

PRAIRIE SMOKE

Nachusa Grasslands Newsletter

Issue 32

August 1998

PICNIC CELEBRATES ADDITION TO THE PRESERVE

Blue sky, green fields and a cheery yellow and white tent greeted folks at the dedication of the new Hook Larson Prairie on July 11th. Over 110 people came to see this new 142-acre purchase and dedicate it to our late friend and supporter Mayo "Hook" Larson (see related article).

Friends, neighbors and volunteers brought a potluck feast. Before eating, some folks enjoyed a self-guided plant identification trail, others visited in the shade and listened to the music from Mike Crowe's concertina. Then the warm, sunny day began to cool and we ate amidst laughter and pleasant conversation. After supper, Angie Jones (Hook's daughter) was presented with a framed memorial. It had a photo of Nachusa Grasslands and Hook Larson and a brass plaque with words of dedication. Bruce Boyd, director of the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy thanked everyone for attending and for their support of Nachusa Grasslands. Bill Kleiman spoke of the enjoyable visits with Hook Larson at the preserve and his generous nature. Then several volunteers led tours on the prairie until dark. Thanks to Jay Stacy, Mike Adolph, Mike Engel, and Gene St. Louis. Those who knew Hook thought that this was just the kind of celebration he would like.

This significant addition to Nachusa Grasslands is just across Stonebarn Road from the Dot and Doug Wade Unit at the north end of preserve. There is about 53-acres of rough land. Twenty-three acres of this is high-quality dry prairie that harbors birdsfoot violet (100's of them), shooting star, cream wild indigo, Hill's thistle, short green milkweed, fringed puccoon, violet wood sorrel, spi-

MAYO "HOOK" LARSON

1933-1998

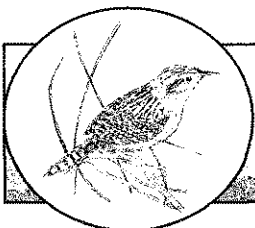
Hook was the kind of guy you liked right away: cheerful, direct, casual, and curious.



See Page 9 for the rest ... of the story!

derwort, lead plant, purple prairie clover, alum root, northern dropseed, pale purple coneflower, rough blazingstar, and little bluestem — to name just a few plants. We have named the prairie knobs already. The one called Tephrosia Hill has a rock dedicated to Hook Larson.

This purchase is an exciting one due to its species richness, protecting another part of the Wade Creek watershed and protecting our view-shed to the north of Dot and Doug's Knobs. In addition to the prairie remnants, there are also 6-acres of currently used pasture, 8-acres of pine plantation with prairie remnants on the edges, and about 75-acres of cultivated ground. There's even a deep and wide sink hole with some nice woodland plants. We have an ambitious restoration plan already written. There is much to be done: remove a few junk piles, re-sculpt the edges of steep-sided borrow pits, thin some brush and trees, battle weeds, restore degraded moist prairie between the dry hills, and slowly replant the cultivated ground back to prairie. We hope to see more new volunteers at Nachusa to help with the restoration.



9th Annual

AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE

SEPTEMBER 19, 1998 • 10 AM - 5 PM • SEE PAGE 2



CELEBRATION! CELEBRATION!

By Gerald McDermott
Chairperson AOTP '98

AUTUMN, WHAT A WONDERFUL TIME TO BE ON THE PRAIRIE! Again this year, AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE (AOTP) volunteers, stewards, and staff have planned a not-to-be-missed event. The ever popular tours are going to be orchestrated by Bob Shone. And Mike Adolph will again design the inviting self-guided, self-paced, self-educating tour. TOURS A MUST!

The Children's Tent will be set up under the direction of Susan Kleiman and will, of course, include Thelma Dahlberg, Sally Baumgardner, Brandon Meiners, and the Professor - - no childhood should be denied an experience with the professor. CHILDREN'S TENT A MUST!

Raffle Tent activities will be conducted by Tonya Bittner with the help of a volunteer or two who will happily assist you in the purchase of raffle tickets. Of course, you will not be able to resist the opportunity to take a chance (or, hopefully more) to acquire one of our offered treasures - - remember it's a welcome donation and a lot of fun! RAFFLE TENT A MUST!

The Sales Tent occupies space within the Welcome Area.. our offerings at the Sales Tent are modest but, tastefully presented, practical, and reasonably priced - - all donations are most graciously accepted. Whether you are purchasing a raffle ticket, a memento, food, art works, or books (Windrift/Dot Wade of course) from our distinguished vendors, remember you are helping to support Nachusa Grasslands at the local level. SALES TENT A MUST! OUR VENDORS A MUST!

Outstanding demonstrations, exhibits, and entertainment have been assembled by Mike Adolph and Gene St. Louis. Gene will, again this year, present photographic evidence to confirm the importance of volunteers to the preservation, conservation, and restoration of Nachusa Grasslands. You will also be provided a wonderful opportunity to sign on as a volunteer - - interesting, worthwhile, fun tasks are scheduled for all volunteers - - WE WANT YOU!

Not to be forgotten, the Site will be managed by Bill Kleiman and a crew of hearty volunteers. The function of this group is to make AOTP appear as effortless as possible, to arrange all of the creature comforts from parking to port-a-potties and every-

thing in between. Setting up the site begins on Friday and cleaning up at the end of the day on Saturday. "Can I help?" you ask. Of course, just call me at 815/284-8584. VOLUNTEER!

You can also help by placing Media Releases and/or Flyers within your immediate community. Susan is driving our Publicity efforts; call her at 815/456-2340 for further info. SPREAD THE WORD!

Last but not least! The Welcome Tent will be headed-up by Ron Ingraham and a bevy of cheerful, fun-loving, knowledgeable, helpful volunteers. A CHALLENGE to all reading this article! Each reader is to bring at least two folks who have never attended AOTP with them, not only to register at the Welcome Tent, but to enjoy the celebration of AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE.

AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE A MUST!

FRANKLIN CENTER AND ASHTON ELEMENTARY PARTICIPATE IN YOUTH STEWARDS PROGRAM AT NACHUSA GRASSLANDS

by Susan Kleiman

Thanks to the funding from Crest Foods of Ashton, IL the staff and volunteers at Nachusa Grasslands have crafted a special program specifically tailored for local school children to participate in stewardship. Volunteer stewards lead small groups of students collecting and planting native seed as well as exploring the prairies, woodlands, and wetlands at Nachusa Grasslands. Students visit three times a year to get to know the natural landscape in different seasons. In addition to the outdoor portion of the Youth Stewards program, carefully designed activities have been developed for use in the classroom to connect students to the great diversity of native plants and birds in the area.

At the beginning of the school year, before their first field trip, students from Ashton and Franklin Center Elementary schools saw a video about the diversity of life on earth and in Illinois. Each student "interviewed" a native plant by reading about it, looking at beautiful 11"x17" photographs and actual dried specimens, all developed especially for this activity. Then each student shared with their classmates about the uniqueness of "their" plant.

The autumn saw these fourth grade students at Nachusa Grasslands gleefully gathering seed from wildflowers and grasses of the prairies and wet-

lands. Each new plant encountered was greeted with curiosity if new to them or, if recognized from study in the classroom, the plant was greeted with comments like, "Wow, this is Joey's plant, it's the one that smells so good!"

Since many of the plants are rare, the students are asked to only pick seed when on a special collecting day with an adult steward and not to pick seed that they might casually find on a hike. At school the seeds are carefully processed out of the seed heads and stored for the winter. Franklin Center students even tried to grow a few, but soon



A boy in a bur oak during a Youth Stewards field trip.

learned that since the plants are long lived perennials they take a long time to sprout (3 months) and even longer to grow a big root (2-3 years) and even longer before they flower (3-7 years). Individual plants can live a hundred years!

Winter was a time to read journal entries from pioneers in this region to get a sense of what life was like on the prairie. Through several articles and even the Internet, the students learned what other children are doing around the globe to restore and steward their special places. They may have even found a role model when they learned about environmental heroes and heroines from the past and present (some of whom are still living in the Rock River Valley today!).

In early spring, to prepare for their spring visit to Nachusa Grasslands, the students learned to identify some birds by sound as well as by sight. They enjoyed looking at slides of the birds while listening to a narrated tape taking them on a "tour" of the birds that can be found in many backyards. Students then "interviewed" a bird and also shared about any birds they noticed at home. Most students can now see and hear the difference between a bluebird, chickadee, house sparrow....

Finally, during their spring field trip the long awaited planting of the seed commenced. Students were seen walking about sprinkling seed in spots

where the soil was showing and then stepping on the seeds to make good soil contact. Afterwards, the children went exploring with their leaders, looking for birds and blooming plants. The day ended with time to sit quietly in a special chosen spot and write or draw in their Youth Stewards Journal about what they noticed around them and how they felt about stewardship. The children feel good about being stewards of their Illinois natural heritage.

At the end of the school year the students strung together small ceramic beads that have the letters S-T-E-W-A-R-D. They thought these necklaces were very cool. The teachers were also pleased with this pilot program and sent their thanks.

The Youth Stewards program culminated in a special Summer Celebration at Nachusa Grasslands with students and their families. Students had a chance to show their families the prairie in its full summer glory. We hope students will continue to bring their families visiting, and perhaps volunteering, at Nachusa Grasslands or other natural areas in the region.

Speaking of volunteering. **We need more small group leaders for the field trips.** Each leader takes 5 to 7 kids out in the preserve to gather or plant seed and discover the wonders of nature. I need 4 to 6 leaders four different half days during the school year (two days in the autumn and two in the spring). Please call me at (815) 456-2340 and let me know you can help.

This year's small group field leaders were: Sally Baumgardner, Mike Adolph, Ron Ingraham, Bill Kleiman, Howard Fox, Hazel Reuter, Jenna Sanders, Joann Keyes, Lynn Hunter, and Susan Kleiman.

Resources

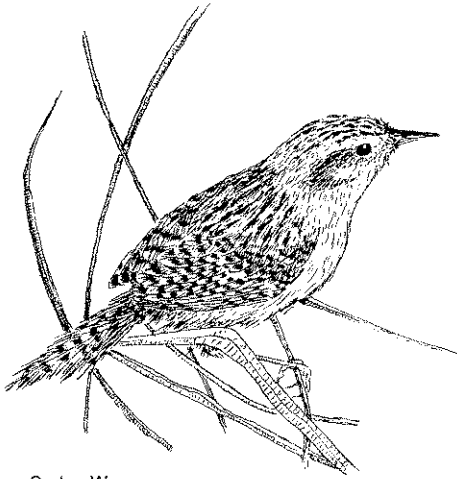
Floristic Quality Assessment for Vegetation in Illinois. A Method for Assessing Vegetation Integrity, by John Taft, Gerould Wilhelm, Douglas Ladd, and Linda Masters, published in *Ergenia*, The Illinois Native Plant Society Journal, Number 15, November 1997. (ISSN 8755-2000) *The lists all the plants of Illinois, their coefficient of conservatism, and other information.*

For information on The Illinois Native Plant Society write to Forest Glen Preserve, 20301 E. 900 North Road, Westville, IL 61883.

