

## A BIG WOODS JOURNAL

By Hank & Becky Hartman

**January:** Large dead trees are constantly coming down as a result of long ago girdling when the unit was purchased. We will end the year with several still on the ground, and still more spontaneously falling down. Every time one crashes, if left on the ground, it suffocates existing savanna plants, and seems to instantaneously sprout more *Rubus* briars. Girdling is a good thing; it is helping to transform Big Woods into a healthy open woodland. At the end of the month, the forestry mower comes to visit Big Woods. Now there are 100 times more large chunks of trees on the ground. We despair of ever running out of dry fuel for brush piles.



Hank & Becky Hartman

**February:** Dead willow stem removal occurs in the sedge meadow area. Wow, is that one spectacular brush pile flame! John Mathis continues to be an enormous help to the Big Woods crew by hauling away large amounts of wood for his wood-burning furnace. Chris Hauser uses the tractor and grapple to build two new large brush piles with the forestry mower wood. There is great rejoicing all month in response to the forestry mower impact.

**March:** More brush piles are built from the left over shredded wood from the forestry mower. The entire

Mathis family loads wood onto their trailer. Thanks for a great effort John and crew!

**April:** Three large areas of Virginia bluebells send up leaves. We decided to clear away all flammable material so they will not be set back in the upcoming prescribed burn. The bluebells survive and flourish; they will eventually cover the entire northwest side of Big Woods. Dutchman's breeches appear on west side of the knobs and wood anemone and red trillium at the west boundary of Big Woods. 125 pounds of seed we collected the previous summer hit the ground after the prescribed burn.

**May:** Morels, prairie violets, fame flower, and wild columbine plants appear on Big Woods. Cream wild indigo, violet wood sorrel and dwarf dandelion are spreading across the east side of the North Knob. Jacob's ladder, wild geranium and wood anemone are flourishing in the south side woods. Exelon employees work two Saturdays and build two more huge brush piles of (you guessed it) forestry mower brush. As a result Hickory Hollow is 90% cleared! An eastern box turtle reluctantly poses for a picture in the sedge meadow. Turkeys, however, strut on cue when Becky and Pat Hayden are touring Big Woods.

**June:** Weed patrol for Queen Anne's lace and wild parsnip begins; they are truly decreasing! The bird's foot trefoil is much more intractable. Brome is now gone from a large area and prairie plants are moving in, many of which we did not seed, for example, prairie violet. In fact, of the plants mentioned in April, May &

*Continued on page 2*



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June, none have previously appeared in significant numbers. Since cream wild indigo is the only one of these plants we have seeded, we can only conclude there is something magical about prescribed burns and the forestry mower induced sunlight. We started spraying, spading, and pulling in May and will continue weekly through August.

**July:** Two giant St John's wort plants appear on the northeast corner. Pale purple coneflower is blooming spectacularly on Dot's Knob; seed will be plentiful this year. For the first time, coneflower also blooms on Big Woods. Tall bellflower and wingstem appear on the west side where the forestry mower opened up the woods.

**August:** More celebration. Now is the peak bloom for rough blazing star and it has doubled from the amount that was on Big Woods last year. Our diligent work against the weed, bird's foot trefoil reveals the good news, there are hundreds of first-year white indigo plants. Maybe they will all bloom in a few years.

**September:** For the first time, there is more Canada and Virginia wild rye seed available on Big Woods than we are able to pick. The bottle gentian is abundant and beautiful in the sedge meadow. From elsewhere on the preserve, we collect prairie, fringed, and cream gentian and plant the seed on Big Woods. Chris Hauser finds flat-top aster in the Big Woods sedge meadow.

**October:** Seed picking continues - over 200 pounds of bulk seed picked.

**November:** Three members of the NIU Society for the Preservation of Wildlife, along with Kevin Kaltenbach, and Neil Chapman help to remove and clean up brush. We spend four full days processing seeds and creating seed mixes. Walking the boundaries with the measuring wheel allows us to map, more or less to scale, wet and dry savanna areas and wet and dry prairie areas. We use this information to create a detailed planting plan.

**December:** Plant 150 pounds of seed, most of it in the areas which before the forestry mower were not accessible to over-seed. Build and burn brush piles of honeysuckle, multiflora rose, forestry mower slash, and girdled trees which fell over. Since April 2001 that's 17 different burn pile locations with 68 fires.

Many thanks to all the staff and other volunteers who have worked patiently with us as we learn what this place is all about. These are all special people and this is a very special place. A big thank you to Al Meier, who until August was co-steward of Big Woods, and is now a unit steward. Without him much that was accomplished could not have been achieved. To be a small part of trying to bring back a little of what we almost lost forever

is very rewarding. Every time we see a new plant pop up in Big Woods for the first time, we are so thankful that we can be part of Nachusa Grasslands.

## Managers Notebook



Bill Kleiman

By Bill Kleiman,  
Preserve Manager,  
Nathan Hill,  
Restoration  
Ecologist



Nathan Hill

After working for the Conservancy for nine years, Susan Kleiman, left our employ this summer to be a full time mom. After going without her help for 6 months, it was clear that Susan had provided us myriad skills and detailed knowledge of this project. By November, Bill was buried under a pile of tasks when, to the rescue, we hired Nathan Hill. Nathan is a confessed jack of all trades. He worked for the preserve in the summer of 2001 and has been the watershed coordinator for the Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership. We still have Susan around to help as a volunteer and we welcome Nathan.

