



### In Praise of Student Interns

by Marlin Johnson

Land management continues to be an important aspect of Waukesha County Land Conservancy's agenda. Management could not succeed without dedicated workers like Carly Smith and Matt Fossum. Carly and Matt are the stars of this summer's work crew.

As a demonstration of their dedication, consider this: They worked 10 hour days, four days a week. Most of their time was spent pulling, spraying and weed-whacking garlic mustard, knapweed and sweet clover. They also picked prairie seed for next year's plantings. Mosquitoes, blazing sun, high humidity, chiggers, ticks, deer flies and wasps are all part of their routine.

Matt is from Chippewa Falls. He currently lives with Jason Dare, the Waukesha County Land Conservancy's Land Manager. Matt graduated from UW-Madison last year. He majored in Conservation Biology and may eventually go on to graduate school. He wants to work in land management. He is very grateful for the opportunity to work for the Land Conservancy, because he could be outside and get hands-on experience in managing natural areas. (He also enjoyed picking black raspberries!) Matt may continue working for us in the fall.

Carly lives in the Town of Summit. She is a senior at UW-Stevens Point where she majors in Biology and minors in Spanish. Her interests lie in ecological restoration, and she hopes to get a job in Central or South America. Carly worked for the Waukesha County Land Conservancy two years ago as a volunteer. She is impressed by how her past work has paid off. Areas where she cut and pulled garlic mustard and knapweed really look good now. She feels that

her work was worthwhile. Carly enjoys working outside with people who share a common interest in ecology. Carly returned to Stevens Point this fall.

The Waukesha County Land Conservancy gives its warmest thanks to Carly and Matt for a job well done. We wish them well and hope they will keep their passion for land conservation.



Matt Fossum and Carly Smith collect seeds at Eagle Centre Prairie

The Waukesha County Land Conservancy is pleased to be able to offer the opportunity of paid work experience to students, and we gratefully thank the **Kettle Moraine Garden Club** for its \$3,000 donation to this summer's student intern program.

# LANDS YOU HAVE PROTECTED: The Eagle Centre Prairie

by Ellen Gemrich



Fall is a fabulous time to take a walk in a prairie. So put down your rake, pick up your wildflower identification book and head out to the Village of Eagle to the Eagle Centre Prairie. (For a review of wildflower books, see article on page 4 of this newsletter.)

The Eagle Centre Prairie is a 19-acre remnant of a former seven-square-mile prairie between the Villages of Eagle and North Prairie. It is considered a dry prairie. Prairie plant communities are classified based on how wet or dry they are. That this remnant we call the Eagle Centre Prairie was not turned into farmland is probably thanks to the steep hills of well-drained soil left here by the glaciers. Surrounded by hundreds of acres of flat prairie, the hilly Eagle Centre Prairie wasn't as inviting for the ox-drawn plow.

In 1994, just two years after a small group of people had formed the Waukesha Land Conservancy, the Eagle Centre Prairie site was proposed for a housing development. The Conservancy was alerted by a neighboring property owner Riene Wells, proprietress of the Eagle Centre House Bed and Breakfast. Riene felt there was something special here, something worth preserving.

Upon visiting the site, the Conservancy's biologist was thrilled to find a rare dry prairie and oak savannah plant community in almost pre-settlement condition. There were scattered huge bur oaks with a great diversity of native prairie plants beneath them. There were hundreds of kittentail plants, a threatened species found only in the Upper Midwest, and prairie smoke, pasque flowers, prairie buttercups and violets. Over 800 kittentail plants were thriving on this site. The Waukesha Land Conservancy later found that a land conservancy in Indiana had paid a premium to purchase a site that had only 6 kittentail plants on it!

The Conservancy notified the Village of Eagle that their community had a very special piece of property in their jurisdiction. The Village Planning Commission visited the site and agreed to slow down the development process to give the Conservancy time to arrange a loan from the Nature Conservancy. In April 1995, the Waukesha Land Conservancy bought eight acres of land from the potential

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**HOT**

**CHILI**

**COOL**

**BLUES**



**WAUKESHA COUNTY LAND CONSERVANCY  
FAMILY FEST**

At the Fish Hatchery  
417 Main St, Delafield WI

On Friday, October 24  
6:00 PM until 10:00 PM

\$50.00 Donation per Household  
(\$25.00 single)



**Steve Cohen Blues Band**

**Send all names and checks to:**

**WCLC  
PO Box 2572  
Brookfield WI 53008**

**Please RSVP by October 15th**

**CELEBRATE THE  
WAUKESHA COUNTY LAND CONSERVANCY'S  
LAND PRESERVATION WORK**

*Chili, some hot, some not so hot and some vegetari-  
an, cooked by WCLC Board members.*

# A REVIEW OF WILDFLOWER IDENTIFICATION BOOKS:

*Wildflowers of Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest*, by Merel R. Black and Emmet J. Judziewicz. Published in 2008 by Cornerstone Press from UW Stevens Point. According to Biologist Marlin Johnson, this is the newest and best wildflower identification book for Wisconsin.

## Positive features:

- 1) It has clear colored photos.
- 2) It has good descriptions of each plant by flower, leaves, and habitat.
- 3) Plants are arranged by families.
- 4) Included are range maps for every species.
- 5) It not only tells which plants are native and which are not, it shows which plants are threatened or endangered or of special concern.
- 6) It is very inclusive. For instance, all 13 goldenrods found in Wisconsin are shown in this book.
- 7) It includes only plants found in Wisconsin.

