

SE MN Prairie Partners Chapter Newsletter
June 2024 Volume 13 issue 2



Watercolor of Goldenrod Galls by *Laurie Sieve*.

SE MNN Prairie Partners officers

President – Barb Bolan
Vice President – Nancy Schumacher
Secretary – Polly Hendee
Treasurer – Jim Sipe
Membership Chair – Ann Dybvik
Newsletter Chair – Ann Dybvik
Webmaster & Social Media Lead- Matt Bruesky
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 for a 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: 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.

Prairie Partners member local Services
(Please let us know if you have one to list)

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

Bluff Land Wildlife Products: Matthew Brueske sales@blufflandwildlifeproducts.com or The Deer Cage

Enabling Healthy Habitats: Dawn Littleton

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](#)

2024 Chapter Events schedule –Inside, in-person events will typically be held in the Emmaus Church at 712 Linden St. North.

July 11, 7PM – Tour Scott and Kathy Regenscheid gardens by Circle Lake

July 21 (Sunday) 2PM - Native Garden Tours – Northfield - Pat Johnson, Penelope, Carl Caskey, Gerald Hoekstra

August 8, 6:30PM – Mud Creak WMA – restored prairie, wetland area

Thursday August 22, 2:30pm - Tentative date – Prairie Moon tour, Winona, MN

September 12, 6PM - Dr. Dick Huston's Restored Prairie Tour started in 1999.

Late September– Native Seed harvest days

October 10, 7pm, Emmaus Church - Mn terrestrial invasives: Terrestrial plants - Breanna Wheeler Chair, Terrestrial Invasive Species Funding Subcommittee DNR

November 14 6pm, Emmaus Church - Annual meeting, voting for 2025 officers, appetizer potluck, Native seed share, 7PM: Presentation: Native plants and wildlife, restorations... Shelley MN DNR

December 12 11:00AM – Luncheon – St Olaf

Prairie Partners Board meetings are open to all chapter members. The plan is to hold them at 10AM on the 2nd Tuesday of each quarter. (Date deviations happen).

Prairie Partners May 30th Board Meeting abbreviated notes from Polly Hendee's report.
In attendance: Barb Bolan (President), Nancy Schumacher (Vice President), Ann Dybvik

(Membership and Newsletter), Jim Sipe (Treasurer and Webmaster), Polly Hendee (Secretary), and Breanna Wheeler

Secretaries Report: Minutes of March 2023 meeting were approved

Treasurer's Report: Gross sale total from the plant sale: \$7448. Checking balance: \$8,924.33. Savings account and CD: \$10,360.38. Combined accounts total \$19,284.71.

Member Sponsored Native Gardens: All 5 grants have been claimed. We also approved 3 'public spaces' native garden grants.

2024 Native Plant sale review: Nancy reported the native plant sale was a success with only 1 1/2 flats of native plants not sold. There was discussion regarding holding next year's sale at Nancy home vs. the Emmaus Church location. Parking, liability insurance and change of venue were under consideration. We approved paying Nancy \$1500 for plant sale expenses.

Board member changes: Matt Brueske will take over from Jim as webmaster and will also manage our Facebook page. Jim will manage the native planting grant programs. Breanna will document grants as a historian and map out locations geographically.

Signage: Jim had SE MN Prairie Partner's sponsorship signs to be used on private and public native plant grant sites.

2025 Event suggestions:

Prairie Enthusiasts, burn specialists, tutorial session of identification Apps; Clean River Partners, Heather Holm on wasps, climates and climate change.

Breanna reported that Little Libraries located in various communities had 7 books left of 57 books distributed in November 2023. But no free member applications resulted that were offered with the books.

Survey results: The membership survey activity by Breanna for 2023 had 15 respondents with the most popular activities being the native plant sale, Heather Holm bee habitat presentation and the chapter luncheon. 2024 activity scheduled that had the most support were: Native plant sale, chapter luncheon and renew membership.

The Goldenrod Gall Fly – by Nancy Schumacher

The cover of this newsletter is a beautiful watercolor of goldenrod galls, by Laurie Sieve.