**Seed Harvest:** A major part of our work from June to November is to harvest seed for habitat restoration. Why start so early in the year? One example: In early summer we collect seed from flowers that feed a rare butterfly, the *regal fritillary*. These flowers include birdsfoot violet, prairie violet, and violet wood sorrel. You have to know where to look for these seeds because the plants occur in certain prairies, and are only a few inches high. The colorful flowers will be gone leaving only tan seed pods as the search image. The harvest here is measured in teaspoons, but by planting these seeds in new areas we help make this preserve even more "regal".



This year over 300 species of plants were harvested 2,150 bulk weight pounds of seed. This grand total is from all collectors, which include, our volunteers and hired seasonal crew. This weight is for un-cleaned seed. We do not clean our seed since this seed is not sold. Our planting methods tolerate chaff and stems. If we cleaned the seed we would have a better estimate of seed weights, but cleaning seed is labor intensive. This year

**Planting 36 acres at Hook Larson Prairie took only one hour with the air seeder.**



all of the seasonal crew seed was planted on 36 acres in Hook Larson Prairie. Each year we collect more seed from more species, yet our need for seed keeps increasing. Want to help us collect?



2004 Summer Crew of Neil Chapman, Mike Hansen and Ryan Klopff. They are carrying special spades used to stab the carrot like root of wild parsnip.

Pendulum seeder and cultipacker working at Hook Larson Prairie Planting.



**Weed Work:** Weed work is not for the timid. Imagine standing before a young prairie planting that you wish to see mature to a diverse success. Within the planting are one or two invasive plant species sprinkled in random patches throughout. Because you have planted a mixture of plant types - broadleaf, grass, sedge, shrub - you can't call in the herbicide boom truck to solve the problem. No, a crop duster won't be swooping down to solve your problem. So you charge ahead pulling or cutting or spraying with your little backpack. Psst. psst. Daunting may not come to mind on your first planting, but you have 50 more plantings to go. Our intrepid seasonal crew pushed hard against a host of weeds. Every day, for about eight weeks, this was their major task. We sincerely thank them for their efforts: Mike Hansen, Ryan Klopff, Neil Chapman, and Austin Saylor.

**Fire:** This was another great year for prescribed fire. We had nice April weather to make up for a cold and windy March. Our volunteer prescribed fire crew once again demonstrated that they could handle large and complex fires. One example of this was the April 4 burn with 18 crew, providing four ignition crews burned through 200-acres of savanna, prairie, and wetlands. Thank you to the crew, especially those who came out for several fires which helped keep us from chaos. We burn a lot of acres of habitat annually but we take care to not burn all our remnants in any one year. At Nachusa, of our index of 20 high quality remnants we: Burned - 12 (60%), Burned Half -3, and Did Not Burn - 5. Fall 2003 through Spring 2004 total Nachusa acreage burned: 637-acres which is about 40% of the preserve.



Fire crew Duane Kitchen, Mary Vieregg, Christa Dahlberg, and Chris Hauser burning neighboring Dahlberg Savanna.

**Prescribed Fire Crew for Fall 2003 to Spring 2004**

Kevin Kaltenschach 7, Jenny Mitchell 3, Jim Vieregg 4, Josh Sage 2, Don Homer 4, Jennifer Hauser 5, Bill Kleiman 14, Tom Mitchell 5, Mary Vieregg 9, Lynn Mecum 2, Chris Hauser 6, Nancy Braker 2, Mike Crowe 3, Cassie Krueger 5, Susan Kleiman 10, Gerald

McDermott 5, Larry Creekmur 2, Becky Hartman 2, Frank Sebok, Hank Hartman 3, Carol Brown, Jan Grainger 4, Al Meier, Dave Breen 2, Dwight Heckert 4, Becky Flack, Nellie Sizgoric, Sally Baumgardner 5, Todd Tucker 2, Jenna Sanders, Al Roloff, Caleb Harty 2, Brian of DCFP, Dave Lawson 2, Nate Hill 2, Sally Pierce, Tharran Hobson, Becky Schillo 2, Todd Bittner, Jim Grove 2, John Bivins 3, Mike Adolph, Sheila McManus, Bob Bartles, Andrew Bartles, Mike Hansen, Jason Johnson, Max Dahlberg, Christa Dahlberg, Andy Bacon

Total number of crew: 50. Number of Nachusa fire crew: 40. Number of Nachusa crew that were on 4 or more burns: 14



Summer 2000 - Looking North from the top of Schafer Knob. In the background is a 1950s era red pine planting with eastern red cedar brush in the foreground.

Summer 2004 - The red pine has been harvested, the logs going to a paper mill, and that area has been seeded with prairie. The eastern red cedar brush have been removed with a forestry mower. The prairie dynamics of full sun, wind and the resulting drying have returned.

*Photos by G. McDermott*



**Brush Clearing Update:** Bill Kleiman is the lead staff running a program sending a heavy duty brush mowing machine to various natural areas around the state. This machine worked at Nachusa over the last few

years. By the end of this winter we will have cleared brush at 29 sites. Land owners will follow up the mowing work with herbicide treatment to the larger stumps, prescribed fire, seeding, and other in-kind stewardship. The U.S. Forest Service is funding the effort with the Conservancy implementing the work. A private contractor does the mowing. Landowners have been very enthusiastic describing the time we saved them in decades.

