

Brush Piles



NBPP's Refrigerator Door Companion

Fall 1995

WHAT'S A STEWARD, ANYWAY?

Barbara Rose

Are they the ones who bring the bagels?

Is she the one who knows all the Latin names of plants?

Is it him, on the brushpile?

Oh, it's probably the grunt hauling saws, gloves, and loppers, right?

No—it's the one who is blurry-eyed from all the meetings.

All of the above are more than likely correct. Stewards, with a capital "S," are the land managers who volunteer to be responsible for the restoration of prairies, savannas, woodlands and wetlands to their once-formidable beauty. They plan and organize the work the other stewards do (stewards, with a small "s" are the rest of us.)

William Stevens writes in *Miracle Under the Oaks*, that this new art of restoration is like building a cathedral: "It takes decades, even centuries, and several generations must participate. Restorationists are in it for the long haul!" Stewards think long-term and big. Here are ours. Some are apprentices (Stewards-in-Training).

Bunker Hill and Harms Woods
Watersmeet
Wayside Prairie
Railroad Prairie
Sauganash Prairie Grove
Indian Roads Woods
Buffalo Grove Prairie
Perkins Woods
Sauganash Prairie Grove
Skokie Sedge Meadow
Sauganash Prairie Grove
Miami/Indigo Prairie
Somme Prairie Grove
Oxbow Prairie and
Harms Flatwoods
Somme Nature Preserve
Harms Woods
Morton Grove Nature Preserve
Somme Woods

John and Jane Balaban
John Berg
Bob Bluestone (apprentice)
Gladys Bryer (apprentice)
Paul Comstock (apprentice)
Dave Eubanks (apprentice)
Lee Hansen
Libby Hill
Larry Hodak
Stephen Isaacs (apprentice)
Pete Leki (apprentice)
Robert Lonsdorf
Steve Packard

Neil Peck
Laurel Ross
Brian Seinfeld (apprentice)
Preston Spinks
Drew Ullberg

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The Nature Conservancy's 1995 Prairie Festival & Illinois Chapter Benefit

Saturday, September 23

Poplar Creek Forest Preserve, Cook County

Prairie Festival, noon to 5:00 PM

Fund-raising Dinner, 6:00 PM

Bring your family and friends to celebrate native prairies and the Conservancy's contributions to their protection and restoration at the Illinois Chapter's first Prairie Festival. Located in the Poplar Creek Forest Preserve, our celebration will feature live music, storytellers, nature-related books and merchandise, and informative displays—ranging from hands-on learning about rare plants and animals to the importance of fire in a prairie ecosystem.

In the preserve beyond the festival grounds, you may try your hand at seed collecting and other restoration activities with volunteer stewards from the Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards throughout the day. The stewards will be joined by top scientific experts in the state to lead guided walks through the prairies and savannas, giving visitors an inspiring view of Illinois' native landscapes and animals and the incredible impact of restoration.

In the evening, we will transform the festival tent into the backdrop for a catered fund-raising dinner. The evening will also feature entertainment, a silent auction and the presentation of Chapter Awards to honor contributions of important members of the conservation community.

This is one festival you won't want to miss.

WHAT'S A STEWARD, ANYWAY?

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In addition to the list at the top of the first page, Stewards regularly visit their sites and report to the landowners (most of ours are owned by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County) and The Nature Conservancy. Each one writes a management plan, organizes and runs workdays, maintains records of the work done and the hours spent to do it, trains volunteers,

monitors species, promotes awareness, shares ideas with others.

When you come across a natural area, John Husar wrote in the *Chicago Tribune*, "you'll enter a rare world of Ice Age Remnants. You'll see combinations of plants and animals that cannot be found anywhere else. And now and then you'll have the bonus of meeting a very high grade human, some of the best that you'll find in chance encounters. These are stewards..." (from *Steward's Handbook*).

6,593 VOLUNTEERS AND STILL COUNTING

The Nature Conservancy Volunteer Stewardship Network has compiled statistics on restorationists' activities. And we are an impressive bunch. Look at this!

	<u>1994</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1990</u>
Volunteers who worked	6,593	4,847	3,809	3,310	4,789
Hours of volunteer time	60,176	53,441	50,726	40,189	37,786
Special events held	303	240	255	281	185
People attending events	10,140	10,271	10,847	5,116	9,383
Acres under management	47,985	37,555	27,364		20,624

This is what it takes to manage 277 sites. Our part is significant. Cook County alone has 56 sites, 14,265.5 acres under management and 1,885 stalwart volunteers who performed 18,032 hours of work.