## Negative:

- 1) This book was so popular and apparently had a small printing, so it is currently unavailable on Amazon and in most book stores. If you can find it, it costs \$35.
- 2) The photos are somewhat small.

*Wildflowers and Weeds*, by Booth Courtenay and James H. Zimmerman, published by Van Nostrand Reinhold Company in 1972. This was the cream of the Wisconsin wildflower identification books until *Wildflowers of Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest* came out.

## Positive Features:

- 1) It covers only the Great Lakes states and is small enough that you may actually find your plant by just studying the photographs.
- 2) There is a very simple key to families of plants.
- 3) It includes the vast majority of wildflowers found in Wisconsin, including all 13 goldenrods..

## Negatives:

- 1) This book is out of print. Used copies are available on Amazon starting at \$40.
- 2) It does not note which plants are non- native.
- 3) There are 3-6 small photos per page, which do not always clearly show the plant nor its flowers.
- 4) The description of each plant is very short, such as, "Dry woods, prairies / plant hairy."

*Wildflowers of Wisconsin*, by Stan Tekiela. Published by Adventure Publications in 2000.

## Positive Features:

- 1) There are large, clear photos, with one plant depicted per page.

- 2) Flowers are arranged by color, making identification easier for the average wildflower enthusiast.
- 3) This book has the longest descriptions and information, including where each species originated.
- 4) The book is small and light-weight enough to fit easily in a pocket or backpack.

## Negatives:

- 1) Only 200 species of plants are identified in the book. Zimmerman's book of Wisconsin wildflowers has over 1200 plants. For instance, only 3 goldenrods of the 13 found in Wisconsin are listed here.
- 2) The index only lists plants by their common names. Plants can have many common names.

*Peterson's Field Guide to Wildflowers*, by Roger Tory Peterson and Margaret McKenny. First published in 1968 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

## Positive Features:

- 1) Plants are arranged by flower color, making it easier to find a specific blooming plant.
- 2) The geographic range covered is NE United States, not the entire country or continent.

## Negatives:

- 1) There are few colored sketches. In the section of yellow flowers, for instance, there are 8 pages in color of the 52 pages of plants with yellow flowers.
- 2) There is no identification key.
- 3) The geographic range covered by this book is NE United States, an area too large to include all of the plants. There are 29 goldenrods included, but 2 of the 13 species from Wisconsin are missing.

*A Guide to Field Identification: Wildflowers of North America*, by Frank D. Venning. Published by Golden Books in 1984.

## Positive Features:

- 1) All plants are shown in colored sketches.

## Negatives:

- 1) The range is huge, including all of North America, therefore it cannot include even a fraction of the possible species found in SE Wisconsin. For instance, there are only 10 goldenrods included, of the 90 found in North America. Many of those found in Wisconsin are missing..
- 2) There is no key, nor are the plants arranged by color. The only way to find a particular plant is to page through the over 3000 plants shown in the pictures.
- 3) There are as many as 15 colored sketches on each page. This is beautiful, but very confusing.



Look for stiff goldenrod (*Solidago Rigida*) at the Eagle Centre Prairie

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developer. The adjoining thirteen acres of prairie owned by the Eagle Centre House Bed and Breakfast was put under a permanent conservation easement to be held and managed by the Waukesha Land Conservancy.

Today the Eagle Centre Prairie is one of two sites owned by the Waukesha County Land Conservancy that have been declared "State Natural Areas" by the DNR. This designation means that these sites are significant enough that they can even stop the building of a highway!

Seventy-six native plants have been recorded at the Eagle Centre Prairie. The Waukesha County Land Conservancy is managing this property to best protect its great diversity. The Conservancy's management team of employees and volunteers have put in hundreds of hours pulling knapweed, cutting and poisoning buckthorn, cutting down trees that don't belong in a prairie and gathering seeds. Additionally,

prairies require periodic burning to keep out brush and remove grass litter. This stimulates the germination of prairie seeds that are now exposed to light. Burning also releases nutrients from the litter and warms the soil to create a longer growing season.

This management encourages a spectacular show of blooming native flowers and grasses. If you visit the Eagle Centre Prairie in April and early May, you will see an amazing show of blooming pale-lavender Pasque flowers. The prairie puts on another spectacular show in fall. In September and October, many species of prairie grasses and asters and several kinds of goldenrods are blooming. Look for the shape of these golden flower heads and study whether the leaves and stems are smooth or hairy, and you may be able to identify which of Wisconsin's thirteen goldenrods are in bloom in this dry prairie and oak savannah.

- *You are welcome to take photos, but please do not pick or dig up any plants on any Waukesha County Land Conservancy property.*

To visit the Eagle Centre Prairie, take Highway 67 south into the Village of Eagle. Cross the RR tracks and watch for South Street. Take South Street left to Meadow Lane. Turn right on Meadow Lane to Clover Lane, which is a cul du sac. Park at the end of Clover Lane and walk straight ahead into the Eagle Centre Prairie.



Waukesha Environmental Action League volunteers help to manage the prairie.

# Land Letter



*Waukesha County Land Conservancy*

*P. O. Box 2572  
Brookfield WI 53008*

Non-Profit Org.  
U. S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 133  
Mukwonago WI  
53149



Fall has arrived at the Eagle Centre Prairie. See the article inside for more information about this important property.

### Wanted:

A company to “adopt” the Eagle Centre Prairie for a year. WCLC will arrange work days for your employees to help manage this important natural area.