**White House Turns Tan:** Last year we reported we were selling off the white colored house on 5-acres at the corner of 30-acres we purchased in 2003. At press time we have a signed purchase agreement. We changed the white house and its white buildings to tan. Now, they don't stick out so much perched on a hill above the Hamill-Winter Prairie. The buildings stuck out because we removed a lot of brush and fence row trees to restore quality grassland bird habitat. This was important to do because grassland birds have had the most precipitous declines in recent decades. Also, there are nice prairie remnants on the tract, they would have died with the continued red cedar shade.

## New Restoration Ecologist

By Nathan Hill

Dear Friends of Nachusa Grasslands. I just wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself, and let you know I am very excited to join The Nature Conservancy and the family here at Nachusa. Ever since I was young, I wanted to protect and enhance the natural world. That passion led me to Southern Illinois University at Carbondale where I knew what I wanted to do I just didn't know what specific job I was going to get when I graduated. In one of my classes we read Aldo Leopold's A Sand County Almanac. I wanted to be like him, someone who would take a stand and be a voice for conservation. In



Nathan Hill

1996 I graduated with a BS in Environmental Management from the Geography Department. My first 'real' job was working for the Piatt County Soil and Water Conservation District in Monticello as the Resource Conservationist. Living in the vast mono-cultures of corn and soybeans in Central Illinois I worked with farmers to implement conservation practices like terraces, grassed waterways and buffer strips. Protecting the Sangamon River was also a main focus, over the years I worked on a campaign to get owners to restore trees to hundreds of acres of farmed floodplain. In 2001 my wife Katie got a new job as a Dietician in Rockford so we moved back home to Northern Illinois. Having no job lined up for that summer I could have settled for any place that was hiring, just to make some cash, but I needed to do conservation work. Checking The Nature Conservancy's website I spotted the Nachusa Grasslands Summer Technician job and immediately applied. I spoke to Bill Kleiman, got the job, and

soon learned it was going to be a great job. The crew of Mike Hansen, Jake Harder and myself got a lot of good conservation work done that summer. We also got ticks, parsnip burns, a lot of sun, and enough botanical knowledge to give us a headache.

That September I began working for the Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership, as the Watershed Coordinator, assisting them with the development of a natural resources information based watershed plan and mapping project, using Geographic Information Systems. Over the years I have tried to come out at least once a month to volunteer. Now Voila! Here I am again working for Nachusa Grasslands full time. A huge list of projects and ideas to implement are already on my plate and rushing through my head. I look forward to working with the many people who make this place successful.

## Stewards Journal

### Dot and Doug Wade Prairie

By Alan Meier

I started working at Nachusa Grasslands in order to get a donation from my employer for The Nature Conservancy. I noticed on The Nature Conservancy website that Nachusa Grasslands was looking for volunteers, and I decided to show up at a Saturday workday. I was surprised to find that I could be useful, even though I knew nothing about prairie restoration. The steward leading the workday took the time to show me what needed to be done, and I left that day feeling that I had actually accomplished something.

I returned to Nachusa several times and put in enough hours to qualify for the donation from my employer, State Farm Insurance. But then I kept coming back. I found that there was more to volunteering at Nachusa Grasslands than just obtaining funds to help The Nature Conservancy. There was also the sense of doing something worthwhile in my free time and the satisfaction of taking action to preserve our natural heritage.

Nachusa Grasslands is a special place for me. On days when I need to be alone, it can be a place of solitude—it's big enough that I can work the entire day and not see another soul. It's also a place of camaraderie—working together with an extremely dedicated group of volunteers, all of whom are very willing to share their knowledge of conservation with new volunteers. After volunteering at Nachusa for two and a half years, I am now the steward of Dot & Doug Wade Prairie. Stewardship is both an honor and a challenge. I continue to learn more and more about nature and to develop new skills. I still have a lot to learn, and every day that I spend at Nachusa Grasslands is a new adventure.



Al Meier

### Roadsides and Thelma Carpenter Prairie

By Tom Mitchell

#### Roadsides

Two thousand four was the year orchids and a gentian appeared along the roadsides at Nachusa Grasslands. Nodding ladies tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*) blossomed near the old entrance on Lowden Road, part of a population that numbers in the hundreds near Pussytoes Lane. On Naylor Road at West Heinkel a single cream gentian (*Gentiana flavida*) popped up, likely from a planting some years ago. The roadside at Jay Stacy's Naylor Road planting was also the site of an over-seeding project, following a prescribed fire, in the spring. The roadside at the entrance of the stewards barn was planted in the fall. Prairie willows (*Salix humilis*) are alive and well along Lowden by the Yellow house. Prairie trillium (*Trillium recurvatum*) is hanging on near the parking lot at Meiner's wetland, where bluebirds nested in a box behind the sign.



Tom Mitchell

#### Thelma Carpenter Prairie

The two plantings at Thelma Carpenter Prairie are still coming up. An over-seeding of 85 pounds, 40 species, started in October and ended in December. Seed collection for the North side plantings will start in 2005. Northern Harriers hunting, over the southeast and southwest plantings, were encouraging signs of habitat restoration.