Permit Holder:

The Nature Conservancy
8 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60603

North Branch Prairie Project

P.O. Box 74
Northbrook, IL 60065

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

*The North Branch
Prairie Project is
a cooperative effort
involving The Nature
Conservancy, the
Chicago Audubon
Society, and the Sierra
Club, Chicago Group.*

*We manage these sites
as volunteers for the
Forest Preserve District
of Cook County and
the Volunteer
Stewardship Network.*

Non-Profit

Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 6632
Chicago, Illinois

CLASSES

VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

The Nature Conservancy

8 S. Michigan, Suite 900, Chicago, Illinois 60603

Requirements: These courses are open to active stewards, co-stewards, and monitors in the Volunteer Stewardship Network. Preregistration is required for all classes. To do so, follow the instructions within each course description. Only when no other instructions are given call 312/346-8166 to register.

Basic Fire Training Workshop. Ed Collins, restoration ecologist for the McHenry County Conservation District, will lead a lively lecture/discussion covering the basics of fire ecology, burn planning, smoke management, safety issues and public relations. Volunteers working on the front line of a prescribed burn should take this informative course. SA Sept. 9, 9:00 AM-Noon at Camp Sagawau, Lemont or SA Sept. 30, 9:00 AM-Noon at North Park Village Nature Center, Chicago. Limit 50 (Camp Sagawau) and 35 (North Park Village). For Cook County volunteers. Registration may open up to volunteers outside Cook County if limit is not filled one week prior to workshop.

Spectacular Spiders. This workshop on spiders, led by Dr. Robert Wolff of Trinity Christian College, will include a slide overview of spiders and the many spectacular ways in which they live. Major groups of spiders will be introduced and then will be looked for in both prairie and forest ecosystems in the Lake Katherine Nature Preserve. An opportunity to do basic identification will be provided. At the end of the session, the class will also have an introduction to tarantulas with a chance to hold a tarantula on the endangered species list. Bring a lunch. SA Sept. 23, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM. Lake Katherine Nature Preserve and Environmental Learning Center, Palos Heights. Limit: 22.

Midwest Oak Savanna and Woodland Ecosystem Conference. This conference will focus professional and public attention on midwestern oak savannas and woodlands to help direct state and national planning efforts. Share information among managers, researchers, administrators and interested publics about oak savannas and woodlands; clarify definitions and management concepts; and explore potential contributions to the national recovery plan. Sept. 27-29, University Plaza Hotel, Springfield, MO. Call (314) 751-8660 or (417) 967-4194 to register.

Harvesting Autumn Gold: An Introduction to Seed Collecting and Identification. Drew Ullberg, Habitat Restoration Manager with the Kane County Forest Preserve District, invites you to explore the District's largest preserve and learn techniques to harvest seeds of native plants essential for restoration. Seed harvesting equipment will be available for hands-on experience. Learn to determine when seed is ripe. This session will be geared for the beginner but will be an excellent refresher for the veteran volunteer. Bring gloves, paper grocery bags, and your lunch. This is a rain or shine event so prepare accordingly. SA Sept. 30, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM. Burnidge Forest Preserve near Elgin. Limit: 20.

Fungal Foray at Spears Woods. Learn about the species diversity and the indispensable ecological role of mushrooms at a nature walk given by Dr. Jack Murphy, research assistant at the Field Museum of Natural History. Participants will collect mushrooms at Spears Woods, and afterwards Dr. Murphy will identify them and discuss their biological (and perhaps gustatory!) significance as well as related conservation issues. Participants should bring a collecting basket, roll of wax paper, pocket knife, small notebook, pen/pencil, and lunch. This is a rain or shine event, so prepare accordingly. SA Sept. 16, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM. Spears Woods. Limit: 25.

Tile Fields. In the classroom and in the field, Ed Collins will teach you how to locate a tile field and then lead a tour of a restored wetland where tiles have been destroyed. You may also have the opportunity to participate in tile-breaking using one of the techniques Ed describes. Be prepared to get muddy. SA Oct. 28, 1:30-4:30 PM. Glacial Park near McHenry. Limit: 25.