Prairie Establishment and Landscaping. (Natural Heritage Technical Publication #2, 1997) by William McCain, published by Division of Natural Heritage, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield, IL. *This 62 page, easy to understand manual will help those who wish to grow prairie in large or small areas of their farm, garden, or school yard. It lists sources of seed and plants.*

IF HE SINGS IT, SHE WILL COME

by Ann Haverstock



Sedge Wren
Drawn by Denis Kania

“Scarce, local and declining” are the first words used to describe the sedge wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) in the recently published American Bird Conservatory’s

Field Guide to All the Birds of North America. Nachusa Grasslands is one of those wonderful local places where you can spend time with this noisy species. I do not use that adjective lightly for sedge wrens chatter and sing throughout the day as well as an occasional night. Recent research (Kroodsma '97 unpublished) suggests that each sedge wren follows some inborn rules and improvises his own large set of songs, generating a unique but large song repertoire of “typical” sedge wren songs. Since their populations seem to be so mobile each individual’s huge repertoire helps to minimize any geographic variations enabling communication regardless of their population of origin.

When I began to survey the breeding birds at Nachusa in 1990, the sedge wrens were either sparse, only two July males, or completely absent. Its preferred nesting habitat is wet grassy prairie and shallow sedge marshes. Sedge wrens seem to be highly nomadic and nest in response to rainfall (Bohlen '89). Nachusa’s April rainfall in 1993 and 1995 was over five inches and this definitely influenced their breeding cycle because the May air was filled with sedge wren music. Some researchers think that certain populations may even begin their southward migration before making a second attempt to breed. This may be the best reason for the later and greater influx of birds to our area during summer. Last July several males moved into the wet prairie east of Coyote Point. Much to their liking this area has been made wetter in recent years by the removal of old field drainage tiles.

When you find a male singing his “chap, chap, chap” and his chattering trill of a song, listen and watch for other nearby males singing similar responses. Often birders get too close and disturb an individual. You can easily tell if you are too close because the male will become agitated. He will fly up and flutter about and then drop back deep into the vegetation. Back off and find some high ground. A telescope will give you a great view without changing the bird’s behavior.

This wren, like many of his related cousins, starts to build several grass ball shaped nests with the hope that a female will like one of his locations, claim it, and finish the nest. If you are lucky you may find a pair and she may act more secretive than he. Remember, that confirmed breed-

ing behavior is a wren carrying food to a suspected nest. After all, birds don’t usually carry food except to give it to a mate or nestling, or to find a safer place to eat undisturbed. If the bird gulps down that grub, you’ll have to keep watching for a better bonding behavior. According to Paul Ehrlich’s *The Birder’s Handbook*, the female lays 4-8 unmarked white eggs and incubates them for 12 to 16 days. Occasionally the male is known to be polygynous, which means he may have more than one female and possibly two active nests at the same time. The male may even destroy the eggs of a neighboring sedge wren or other small birds nesting nearby.

Since finding this species is usually the goal of most bird watchers just go to Nachusa Grasslands and listen. I do have one caveat. Listen to an audio tape before your visit, and compare the sedge wren song with that of another Nachusa species, the dickcissel. Some visitors miss the wren because they think it is a distant dickcissel. Sedge wrens usually return to Nachusa from the southern states by the first week of June but greater numbers can probably be seen and heard at the end of July. Go to your library and request the compact disk or audio tape of *A Field Guide to Bird Songs of Eastern and Central North America* from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. You are certain to see and hear this species if you take a few minutes to learn its song.

Remember, if you bird Nachusa please send me a copy of your day list, and don’t forget to put your name and address on it. I hope to see you in the field.

Literature Cited:

A Field Guide to Bird Songs of Eastern and Central North America. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, New York: Mark Records. 1990. (This is now a part of the Peterson Guide series).

American Bird Conservancy’s *Field Guide to All the Birds of North America*, designed by Jack L. Griggs, Harper Perennial Pub. 1997.

The Birder’s Handbook; A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds, by Paul R. Ehrlich, David S. Dobkin and Darryl Wheye, Simon & Schuster Inc. 1988.

The Birds of Illinois, by H. David Bohlen, Indiana University Press, Bloomington. 1989.

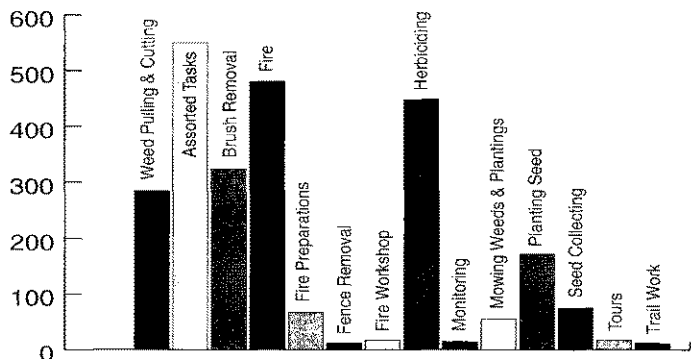
“The Ecology of Song Improvisation, as Illustrated by North American Sedge Wrens,” by Donald E. Kroodsma PH.D., Dept. of Bio., University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Nov. 1997.

Note: Ann is an interpreter and guide at the Morton Arboretum. She has some well done reports on her yearly bird surveys at Nachusa and keeps our bird list updated, as well as leading an occasional tour here.

