

**SE MN Prairie Partners Chapter Newsletter
September 2023 Volume 12 issue 3**



View from Red Wing Memorial Park

**September 14th Tour – Red Wing
Memorial Park native prairie tour**
led by Park Naturalist Madeline D.

The Memorial Park views, especially at sunset, are gorgeous. In addition to seeing several species of late summer bloomers, we discovered both the native and the invasive Bittersweets growing side by side on the woodlot margins. In the Northeast US, the invasive oriental bittersweet has nearly replaced our native one. Unfortunately, the Oriental bittersweet is still being sold at some nurseries.



American Bittersweet *Celastrus scandens*, our native bittersweet. Female and male flowers on separate plants.



Oriental Bittersweet *Celastrus orbiculatus* aka Asian bittersweet. Highly aggressive and invasive. Female and male flowers are on separate plants.

| American Bittersweet | Oriental Bittersweet |
|--|--|
| <i>Celastrus scandens</i> | <i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i> |
| Vine. Less aggressive spread by seed or rhizomes | Vine. Aggressive bully, spreads rapidly by rhizomes and seeds |
| Orange fruit and orange skins “jackets” that split open in winter | Orange fruit wrapped in yellow skins “jackets” that open during winter |
| Leaves about twice as long as wide, finely serrated edges. Variable | Leaves are roundish to oval with rounded teeth. Variable |
| Flowers/ fruit – in large clusters, off young side branches. Pollen is yellow. | Flowers/fruit – in clusters of 4 or less, out of leaf axils. Pollen is white |
| NATIVE - ENJOY | INVASIVE BULLY - ERADICATE |

Prairie Partners Chapter 2023 officers

President – Barb Bolan
Vice President – Nancy Schumacher
Secretary – Pat Johnson
Web Master – Jim Sipe
Treasurer – Jim Sipe
Membership Chair – Ann Dybvik
Newsletter Chair – Ann Dybvik

Wild Ones Mission: Native Plants, Natural Landscaping promote environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

Wild Ones National Address: 2285 Butte des Morts Beach Road, Neenah, WI 54956
www.wildones.org

Membership: Sign up/ renew online at www.wildoneones.org/membership.html or by mail at above address. Cost is \$40 per year for a household (family) membership. Student and other membership types also available.

SE MN Prairie Partners Mission Statement: To preserve, maintain and provide knowledge of native and restored plant communities in a way that fosters friendship.

SE MN Prairie Partners online:

<https://semnprairiepartners.wildones.org/>

[Wild Ones: SE MN Prairie Partners | Facebook](#)

Newsletter Committee: Lead: Ann Dybvik,
Chief Photographer: Bruce Dybvik, Committee:
Nancy Schumacher, Gary Bullemer, Barb Bolan

Submitting articles for the newsletter – We welcome stories about natural areas, a native garden you have visited or designed, a nature-based vacation, a special flower, bird, butterfly, etc. Please contact Ann Dybvik at anndbvk@gmail.com to discuss your ideas.

Prairie Partners member local Services

(Please let us know if you have one to list)

Minnesota Native Landscapes (MNL): Dwayne Vosejka mnlcorp.com

Friends of Nerstrand State Park: Katy Gillispie
[Friends of Nerstrand Big Woods](#)

Friends of Whitewater State Park: Joel Dunnette - [Friends of Whitewater](#)

Zumbro Valley Audubon: Joel Dunnette –
Board member zumbrovalleyaudubon.org

River Bend Nature Center, www.rbnc.org
Packy Mader, Board of Directors

Enabling Healthy Habits: Dawn Littleton

Halfpint Hollow Miniature Donkeys: Rod and Sue White halfpinthollow.com

CRP – Clean River Partnership: Bill Jokela
[Home - Clean River Partners](#)

Member-Sponsored-Native Garden program – Get paid to plant natives!

