

SE MN Prairie Partners Chapter Newsletter
December 2025 Volume 14 issue 4



Norma and Terry enjoying their boulevard garden they put in with the Lawns to Legumes program



Compass Plant. Photo by Gail Gates



Golden Digger bee on Mountain Mint. Photo by Laura Teele

2025 SE MN Prairie Partners officers

President – Barb Bolan
 Vice President – Nancy Schumacher
 Secretary – Polly Hendee
 Treasurer – Jim Sipe
 Membership Chair – open
 Newsletter Chair – open
 Webmaster & Social Media Lead- Matt Brueske
 Member-at-large – Breanna Wheeler
 Grant Manager – Jim Sipe

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 <https://members.wildones.org/> or by mail: <https://members.wildones.org/renew-by-check/>. Cost is \$40 per year per household (family) membership. Student and other membership types are 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: Nancy Schumacher, Barb Bolan

Submitting articles for the newsletter –

We welcome stories about natural areas, native gardens, a nature-based vacation, a special flower, bird, butterfly, etc.

Prairie Partners member local Services

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

Whitewater Gardens Farm: Lonny and Sandy Dietz [Whitewater Gardens Farm](#)

Blazing Star Gardens: Dustin Demmer [Blazing Star Gardens](#)

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

Bluff Land Wildlife Products: Matthew Brueske sales@blufflandwildlifeproducts.com or [The Deer Cage](#)

Enabling Healthy Habitats: Dawn Littleton

Friends of Hauberg Woods: Breanna Wheeler

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: Packy Mader, Board of Directors www.rbnc.org

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

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



One of the Wicklund's Woodducks

2026 Chapter Events schedule –Inside, in-person events will typically be held in the Emmaus Church at 712 Linden St. North.

Jan 8th – Liz Stanley – Landscaping for Wildlife

Feb 12th – Judy Cardin - “The Buzz in your Garden”

Feb 14th – Join Master Naturalists zoom call on Insect surveys in Northfield ‘prairie’ yards

March 12th – Dustin Demmer - "Converting your front yard into a native garden"

April 9th – Dinner – Faribault

April TBD – ephemerals tour – Kaplan woods

May 14th Hampton Woods walk

May 30th – Plant sale

June 11th – Park Workday

July 9th – NABA butterfly count

July 25th Sat - Native Yard tours

Aug 13th – Native Yard tours

August TBD Sat – Monarch tagging, Family Day

– with Master Naturalists and Clean River

Partners

Sep -10th – River Terrace Prairie

Sep 19th – Native Seed harvest

Oct 8th - Alison Cariveau – MN DNR – 10 yr plan
- wildlife (and native plants)

Nov 12th – Seed share/potluck...

Dec 10th - Luncheon



Monarch on Liatris. Photo by Laura Teele

Dragonflies are fascinating creatures.

Dragonflies spend months to even years in water as aquatic nymphs before crawling onto land to become some of the most efficient aerial hunters alive. At this transition stage, the nymphs out of the water and the newly emerged adults whose wings are still too wet to allow them to fly, are very vulnerable to predation. Nymphs of some species “swarm” up for safety at this stage. Dragonflies don’t get full coloration until they dry so they can be very hard to identify at this stage.



A swarm of dragonfly nymphs molting into adults on a post at Lake Carlos State Park. Likely the Prince Baskettail Dragonflies Photo by Arlene Kjar



Rusty Patch Bumblebee on Joe Pye on Judith Bechtum’s property in Iowa. Photo by Brian Frankhauser, with Iowa Natural Resources Foundation. Judith is donating her Iowa farm to the Iowa Natural Resources Foundation.

Strange Plant in My Yard by Katy Gillispie

Back in 2023, in the midst of a drought, a strange plant appeared in an area of my parched backyard that had been a tilled garden the previous year. With the help of iNaturalist, I was able to identify it as Long-leaved Groundcherry, *Physalis longifolia*, a member of the nightshade family.

According to Minnesota Wildflowers, MN and MN DNR don't recognize it as native. However, I was able to find it in the MNTAXA database, shown as existing in the 3 shaded counties below. I'm in Dennison, on the western edge of Goodhue county. It does not appear in Newcomb's Wildflower Guide, nor in my very old Peterson Field Guide to Wildflowers.



I think it was only one plant, to begin with, but in 2 years it has grown to a good-sized patch about 5 feet square and 3 feet tall. I intend to keep it but probably won't let it get any bigger. I don't know if it is invasive.

In midsummer it was full of flies and bees visiting the flowers.

Inside the green lantern that follows the flower is a berry that turns yellow when ripe. As a ground cherry, it's reasonable to think it might be edible when ripe, but I don't know that.