Stewardship Training Program/Morton Arboretum in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy. Each quarter, a selection of classes and workshops oriented toward the challenges of Stewardship are offered. Most of the courses are held at the Arboretum. This fall you can pursue classes in ecology; nature interpretation; botany; seed collection, preparation and application; floristic quality analysis; an ecological approach to understanding soil; studies of rodents and birds, and mushrooms. To register by phone, call 708/719-2468. For more information call 708/719-2458.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SEED PROCESSING DAY

9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 18

Emily Oaks Nature Center

A time to sow and a time to reap. And before we sow again we process seeds, the highlight of the season and one of our most important events! Come whenever you can and stay as long as you wish. Bring friends. Bring snacks to share. Wear clothing for the weather—we work outdoors.

SEED COLLECTING

We will be collecting seed every Wednesday from now until November 16. Join us from 9:00 a.m. to Noon each week. For the location, call the workday hotline, 312/878-3877.

ANNUAL HARVEST CELEBRATION

12:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 19

Hackney on Harms

An annual tradition! We celebrate the end of another successful season of seed collecting, only earlier than last year. Everyone is welcome to this "dutch-treat" lunch right after the morning workday at Harms Flatwoods. For directions, call the Hotline, 312/878-3877.

WOMEN'S POTLUCK

Wednesday, September 6, 7:00 p.m.

Let's get together to socialize, plan other women's activities, and hear about the progress of a collection of women's writing. All women are welcome! Please bring side dishes, desserts, and drinks to Karen Holland's, 2048 W. Melrose. For information, call Karen (312/929-7658) or Nancy Freehafer (312/342-6665).

ART OF THE PRAIRIE

An exhibit of art with a prairie flavor, featuring work by 16 local artists, will open on Friday, September 15 at the Chicago Botanic Garden. The show, organized by Tor Faegre, Lana Gits, and Sue Sommers, will run until November 5 when it will travel to Fernwood Botanic Garden in Niles, Michigan for two months. North Branchers are invited to attend the Artists' Reception on Sunday, September 24, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

READING GROUP

You do not have to be a regular to attend the North Branch Reading Group; just join us when you can. The next selection is *Magic Under the Oaks* by William K. Stevens. (See the review in the last *Brush Piles*.) The book is about us and has raised many issues of great interest to restorationists. This will be a discussion not to be missed. We will meet at the home of Colin Hubbard and Rachel Rosner on September 20.

On October 16 we will discuss *Green Rage*. This example of the thinking of the deep ecologists is certain to be provocative.

On November 16, participants will bring copies of their favorite works to read aloud and pass around. Remember, all of you are welcome. This is a great way to get to know each other and share ideas.

We meet at 7:30 p.m. Please call Nancy Freehafer at 312/342-6665 or Barbara Rose at 312/248-4817 for directions.

PRAIRIE FESTIVAL, POPLAR CREEK

The Nature Conservancy hosts its fall Prairie Festival on Saturday, September 23 from Noon-5:00 p.m. at the Poplar Creek Forest Preserve, in northwestern Cook County. The Festival offers lively activities for the whole family, nature walks, storytellers, music, merchandise, and interactive demonstrations in a variety of areas including native landscaping, live raptor presentations, ecological restoration, and much, much more. A \$5 donation (\$10 per family) is requested. For information and directions call (312) 346-8166.

FAMILY PRAIRIE DAY

North Branch Prairie Project, the Cook County Forest Preserve District, and the Morton Grove Park District are co-sponsoring a "Family Prairie Day" at Wayside Woods Prairie on Saturday, October 14. The fun lasts from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. with storytelling, apple cider pressing, and ol' time music and dancing. A regular work day precedes the Family Day, so bring a lunch and join in the fun.

North Branch volunteers are also needed to give prairie tours. Call Karen Laner at 708/657-9220 if you are willing to lead a tour or for more information.

STEWARDS CONFERENCE

Regional leaders, stewards, co-stewards, apprentices, and monitors—mark your calendars now. The 1995 Stewards Conference is scheduled for all day December 9.

GREET AND ORIENT NEW VOLUNTEERS

Hosts are needed:

- to welcome new people
- to provide some kind of orientation
- to make them a part of the group
- to ask who wants to be on our mailing list
- to contact them later to thank them
- to encourage them to come again.

Would you be willing to spend a few times a year to be a North Branch greeter? If so, please call Nancy Freehafer at 312/342-6665 (best time to call is mid-week, Tuesday to Thursday).