THOUSANDS OF HOURS PUT IN BY NACHUSA GRASSLANDS VOLUNTEERS

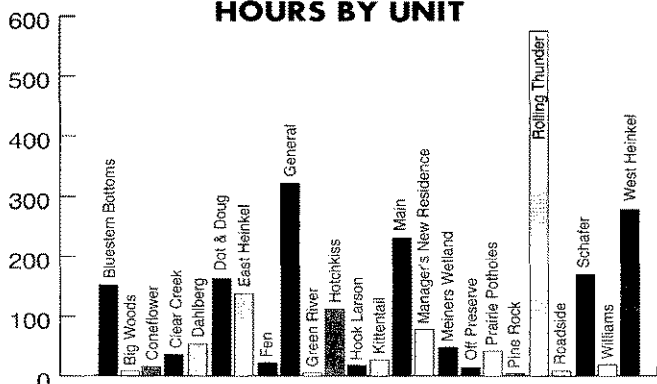
If we were to put a value of \$10 per hour worked by our volunteers, the value from February 1, 1998 through June 30, 1998 would be \$25,400.00! **Thank You Volunteers.**

HOURS BY TASK



Description of Task	Hours	% Overall
Weed Pulling & Cutting	285	11.22
Assorted Tasks	551	21.70
Brush Removal	324.5	12.78
Fire	481	18.94
Fire Preparation	67.5	2.66
Fence Removal	12	0.47
Fire Workshop	18	0.71
Herbiciding	449	17.68
Monitoring	15	0.59
Mowing Weeds & Plantings	55.5	2.19
Planting Seed	172.5	6.79
Seed Collecting	75	2.95
Tours	18	0.71
Trail Work	12	0.47

HOURS BY UNIT



Unit Name	Hours	% Overall
Bluestem Bottoms	151.5	5.97
Big Woods	8	0.32
Coneflower	16	0.63
Clear Creek	36	1.42
Dahlberg	54	2.13
Dot & Doug	163	6.42
East Heinkel	137.5	5.41
Fen	22	0.87
General	321	12.64
Green River	5	0.20
Hotchkiss	112	4.41
Hook Larson	18	0.71
Kittentail	28	1.10
Main	231	9.10
Manager's New Residence	77	3.03
Meiners Wetland	48	1.89
Off Preserve	14	0.55
Prairie Potholes	42	1.65
Pine Rock	4.5	0.18
Rolling Thunder	575.5	22.66
Roadside	9	0.35
Schafer	170	6.69
Williams	19	0.75
West Heinkel	277.5	10.93

STEWARDSHIP HAPPENINGS

by Bill Kleiman

New Roadside Stewards: Jenny and Tom Mitchell are our new Roadside Stewards. They will be taking care of various aspects of roadside management including: litter, weeds, seeds, signs, fencing, kiosk.... On a recent outing 5 big bags of cans and trash were picked up. We presented them with new litter pickup tools to welcome them aboard.

New Costeward: Barb Regan will be working with Gene St. Louis on the Dot & Doug Unit. Barb supplied homemade cookies at the last workday there, a nice addition. Gene has been controlling reed canary grass, thistle, garlic mustard, briars, and birdsfoot trefoil on his unit. Shabbona Savanna, just west of Doug's Knob looks different from last year (and very nice) with the removal of numerous cherry trees from the oak stand. Indigo buntings can often be viewed up in the oaks there.

Welcome the summer stewardship team: Cristina Canales, Mike Engel, and Tina Fonger. Cristina Canales, from Spain, is volunteering with us for the summer. Cristina has a degree in marine ecology but seems to be sure footed on land too. Her English is muy bueno. Mike Engel, from Freeport, comes to us from his last work in Big Bend National Park where he did resource work. Mike has a degree in plant biology and a pleasant humor. Tina Fonger, of Franklin Grove, is a senior in agronomy at Western Illinois University.



Volunteers getting ready for a prairie planting this spring, left to right: Susan Kleiman, Tom Mitchell, Bob Shone, Jenny Mitchell, Barb Regan, Sally Baumgardner, Mike Adolph and David Edelbach.

NIU Co-op: We have a new Co-operative education student volunteering this summer and earning college credit. Bill McCarthy is working on a degree in Environmental Ethics and was sparing at lunch with Jay Stacy on the ecological viewpoints of Plato and Aristotle

STEWARDSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF LATE:

Schafer Unit: David and Gerald have cleared some junk brush by the north end of Schafer Knob. They also have cleared honeysuckle from the small woods there. A group of us burned about a third of the unit on May 17 to try and burn out wild parsnip and sweetclover and brome grass. The fire was slow and smokey but the effects may prove worthwhile. They are planting seed into these burned areas. We have received a small matching grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to do two projects at once: 1. Create a small shallow depression, a prairie pothole, in the former farm field west of Schafer Knob. 2. To fill the smaller gravel "borrow" pit on the west face of Schafer Knob. The dirt from the pothole will be used to fill the pit on the knob. A three foot cap of gravel will be laid to mimic the drainage and pH of the original gravel knob. The new gravel cap will be covered with a thin layer of soil and then the area will be heavily seeded and covered with erosion fabric.

Jay Meiners Wetlands: We have again sprayed reed canary grass in sections of the wetlands. We have plans to remove some more of the grass sod and haul it away. Removing the grass sod will create some natural looking potholes and allow us to have sections of the wetlands free of this weedy grass. We also planted about 5 acres of prairie on the east side of Meiners. We used herbicide to kill the brome grass sod. A rich seed mix was broadcast into the dead sod and the area was harrowed twice to get the seed into the soil. Barring a drought, this planting should start showing up next year. An erosion gully that has been forming by the roadside pond was recently repaired. We had a truck deliver small rock nearby the bridge on Naylor Road. We then rented a skid loader and moved the rock to the small gully. We think we have the problem solved for a while, but the flooding of Franklin Creek will always create some work for us. A second erosion problem on the oxbow wetland will be dealt with early this winter.

Rolling Thunder Unit: Sally and the weekday crew have been carefully managing birdsfoot trefoil by a population of the rare prairie bushclover. Sally and the summer crew have been controlling several other weed problems and she has been planting many seeds in these areas to give the weeds some natural competition. Sally and Max have also been doing some brush thinning. Sally's butterfly weed is an amazing burst of orange and the Rolling Thunder Unit is still the June grass capital. Sally has also continued her publishing of natural history articles in local papers.