We are offering up to 5 native garden grants, for reimbursements of up to \$200@ for native plants purchased and installed in your yard or landscape project again in 2024. The gardener must either be a member or be sponsored by a member. Please contact Barb Bolan at bdbolan@hotmail.com for an application.

Upcoming 2023 Chapter Programs – *We will always need some flexibility in schedules due to weather and health concerns. Inside, in-person events will typically be held in the Emmaus Church at 712 Linden St. North.*

October 12, 7pm– church- **Ducks and Duck Decoys** by Gary Bullemer



November 9, 6pm – *Annual Meeting, appetizers, seed sharing event, and presentation 7pm - **Starting a prairie regeneration project*** – Jake Froyum – Forester

December 7, 11am –Luncheon – St Olaf – loft at Buntrock commons

Prairie Partners Board meetings are open to all members and are planned be held on the second Monday of each quarter.

Prairie Partners July Board Meeting notes

Minutes: In attendance: Barb Bolan (President), Nancy Schumacher (Vice President), Ann Dybvik (Membership and Newsletter), Jim Sipe (Treasurer and Webmaster), Pat Johnson (Secretary), and Breanna Wheeler

Secretaries Report: Minutes of January 9, 2023 were approved.

Treasurer’s Report: Combined accounts total \$19,068.47. This include donations that have been made in memory of Charles Carlin. We should be spending our account to advocate, educate, and engage more people in the work that we do.

Membership Update: Barb needs to get Ann information on renewal reminders to send out.

Member Sponsored Native Gardens: We still have openings for a couple more gardens.

Report from Breanna Wheeler: Breanna plans to do one survey per year.

Spending our money: Plans were approved to:

- Donate \$1,000 for a native planting at Carleton from funds donated in memory of Chuck Carlin. He worked at Carleton and loved the Arboretum.
- Increase annual payment to Emmaus Church to \$300.
- Contribute \$1,000 to printing more bird and butterfly books. We will get 500 booklets for our contribution.
- Order and donate books to schools and nature centers. **Pat and Breanna will work to develop specific suggestions.**

Other possible uses for our funds include:

- Donate a Wild One’s chapter planting to a nature center or park.
- Order native garden signs with our logo once National finishes redesigning the Wild Ones logo.
- Host family nature workshops. We could work with the library programs or the YMCA. Barb will explore the possibility of connecting with YMCA.
- Pay our speakers more.
- Fund a bus tour again, perhaps to Prairie Moon.
- Pay Board members? We would need to see if this is possible.
- Order a better-quality display board.
- Pay to table at certain events that we are not currently doing.
- Write articles for local newspapers papers - could also be shared on Facebook and our Website. If successful, Barb and Nancy will write the first column introducing the Chapter.

Lewis and Clark Recreation Area Yankton, South Dakota *By Gary Bullemer*

As we neared retirement, my wife Sue and I searched high and wide for our future home. Much like the explorers Lewis and Clark, we were drawn to the Missouri River as a place of great potential. Our base for the long weekend was the Lewis and Clark Recreation Area, a unit managed by the state of South Dakota on the river just west of Yankton. We found a campsite with an amazing view of Lewis and Clark Lake, a huge reservoir formed by the construction of the Gavin Point Dam in 1957.



View of Gavin Point dam and the Missouri River

Overlooking the dam and river on the Nebraska side is the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, where you can learn about the historic Corp of Discovery. The National Park Service manages the facility and tells the story of Lewis and Clark passing here in 1804, the dam and its role in the area, and the various recreational opportunities on this stretch of river. Below the dam is one of two stretches of the remaining free flowing river, managed by multiple units of the federal government. This lower segment is 59 miles beginning at the Gavin Point dam and ends at Ponca State Park in Nebraska. Unlike Lewis and Clark, I thought a downriver trip would have been a better choice for discovering the benefits of traveling here!