Note: While Long-leaved groundcherry has been discovered a couple of times in Minnesota over the past few decades, in freshly tilled sites, it is believed that they have arrived naturally, likely from birds, but it is unclear if it is a true native or just moved in. Very interesting case!



Long-leaved Groundcherry, *Physalis longifolia*. Katy Gillispie

October Native Seed Harvest event – led by Nancy Schumacher

Nancy hosted our seed harvest event this past September. Since Nancy and Jim have moved to town, it was our last chance to collect seeds from her beautiful prairie. ***We Thank You so much, Nancy, for sharing your prairie with us and letting everyone harvest seed for their own plantings.*** Monarch butterflies were hanging out there too as they gathered up to head to Mexico, making the day even more special.



Nancy gives advice on how to identify, find and harvest various species in her prairie.



A few of the monarchs gathered up in a 'flutter' or 'swarm' as they prepare to migrate.

A new Dakota County Park – Jerry and Audrey Wicklund's Family Farm



Jerry and Audrey Wicklund purchased their 165-acre home farm, the *Wicklund family estate* in January 2007. It had been in the family since 1947. For decades the family had produced corn,

beans, hay, sweet corn and peas. Hunting and gardening helped provide food and income too.

In 1998 Jerry's Mom put 64 acres of farmland and 20 acres of pasture area along the creek into CRP (Conservation Reserve Program). There were about 39 acres of wooded areas, ponds, and a great area for wildlife, pheasants, turkeys, ducks, geese and a big variety of birds and other critters.

Jerry and Audrey have put their hearts, love and a lot of hard work into their beloved property, creating a natural paradise for wildlife and nature lovers. About 75 acres were already planted into prairie switch grass and a variety of native wildflowers when they took over ownership in 2007.

They have hosted youth and Veteran Turkey Hunters for about 15 years. Governor Walz also hunted on the farm twice, including in 2023, the



50th anniversary of the introduction of turkeys to Minnesota.

The Wicklunds were such great stewards of the land that Dakota County has purchased 123 acres of the habitat land for a county park, scheduled to open to the public in the spring or summer of 2026.



Their property will help create a wildlife or ecological "corridor" linking Chub Lake and Lake Byllesby via Chub Creek. These corridors help provide safe passage and good food for wildlife traveling between pockets of habitats.

Jerry and Audrey note that there is a beaver lodge just north of the creek bridge along with a large beaver dam which moves up and down the creek stream due to occasional flooding. Beavers have used the same lodge since 1947. "We expect one of the highlights of park visitors will be to enjoy the close-up view of the beaver dam. Visitors should also enjoy the 1,000 Oak trees (5 species) and the 200 various native fruit trees that we have planted over the years.

Initially we hoped the acorns of the Oak trees would help support the wood ducks that nest in many of the 100 or so wood duck houses we put up and maintain. Now we realize how trees cool our earth, clean our air, provide food and nesting for many birds, and especially acorns for turkeys.



Momma Wood duck in a nesting box the Wicklund's provided.

Wildflowers have always survived along the railroad right-of-way which was never farmed. Many Indian Moccasin and Lady Slippers, Compass Plants, Cup Plants, purple clover and more survived and spread out into the prairie grass fields."



[Small White Lady slipper \(*Cypripedium candidum*\). A species of special concern.](#)



[Showy Lady's Slipper \(*Cypripedium reginae*\) at the Wicklunds' farm estate](#)



[Beaver Dam at the Wicklunds. Jerry Wicklund](#)



[Glacial Lakes view at Glacial Lakes Park. By Dee Menning](#)

A trip to Glacial Lakes State Park – by Dee Menning



[Dee and Gregg Menning](#)

A Glacial Lakes State Park camping trip this past August 2025, with my husband Gregg, nudged me into a new appreciation for grasses, especially bluestem. Upon return home, I felt compelled to

purchase and promptly plant a couple of little bluestems for my small native plot. From the Glacial Lakes park narrative: "...located at a crossroads or transition zone between the original prairie land to the west and the central hardwood forests to the east... the park preserves a portion of rare native prairie including a wide variety of grasses and forbs such as the big and little bluestem grass, Indian grass, prairie clover, Pasque flowers, coneflowers, and goldenrods."