Clear Creek Unit: Mary and Terry (and Keith) burned some of the acreage there and planted seed into three areas using different methods to test their effectiveness. This summer Mary's goats will do their best to control multiflora rose. The weekday crew fixed up the Clear Creek House for the residence of summer interns. The house actually looks pretty good.

West Heinkel Unit: Jay Stacy continues to amaze us with his persistent and careful restoration work on this unit. Along with his costeward Gene Miller, they have cleared a wetland area of a multiflora rose thicket that only a rabbit could love. This area is west of Bivins along the waterway. They have sprayed reed canary grass there and planted many seeds. The planting along Naylor Road is on its second year and Jay and Gene report purple prairie clover, indigo, little bluestem, and other plants emerging. The silt fence we installed last year worked very well with no further erosion. A large burdock patch was recently sprayed. On the west end of the oak woods in this unit they thinned some cherries and then cut a staggering number of briars and treated each cut stem with herbicide. The weekday crew burned a bunch of piles made from thinning in the oak woodlands. The extra light reaching the forest floor should encourage regeneration of the oaks and native flora.



Some of our Monday volunteers, left to right: Gene Miller, John Schmadeke, Gerald McDermott, and Jay Stacy

Main Unit: Mike Adolph and Bob Shone have been busy. They thinned some more brush and burned about 20 brush piles. They have been spraying reed canary grass, multiflora rose, and Canada thistle. They planted seed in various places. We have reshaped a few fencerow lumps in this unit that were mostly covered with brome grass. By reshaping and restoring them we can reduce the height and blend them into adjacent plantings and remnant. A pair of northern harriers has been seen—the male bringing the female rodents to eat and the two of them diving at each other. The weekday crew has worked hard on the weed, *Hieracium pratense* = field hawkweed = king devil. Keep a watch out for this plant in May. It has bright yellow flowers and the green bracts and foot-high green stem have black bristly hairs. The leaves lie close to the ground and spread by root runners. This relative of hairy hawkweed blooms about mid-May at about the same time as *Senecio pauperculus*, balsam ragwort, which also has yellow flowers. The *Hieracium* is a weed that is strongly invasive at a nearby natural area and we would rather get rid of it while it is still only in a few patches. It sets seed quickly after being sprayed so it must be caught early. Many acres

around the patches were searched for outlying plants. We found plants here and there around the five populations. We have a poster of this plant in the barn.

Big Woods Unit: We performed an experiment in herbiciding buckthorn and honeysuckle on a few hundred plants. We found that about a third of plants painted with 20% Garlon-4 died. The herbicide was painted on about one foot of stem near the ground. Plants that had the same herbicide applied to the cut stem died about half the time. We conclude that we might want to use 50% Garlon-4 in the future and apply more to the bark and the cut stems.

Kittentail Unit: Mel Hoff and the West Chicago Prairie Stewards cut an amazing amount of brush again this winter and seed was planted afterwards. This spring many huge brush piles were burned. The prairie areas that have been cleared of invading brush in the last few years are recovering nicely with many prairie plants returning from the seed bank or planting.

Coneflower Unit: This is the second year we did not burn and there are several Henslow's sparrows residing there as well as in the 1991 planting of the Main Unit (also not burned). We think there are five males total, up from 2 last year. Since they are singing almost constantly we assume that there are females and nests. We hope that we have eradicated sweet clover from this unit and several others due to summer burns, mowing and constant removal of flowering plants over the last 5 years. Since it's a biennial, we won't know for sure until after next year's growing season.

There is lots of good work going on here. I likely left out some projects and people. There are few places in the state (world?) that are getting the level of stewardship that this land is.

NEW LOCATION FOR PRESERVE HEADQUARTERS IN THE MAKING

An eight acre parcel of land was purchased this spring and is adjacent to the Baumgardner's. The land has a bit of sandy prairie (where a rare western hognose snake was found last year), some pines, and a new house and garage. This will be the manager's residence and the site for our headquarters where we will build our stewardship barn. The staff and volunteers are excited about the usefulness of the barn as we are bursting out of the current stewards' shed. The new barn will house the office, volunteer resource center (with field guides, herbarium, lunch table), workshop, meeting space, bathroom, and tool, vehicle, and seed storage areas.

We look forward to these useful and positive changes to take Nachusa Grasslands into the 21st century. **Please be a part of it.** We still need your donations and volunteer labor for the barn raising. Ask your friends to help, too.

GREETINGS FROM WEST HEINKEL UNIT *by Jay Stacy*

[Editor's note: Jay Stacy is steward of the West Heinkel Unit—half of the Edith and Anna Heinkel Restoration and Woodland. As you may know Nachusa Grasslands is divided into smaller units, which are still quite large. We always need more volunteers, so come on out.]



**Gene Miller and Jay Stacy,
Stewards of West Heinkel Unit**

Gene Miller and I put in a good solid spring; I think we seriously impacted many populations of non-natives. The usual gallery of rogues was targeted: garlic mustard, dame's rocket, reed canary grass, multiflora rose, burdock, Canada and bull thistle, orchard grass, ox-eye daisy, parsnip, common and moth mullein, and both species of sweet clover. We used every trick in our bag: mowing, brush-sawing, herbiciding, pulling, lopping, beheading, etc. Gene and I walked the unit carefully to check for birdsfoot trefoil, spotted knapweed, and field hawkweed. It's not a bad idea to snuff outbreaks of these three problems in the early stages. Thanks to Mike Engle for mowing our Canada thistle with surgical precision.

