

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes July 27, 2024; Updated August 21, 2024

Present: Elizabeth Bach, Phil Bratta, Dave Brewer, Bernie Buchholz, Marilyn Carr, Michael Carr, Teresa Haggstad, Heather Herakovich, Pete Guiden, Betty Higby, James Higby, Dee Hudson, Marcia Heuer, Eric Kingery, Linda Kuhns, Charles Larry, Mary Meier, Tim Mescher, Kathy Michel; Tim Ngo, Don Panozzo, Joe Richardson, Mike Saxton, Emmylou Studier, and Tristan Wells

The meeting took place at the Nachusa Grasslands Headquarters and also via Zoom.

Exhibits: Links to the exhibits shared during the meeting are posted on the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands 2024 Annual Meeting web page (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/friends-annual-meeting-2024.html>) Note that these and other hyperlinks don't always work on the PDFs uploaded to the Friends website – request a personal copy if you want one.

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Opening: President Bernie Buchholz called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

- Attendees introduced themselves.
- Bernie Buchholz noted that The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has owned and operated Nachusa Grasslands since 1986.
- Our non-profit organization exists to promote and protect the preserve in cooperation with TNC.
- Bernie reviewed our mission: to build endowments that will help defray the cost of natural areas management, staff and operating expenses; conduct and encourage stewardship; support education and scientific activity; and fund land acquisition at the preserve.
- For details on our goals, see the Mission and Leadership page (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/mission-and-leadership.html>) on the Friends website.
- Bernie also stated that the Friends Bylaws establish that we are a strong Board-led organization. The voting members elect the Board of Directors, and then the Board makes all the decisions affecting the group by a majority vote, after listening to the views expressed by the members.

Quorum: A quorum (10% of the 53 potential voting members) was established.

- Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Voting Member Description from Bylaws: Any person may become a voting member who has either (i) been a volunteer at the Preserve for the full calendar year prior to the Annual Meeting, has contributed at least forty (40) hours during that year and has paid the annual dues; or (ii) been a volunteer at the Preserve for at least three (3) years of the preceding ten (10) years with a minimum contribution of forty (40) hours in each of those years and has paid the annual dues.
- The members have decided that a donation of any amount qualifies as dues.

2023 Annual Meeting Minutes: The 2023 minutes were approved as presented.

Board of Directors Election: The membership unanimously elected Mike Carr and Heather Herakovich to additional two-year terms (2024-2026).

- A description of Mike's and Heather's involvement at Nachusa is provided in the "2024 Board Candidates" document on the Annual Meeting web page.
- Betty Higby will continue to serve as a director for another year.

Election of Officers by Board of Directors: The Board elected the following officers for one-year terms: President: Bernie Buchholz; Vice President: Mike Saxton; Treasurer: Eric Kingery; and Secretary: Mary Meier.

Friends T-Shirt Initiative: Heather Baker coordinates our t-shirt program.

- Her 2024 design features an ornate box turtle "living its best life at Nachusa Grasslands" on the front and our Friends logo on the back of each shirt.
- Heather researched options for more environmentally friendly options and proposed that this year's shirts be made of undyed natural organic cotton with water-based ink; the Board approved her recommendation.
- The price will increase to \$15.
- Heather will create an informational poster regarding the content of the shirts.
- Friends sells the shirts at cost, so taxes do not have to be collected.
- Prior year shirts will probably be \$8.
- The shirts can be purchased at Autumn on the Prairie.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): The Federal government reimburses landowners for reserving tillable acreage for wildlife habitat and soil conservation.

- Mike C. administers the CRP program. Part of his report is below:
 - I have walked both CRP sites, Meiners wetland planting, and Stone Barn Farm.
 - You may remember that Nachusa removed several tracts from the program in 2023. They hope to have added those areas for the bison herd before another CRP contract is completed.
 - This led to the Friends taking over one of the Middle Rock Conservation Partners (MRCP) contracts.
 - We now have two contracts equaling 134.07 acres, and our expected payout in 2024 is \$26,414.00.

- Nachusa has indicated they will find other tracts in the near future to get us back to our maximum payout of \$50,000.00 per year. I expect lower revenue for a couple of years.
- The Stone Barn Farm site needs a little work to meet the requirements set forth in the CRP guidelines. No woodies are allowed in CRP areas. Stone Barn Farm needs two workdays to complete the work done trying to get in compliance.
- Per our state's supplied maintenance schedule, the site was burned in 2024.
- Well over 100 acres were cleared of brush last year. We need to work on the last 5 or so acres to be in compliance. There are not any populations of state listed noxious weeds on the site.
- Meiners Wetland Upland CRP area is free of woodies and populations of state listed noxious weeds. We are in compliance on that site.
- Eric noted the complexity of the paperwork and thanked Mike for overseeing the project.
- As a non-profit, Friends can receive this income, because it supports our mission.