[Rough Blazing Star \(*Liatris aspera*\). Photo by Dee Menning](#)



[Common or Showy Milkweed: difficult to differentiate without blossoms. By Dee Menning](#)



Big Bluestem *Andropogon gerardii* and possibly **Indian Grass** *Sorghastrum nutans*.
Dee Menning, Glacial Lakes State Park



Monarch on Joe Pye Weed,
Evangola State Park, NY. By Sue

2025 Trip to Maine by Sue White

In August Rod and I took a road trip with our dogs, Barnaby and Mazie, to the coast of Maine, staying at gorgeous state parks along the way. I was very impressed with the many native flower plantings. At Indiana Dunes State Park a wooded trail lead to a lovely boardwalk and Lake Michigan. Along the sides of the boardwalk were many native flowers, horsetails, and baby burr oak seedlings.



Barnaby enjoying Rangeley Lake, Maine

At Evangola State Park in New York a sweet little Butterfly Garden had giant dark purple asters, Joe Pye Weed, cardinal flowers and milkweed. Monarchs and a bumblebee were enjoying the Joe Pye Weed and there was a large monarch caterpillar crawling on one of the milkweed plants.

A sparkling Atlantic Ocean greeted us in Maine where we had wonderful weather and fun

reunions with our siblings and friends, ate lobster, and visited favorite little beaches.

We were warned at Stillwater State Park in Vermont, on our return, of moose crossings and black bear, but no pictures to share. Loons sang to us at Lake Saranac in the Adirondacks of NY. They made our adventure complete.



Mazie admiring the cone flowers and Brown Eyed Susans, Rollins State Park, NY.
By Sue White



Bunchberries, Maine.
By Sue White



View of some islands off
Stonington, Maine. Sue White

Hauberg Woods – Volunteers Making a Difference *by Breanna Wheeler*

Hauberg Woods, a city nature park in northwest Northfield with an entrance at the intersection of Thye Parkway and Lockwood Drive, has benefitted from a second year of volunteer stewardship days that has resulted in important outcomes for this beloved space.

What had become, until fall 2024, a wall of buckthorn and non-native honeysuckle along the paved path has been cut and treated or pulled to reveal better views of the wetlands for park visitors and unleashed the opportunity for a larger diversity of plant species to thrive.

Buckthorn and non-native honeysuckle form dense thickets that, without predators, spread and make it impossible for other plants to grow. By getting rid of or reducing invasive species, the biodiversity of an area improves to be healthier and more supportive for a larger variety of plants, pollinators, birds, wildlife, and people. These efforts make the woods a better place for people to connect with the natural world and with each other.

Invasive species don't give up easily, however, and the Friends of Hauberg Woods and community partners are committed to continue to assist in upcoming years. By keeping focused and being diligent, the work becomes easier with each new season.

Here were the 2025 stewardship activities:

- February 27, five Friends joined Shelley Evanson, City Horticulturist, to spread a “buckthorn replacement” native grass seed in the areas where we removed buckthorn in fall 2024 to compete with emerging seedlings in accordance with UMN “Cover it Up” research.

- May 1, 25 volunteers removed invasive species and prepared five beds for planting native seedlings.
- June 6, 13 volunteers planted 200 native shade and shoreline plants in five areas where buckthorn had been removed in accordance with UMN “Cover it Up” research.
- Throughout the season, 36 volunteer slots were filled by eleven volunteers to keep the newly planted seedlings strong.
- July 18 and 19, six volunteers removed buckthorn and weeded newly planted areas.
- Five invasive removal events were held in October and November with 37 volunteers.

Special thanks to all the volunteers who made these projects successful. Thanks also to: Shelley Evanson, City Horticulturist, Carleton College student leaders Jonah Docter-Loeb and Grace Clemen, St Olaf Professor Diane Angell, and Dustin Graham, MN DNR.



[The Friends of Hauberg Woods and Community Volunteers – Making a Difference in One of Northfield’s Natural Spaces. Photo by Breanna Wheeler](#)

Altogether, between these events and Breanna Wheeler’s volunteer time coordinating them, 122 people volunteered for a total of 230 hours in 2025, an \$8000 value. 2024 saw around 75 volunteers for a total of 200 hours removing

over a half-acre of invasive species removal, valued at \$6700.

A couple of other notable activities happened this year. In the summer, Dustin Graham, a plant ecologist / botanist with the MN Biological Survey, MN DNR, surveyed the wetland on the east side of Hauberg Woods. He mapped the communities as northern wet meadow, lake sedge subtype and elm-basswood-black ash (hackberry) forest. Both communities were ranked as having fair ecological integrity with strong evidence of human-caused degradation, but with potential for recovery with proper protection and management. There is still hope for healthier ecosystems.