Our May 16th workday went great. Participants were Gene St. Louis, Gerald McDermott, David Edelbach, both Sallys, Fui-Lian and Bob Inger from Chicago, David Breen and Rob. If I forgot anyone, please forgive. For two hours we hand-picked garlic mustard from a cool, moist, north-facing slope where numerous woodland forbs, ferns, grasses and sedges have survived. The last hour we picked pussytoes, then dispersed the seeds to the winds in the Naylor Road planting. Many thanks to all.

The past month we've begun to shift our focus to seed collection. John Schmadeke has helped us on more than one occasion. When shopping for high-dry species we have found that a good spot is the slopes north of Pussytoes Lane; oodles of goodies can be easily found in any warm month, if your timing is right. So far we've collected *Carex pennsylvanica*, *Carex mühlenbergii*, *Carex bicknellii*, several upland Panicum grass species, dwarf dandelion, and blue-eyed grass. Two notable misses—violet wood sorrel and arrow-leaved violet—a week late, and nary a seed to be found! Maybe next year. Sally Baumgardner generously allowed us to harvest June grass at Rolling Thunder. Gene and I spent three hours on our knees at the newly acquired Hook Larson Prairie; the result a cup full of the tiny orange seeds of birdsfoot violet, *Viola pedata*—prettier than gold. These have been planted in six promising sites around the unit. Native plants are popping up all over the plantings. Exciting indeed.

NACHUSA GRASSLANDS STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR FOR THE REST OF 1998

August

2 Sun: Clear Creek Unit
8 Sat: Rolling Thunder Unit
15 Sat: Coneflower Unit
22 Sat: Schafer Unit
29 Sat: Rolling Thunder Unit

September

5 Sat: West Heinkel Unit
12 Sat: Potluck Gathering (for Autumn On The Prairie preparations, and Field Class on the Goldenrods and Asters)
19 Sat: **AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE** -10 am to 5 pm
26 Sat: Main Unit
27 Sun: Schafer Unit

October

3 Sat: West Heinkel Unit
4 Sun: 10:30 AM Rolling Thunder Unit (seed collecting)
10 Sat: East Heinkel Unit
17 Sat: Schafer Unit
24 Sat: Main Unit
31 Sat: Dot and Doug Wade Unit

November

7 Sat: Potluck Gathering (Ann Haverstock— presentation on mammals)
14 Sat: General Burn Workshop with Bill Kleiman
21 Sat: **STONE SOUP SEED PROCESSING PARTY** - 9:30-3
28 Sat: Dot and Doug Wade Unit
29 Sun: Schafer Unit

December

5 Sat: Dot and Doug Wade Unit
12 Sat: Schafer Unit
19 Sat: Buckthorn Bash with Bill Kleiman

January 1999

9 Sat: Winter Seed planting workday
16 Sat: Potluck Gathering (topic: identifying 50 species by their seeds)
23 Sat: Schafer Unit
30 Sat: Dot and Doug Wade Unit

All workdays and events start at 9:30 and end about 1:30 unless otherwise noted. Bring a lunch or snack. Work groups meet at the Steward's Barn at 2055 Lowden Rd. Extreme weather conditions will sometimes cause a Steward to cancel a workday.

We have on-going stewardship crews all week long during the summer, and Monday and Wednesday mornings throughout the year. Call Bill or Susan Kleiman for details.

Editor	Susan Kleiman
Associate Editor	Thelma Dahlberg
Associate Editor	Dot Wade
Associate Editor	Bill Kleiman
Manager of Mailing	Ellen Baker

NACHUSA GRASSLANDS UNIT STEWARDS

STEWARDS

Clear Creek Unit

Prairie Preservation Society
of Ogle County

Dot & Doug Unit

Gene St. Louis

East Heinkel Unit

Mike Crowe

Fen Unit

Kevin Kaltenbach

Jay Meiners Wetland Unit

Jeff Meiners

Kittentail Unit

West Chicago

Prairie Stewards

Main Unit

Mike Adolph

Rolling Thunder Unit

Sally Baumgardner

Schafer Unit

David Edelbach

West Heinkel Unit

Jay Stacy

Roadside Stewards

Tom Mitchell

Science Stewards:

Bird Monitoring

Butterfly Monitoring

Project Ecologist

CO-STEWARDS

Mary Blackmore
Terri Clarke

Barb Regan

Todd Bittner

Steve Meiners

Mel Hoff

Bob Shone

Max Baumgardner

Gerald McDermott

Gene Miller, Ron
Ingraham

Jenny Mitchell

Ann Haverstock

Mike Adolph

Dennis Lubbs

Wish List

- More donations for our "new" historic barn
- More volunteers during the weekend and weekdays
- Donation towards seed purchase
- Your old vehicle for us to trade in towards a new truck
- An almost new (or new) "bobcat" skid loader
- Four drawer file cabinets
- Donation for a walk-behind heavy duty mower
- Another John Deere Gator
- Heavy duty shop vacuum.
- Donations for more Motorola radios
- Good Drawings or photos of native species, volunteers, landscapes
- For our intern housing: 2 dressers or chest of drawers, night tables or bed side drawers, wall mirrors, wall shelves, and book shelves.

MAYO "HOOK" LARSON 1933-1998

by Bill Kleiman

This March, Nachusa Grasslands lost a friend and supporter. Hook Larson died in his home of the nerve degeneration disease named after Lou Gerig. We featured Hook in this newsletter in June of 1996. Hook was the kind of guy you liked right away: cheerful, direct, casual, and curious. Perhaps knowing that he was dying helped us skip the introductory time of friendship; we would load-up in the all-terrain-Gator vehicle and go out like old buddies to see the preserve. Hook's eyesight and hearing were fine and we would identify birds and flowers and grasses.



Hook Larson in April 1996.