Policies:

- As required by our Bylaws, the Directors and Officers acknowledged that they had all read and are in compliance with the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Friends also has a Donor Confidentiality Policy, a Whistleblower Policy and a Document Retention Policy.
- See the website or check with a Director or Officer for copies.

Cash Flow Diagram:

- To help members and supporters better understand the sources and utilization of Friends income as well as the role of the Board of Directors in directing the money to the appropriate funds, Eric Kingery presented the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Cash Flow Diagram.
- The document is appended to the end of the minutes and is also online.

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Treasurer's Report 2023-2024: Eric presented a revenue / disbursements / expenditures report covering July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

- He pointed out key details and highlights of the Treasurer's report, which is appended to the end of these minutes and posted on the website.
- We are transitioning to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), so the format is somewhat different than in previous years.
- As we are an all-volunteer organization with expenses of about 4% of our revenue, almost all of our income can go toward land acquisition, science grants, and endowments.

2023-2024 Revenue and Disbursements (unaudited):

- Total revenue from all sources was \$1,517,631, including donations, t-shirt purchases, grants, endowment distributions, investment gains, and CRP payments.
- Total operating expenses were \$30,724.
- The main expenditures included auditing, insurance, and professional expenses, as well development (fundraising, donor management, various publications, the annual meeting, and the Prairie Potluck).

- Fund and endowment contributions totaled \$718,225, honoring all donors' donation designations.
- Over 96% of our income is expended on achieving our goals.

2024-2025 Proposed Budget:

- Eric reviewed the proposed budget overview.
- Income of \$940,414, and expenditures of \$288,250 are projected, so the net revenue would be \$652,164.
- Following review, the budget was approved by the Board of Directors the week after the meeting.

Endowment Balances and Distributions:

- Friends has three Endowments, all with permanent principal. Once money is deposited, it can't be withdrawn.
- Each of the endowments follows similar professional investment strategies.
- Annual distributions are 4-to-5.3% of each endowment balance, based on historical multi-year balances. Distributions will continue to grow as the principal increases.
- The Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment was set up in 2009 through an agreement with The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The June 30, 2024, unaudited preliminary balance was \$838,231, and the 2023-2024 fiscal year distribution was \$43,940, which TNC paid to itself for Nachusa operation expenses.
- The Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands, held and managed by the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL), was established in 2014 at the request of donors who prefer local control of their gifts. The June 30, 2024, balance was \$2,979,988, and the 2023-2024 fiscal year distribution was \$96,174, which was sent to TNC earmarked for Nachusa stewardship.
- The Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science, held and managed by CFNIL, was established in 2020. As of June 30, 2024, the balance was \$685,934, and the 2023-2024 distribution was \$21,267 and will be used for Friends Science Grants.

Fund Balances:

- The Land Protection Fund for strategic land acquisitions was established on June 30, 2021. The Fund received several substantial gifts last year, so the June 30, 2024, balance was \$537,811, so we are in good position for additional purchases if appropriate.
- The Yellow Farmhouse Fund for repairs that will extend the house's useful life was established on June 28, 2022. The June 30, 2024, balance was \$48,511.

Cash Flow Designations:

- Because (1) the two CFNIL endowments generate dramatically higher returns than the TNC endowment (due to CFNIL matching grants) and (2) the CFNIL distributions are controlled by Friends, the Board has adopted the following policy:
- After donor designations are honored and expenses are paid, all remaining revenue will be directed to either the CFNIL endowments or to the Land Protection Fund. All CRP receipts will also go to the CFNIL endowments.

- We intend that revenue will be allocated to the two CFNIL endowments and the Land Protection Fund such that progress toward the goals for those accounts (stated above) will advance in a roughly proportional manner from year to year.
- Current year Science Grants will be funded as an expense before distributions to CFNIL endowments and the Land Protection Fund.
- The annual endowment distribution from the Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands (CFNIL) will be paid to TNC for operations at NG. The distribution from the Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science (CFNIL) will be paid to Friends to fund science grants

Audit:

- In the State of Illinois, a certified audit is required if a nonprofit has annual gross revenue that exceeds \$300,000.
- Our audit for the year ending June 30, 2023, had very positive results, including the conclusion that we achieved a non-qualified audit, which means that the auditors confirmed that the information we presented was accurate and properly adhered to accounting standards.
- Our organization is transparent so that everyone can see where the money comes from and where it goes.
- Bernie thanked Eric for managing our audit requirements over the past year.
- See the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Financials section of the About Friends (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/mission-and-leadership.html>) page for a link to the audit.