Back on the South Dakota side, we found some places of interest in and around Yankton. What is now nearly 100 years old, the Meridian Bridge is a classy looking double decker that was supposed to handle vehicle and rail traffic. No trains ever used the bridge, and it became a set of one-way vehicle crossings. I remember driving across once on a hunting trip to Nebraska, using the upper deck for traveling south. On this more recent camping trip, the bridge was now only open to hiking and biking, with a new vehicular bridge just upriver.

Yankton has much of the charm that river towns of that age seem to share and is known for having many buildings made of limestone. Another attraction nearby is a national fish hatchery, which supplies gamefish to the Missouri River. Notably it produces Pallid Sturgeon and American Paddlefish. South Dakota and Nebraska residents are allowed to buy a license to snag paddlefish, a practice they do below the Gavin Point dam in the fall. These fish are quite large, getting up to 100 pounds or more, and are prized for good eating. The fish do not bite on baited hooks, so snagging is the only means of catching them. The limit is one per fisher person.



View of the free-flowing Missouri River near Vermillion SD

The next bigger city downriver is Vermillion, home of the University of South Dakota. We spent a day there, exploring the city and college campus. Again, there is a charm to the old river towns, and the university adds a lot to the attractiveness here. Our tour of the National Music Museum at USD was a highlight, and I can't begin to explain the unique qualities of this huge collection of musical instruments. A few things that stood out for me: One of BB King's "Lucille" guitars on display, a guitar played by Bob Dylan, guitars owned and played by Johnny and Roseanne Cash, and a Stradivarius violin. There was so much more, impossible to list...

Another very unique attraction was another Lewis and Clark site, this one not too far north of Vermillion. It is called Spirit Mound, a low hill surrounded by a prairie reconstruction that is managed by the National Park Service. It is one of the very few places that were documented to have been visited by both Lewis and Clark, as they went there together to see if stories the local Plains Indians told of spirits and little people were true.



Spirit Mound, near Vermillion SD

The primary attraction of Lewis and Clark Recreation area is to provide access to the lake and river. There are hundreds of campsites, camper cabins, and a resort with a marina. There are sandy beaches, and miles of trails to explore the shore. I am sure it is very busy in

summer, but we found it to be peaceful and quiet in the fall. The Missouri River is quite a beautiful feature of America, so rich in history, so awesome in many ways. Although I did not get a chance to paddle my canoe there, I would jump at the chance to go do that....but only downriver!



Camper Cabin at Lewis and Clark Recreation Area

Fall and Winter Birding in Minnesota

There are over 440 species of birds found, at times, in Minnesota. Some live here, others visit. Fall migration is a great time to see some of the visitors, if you know where to look.

State Parks and natural areas are fantastic places to bird. They have bird checklists that show what species and in what season may be present there. [MN DNR State Parks](#)

Hawk Ridge in Duluth – [Hawk Ridge.org](#) - free, relaxing, great views of Lake Superior. On Sept 21st, they saw 9516 individuals of 52 species!

Sax-Zim Bog - [Saxzim.org](#) Great place to see many owls and more, especially winter visitors.

Birding hotspots: [6 Hot Spots for Watching the Fall Bird Migration | Explore Minnesota](#)

Zumbro Valley Audubon: [Zumbro Audubon](#) Excellent and very active Audubon chapter with many birding activities, walks and projects.

Sweet Susans and Sweetgrass

By Sue White

Growing up in the Penobscot Bay area of Maine, I fell in love with the sweet-smelling baskets woven by the Penobscot Indians of the Wabanaki Nation. Sweetgrass (*Hierochloa odorata*) has been used in basket making for hundreds of years by both the indigenous Native Americans and the American descendants of Africa.

My interest in sweetgrass was renewed by reading Robin Wall Kimmerer’s book *Braiding Sweetgrass*. I now have a little patch of sweetgrass outback and decided to make some braids according to the indigenous way. A braid should be made with three bundles of seven strands each. The strands represent love, respect, truth, wisdom, honesty, courage, and humility. Mind, body, and spirit are the three bundles. When the fragrant dried braids are burned, it is believed that the smudges will invite good spirits to be with us.

