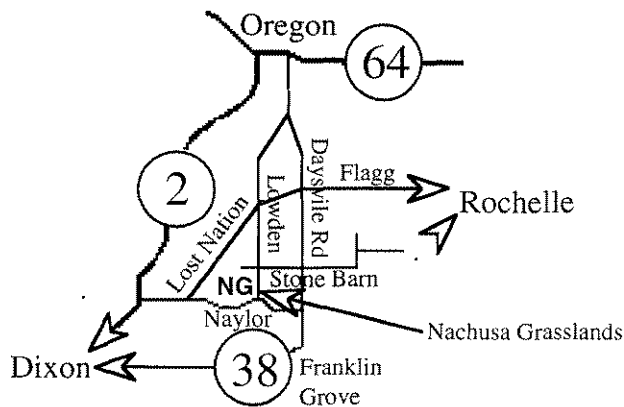
Work projects that need you:

- Create portable "Smoke Hazard" road signs
- Someone to loan us a trencher to dig up some tile and put in a water line, two days work.
- Field trip leaders that we can call occasionally to give tours
- help maintain the mechanical equipment (tractor, skidster, pickup,...) Greatly Needed!
- build four simple easels to hold aerial photos
- Members of a "speakers bureau" to give talks or slide shows
- Road side steward to collect litter, battle a few weeds, check fences and gates for damage, and maintain the bulletin boards
- Electrician to run a few outlet lines.
- Excavator to loan a drot for two days work.
- Prescribed burn host - someone to greet visitors/new crew members - help keep the crew hydrated and full of cookies
- More monitors recording occurrences of birds, butterflies, herps, plants.
- Someone to start a plant collection Nachusa species.

Editor-Publisher _____ *Earl Thomas*
 Associate Editor _____ *Dot Wade*
 Associate Editor _____ *Bill Kleiman*
 Associate Editor _____ *Sally Baumgardner*

IN THIS ISSUE

Article	Page
Environmental Conservation Award	1
Closeup - Nachusa's Birds	1
From the Preserve Manager	2
Biodiversity Sited	2
Special Thanks	2
Prescribed Burn Gear - Wish List	2
Stewardship/Management Unit Map	3
Photos	4
Northeast Unit Report	5
Public Showers!	5
Photo Collection	5
In Search of Karner Blue	5
Biodiversity Reading Group	5
Calendar	7
Wish List & Projects	7



From the Editor(s):

If you know something about Nachusa Grasslands, but no one else knows because you didn't share the information, then you are *GUILTY* of keeping secrets! Send me articles, photos, drawings, poems, cartoons, calendar dates (items of interest to the friends of Nachusa Grasslands). Articles on computer disk encouraged!



brings you **Prairie Smoke**, the Nachusa Grasslands Newsletter.
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