Executive Director Hiring:

- Bernie and Heather H. presented information about the Board's decision to hire an Executive Director for our organization.
- This person will provide continuity of leadership to carry forward our mission and enable us to do even more stewardship, science, land acquisition, and fundraising.
- A detailed job description will be available once it is finalized, and the position is posted on the Friends website, social media, and various job search sites.

Stewardship and Volunteer Recruitment:

Community Science:

- Elizabeth reported on various community science projects that are taking place at Nachusa, including stream, dragonfly, frog, and butterfly monitoring.
- There are 14 dragonfly/damselfly monitors, and a species new to Nachusa, the rainbow bluet, was recently identified.
- Regal fritillary monitoring is ongoing and may result in Illinois listing it as a threatened species.
- RiverWatch volunteers, including several new ones, sampled three streams this year.
- Susan Kleiman reported that there are three sets of calling frog monitors.
- See <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/about-citizen-scientists.html> for additional information.

Volunteer Workdays:

- Thursday and Saturday morning workdays have been very popular.
- Steward leaders should sign up via SignUpGenius, using the link on the Friends website home page.
 - Leaders' emails must be recorded in SignUpGenius before they can sign up.
 - We need a few more leaders for September. The October to February signup will be published soon. Let Mary know if you want a specific late fall or early winter date.
 - Regular volunteers who aren't stewards can also lead workdays. Consult Dee or other staff members for possible tasks and locations.
 - Check the workday leader tips and safety guidelines for information.

New Stewards:

- Welcome to Tim Mescher, Mary and Perry Paliga, and Abbigail McWilliams, who are now stewarding Nachusa units.
- They can also lead workdays if they wish.
- Requesting an experienced steward to accompany new ones is possible.

Guided Hikes:

- Heather Herakovich has been serving as the part-time Nachusa Grasslands Summer Interpreter.
- She is leading hikes in different Nachusa units on various days and at various times.
- During the hikes, she points out various volunteer opportunities.
- Two to eight guests usually participate.

Public Bison Tours:

- The tours, overseen by TNC, are very popular, and two were offered in June, July, and August with one in May, September, and October.
- Some guests who have gone on tours have subsequently volunteered, so they are an excellent outreach opportunity.
- Marilyn mentioned that she went on a tour, and she was very impressed by how much she learned about our bison herd.

Autumn on the Prairie:

- Dee announced that Autumn on the Prairie will take place on September 21, 2024.
- Susan, Bill, Dee, and John Schmadeke are on the committee.
- The focus is on guided hiking tours and riding bison tours, as well as an all-day prairie experience at Clear Creek Knolls and continuous short hikes on the Visitor Center Ridge Trail.
- Headons Fine Meats will provide a food truck.
- The Discovery Tent, raptors, kettlecorn, and music by Mike Crowe will also return.
- John has finalized the hike schedule, featuring a variety of topics, and Susan has sent out a SignUpGenius recruiting volunteers.
- See <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/aotp-2024.html> for details.

Soderholm Stewards:

- Paul and Carol Soderholm are long-time Nachusa supporters who also oversee the Edward Vassallo Land and Water Reserve, owned by TNC.
- They wanted to have more stewardship done, mainly weed management and seed collection, at their preserve, as well as the Franklin Creek State Natural Area.
- At Bill’s encouragement, the Soderholms agreed to fund two full-time seasonal crew members to work at the two sites for six months.
- Generous Friends donors purchased a truck and equipment for the Soderholm Stewards to use.
- Depending on funding, next year, there may be up to six Soderholm Stewards serving at a variety of local nature preserves.
- This project recognizes the importance of community-wide conservation collaboration with Nachusa providing leadership and resources.

Call for New Volunteers:

- Bernie mentioned that Friends and Nachusa Grasslands can always use more help in a variety of areas, including stewardship and organizational projects.
- Feel free to reach out to indicate your interests, and we will show you how you can become involved.

Volunteer Appreciation Potluck:

- Sometime this fall, TNC will host an event thanking our Nachusa volunteers.
- Activities will include a potluck lunch and tours.
- Watch for an invitation in September.