The macabre progress of Hook's disease was noted each time he came for a visit, he would be a little less able to smoothly move his arms and legs, he would be thinner; but his attitude towards his condition was one of acceptance and humor. He would have a friend or two bring him down from Rockford. Deacon Jackson was out, George Dilling, Hook's daughter Angie and her husband Rick, Joe Maring, Craig Gustafson.... One time we had four guys in the back of the Gator and Hook and I in the front. Hook wanted to see grasshopper sparrows and we cruised down the lane on the Main unit and turned off the engine, but there was not a one to be seen or heard. Hook's numerous visits often felt like his last so finding this elusive sparrow was my mission. We toured around the preserve and finally towards the end of the trip the high pitched trill of a grasshopper sparrow could just be heard, along with dickcissels, meadowlarks, song sparrows, Henslow's sparrows and bobolinks. It alighted nearby and sang triumphantly, hanging on to a little bluestem clump. It sang out its territory, holding back nothing, amid a myriad of other songs, buzzes, chewing beetles, colors, sun and wind.

Hook's career was at Ingersoll Steel in Rockford. He lit-

erally ran in the circle of the president of the company - he was the chauffeur. His passions included hunting ducks and pheasant, and listening to a Dixieland jazz band on Sunday afternoons on a station out of Wisconsin. He hired them, his favorite band, to play at his wake at the Swedish Svithiod Club and the wake seemed more Irish than Swedish. Hook and his friends started the Rockford chapter of Ducks Unlimited (DU). I was invited to last year's DU fund raiser as Hook's guest where he had bought two tables for other friends. He was given an award for 30 years of service to DU. It was a raucous fundraiser with loud talk, beer, auctions, cigars, lotteries and money being spent freely. Hook seemed in his element.

Hook was a generous supporter. Each time he came out he would hand me a check for the preserve and tell me to buy some land. One time he brought his truck and gave us the keys. The accompanying article describes the dedication we had of the Hook Larson Prairie which we recently purchased using all of Hook's checks and some of Thelma Carpenter's (we will dedicate a property to her soon).

Hook Larson was a man passing away before us, like we all are - just faster. I will miss Hook, let the prairie we have in his name remind of us the passion he had for this place.

THANKS FOR THE HELP DURING OUR PRESCRIBED BURN SEASON

by Susan Kleiman

Many acres were burned this spring starting with the National TNC burn workshop in March through a late May burn in the old pasture on the Schafer Unit. Every year we are amazed at the increase in native plant diversity. For example, on the Main unit there was an explosion of blue-eyed grass, *Sisyrinchium albidum*. We were also able to assist Todd Bittner (DNR Heritage Biologist) with three burns at Foley, Temperance Hill, and Green River.

Thanks to the following who helped in burning and getting boundaries ready for the burns (I know I'll probably forget someone, sorry): Jay Stacy, Gene Miller, Gerald McDermott, John Schmadeke and his son John Jr., Lynn Hunter, Kevin Kaltenbach, Jason Johnson, Jenna Sanders, Rich Bielfus, Katie Green, Sally Baumgardner, Gene St. Louis, Mike Adolph, Bob Stanton, John Holbo, David Edelbach, Steve and Monica Sentoff, John Huck, Emilio Salis, Georgette and Bruce Rocheleau, Pete Knysz, Dave Breen, David Wachtel,



Dave Breen lighting a prescribed burn with a drip torch this April.

Steve Thomas, Mike Crowe and two friends, Earl Thomas, Eric Thomas, Max Baumgardner, Mary and Keith Blackmore, Terri Clarke and two friends, Jim Long, Todd Bittner, Bob Clause, and Ray Derksen.

Wow! And guess what? We still need more help during our prescribed burns. We need a minimum of 6 for each burn and preferably not more than say about 12. Since we can't always depend on the weather to be good on the weekends, we need more help during the weekdays. **So please call us and let us put you on our burn list.**

NACHUSA GRASSLANDS SUPPORT

-Thank you to:

Gene St. Louis - donation of heavy duty Army canteens (for fire crew) and getting an article in the DeKalb Midweek about the workday he and Sally B. did with 4th graders — picking up wood removed from the prairie and donating it to folks who heat with wood.

Willard Simpson - barn timbers

Jay Friberg - barn timbers

Howard Fox - for adding the new box to hold the visitor log at the main entrance kiosk (which he built last year) and for the new sign for the Hook Larson Prairie (see related article).

Cristina Canales - our summer volunteer from Pamplona, Spain

John Schmadeke - several photos and slides of the preserve

Ann Haverstock - items for the raffle at Autumn on the Prairie

Sally Baumgardner - for laminating signs

Dixon Web Printing - for acetate for map overlays

Thank you to all of our volunteers. You give your time and energy in return for being a part of saving one of the Last Great Places.

THANK YOU!

We are grateful to the following who have contributed so far to the Barn Fund-raiser for the new preserve headquarters:

John & Mary Rose Santucci -gave a large start-up donation

Harold Walkup - gave a large start-up donation

The Woodyatt Family

Richard J. Schutter

Robert E. Parenteau

John H. Andes

Barbara & John Rutterford

Elizabeth Gallagher

Wilbert & Carol Boynton

Ann & John Snyder

Judy Snyder

Agnes and John Kleiman

Daniel Hill

Dave Sollenberger & Family

Bruce and Beth Wiley Boyd *

Alex, Amy & Dave Brewer *

Gary Gathman

Loreen K. Stravers in memory of her father Henry O. Stegeman

Fran Lowman

Carly Ann Vollmer

Todd & Tonya Bittner *

Clifford E. Knapp

Dennis & Carol Hiebert

Wil & Judy Johnson *

Lloyd Johnson

Doreen O'Brien

Michael, Lana, Amanda, Zachary Haines *

Patrick P. Campbell

Jim & Karen Timble

Rev. & Mrs. Bliss Cartwright

Willard & Maxine Simpson

Leo & Jean McGrain

Sally Bowers

Garden Dept. of Rock Falls Woman's Club

Ken & Kathleen Hodowanic for Mike Hodowanic

Mike & Connie Adolph

Victor & Jean Guarino *

Bob Schone

Frank & Ruth M. Jorgensen

Sheila Ary

Gerald McDermott

Howard Fox *

Rita & Daniel Randecker *

Names with an asterisk following have promised to supply volunteer labor when we start building (which we can do when we have raised the money needed).