Most of us who spend time tromping through various landscapes have seen the galls on goldenrod plants, and probably know that there is “some kind of insect” living in it. Indeed, the galls are formed by the  **Goldenrod Gall Fly**, *Eurosta solidaginis*. These flies happen to have quite a unique life story. Goldenrod gall flies emerge from the galls in the mid- to late-spring. The males emerge before the females. The adults typically live for only two weeks. They are poor fliers and usually don’t move far from the patch of goldenrods where they emerged. The adults also lack mouth parts and do not feed. At this point in their life cycle their only function is to reproduce. The males will stand on a goldenrod and “dance” to attract a female. If the female finds the male acceptable, they will mate, and she will fly off to lay her eggs.

A female may lay as many as 100 eggs over the course of her brief adult life. She lays each egg just barely inside a goldenrod stem, near a growing terminal bud. When the egg hatches, the larva burrows into and down the stem. Chemicals in the larva’s saliva cause the plant to begin forming the growth that we know as the gall. The plant tissues in the gall are high in starches and other nutrients that the larva feeds on as it develops. As the larva feeds on the tissues, the plant sends more nutrients and starches to the area to replace the ones that the larva ate. The larva will go through three instars (developmental stages) over the summer. The goldenrod stem may not grow quite as tall as nearby stems that don’t have galls, and the stem’s seed production may be slightly lower that year, but the gall and its host don’t appear to have any long-term effects on the goldenrod.

The larva will continue to feed and grow until late fall. In mid- to late-fall, the larva will chew a tunnel through most of the gall towards the outside edge, but it will leave a thin layer of tissue between the tunnel and the outside world. The larva will then move back into the main part of the gall and go into a form of hibernation. A type of natural antifreeze produced by its body will keep it from freezing during the winter.

The gall fly’s main predators are the wasps *Eurytoma obtusiventris* and *Eurytoma gigantea* who use long ovipositors to penetrate the galls and deposit eggs into the larvae which then become a captive food supply for the wasp youngsters. The larva of the beetle *Mordellistina unicolor* can also bore into a gall and eat its contents. In the autumn, Downy woodpeckers and chickadees eagerly await the

construction of the exit tunnel, then tap on galls to find the tunnel and bore in to get the juicy larvae, a high fat, high sugar winter treat for them.

In the spring, the larva will pupate and metamorphose into the adult gall fly. Adult goldenrod gall flies don't have mouth parts so the larva has to chew the exit tunnel in the fall. The adult goldenrod gall fly crawls down the exit tunnel then uses fluids to inflate a balloon-type structure on its forehead to push open the last remaining section of the tunnel. Once the tunnel is completely open, the goldenrod gall fly crawls on top of the gall and begin pumping fluids into its wings before the mating process starts and the cycle begins again.

Some fun facts about goldenrod gall flies:

- Goldenrod gall flies are not found on all species. Only Canada Goldenrod, Tall Goldenrod and Giant Goldenrod have parasitic relationships with the fly; all three of these species are native in Minnesota.
- Usually only one gall will form on an individual stem, sometimes two. Laurie has said that she would love to find a "three gall stem" to draw.
- There has been considerable research prompted by the larva's ability to withstand extreme cold.



Goldenrod gall showing larva and exit tunnel

Laurie is a member of our chapter and a gifted artist. She plans to retire from her nursing career next year and is looking forward to spending more time gardening, painting and being more involved with Wild Ones.

Member Profile – Dawn Littleton

"I was but a wee child..." As a five-year-old girl in Bristol, England I frequently apologized to earthworms who found themselves in my trowel as I planted our vegetable garden.

I immigrated to America with my family and eventually became a medical librarian/researcher and later earned a PhD in Community Development.

In the 1990's, whilst walking along a mono-color creek, the most beautiful dagger of red jumped into sight. I had no idea what it was but was smitten. I soon discovered it was a Cardinal flower. Through this single flower I learned about the realm of native plants and how they support our wildlife.