Volunteer Recognition in Friends Annual Report:

- All volunteers who have given 40 or more hours related to Nachusa Grasslands or the Edward F. Vassallo Land and Water Reserve (any activities on- or off-site) between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, will be noted in our Annual Report, which we will mail in late October.
- No documentation or explanation of your activities is required.
- On July 17, an email was sent to Nachusa volunteers from friends@nachusagrasslands.org requesting that anyone who volunteered more than 40 hours submit the form posted on <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/volunteer-recognition.html>.
- If you wish to be listed and have not yet responded, please contact Dee immediately.

Annual Fundraising Results:

Total 2023-2024 Donations to Friends Recorded in NeonCRM: \$874,832

• Undesignated	\$313,815
• Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment (TNC)	\$700
• Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands (CFNIL)	\$114,040
• Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science (CFNIL)	\$16,830
• Friends Fund for Science	\$31,922
• Friends Land Protection Fund	\$397,525

Increase in Donations from 2022-2023: \$94,242 (+12%)

Donation Tender Types:

- Check / Cash Donations: \$829,213 / 205 [2022-2023 – \$468,767 / 241]
- Credit Card / E-Check / Wire / Stock-Securities Donations: \$45,619 / 461 (many recurring) [2022-2023 – \$311,823 / 457]

Donors:

- Total Donor Households 289 [2022-2023 – 311]
- New Donors 2023-2024: 56 (26 Tributes) [2022-2023 – 61]

Donor Tiers:

- Restoration Benefactors – \$5,000 or more: 20 [2022-2023 – 18]
- Conservation Champions – \$1,500 to \$4,999: 18 [2022-2023 – 23]
- Supporters – \$1 to \$1,499: 251 [2023-2023 – 270]

Prairie Perennials: Donors who have given to the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands in consecutive years [July 1 through June 30] at the same or a higher level): 271 [2022-2023 – 164]

Recurring Donors: 30 [2022-2023 – 33]

Voting Members: 53 Nachusa volunteers donated to Friends during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. [2022-2023 – 53]

Charity Navigator and GuideStar/Candid Ratings:

- The Charity Navigator rating for Friends of Nachusa Grasslands is 100%–Four-Star. We have fulfilled all the necessary requirements for the best rating possible.
- For Candid/GuideStar we have a 2024 Platinum Transparency rating.
- Links to both profiles are included in the Friends Mission and Leadership (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/mission-and-leadership.html>) and Donate (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/donate.html>) pages.

Grants Received: Friends worked on several grant projects last year:

- TAWANI Foundation:
 - Friends received \$20,000 in June 2024 designated for scientific research in grasslands restoration, the final challenge grant payment on behalf of COL (IL) Jennifer N. Pritzker, IL ARNG (Retired), and the TAWANI Foundation.
 - New Challenge: Friends of Nachusa Grasslands has been awarded another grant from the TAWANI Foundation. Starting August 1, 2024, Friends can earn up to \$60,000 over three years by annually collecting a matching amount of gifts to science from new donors. The award will be used to fund scientific research grants. We anticipate that making donors more aware of the science program will help increase support and build a science constituency for grant making. A social media fundraising campaign is expected to take place in early 2025.

- Incentives for attracting new donors to support the grant include bison tours as well as *The Healthy Nature Handbook* edited by Justin Pepper of the Bobolink Foundation and Don Parker, which we obtained at no cost. The first 20 pages focus on “Restoration, Nachusa Style” with Jay Stacy, Bernie Buchholz, Cody Considine, Bill Kleiman, and Kaleb Baker.
- Illinois Clean Energy Foundation (ICEF):
 - In 2023-2024, Friends received \$30,000 for the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation’s Community Stewardship Challenge Grant Program – the Stewardship at Stone Barn Savanna - West Holland Savanna Project.
 - ICEF has ceased its Energy and Natural Areas Programs and has turned over about \$42 million to the Prairie State Conservation Coalition (PSCC).
 - PSCC is expected to utilize the funds from the Foundation to provide grants to eligible 501(c)3 organizations or local government bodies engaged in the preservation and enhancement of natural habitats and wildlife areas in Illinois. PSCC anticipates to begin awarding grants sometime in late 2025.
 - Therefore, TNC and Friends can’t count on this source of funding for several months.
- John R. Flanagan Charitable Foundation: In August 2024, Friends was awarded a \$25,000 unrestricted grant, renewable for two more years.

Heritage Heroes Legacy Giving Program: Heritage Heroes is a Friends initiative that encourages legacy giving among Friends donors and other individuals or households.