The unplowed but grazed 30 acres at Carpenter Prairie still produce a challenging array of non-natives. Foremost is the sweet clover on steep, rocky hillsides where violets, asters, false toadflax, shooting stars, and dropseed also occur, making for difficult mowing and

### *From the Visitor's Book*

Last year visitors from Albert-Canada, Tucson-Arizona, Portland-Oregon, Washington-DC, Milwaukee-Wisconsin, Des Moines-Iowa, Alderwood-Washington, Minnesota and New York contributed to the Visitors book.

"Love it! Please save the patriarch cottonwood near the pond."

"We're looking forward to seeing birds! Saw a bobolink and eastern kingbird (I think) plus a hairy black spider in the book box!"

"The coneflower bloom blew my socks off. The dickcissels wore my ears out."

"We had a great day exploring the grasslands the tall grass was fun to blaze trails through."

scything. A two-person, 8 foot long wick applicator of herbicide was used on young adult plants (a Mel Hoff design with modifications by Bill Kleiman) it was somewhat successful in preventing seed set. Red clover, wild carrot and wild parsnip are still widespread in degraded areas where over one thousand eastern red cedars have been removed. Bill piloted the new Bobcat-mower and turned honeysuckle and osage orange into wood chips. The crew collected bulk seed with the seed stripper, on the front hill, for the first time with limited success. The back hill was burned October 24, the preserve's first fall burn of 2004. Dozens of volunteer students from area colleges turned out for a successful workday November 13th, when the last of the cedars were cut and burned.

### West Heinkel

By Mary Vieregg

“The first year, prairie plants sleep; the second year, they creep; the third year, they leap.” This adage for patient prairie planters rang true in 2004 as the 2001 West Heinkel prairie reconstruction exploded in growth. Across an old soybean field and on top of a formerly weed-choked oak knoll, a carpet of native plants blossomed with exuberance.

In soils that range from nearly pure sand and gravel through sandy loam to silt loam, at least 115 of the nearly 200 native species planted made an appearance. Filling every season with beauty, this created habitat served as a nesting site for numerous grassland birds. There was even a probable sighting of a blue racer snake, an uncommon *Nachusa* sight.

Hopefully in the coming year, more species will appear as fire and careful weed management continue. Undoubtedly, some species will fade away as species compete and sort themselves. It was by any definition, though, a glorious year in West Heinkel.



Mary Vieregg

### Hamill Winter Prairie

By Mike Adolph and Bob Shone

After a little more than a decade of working on Hamill Winter Prairie, this year was notable for a number of reasons. Along the North boundary, which abuts the Prairie Potholes Unit, much progress was made. Near the Northwest boundary willows that had encroached into both units were mowed down, and then most of the re-sprouts were sprayed



Bob Shone



Mike Adolph

with herbicide. The battle against willows will continue. Further east, a fence line that had been a blot on the prairie was largely taken down by the big bobcat's mower, and then, the first phase was finished by chain-sawing. More clearing, burning and herbiciding remains, but it's doable.

Honeysuckle, multi-flora rose, and cherry sprouts have been the bane of the unit. We have gained substantial ground on all three. 2005 will see them almost eliminated. Wild Parsnip has been reduced by about 75%. King Devil remains a major problem, as does White Sweet Clover. Our seeding was concentrated on No-name Knob—after it was burned. The area next to Lowden has many fresh-dug holes. It would be something to see who's digging them. The progress we've made is second to the beauty of *Nachusa* as reasons to keep coming. Add to that the fine comrades we have here, and we couldn't ask for more.

### Rolling Thunder Prairie

By Sally Baumgardner

This was a year of HELP and DISCOVERY at Rolling Thunder Prairie. HELP: Our most powerful diggers and pullers, of parsnip and sweet clover, were 16-year-old Josh Blythe and Nick Rios of Franklin Grove. They helped in late spring and early summer. After they left for “real” jobs, Levi Smith, 12, from Dixon volunteered two to three weekday mornings throughout the summer. Levi learned many new native plants, and quickly recognized wild parsnip for careful removal. We moved on to “volume” seed collecting, and he proved to be a steady worker before school days were upon us. Neighbors Jessica, 14, and Macy Fair, 10, came two to three afternoons after school in September and October for reliable and intensive seed collecting. Drying and processing followed, so, when six different area schools came for a total of ten field trips, all were asked to help over-seed in selected areas. They did so with glee! And soon the helping rains fell. The so-called “selected areas” were infestations of invasive weedy growth. We mowed these patches before weed seeds formed. DISCOVERIES: *Ruellia humilis*, or hairy ruellia or “prairie petunia,” was found on nearby private property. We obtained owner permission to enter and collect seeds. This uncommon prairie wildflower is not related at all to the garden petunia, which has its origins in South America. Our greatest discovery over the last year was a tiny, delicate, utterly beautiful orchid, *Spiranthes lacera*. It was found growing in an area that could have been a street named Indigo Lane. To my knowledge, no one planted seed in that place, it is another beautiful surprise provided by nature.



Sally Baumgardner

## Herbarium

By Dwight Heckert

The Nachusa Grasslands Herbarium has had another successful year. A big thank you goes out to all who helped me find 23 new plants for the herbarium. Over the last six years, 530 species have been collected.