This experience opened my eyes to "discover" trilliums, bloodroot, leeks, poison ivy vine, bluebells, and blue-eyed grass in our woods.

My Activism for habitat protection and public promotion began in 2010 when a severely degraded savanna and Dakota burial ground within Indian Heights (a Rochester Park) was approved for highly erosive recreational activities. Opponents called a beautiful patch of native Joe Pye invasive thistles but we saved the Joe Pye and helped increase the plant diversity of the park and ensure respect of the burial grounds.

These experiences led me to arrange community and cultural strengthening events with archeologists, historians, conservationists, and Dakota elders.

In 2015 I retired from Mayo Clinic and joined the U of MN Extension as their first invasive plants program coordinator. After their grant ended, I started a small business called *Enabling Healthy Habitats, llc* to help clients increase native plant and animal diversity on their properties.

For years the Wild Ones has provided me with a lovely network of resources and people. This year, I was awarded a grant for my project to create a native planting around Oronoco's City Hall.

I continue to make new friends through my membership. Recently a member sought to purchase a species seldom found for sale, except as a cultivar. I tracked down someone who had reported one in her native habitat and gave her a "cold" call. She is delighted to share seeds and cuttings.

People like me, with my background and passion can be hard to find so I am indebted to Wild Ones members who seem to understand and support my many initiatives and to learn more about growing and protecting Minnesota's majestic flora and fauna.

What started as a mind-blowing experience over a single blooming Cardinal plant has led me to a closer connection with my mom, with

the land, and with my clients and their hundreds of acres of native habitats across central and south Minnesota.

Dawn Littleton, from Oronoco, MN, is a business member SE MN Prairie Partner's Business Member.

2024 Native Plant Sale

Thanks to Nancy's leadership, amazing volunteers and plenty of eager shoppers, our 2024 Native Plant Sale was a big success. We sold out of all but 1 ½ flats of native plants. This fundraiser allows us to pay speakers and guides for our events, offer native garden grants to individuals or for public places, and to spread our message to others. Helping at the plant sale is as much fun as it is educational.



“Man does not weave the Web of Life. He is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to his web, he does it to himself.”
Chief Seattle, chief of the Suquamish and Duwamish tribes.



Fort Snelling State Park by Gary Bullemer

There is much to see and do at this metro area park, and many other interesting places to visit nearby. For anyone that loves history, nature, scenic beauty, and recreation, Fort Snelling



The old Fort Snelling, now managed by the Minnesota Historical Society
Sibley House, home of

State Park is a great explore. The area that now forms the park has been an important site for the people of Minnesota throughout history, primarily because it is where the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers converge. For the Native Americans that lived here decades ago, the rivers provided travel routes, food supplies, and shelter in the deep valleys. In 1805, Zebulon Pike forged a treaty with the Dakota tribes at the large island where the rivers meet. By 1819, the United States military began building the fort on the bluff above the confluence. The fort was used to control and oversee the development of Minnesota up until 1946 when it was transferred to the Veterans Administration.

As development of the Twin Cities increased after World War II, plans to create highways and buildings near the old fort threatened to

obliterate what was left of the historic structures. After various state officials proposed plans to preserve the fort site, the formal creation of Fort Snelling State Park came about in 1961. Over the next ten years, much of the lands that form the modern-day park were secured, mostly in the lower four miles of the Minnesota River valley to where it joins the Mississippi. The park now consists of just under 3000 acres, and it attracts over 700,000 annual visitors, second only to Gooseberry State Park in northern Mn.



Minnesota's first governor.

A good place to start your visit to the state park is the Thomas Savage Interpretive Center, located in the valley directly below the historic fort. Here you can gather information on the history of the area, summer or winter trail layouts, places to enjoy a picnic, go fishing, look for birds, or view plant communities. The interpretive center is staffed year around, and frequently has programs on topics of interest. Eighteen miles of park trails are provided for hiking, biking, and skiing in the winter. There are connections to a wide web of trails that will lead all over the metro area. One I would recommend is the trail from the interpretive center up the hill to the historic fort, where

you can see a great view of the rivers and imagine the past goings on here.