- To date, 32 couples or individuals have named or are committed to naming Friends in their estate plans or as a beneficiary of life insurance or retirement accounts – an increase of 4 in the past year.
- We have set a goal of developing 40 Heritage Heroes during the next several years.
- In the future, these legacy gifts are expected to become a very significant source of revenue, helping our organization continue to thrive.

Land Acquisition: Friends' participation in land protection is intended to ensure that sites are acquired at the quickest possible pace and, thus, support the timely realization of the project's geographic goals.

- Working cooperatively with The Nature Conservancy, Friends supports land protection opportunities on a case-by-case basis.
- Friends purchased 6.5 acres just north of the Headquarters Barn in May 2023, and restoration efforts, headed by Susan, have already been very impressive.
- Historically, Illinois Clean Energy funded a major percentage of most Nachusa land purchases. Since the foundation has essentially gone out of business, that money is currently not available.
- However, generational land keeps coming on the market, and Friends involvement is helping to protect properties near the preserve.
- With Board approval, Friends is engaged in additional confidential negotiations for two more parcels, one a large residential lot and the other a farm. We expect to close on each property by the end of 2025.
- This year’s annual report will include an appeal to support land acquisition, and we are hoping for many donations to increase our Land Protection Fund.

- Betty concurred that “The best time to buy land is when it’s for sale,” and Mike S. commented that this part of our mission shows our organization’s vision and success.

Communications:

A *Prairie Calling* Newsletter: A *Prairie Calling* (APC) is a newsletter covering various topics related to Nachusa Grasslands aimed at a popular, broad audience.

- It approaches the subject matter in a less scientific way, with an emphasis on images.
- The newsletter is snail mailed to Friends supporters and several other people interested in our organization.
- Links to digital copies are emailed to donors as well as researchers, volunteers, and crew members.
- Currently, the APC comes out three times per year: February, May, and August.
- The publication is a team effort with Charles Larry as editor-in-chief, Dee Hudson as layout designer, and James Higby as editor.
- The past year’s issues have focused on ethnobotany, winter bird watching, and small mammals. The August one will be on Charles’ favorite oak.
- See <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/digital-prairie-newsletter.html> for links to PDF versions of the newsletters.
- The newsletter has received very favorable responses from recipients, and the group also praised the quality of the newsletters.

Annual Report: Our 2023-2024 Friends Annual Report theme will be Biodiversity.

- Articles by four or five authors are being developed.
- One more 300-word piece is needed on an individual’s vision for biodiversity.
- Contact Bernie for details.

Thank You Notes: Emmylou reported that she sent 298 handwritten thank you notes to all of our donors (once each summer to recurring donors).

- After Mary M. notifies her of a formal donation acknowledgment, Emmylou almost always sends the note the same or the next day.
- Notes cost under \$2 each.
- Emmylou was commended for her amazing timeliness and personalization of each note.

Appreciation Books for New Donors: Marilyn continues to mail *The Prairie – Swell and Swale* book by Torkel Korling to first-time donors.

- This year, she mailed 12 books.
- Note that we don’t send them to new donors who give amounts under \$50, company matches, memorials, or appreciations, as well as those who don’t provide their addresses.

Social Media Team: The Social Media Team consists of Dee Hudson, Mary Meier, Joy McKinney Cologna, Heather Herakovich, Erin Rowland-Schaefer, and Chantelle Edmunds.

- Charles Larry doesn't attend our meetings, but he continues to contribute marvelous photographs to our social media platforms.
- We welcome new members, especially ones interested in helping with our Twitter, Instagram, and Blog posts.

Website (www.nachusagrasslands.org): Mary M. noted that the Friends' website receives quite a bit of traffic and is continually under development.

- In the past year, we had 63,510 page views by 32,263 unique visitors.
- The most popular pages are Home, Bison, Directions, Bison Tours, and Hiking Destinations.
- The team is currently reviewing the entire website and developing a site map to aid our visitors in finding the information that they need.
<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/site-map.html>

Facebook: Mary M. reported that the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Nachusa>) has about 8,100 followers.

- Our page reaches thousands of people per week, as many posts are shared.
- Dee's Autumn on the Prairie post had over 19,000 views, and 290 interactions!
- Charles' weekly photo collages usually have about 2,000 views and numerous comments.
- Charles is the administrator for the Photography at Nachusa Grasslands Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/356617574475489/?ref=bookmarks>).
- He has about 1,700 followers who post a variety of photos of flowers, birds, landscapes, and bison.