Sweet Susans (*Rudbeckia subtomentosa*) are a native Black-eyed Susan whose aromatic leaves are likened to that of sweetgrass. I first was introduced to them on a Wild Ones visit at Whitewater State Park Native Gardens. *Rudbeckia* roots were used by the indigenous people for treating snake bites and colds as well as for earaches when in the liquid

form. The cheerful blossoms also provide many pollinators with food and nectar. If successful, there will be some Sweet Susans blooming in my garden next year.



A sweetgrass basket that has been in my family for years.



Sweet Susans at Whitewater State Park.



Some of the braids I made along with a packet of Sweet Susan seeds.

Member Profile: Scott and Kathy Regenscheid

As a point of introduction, Kathy and I both retired from the Air Force with a combined 59 years between us. One lesson we learned during those years is when communicating – know your audience. To that end, I realize that virtually every person reading this newsletter about native plants – knows more about native plants than we do!

When Kathy retired from the Air Force after 26 years, she turned off the phone and happily worked in the yard for 12 hours a day. That held no interest for me. So when I hung up my uniform, I instead took a long weekend off and went back to work 3 days later.

In 2013 after retiring for good, we moved to Minnesota and bought an interesting house that needed (needs) lots of work. We spent our time and energies working on the inside and our outdoor efforts were limited to mowing the weeds every week or two. About 2019 we decided to start putting some effort into the yard. I say yard because we had nothing even remotely resembling a garden. The only thing I accomplished that first year was killing two trays of SWCD butterfly mix seedlings.

Undeterred, in 2020 we started in earnest. We first cleared out an area of some ten years of uncontrolled weed growth and did away with our in-ground turtle pond – (the tax records called it a swimming pool, but those glory days were long gone). It took 14 dump trucks to fill in the pool, so we thought it best to let that area settle for a while. We created a garden in the area we'd cleared out and planted lots of great flowers with flashy names. My ignorance was on

full display when I had to look up a word I'd never heard before "cultivar" ...



The backyard/pool area we started with



Spring 2023, site prepped, waiting for native plant sales.



August 2023, coming to life!

While the Pandemic negatively affected everybody and most everything, in a strange way it helped us focus on our projects – and read. The books of Doug Tallamy, Larry Weaner and Benjamin Vogt have highlighted so many interesting ideas that we wanted to try. The whole "go native" thing was slowly taking hold.

The next year we tried our hand at another 2 trays from SWCD, one butterfly mix and one pollinator mix. This time, Kathy transplanted all 96 plants into larger pots so we could let them grow for a few more weeks before planting them in a big pile of rocks. Amazingly, other than four Sneezeweeds that died immediately, the others all took off and our rock pile turned into a rock garden! A few bloomed that first year, but by last year they were on full display. The Stiff Goldenrod, Meadow Blazing Star, and Joe Pye are all more than six feet tall, while the Rudbeckia and Prairie coneflowers are hanging in there, although a bit overwhelmed.

Last fall I embarked on another adventure by collecting seeds (lots of seeds) and dove head long into winter sowing. By the end of January, we had many hundreds of seeds sprinkled across milk jugs, roasting pans, (and everything in between) in our covered deck. In true analytic fashion, I had multiple types of seed, various styles of containers, and even varied the types of soils – so I’d be able to learn which combinations worked best.

It was an abject failure.

The few plants that did emerge only got to 3-5 inches tall and just stopped. I could have saved some by transplanting, but I was waiting for the eventual burst of greenery that never came. Unfortunately, since each and every planting combination failed – the only common denominator was me! While I still don’t know what I did wrong, I do know that the Butterfly weed pods are starting to burst, and since we’re in Minnesota, there will always be another winter right around the corner – we’ll try again.

To make up for our lack of homegrown seedlings, I went into this spring with an

extensive list of natives to try. Several trips to Blazing Star and three native plant sales later, we planted about 400 plants of 38 different varieties – most of which I had not even heard of a year ago. Our current effort is to expand the rock garden by converting another 1,000 feet of grass into natives. It is slow going, but it’ll be ready for all those seedlings we’re going to get from this year’s winter sowing effort.