Dwight Heckert

Some of the more exciting plants were: *Aster furcatus*, (forked aster), *Aster umbellatus*, *Filipendula rubra*, *Phlox maculata*, *Viola pedatifida*.

## Prairie Potholes

By Chris and Jennifer Hauser

Some plant species have fussy seeds and germinate in the wild only under special conditions. As a result, some plants that are common in remnant areas (such as, Blue Joint Grass and New Jersey Tea) are very rare in seeded restorations. Our goal for this unit this year was to plant species like these that are difficult to establish from seed. With the help of friends and volunteers, we planted almost 500 individual plants of about 10 species.



Jennifer Hauser

Most of our plants came from local seed that was germinated over the winter and spring in our house. These seedlings were then planted in our unit over the spring and summer. These plants included about 200 Hazelnut, 100 Flat-topped Aster, 30 Skunk Cabbage, 20 Obedient Plant, 20 Glade Mallow, and 5 Meadow Rue. Species like these are well worth the effort of growing and planting because, these plants provide important habitat and they grow and reproduce for decades.



Chris Hauser

For some of our plants, we had to use creative ways to find plant material. For example, over the winter, we collected broken chunks of Tussock Sedge hummocks and planted these pieces in about 50 small pots. In the spring, these pots sprouted with Tussock Sedge, Bulbous Cress and Bur Marigold. For other species, including Prairie Coreopsis, Blue Joint Grass, and Penn's Sedge, we judiciously harvested cuttings from remnant areas and transplanted them into appropriate habitats in our unit.

As these plants grow and spread throughout our wetlands and prairies, we hope to see these areas become better quality habitat in the years to come.

Don Homer is a man who knows how to work; when

## Eight Oaks Savanna

By Jan Grainger

The area known as Eight Oaks Savanna was dramatically cleared of brush, along Wade Creek, and now the remaining Oaks (many more than eight) are scattered throughout a much more open vista. This area is becoming restored to a mix of wet stream-side swales, upland prairie, and savanna.

I have been pleased to see numerous species becoming established as a result of clearing, weed control and seeding. This year was the first for blooming Turtlehead in one of the wet swales near the creek. It was found within a mix of sedges and other native wetland species. Weed control is a constant job with opportunistic Multiflora Rose and Honeysuckle taking advantage of the clearing.

Some days I can truly appreciate the home we are preserving when the residents make an appearance. On July 6, a day beautiful and sunny, I admired a Yellow Breasted Chat, *Icteria virens*, loudly vocalizing from a highly visible perch near Wade Creek. This is a bird that is usually well hidden in dense brushy thickets, but not on this day. Its vocalizations have been described as chuckles, clucks, whines and wails. I think I would add "hoot" to the list. All this from a single throat. The sounds it delivers have led it to be called the yellow mockingbird. It is the largest of the warblers at seven and one half inches. To me, anthropomorphism is fun, so I will say he was happy, proud and grateful.



Jan Grainger

## West Heinkel

By Jay Stacy

We're a winter crew of three. We've set ourselves to the task of clearing scrub and adventive (weedy) trees from the Naylor Hills, to further encourage the startling black oak regeneration already in evidence.

Mary Scott awaits us in the parking lot every Monday and Friday morning (she works with Tom Mitchell on Wednesday and Saturday mornings) with her "breakfast buffet" of fig newtons, nuts, raisins, graham crackers and her good blue thermos full of piping hot coffee. A blend of wiry toughness and warm affection, she's willing to work in any weather- collecting seeds, pulling weeds, cutting rose, herbiciding stumps, carrying branches to keep our winter fires going; total number of morning shifts worked in 2004: 155! And all of this at age 83! She's an inspiration and a challenge to all who invent one excuse or another not to come out and participate in this mighty work.



Jay Stacy

he straps on a pair of saw chaps the chips fly - safely, and at a brisk, workman like pace. His single-handed campaigns against rose warrens during past summers have allowed us to access the areas we are working now. He's a kind, generous, and gracious man and a pleasure to work with, and a quiet force behind the effort at Nachusa Grasslands for many years.

Come take a peek at our work; I think you'll find the view surprisingly dramatic. Park at the little Naylor Rd. lot, walk up North across the planting (the direction your car is parked), go 100 ft. West down the old two-track (Left), North again (right) through the planted lobe at the woodland edge. Voila! The eye is drawn down to the contours of the hills, past the 1999 and 2001 plantings, to Mary Viereggs's oak knoll and her lovely sand prairie/savanna restoration - already at three years the crown jewel of the unit.



What a planting can be. Three year old planting led by Mary Viereggs and Jay Stacy.

### Clear Creek Prairie

By Terri Clark and Mary Blackmore

In April a section of farmed land in the Northeast corner of the unit - about 3 acres- was seeded by Chris and Jennifer Hauser, with 46 species in two mixes. The seed had been collected in 2003 at Nachusa by Jennifer and Emily Tilsy. The 04' seed collection - gathered again by Jennifer and Emily - is to be over seeded onto those 3 acres this winter or next spring. During summer workdays we focused on completing tree girdling in an interior fencerow. In December we updated our management plan to include specific areas (currently farmed) for reconstruction for the next four years, and the goal of eliminating all interior fencerows.



In May we held an open house for resource managers. Fed chili to 110 and hiked the preserve for 3 hours.