Prairie-Updates, Workday/Guided Hike, and New Volunteer Emails: Friends has a free MailChimp account.

- The *Prairie-Update* has about 1,400 subscribers.
 - Mary M. is the editor. She sent 3 newsletters from September 2023 to June 2024:
 - 09/10/2023 – Nachusa Grasslands Happenings – September 2023
 - 11/29/2023 – Friends of Nachusa Grasslands 2023 Annual Report
 - 06/03/2024 – Nachusa Grasslands Publications – Spring 2024
 - Contact Mary if you would like to take over this role and increase the frequency of publications.
- Mary also sends weekly workday/guided hike emails to about 500 recipients.
- In addition, when people submit the website volunteer interest form, she contacts them via MailChimp.

Twitter (X):

- x.com/Nachusa
- Nachusa gained only 11 new followers in 2023, for a total of 1,642. This low number could be a reflection of an overall drop in users on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Instagram:

- <https://www.instagram.com/nachusa>
- Instagram has gained another 208 new followers for a total of 1,987

Science at Nachusa:

Science Symposium: Elizabeth Bach reported on this year's Science Symposium that took place last April.

- About 80 people attended, which was almost capacity at the barn.
- The remodeled barn space, especially its enhanced audiovisual technology, was a major improvement.
- The quality of the presentations and posters was excellent.
- Thank you to Cindy Crosby, who offered an optional webinar to participating scientists on science communication, which was very helpful.
- Feedback was very positive, including praise for the QR codes in the program.
- Kudos to Teresa and Judy Plum who helped with food provided by Friends.
- More assistance with the event is always welcome.
- The next symposium is scheduled for April 26, 2025.

Nachusa Researchers:

- Elizabeth consistently approves 35 to 40 research permits for scientists from 15 to 20 institutions every year.
- This is a sustainable level for our facilities and staff.

Science Grant Program:

- **2023 Recap:**
 - 16 awards
Budget: \$73,000
All reports are accessible in a Google Folder: [2023 Grant Reports](#)
Link will be emailed.
 - Synopses of the projects are posted on <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/science-grants-2023.html>.
- **2025 2026 – Directed Research Program:**
 - Applications for grants comprise a great variety of topics, but sometimes they don't address the issues most pressing for Nachusa stewardship.
 - The committee decided to fund a graduate student in a new Directed Research Program focusing on a specific research question.
 - Starting on January 1, 2025, we will provide \$16,000 per year for 2 years.
 - The project is designed to investigate invasive plant suppression at Nachusa.
 - The committee selected Kamal Ehrlich who will start graduate school at NIU this fall, co-advised by Elizabeth and Holly Jones as part of the Jones Lab.
 - Kamal worked with Elizabeth as a technician this summer, so they are familiar with Nachusa's staff and volunteers as well as the preserve itself.
- **2024 Grants**
 - Linda also reported on the 2024 Science Grants:
Budget: \$76,000
Applicants: 16 from 5 states plus Canada

- Awarded: \$70,617 to 13 applicants (less than budgeted, as the committee chose to fund research at a level that best suits our needs)
Average award was \$5,432
3 grants between \$2,200 – \$3,999
5 grants between \$4,000 – \$5,500
5 grants between \$7,000 – \$8,000
- See <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/science-grants-2024.html> for project descriptions, recipients, and award amounts.
 - **2025 Grants**
 - The total budgeted will be \$92,500 – \$76,000 for grants, \$500 for the symposium, and \$16,000 for directed research.
 - Grant applications will be available in early September.

TNC-Nachusa Grasslands Update by Elizabeth:

- **HQ Renovation:** Modifications to the Headquarters Barn, including expanding gathering areas and remodeling the offices, are underway.
 - Phase One: Renovation of the loft – an airconditioned meeting room equipped with audiovisual technology, work area, and storage space loft – is complete.
 - Phase Two: The old seed processing area has become the break/gathering room. Improvements include audio-visual enhancements and new kitchen equipment.
 - Phase Three: Remodeling of the old lunchroom that will provide three private offices and open desk space for staff and crew members has begun.
- **TNC Illinois Leadership Changes**
 - Georgie Geraghty is now the Executive Director and Midwest Partner of TNC in Illinois. She was the Deputy Director for the former Illinois State Director, Michelle Carr, so there is a continuity of leadership.
 - TNC is shifting to a more regional perspective in its administration. Jeff Walk, who has served as the Illinois TNC Director of Conservation, is moving up as the Midwest Division Director of Leveraging Our Lands.
 - Jason Beverlin, the current Deputy Director of Conservation, will take on a co-leadership role of certain land-based projects. Bill Kleiman reports to Jason, and the rest of the Nachusa staff reports to Bill.