Other points of interest near the state park include Sibley Historic Site; two of the oldest private residences in MN, where Henry Hastings Sibley and Jean Baptiste Faribault lived in the early 1800s; and the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Bloomington Visitor Center. Located just south of the International Airport, there is much to see and learn about the awesome refuge our rivers provide for wildlife; Pilot Knob, across the Minnesota River from the historic fort, is a prairie hilltop and an important site to Native Americans that gives a spectacular view of the city and river valleys below; and the Mall of America, where you can get pretty what you forgot to bring on your trip to the park!

For me as a Wild Ones member, I treasure the commitment of the Minnesota State Parks to preserve and protect important habitat for



Looking north up the Mississippi River toward downtown Minneapolis

native plants and wildlife, and birds. Although Fort Snelling State Park is not necessarily home to the most rare species, it is a unique spot among our system of parks. Roughly 244 species of birds have been recorded here, including peregrine falcons, bald eagles and

Forster's terns. You can find the full list of birds seen at the park on the web site - [Minnesota State Parks and Recreation Areas](#).



Pilot Knob provides a unique view of the rivers below and the historic fort site.

Member Sponsored Native Garden Grant Program.

We awarded five \$300 Member-Sponsored Native Garden Grants this year and plan to offer more in 2025. Grants are reimbursements for purchasing and planting native plants. Members can sponsor themselves or someone else in Southeast Minnesota.

Matt and Clare Brueske's gardens benefited from one of the grants. They put in a lot of work taking out the old vegetation and planting natives. Matt says "so far this year we've had the Hairy Beardtongue, Wild Sweet William and Downy Wood Mint flower out. We're looking forward to seeing this area through the years as all the other plants mature." And, as shown in the photos, Matt and Claire are protecting their plants from hungry animals with deer cages. Beautiful new gardens!



The Brueske's Garden #1 before



Garden #1 replanted with native plantings



Brueske's Garden #2 Before



The Brueske's Garden #2 with native plantings

Dee Menning's Grant Garden

Dee shared a “newbie naivete” learning experience: ‘A few weeks after planting a new native garden plot, I noticed the pussytoes plant had webbing on some leaves. Careful

examination revealed a blackish ‘worm’ inside the webbing. Fearing it was something akin to the dreaded army worms, I dug up the pussytoes and placed it in a pot for isolation, picked off the affected leaves, sprayed the plant with a soapy solution... *and then* did some research! I learned that the webbing is likely caused is from the Painted Lady butterfly larvae: I just destroyed the kind of creature I want to support with the natives. I put the pussytoes back in the garden and later saw a few more folded webbed leaves with little black caterpillars inside. **Lesson learned: ALWAYS research before taking action!**



Dee Menning Native Garden, 1st year.



Addition section of Dee Menning's new native garden

Native Plant Profile – Wild Petunia, by Pat Johnson

Ruellia humilis is commonly known as Wild Petunia. It is sometimes called Fringe-leaf Ruellia, Prairie Petunia, or Hairy Wild Petunia. It is perennial and a member of the Acanthaceae (Acanthus) family. It is native



to dry prairie and oak savanna. I first learned of the plant by looking through a Prairie Moon catalogue. I wanted something low growing to plant at the edge of one of my pocket prairies. I fell in love and have used it in a number of places since. This Spring, I planted several of them in an edge garden along my garage. They have been recommended as a plant to intersperse with Blue Flag (*Iris versicolor*) to add color after the Blue Flag finishes its bloom.

In Minnesota, Wild Petunia is a Special Concern species. It had been thought extirpated in the State but was discovered in Afton State Park in 2005. It was found in what was formerly a pasture, so the DNR does not know if it is naturally occurring or introduced. It is available from many places that grow native plants.