## Thank You

*to the following people who contributed toward the purchase of a new Mule work vehicle:*

- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Al & Mary Meier      | Ron Ingraham      |
| Gerald McDermott     | Bob & Joyce Shone |
| Mike Adolph          | Ann Haverstock    |
| Jan Grainger         | Cassie Krueger    |
| Becky & Hank Hartman |                   |



Tod Tucker of Byron Forest Preserve was recognized for his efforts in conservation, protection and stewardship of regional natural areas over the last decade. Bill Kleiman, Project Director, Nachusa Grasslands presented Todd with a painting of native prairie plants to commemorate his services.

In large part due to Todd's ability to communicate the importance of conservation, a neighbor donated 300 acres to the Byron Forest Preserve. A grant written by Todd funded an additional 200 acre purchase. "The success of this effort took many months. Throughout this time his careful attention and support of many friends of Byron Forest Preserve kept the plan from falling apart," said Kleiman. Kleiman continued, "We honor him for this recent success and for all his good works."



SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH



This tracked Bobcat was awarded by DNR's C-2000 program to Byron Forest Preserve for work in natural areas in the region. Here we have it mowing brush within bur oak at Shabbona Savanna unit.



Volunteer Emily Tilisy showing children a fox snake.

## Thank You

*to the following people for their generous donations since February 2004:*

Greg Milberg  
 First Presbyterian Church  
 Bob Shone  
 Howard G. Buffett Foundation  
 Becky & Hank Hartman  
 Memorial gift in memory of  
 Dewitt & Parke Holland  
 Robin M. Read  
 Tellabs Foundation  
 Nancy C. Hamill Winter  
 Ellen Baker  
 M. R. Bauer Foundation  
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 Dixon Chapter  
 of the Daughters of the American Revolution  
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 Dan Hill  
 James Hoyt  
 Alfreda & David Lelko  
 Marea & Gordon McKeague  
 Jim Grove  
 Kay & Greg McKeen  
 Mendota Federated Woman's Club  
 Janet & Richard M. Morrow  
 Oregon Chiropractic Clinic  
 Richard J. Schutter  
 Mary Baker Scott

Volunteer  
Doug Armontrout  
collects seed by  
hand.



Isabel's knob

# Thank You

*to the following people for their generous donations since February 2004:*

Clyde Gelderloos - Donated dumpster service

Betty McGoon - 2 donations, one in honor of her son-in-law Brent Coulter and one for her daughter's birthday - Susan Coulter

Tom and Jenny Mitchell - 3 Parsnip spades

Al Meier - Match donation from his employer State Farm

Sue Coulter - To honor Mary V.

Mike Adolph - 2 parsnip spades and truck tailgate (There was a tree back there, Mike)

Mary Vieregg - Donation for saw chains

Genesis Nursery - Sponsor of Autumn on the Prairie

Patricia Hayden, in memory of her daughter Judi

Jeanne and Tom Lawson in memory of Russell Lawson

Peter and Jan Heinkel in Memory of Edith Linneman Heinkel

## STEWARDS OF NACHUSA GRASSLANDS

Bruce Boyd	State Director
Bill Kleiman	Preserve Manager
Nathan Hill	Restoration Ecologist

### STEWARDS

#### **Big Woods**

Hank & Becky Hartman	NIU - CPW
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#### **Clear Creek Prairie**

Prairie Preservation Society of Ogle County	Mary Blackmore Terri Clark
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#### **Dot & Doug Wade Prairie**

Al Meier	Barb Regan
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#### **Edith & Anna Heinkel Savanna**

##### **East Unit**

Mike Crowe	Cassie Krueger
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##### **West Unit**

Jay Stacy	Mary Vieregg, Don Homer Gene Miller
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#### **Eight Oaks Savanna**

Jan Grainger

#### **Fen Unit**

Kevin Kaltenbach

#### **Hook Larson Prairie**

Dave Breen

#### **Kittentail Savanna**

West Chicago	Steve Sentoff
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Prairie Stewardship Group

#### **Hamill Winter Prairie**

Mike Adolph	Bob Shone
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#### **Prairie Potholes**

Chris Hauser	Jennifer Hauser
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#### **Roadsides & Jay Meiners Wetlands**

Tom Mitchell	Jenny Mitchell
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#### **Rolling Thunder & Harold Walkup Prairies**

Sally Baumgardner	Max Baumgardner Earl Thomas
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#### **Sand Farm**

Russ Brunner

#### **Schafer Prairie**

David Edelbach	Gerald McDermott Ray Derksen
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#### **Tellabs Savanna**

Ron Ingraham	Jan Grainger, Bob Shone
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#### **Thelma Carpenter Prairie**

Tom Mitchell	Jenny Mitchell
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#### **Barn Steward**

Jenny Mitchell

#### **Autumn On The Prairie 2004 Chair:**

Mike Adolph

#### **Science Stewards:**

Bird Monitoring	Ann Haverstock
Butterfly Monitoring	Jan Grainger
Herbarium Steward	Dwight Heckert
Insect Collector	Chris Hauser
Lespedeza leptostachya monitor	Todd Bittner
Photo Monitor	Gerald McDermott