From what used to be the diving board of the pool; Butterfly weed, Poppy Mallow, Phlox, Liatris, Heliopsis, and Petunias (just in case)



Our first year's efforts

August Tour – Judith Bechtum’s prairie

By Judith Bechtum

Our Wild Ones chapter, SE Prairie Partners, hosted a gathering at my 8.5 acre restored prairie on 10 August. We had Wild Ones members, next door neighbors, friends, and new members. Although the masses of Monarda fistulosa (purple beebalm) had just lost their color, the prairie provided many other species in bloom.



Our prairie restoration, starting in 2015, involved removing all existing grasses and weeds; unfortunately, this process utilized

Glyphosate spray. (Since then, data on this chemical would lead me to a different approach of site preparation. I see a conflict in the achievement of pristine soil prep and the use of a dangerous chemical.)

Rice County FSA assisted me in choosing appropriate native seeds, which I purchased from Werner Seeds of Dundas. The county rents out a seeder that lightly tills and covers the prairie seed; my neighbor did the planting in the spring. In retrospect, I feel it would have been better to do a fall planting since many prairie seeds germinate late in the year and need cold stratification. But I was anxious to get started.

I have learned that the prairie is its own mistress; every year it changes. Every year it surprises me with new and exciting plants, and sometimes a seeming loss of plants that will recur in later years. It is ever changing. One vivid memory of my prairie's first year was the

size of the dandelions that popped upthey were huge, deep green, and magnificent. This told me that the soil was rich and had been waiting for restoration. Now there are few if no dandelions, but there is a continuous flow of sturdy prairie plants and grasses. My Big Bluestem dramatically decreased during the last 2 years' drought, but I am confident it will recur robustly.

This year the most exciting newcomer was a clump of Prairie Blazing Star, *Liatris pycnostachya*. It was stunning and a total surprise, so very lovely.



I've had 3 burns to assist in ridding the site of volunteer trees and to enhance the growth of the prairie natives. I'll be doing another this spring.

Our prairie walk ended on our deck with interesting discussions, talk of seed gathering, plant and seed sources, and friendships renewed.



The Great Spangled Fritillary Butterfly

Speyeria cybele by Barb Bolan



Great Spangled Fritillary on Wild Bergamot

Imagine a caterpillar hatching from an egg in late fall then, before having even one bite of food, going to sleep (diapause) for over seven months. In Minnesota. That's how life starts for the Great Spangled Fritillary.

In early spring, the tiny worm-like caterpillars, about 0.1" long, wake to find themselves near emerging violets, their required host plants. Though the female butterfly laid a couple thousand eggs in the fall, only a few lucky



Native Common and Downy violets

caterpillars will survive the winter. These tiny survivors feast on violets and grow, molting their way through 6 instars until they reach about 2" in size and sport black and orange spikes on a mostly black body. Females are slower going through the caterpillar stages than males. The nocturnal fritillary caterpillars feed at night and by day hide from birds, insects and spiders under leaves and debris.

The male butterflies complete their metamorphosis at least a couple of weeks before the females and are eager to mate.

Though the females release a mild pheromone to attract mates, the males initiate the mating rituals by performing a fluttering dance above the females. Mating is either very quick or can last hours. As soon as they finish, males take off to start dancing for other receptive females. The females however, either move on to prepare for laying their eggs, or may enter a diapause phase for a few weeks, perhaps so the timing of their egg laying is suitable for the emerging caterpillars. They have only one brood per season.



Native common blue violet, bi-color form

It is believed that females use scent receptors to locate violet roots or dying leaves then scatter eggs, individually, on leaf litter, or debris near the violets the caterpillars require in the spring.