Wild Petunia grows 8-24 inches tall, blooming June through August. My established plants are not yet in bloom this year. It likes sun and tolerates a range of soil conditions. Stems are erect, single or multiple from the base. The leaves are 1-3 inches long and up to 1 inch wide. They are hairy with opposite pairs that attach at right angles from the pair above and below. Flowers are funnel-shaped, about 1½ to 2½ inches long. They range from lavender to pale blue. Five lobes are widely spreading,

with 4 white to purplish stamens inside the tube. Flowers last a day and then a new flower opens. Long-tongued bees (including bumblebees) are the most important pollinators of the flowers. While the flowers resemble cultivated petunias, they are of different families.

The fruit is a bullet-shaped capsule, smooth, and two-sectioned. Each fruit contains 3 to 8 flattened, oval seeds that are ejected when ripe and are wind borne. They also are carried by animals. This way of propagation helps them spread widely.

Some people find the plant to be too aggressive, but that has not been true in my experience. I have planted Prairie Dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) as an edge plant along the pocket prairie where I first planted the Wild Petunia. This year the Wild Petunias have found a home in between the Prairie Dropseed plants. If you come on the garden tour on July 21, I will show them to you.

Foraging with Tim Clemens - June 13 at Caron Park

We had a great tour with Tim Clemens of Ironwood Foraging. His expertise and passion truly shone through as he shared invaluable tips, like how to walk off-trail without leaving a footprint—because we don't want to hurt our plant friends! He also emphasized the importance of being focused and present while foraging to ensure you harvest the right berries, mushrooms, and leaves.



Brooklyn shows a 'False Turkey Tail' mushroom from our hike.

Check out Ironwood Foraging for more info: <https://ironwoodforaging.com/>

Plant a Pocket of Prairie School Project

We participated in a “Plant a Pocket of Prairie” program for 3rd graders this year. The program was initiated by Dick Huston and the Rice County SWCD in 2023, in Faribault. Our volunteers read the

“Plant a Pocket of Prairie” book by Phyllis Root and Betsy Bowen, answered questions and gave each student a native plant. The Northfield Rotary Club donated the books, and Rice County SWCD and the Tri-Lakes Sportsman’s club donated the plants.



Jennifer Cox-Johnson reads the book to 3rd graders at Greenvale



Holly Fischer presenting the Plant a Pocket of Prairie program

Environmental Day at Greenvale school

This year we participated in the Environmental Day at Greenvale elementary school in Northfield for students from Kindergarten through 5th grade. We had 25 minutes per group for 6 groups of 60-100 kids each.

Nancy Schumacher, Polly Hendee, and Barb Bolan volunteered for it. After teaching about

Thank you LuAnne Raadt, Polly Hendee, Jennifer Cox-Johnson, Holly Fischer, and Sue Kirchberg for doing the presentations!!!

natives, introduced plants, and invasive plants, the students made ‘native seed bombs’ to throw into the school’s nature area.

Seed bombs: Equal parts of ‘clay-based-clumping-kitty-litter and potting soil mixed with just enough water to easily make balls about 1-2” in diameter. Roll damp seed balls in pans of native seeds, then throw into the natural area, or let dry and throw later. It’s a fun activity to do with kids or grandkids too.



Students throwing their seed bombs into the natural area by the school

2024 Spring Ephemeral viewing and workday at Lashbrook Park

This spring we checked on the spring bloomers we planted at Lashbrook last year and spent time removing buckthorn, honeysuckle and other weeds. The Bluebells, Wood Betony, Spring Beauty, and Shooting Stars were so pretty! Many Jack-in-the-Pulpits and violets filled in on their own too. Thank you to all volunteers that helped.



Shooting Stars planted in 2023 at Lashbrook Park. Photo by Breanna

Return Address:
Barb Bolan
9700 Baldwin Ave
Ave Northfield, MN 55057

Address Label



Our 2024 Native Plant Sale was a huge success.



Shaggy Mane Mushroom, post prime,
found during our foraging walk. Photo by
Breanna Wheeler



Virginia Bluebells at Lashbrook Park



Tim Clemens of Ironwood Foraging discusses the many uses for Wood Nettle with tour participants