2025 Annual Meeting: The next Friends Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, July 27, 2025.

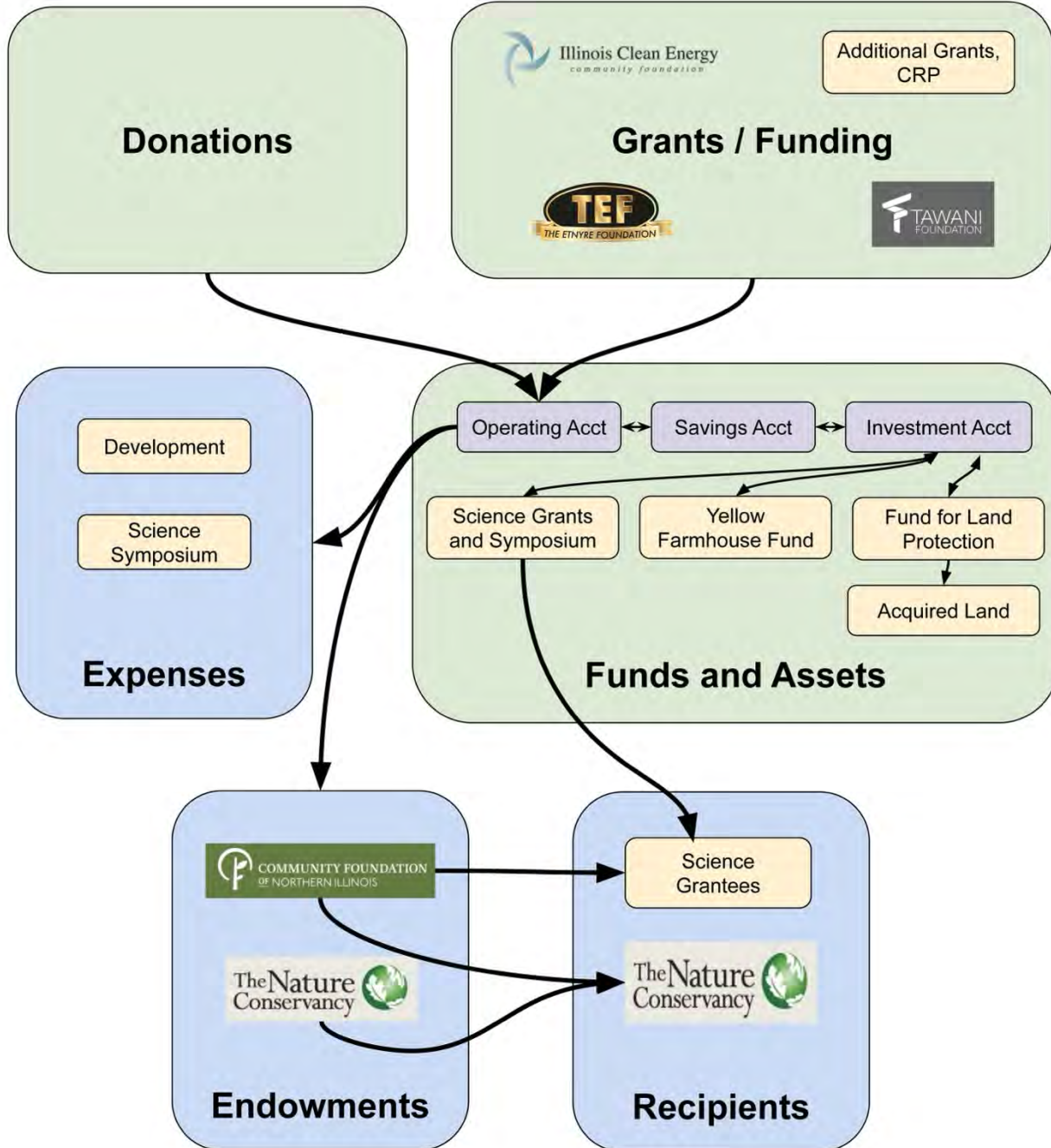
Group Photograph: Thank you to Dee for taking the photo below.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Meier, Secretary
August 18, 2024

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Cash Flow Diagram



FY 2024 Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Treasurer's Report

Statement of Activity

Support & Revenue	2024 (unaudited)	2023 (audited)
Donations	\$863,660	\$567,255
Investment Income	\$276,329	\$208,426
Endowment Distributions	\$117,441	\$104,383
Grant Income	\$55,000	\$167,940
Other Income	\$54,666	\$50,000
Total Revenue	\$1,367,096	\$1,098,004