Franklin Creek
Grist Mill



**B-B-Q
Fund-raiser**

**September 19, 1998
Noon to 4 PM**

Same day as AOTP. Two festivals for one trip!

Located at the Grist Mill just south of
Nachusa Grasslands on Twist Road in
Franklin Creek State Park.

Nachusa Grasslands Barn Building Fundraiser



Nachusa Grasslands will be building a multi-purpose barn. Various components of the building will be: workshop for equipment repair; storage for equipment, vehicles, and seed; bathroom; meeting and resource area (reference books, herbarium); and the preserve office.

The barn will look, as much as, possible, like an-old fashioned barn with a cupola, wood siding, old-style windows and a steep roof pitch. If we can find the right historic barn we will move it to the site and restore it to our needs. The area around the building will be landscaped with local native plants. We have received some donations and are half-way to our grand total of \$85,000.

Donations of \$50 or more will get your name on the barn builders plaque.

Clip and mail

Yes, I can help with the barn building project. Enclosed is my check for \$_____.
I understand that for that for a donation of \$50 or more I can have my name on the plaque, or a designated name(s).

The name(s) I want on the plaque are (up to 36 characters including spaces):

Please contact me when you start building, I want to supply some volunteer labor.

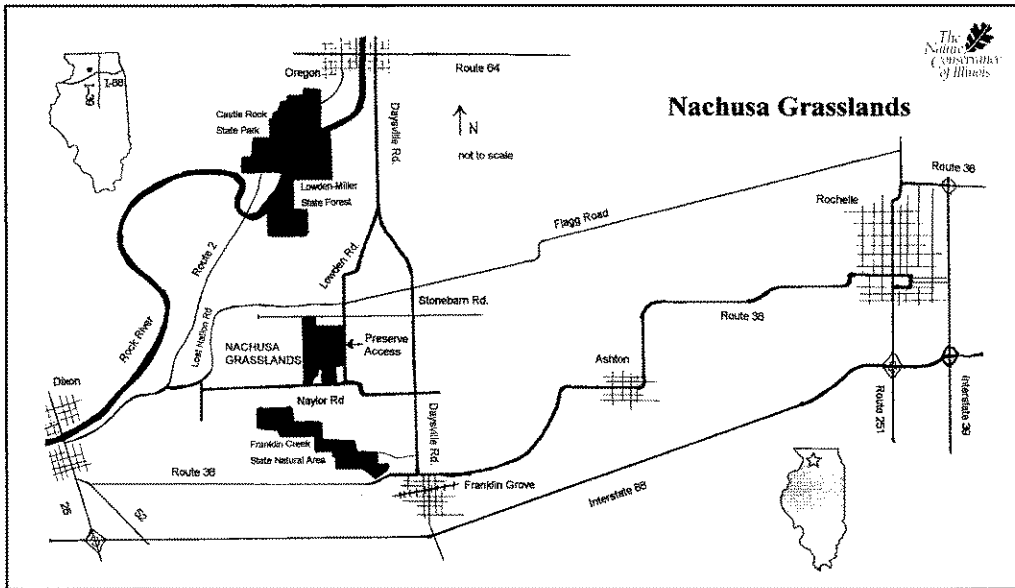
My Name _____

Address _____

City, _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____ - _____

Mail to: Nachusa Grasslands, 2055 Lowden Rd., Franklin Grove, IL 61031



From Route 64: At eastern edge of the city of Oregon, turn south on Daysville Rd. (towards Lowden-Miller State Forest). Travel approx. 2.4 miles to Lowden Rd., turn right (angle) still following State Forest sign. Travel south approx. 5.3 miles (past State Forest) to a 4-way stop at Flagg Rd. Continue south another 2 miles, the preserve entrance is on the right (west).

From Dixon: Option 1: Take Rt. 38 East into Franklin Grove then turn left (north) on Daysville Rd. Travel 1.5 miles north to Naylor Rd., turn left (west) and go 2.2 miles to Lowden Rd., turn right (north) and go 1 mile to preserve entrance on the left (west).

REACHING NACHUSA GRASSLANDS

From I-88 (East-West Tollway): Exit at Rt. 251 North (Rochelle), to Rt. 38 West. Travel through Ashton and into Franklin Grove (approx. 16 miles), turn right (north) on Daysville Rd. Travel 1.5 miles north to Naylor Rd., turn left (west) and go 2.2 miles to Lowden Rd., turn right (north) and go 1 mile to preserve entrance on the left (west).

Option 2: Take Rt. 2 North (approx. 2.3 miles from Rt. 26/Galena Ave.), turn right (east) on Lost Nation Rd. Go one mile to Maples Rd., turn right, then left immediately onto Naylor Rd.. Go east for 3.5 miles to Lowden Rd. Turn left (north) and go one mile to preserve entrance on left (west).

The Nature Conservancy

Nachusa Grasslands
2055 Lowden Road
Franklin Grove, IL 61031
(815) 456-2340



To Our Friend Below or the Current Resident:



Nachusa Grasslands is owned and operated by The Nature Conservancy, a private non-profit group whose mission is to protect plants and animals by protecting the land and water they need to survive.