#### **Outreach Volunteers:**

Publicist/Educator/Presenters	Sally Baumgardner, Gene Miller, Dwight Heckert
Youth Stewards Leaders	Mike Adolph, Carol Bartles, Sally Baumgardner, Howard Fox, Ron Ingraham, Hazel Reuter, Barb Rutherford

## Wish List

- MORE VOLUNTEERS! Each unit on the preserve and every aspect of our operation would welcome additional team members. Volunteers are empowered to do as much stewardship as they wish. Check the stewardship calendar for a Saturday workday or just come out to the preserve and learn more.
- ANOTHER HARDWORKING SEASONAL CREW! Each year Nachusa Grasslands has excellent opportunities for recent graduates and other conservation minded workers to work full time at the preserve during May to October. Assistant Stewards are needed for prairie and savanna management and restoration including weed management, seed harvest, and general maintenance. Keep an eye on TNC's career webpage for the formal job announcement - <http://nature.org/careers/index.html>

### Equipment Needs:

- Single Bed, Small table, lamp and bedding
- 50 Gallon Sprayer for new mule
- Hoist Kit for White Truck
- Snow plow for truck

# CALENDAR FOR STEWARDSHIP WORKDAYS 2005

Volunteer Stewards and Co-stewards lead workdays. New volunteers are always welcome to come learn and have fun with us. Start time is 9:00 A.M. Meet at the Preserve Headquarters (red barn) at 8772 S. Lowden Road. Volunteers break for lunch at the Barn and then sometimes continue stewardship or go for a hike in the afternoon as the group desires or weather permits. We also have stewardship during the week (give us a call at 815 456-2340).

## **March** - Brush, Planting and Fire Season

- 5 Big Woods, Fen and Schafer Prairie
- 12 Special Workday - TBA
- 19 Tellabs Savanna, Rolling Thunder Prairie and Hook Larson Prairie
- 26 Prairie Potholes and Eight Oaks Savanna

## **April** - Brush, Planting and Fire Season

- 2 East Heinkel Savanna and Rolling Thunder Prairie
- 9 Tellabs Savanna and **ANNUAL SKUNK CABBAGE TOUR with Tim Keller (at 2 P.M.)**
- 16 Coneflower Prairie - Special Project, Chris Hauser and Hamill Winter Prairie
- 23 Big Woods, Schafer Prairie and Hook Larson Prairie (*Autumn On The Prairie (AOTP) Committee Meeting at noon*)
- 30 Rolling Thunder Prairie

## **May** - Weed Season

- 7 Tellabs Savanna
- 14 Hook Larson Prairie and Rolling Thunder Prairie
- 21 Prairie Potholes, East Heinkel Savanna, Hamill Winter Prairie and **Potluck Gathering (meal at 12:30)**
- 28 Sand Farm, Schafer Prairie and Dot & Doug Wade Prairie

## **June** - Weed and Seed Collecting Season

- 4 Hamill Winter Prairie and Rolling Thunder Prairie
- 11 Eight Oaks Savanna and Schafer Prairie
- 18 Sand Farm and Rolling Thunder Prairie (*AOTP Committee Meeting at noon*)
- 25 West Heinkel Savanna, Big Woods and Thelma Carpenter Prairie
- 26 Sun. Clear Creek Prairie

## **July** - Weeds and Seeds

- 9 Prairie Potholes and Dot & Doug Wade Prairie
- 16 Schafer Prairie, Big Woods and Clear Creek Prairie (*AOTP Committee Meeting at noon*)
- 23 East Heinkel Savanna
- 30 Sand Farm and Rolling Thunder Prairie

## **August** - Seeds

- 6 Hamill Winter Prairie and Big Woods
- 13 Tellabs Savanna, Thelma Carpenter Prairie and West Heinkel Savanna
- 20 Eight Oaks Savanna and Dewitt Holland Prairie
- 27 Schafer Prairie and East Heinkel Savanna (*AOTP Committee Meeting at noon*)

## **September** - Seeds

- 3 Hook Larson Prairie and Prairie Potholes
- 10 AOTP Preparation Workday, Thelma Carpenter Prairie and Rolling Thunder Prairie
- 17 **Autumn On The Prairie Celebration – 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.**
- 24 Schafer Prairie and Dot & Doug Wade Prairie

## **October** - Seeds

- 1 Hamill Winter Prairie and Hook Larson Prairie
- 8 Tellabs Savanna
- 15 Doug and Dot Wade Prairie
- 22 Rolling Thunder Prairie and Thelma Carpenter Prairie
- 29 Schafer Prairie and Eight Oaks Savanna

## **November** - Brush, Planting and Fire Season

- 5 Fen and Eight Oaks Savanna
- 12 Thelma Carpenter Prairie and Big Woods
- 19 **Seed Mixing Celebration and Potluck Gathering**
- 26 Schafer Prairie, Prairie Potholes and Sand Farm

## **December** - Brush and Planting Season

- 10 Schafer Prairie and Hamill Winter Prairie
- 17 Hook Larson Prairie, Tellabs Savanna and East Heinkel Savanna

## **January 2006** - Brush Season

- 7 Schafer Prairie and Tellabs Savanna
- 14 Big Woods, Hamill Winter Prairie and Hook Larson Prairie
- 21 Prairie Potholes and Eight Oaks Savanna
- 28 East Heinkel Savanna and Rolling Thunder Prairie

## **February 2006** - Brush Season

- 4 Fen and Thelma Carpenter Prairie
- 11 Schafer Prairie
- 18 Hook Larson Prairie and Rolling Thunder Prairie
- 25 West Heinkel Savanna and Tellabs Savanna

## AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE

16th Annual Celebration at Nachusa Grasslands  
Saturday, September 17, 2005, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

A free event with fun for the entire family: guided walking tours of the preserve, paintings by local artists, children's activities, gift raffle, horse drawn wagon rides, live music, and good food.