Expenses & Land Purchases

Science Grants and Symposium	\$71,135	\$85,273
Auditing, Insurance, and Professional Expenses	\$10,725	\$11,784
Stewardship	\$41,356	\$42,268
Nachusa Operations (TNC endowment distribution)	\$96,174	\$98,479
Endowment Fees	\$11,534	\$4,839
Development Expenses	\$13,275	\$16,641
Grants to Other Organizations	\$4,250	\$4,000
Other Expenses	\$6,724	\$3,312
Grant spending	\$38,663	\$0
Total Expenses	\$293,836	\$266,596

Change in Net Assets	\$1,073,260	\$831,408
Net assets, end of year (June 30)	\$5,479,628	\$4,406,368

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Cash and Investments	\$826,303	\$275,759
CFNIL General Endowment *	\$3,094,496	\$2,615,666
CFNIL Science Endowment **	\$676,795	\$633,496
TNC Endowment ***	\$805,000	\$804,413
Protected Land	\$77,034	\$77,034
Total Assets	\$5,479,628	\$4,406,368

Liabilities

Total Liabilities	\$0	\$0
Net Assets	\$5,479,628	\$4,406,368
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$5,479,628	\$4,406,368

Endowment and Fund Report

Fund Balances		
Land Protection Fund ****	\$537,811	\$48,511
Yellow Farmhouse Fund *****	\$43,315	\$48,332

Contributions		
Land Protection Fund ****	\$489,300	\$47,986
Yellow Farmhouse Fund *****	\$0.00	\$50,000
CFNIL General Endowment *	\$210,914	\$120,000
CFNIL Science Endowment **	\$15,255	\$366,842
TNC Endowment ***	\$96,173	\$96,174
Total Contributions	\$811,642	\$681,002

Endowment Distributions	Current Year	Since Inception
CFNIL General Endowment *	\$96,174	\$419,148
CFNIL Science Endowment **	\$21,267	\$32,380
TNC Endowment ***	\$0	\$185,833
Total Distributions	\$117,441	\$637,362

* Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL) General endowment established May 14, 2014; Distributions fund operations at Nachusa.

** Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL) Science endowment established December 1, 2020;

Distributions fund our science grants and symposium.

*** The Nature Conservancy (TNC) endowment established September 1, 2009; Distributions fund operations at Nachusa.

**** Land Protection Fund Established June 30, 2021;

Funds for strategic land acquisitions.

***** Yellow Farmhouse Fund Established June 28, 2022;

Funds for repairs that will extend the house's useful life.



Company name: Friends of Nachusa Grasslands

Budget name: FY 2025

Budget type: Profit and loss

Period: FY 2025 (Jul 2024 - Jun 2025)

Consolidated

Accounts	Budget totals
4010 Donations - Cash	\$300000.00
4022 Donations - Fund for Land Protection	\$300000.00
4023 Donations - Science Grants and Symposium	\$35000.00
4050 Donations - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands	\$100000.00
4051 Donations - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science	\$50000.00
4060 Donations - TNC Nachusa Grassland Stewardship Endowment	\$0.00
4121 Investment Income - Yellow Farmhouse Fund	\$500.00
4122 Investment Income - Fund for Land Protection	\$5000.00
4123 Investment Income - Science Grants and Symposium	\$500.00
4150 Distributions - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands	\$100000.00
4151 Distributions - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science	\$20000.00
4312 T-Shirt Income	\$3000.00
4313 CRP Annual Payments	\$26414.00
Total Income	\$940414.00
5021 Expenses - Yellow Farmhouse Fund	\$5000.00
5023 Gifts - Science Grants and Symposium	\$76500.00
5080 Gifts - to Other Organizations	\$4500.00
5110 Stewardship	\$2000.00
5123 Directed Research	\$16000.00
5160 Nachusa Operations	\$100000.00
5250 Fund Expenses - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands	\$10000.00
5251 Fund Expenses - CFNIL Friends Endowment for Nachusa Science	\$2000.00
5400 Banking Fees	\$150.00
5420 Auditing Fees	\$8600.00
5430 Insurance.	\$3500.00
Total 5300 Operational Expenses	\$228250.00
5312 T-Shirt Expenses	\$6000.00
5440 Development	\$15000.00
5500 Payroll	\$39000.00
Total Expense	\$288250.00
Total Net Income	\$652164.00