Pansies are violas and are used by fritillaries too, but pansies don't always survive our winters so if eggs are laid near pansies, the caterpillars may wake up to find no food to eat. In parts of the world with native pansies, their fritillaries rely on pansies for their food. Sometimes fritillary caterpillars are even called 'pansyworms'. The diurnal adults are nectivorous and use many flowers, native or not.

Adult great spangled fritillaries are large butterflies, with 2.5 to 4" wingspans. They live longer than many butterflies, emerging in June and dying off in September or even October. By the end of the season, they typically look battered, torn and worn.



Female great spangled fritillary on common milkweed

The great spangled is our most common fritillary. The females are slightly larger and often darker on top than males and have more rounded wings. Looking down from above a great spangled fritillary, black lines, spots and dashes decorate the orange background. With the wings folded up and the underside revealed, beautiful white and silvery spots dot the wings while a wide, light-colored border covered with triangles, gives them a slightly scalloped looking edge and dainty look. The silvery spots reflect light and may help provide camouflage.

It can be difficult to distinguish some of our fritillaries from each other. The Atlantis fritillary has a distinctive black band on the wing margins. The Aphrodite has an extra tiny black spot near the base (by the body) of the upper wing and no light border on the wings.

Understanding the life cycle of the fritillaries shows how important it is to make sure we save native plants; that we don't remove all the debris from gardens in the fall; and that invasives are controlled. Unfortunately, an invasive spring ephemeral with cute purple flowers, called Scilla or Siberian squill, looks harmless, but is actually very aggressive, forming dense mats of bulbs and plants that squeeze out violets, thereby jeopardizing the lives of not only violets but fritillaries too.

July Tour - Spring Lake Reserve Park - Restored Prairie and Bison

In July we toured Dakota County Spring Lake Reserve Park, guided by naturalist Meagan Keefe. They have a herd of highly genetically pure bison – ones that have been



Part of the highly pure true bison herd at the park. Photo by Gail

selected to not have cattle genes in them. Their restored prairies are loaded with baptisia, lead plants, monarda and more.



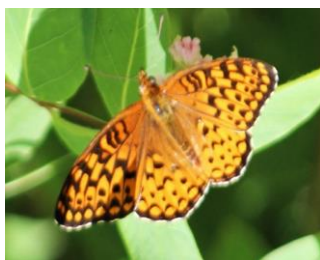
Common Eastern Bumblebee (*Bombus impatiens*) on *Monarda fistula*



Spotted Beebalm (aka Spotted Horsemint). Photo by Gail Gates



Lead Plants everywhere!



Atlantis fritillary - note black wing margins.



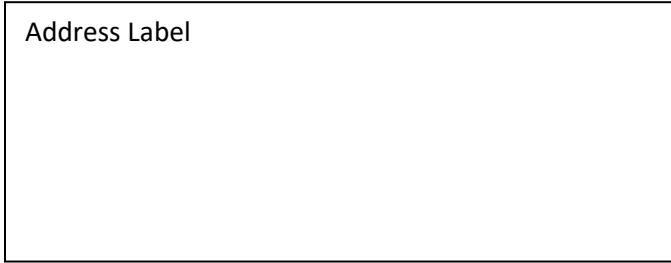
Great spangled fritillary on common milkweed

Return Address:

Barb Bolan

9700 Baldwin Ave

in Ave Northfield, MN 55057



More photos from Scott and Kathy Regenscheid's native gardens



Wild Licorice, Narrow Leaf Puccoon, Rattlesnake Master, Aromatic Aster, Coreopsis, Little Bluestem, etc



Rock Garden, The Boneset, Joe Pye, and Liatris are winding down while the Goldenrod, Asters, and Rudbeckia are getting started.



Rock Garden: Boneset, Joe Pye, Bergamot, Heliopsis



Sneaking some Prairie Smoke and Prairie Lilies in with the Liatris, coneflowers, and Aster



Hoary Vervain, Nodding Onion, Gaillardia, Turtle Head, Sky Blue Aster, Prairie Phlox, and a few marigolds (just in case)



The original cultivars are doing well.