Issue 42, March 2005

Editor . . . . .Nathan Hill  
Associate Editors . . . .Gerald McDermott, Bill Kleiman

## REACHING NACHUSA GRASSLANDS

The preserve is open to the public. The main trail head to the preserve is at the Visitor Entrance with the kiosk. All volunteer workdays meet at the Preserve Headquarters red barn (located 1/2 mile north of Visitor Entrance) at 8772 S. Lowden Road up a long driveway.

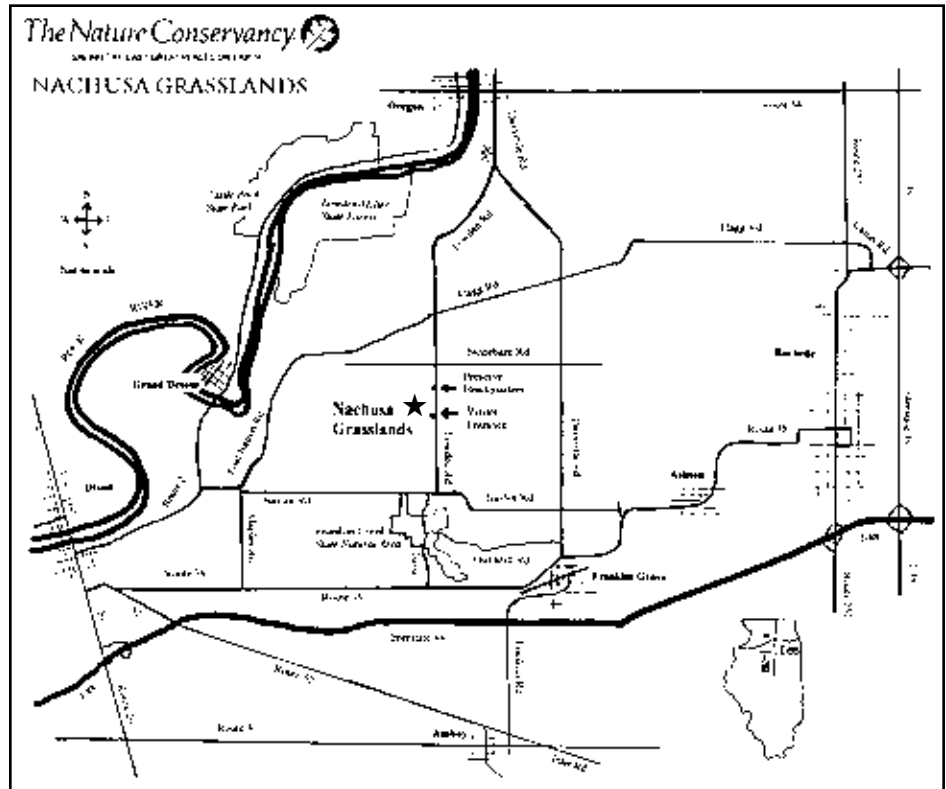
**From I-88 (East-West Tollway):** Exit at Rt. 251 North (Rochelle), to Rt. 38 West. Travel through Ashton and into Franklin Grove (approx. 16 miles), turn right (north) on Daysville Rd./1700E. Travel 1.5 miles north to Naylor Rd./1950N, turn left (west) and go 2.2 miles to Lowden Rd./1500E, turn right (north) and go 1 mile to Visitor Entrance (on the left with kiosk).

**From Route 64:** Just east of the Rock River in Oregon, turn south on Daysville Rd./1700E. Travel approx. 2.5 miles and turn right (45 angle) on Lowden Rd./1500E (Lowden-Miller State Forest). Travel south 5 miles to a 4-way stop at Flagg Rd. Continue south another 2 miles to the Visitor Entrance (on the right with kiosk).

### From Dixon:

**Option 1:** Take Rt. 38 East into Franklin Grove then turn left (north) on Daysville Rd./1700E. Travel 1.5 miles north to Naylor Rd./1950N, turn left (west) and go 2.2 miles to Lowden Rd./1500E, turn right (north) and go 1 mile to Visitor Entrance (on the left with kiosk).

**Option 2:** From downtown (Rt. 26/Galena Ave.) take Rt. 2 North two miles, then turn right (east) on Lost Nation Rd. Go one mile to Maples Rd./1150E, turn right, then left immediately onto Naylor Rd./1950N. Go east for 3.5 miles to Lowden Rd./1500E. Turn left (north) and go one mile to Visitor Entrance (on the left with kiosk).



Nachusa Grasslands is owned and operated by The Nature Conservancy, a private, non-profit group whose mission is to preserve plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

*The Nature Conservancy*   
SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

### *The Nature Conservancy*

Nachusa Grasslands Preserve  
8772 S. Lowden Road  
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www.nature.org

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