At a Friends group meeting this fall, two St. Olaf students reported on their research at Hauberg Woods. Ella Landis presented her findings on the tree community composition, noting that there are not many forest patches like this. She recorded (in order of abundance): hickory, hackberry, basswood, bur oak, American elm, box elder, white ash, and prickly ash. She highlighted previous research that found that among Northfield parks, Hauberg Woods has the highest density of sequestered carbon at 17,177.81 tons with one notable large silver maple sequestering 3,335.22 tons alone. Jessica Schmidt presented her findings on the animal communities found in the woodlands with samples from camera traps. She found (in order of abundance): squirrels, deer, raccoons, deer mice, opossums, red squirrels, robins, rabbits, foxes, chipmunks, coyotes, cats (please keep your cats inside), and wild turkeys. There were also many birds, including owls and even a bobcat was recorded! These results also encourage continued stewardship of natural resources to conserve and promote biodiversity now and for the future.

To help or stay informed about the Friends of Hauberg Woods, please email: friendsofhaubergwoodsnfld@gmail.com or follow them on Facebook.



Here are a couple of David Hendee's beautiful shots from 2025! The Hendees have an incredible backyard full of native plants and wildlife!



Goldfinch eating at nature's feeder. Photo by David Hendee



Female Hummingbird being challenged at the nectar feeder. Photo by David Hendee

Sights from daily walks around Northfield – by Gail Gates

Gail kept her eyes open on her daily walks around Northfield, the Carleton Arboretum and the St. Olaf Natural lands and captured many of nature's beauties!



Fritillary butterfly on a native thistle. Photo by Gail Gates



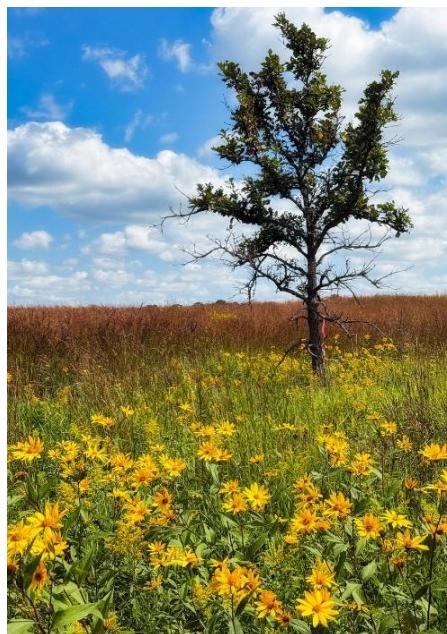
Exploding milkweed pods By Gail Gates



Sharp Lobed Hepatica, a sign of spring! By Gail Gates



Sphingidae Moth caterpillar
Photo by Gail Gates



Praire view Photo by Gail Gates



Clouded Sulfer on Goldenrod. By Gail Gates



Green Heron. Photo by Gail Gates

The Trumpeter Swan Comeback

Trumpeter swans were very abundant in Minnesota when settlers first arrived, but extensive hunting and rapid habitat loss caused them to vanish from the state by the 1880s. By 1930 only about 69 existed in the whole lower US, and they were all in Red Rock Lakes area, Montana.

But all was not lost. These big birds are a wonderful conservation success story. In the 1960s, Minnesota, determined to help Trumpeter swans recover, received 40 swans from Montana. The Minnesota non-game fund was started in the 1970s and money was used to purchase swan eggs from Alaska and to help restore breeding habitats. By 2023 Minnesota had over 50,000 of them! Some Trumpeter swans migrate, others stay for the winter on open water. [Trumpeter swan restoration project | Minnesota DNR](#)



Trumpeter Swans once again visited Judith's wetlands this year. Unlike Tundra (Whistling) swans, Trumpeters have no yellow near their eyes, and the top of the black bill is like a V. Photo by Judith Bechtum

Seed Share and election of officers

Scott Reginschied led, designed and managed our 2025 seed share. He did a BEAUTIFUL job! We had seed from over 70 species of native plants and he had information sheets made up for each one. He made it a very accessible, well organized process!

Nancy presented on preparing seeds for germination and shared many resources for folks to check into for more information.

Polly demonstrated the Milk Jug Winter Sowing technique and several people are now interested in trying it.

Scott will become our Webmaster for 2026, all other officers are continuing in their roles.



Scott's 6 tables of seeds to share.



Handout from
Polly on Winter
Sowing. Copies
are available if
desired

Return Address:

Barb Bolan
9700 Baldwin Ave
Ave Northfield, MN 55057

Address Label



Queen Rusty patched bumblebee on blooming Virginia Waterleaf. From Arlene's garden, photo by Arlene Kjar



Edna Anne Scoville with her freshly planted native garden from our Member-Sponsored-Native-Planting grant program. Photo by Arlene Kjar



Monarch caterpillar. Photo by Polly Hendee



Monarchs on Asters. Photo by Polly Hendee