MIGHTY ACORN NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

...to lead small groups of children in stewardship activities. Skilled adults are needed to teach and help with brush pile building. Children need instruction in proper construction, and help in getting the brush up on the pile a la Brushmeister Brian! Call Justine Kusner, 708/825-3835, or Diane Reckless at The Nature Conservancy, 312/346-8166 for time and dates.

PLANTS OF THE CHICAGO REGION

The new Swink & Wilhelm is available to North Branchers at a substantial discount. Call Jane Balaban at 708/679-4289.

NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT FALL WORKDAYS AND ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

The NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT is working to restore and manage the few remaining prairie and oak savanna remnants along the North Branch of the Chicago River in the Cook County Forest Preserves. These areas, once part of a vast grassland ecosystem, are under tremendous pressure from urban development and non-native species. We are working to restore conditions that will allow these natural

wild communities to flourish as a permanent part of the metropolitan area.

In the fall we collect seeds. Always wear long pants and shirts with sleeves. Bring some water. Sun protection is important. We picnic after working so bring a lunch and something to share. The workday hotline is 312/878-3877.

FALL 1995

September 2	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Woods
September 3	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Woods
September 9	Saturday	9:30 a.m.	Watersmeet
September 10	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Buffalo Grove
September 10	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
September 16	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Oxbow (Bunker Hill)
September 17	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Flatwoods
September 20	Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Book Group
September 23	Saturday	9:30 a.m.	Watersmeet
September 23	Saturday	12:00 p.m.	Prairie Festival
September 24	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve SEEDS
September 24	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Prairie Grove SEEDS
October 1	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Bunker Hill Prairie SEEDS
October 1	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Harms Woods SEEDS
October 7	Saturday	9:30 a.m.	Watersmeet
October 8	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove SEEDS
October 8	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Woods SEEDS
October 14	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside/Railroad Prairie
October 14	Saturday	1:00 p.m.	Family Prairie Day
October 15	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Sauganash Prairie Grove SEEDS
October 15	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Wayside/Railroad Prairie SEEDS
October 16	Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Book Group
October 22	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods Prairie SEEDS
October 22	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Bunker Hill Prairie SEEDS
October 29	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Watersmeet SEEDS
October 29	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Harms Woods SEEDS
November 5	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods SEEDS
November 5	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Prairie Grove SEEDS
November 11	Saturday	9:30 a.m.	Watersmeet
November 12	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Wayside/Railroad Prairie SEEDS
November 12	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Wayside/Railroad Prairie
November 16	Wednesday	7:30 p.m.	Book Group
November 18	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	SEED PROCESSING AT EMILY OAKS
November 19	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Flatwoods
November 19	Sunday	12:30 p.m.	Annual Harvest Celebration
November 26	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove
November 26	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Somme Prairie Grove

Directions

NORTH BRANCH WORKGROUPS

The North Branch workgroups listed below need volunteers. Contact the chairperson for more information or attend a workgroup meeting.

Ecological Management

Next meetings are September 19 and November 14
Jane and John Balaban, 708/679-4289.

Education/Volunteer Development:

Joanne Softcheck, 312/878-3877

Publications/Publicity:

Karen Holland, 312/929-7658.

Science:

Drew Ullberg, 708/304-6972

POET'S CORNER

THREE POEMS BY CAROL NELSON

1

My spirit is the solitary song
of a young marsh bird
singing in the lonely morning mist.

My spirit is the fluttering wing
of a young marsh bird
clinging to a slender yellow reed.

My spirit is the endless glide
of a young marsh bird
resting on the heavy breath of day.

My spirit is the swelling flight
of a young marsh bird
soaring to where mighty eagles play.

BUNKER HILL/OXBOW (Chicago)—Meet at the Bunker Hill Forest Preserve parking lot on the west side of Caldwell Ave. about 1/4 mile north of Devon Ave.

EMILY OAKS NATURE CENTER (Skokie)—From intersection of Skokie Blvd. and Howard St., go east on Howard to first residential street, Knox. Go north on Knox to Brummel. Turn left on Brummel and go one block to Nature Center parking lot.

GLENBROOK HIGH SCHOOL (Northbrook)—North of Willow Rd. on the west side of Shermer Road. Enter the parking lot at the north driveway and park by the tennis courts.

HARMS WOODS/HARMS FLATWOODS (Glenview)—Meet at Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Rd., just south of Glenview Rd.

MIAMI-INDIGO (Morton Grove-Niles)—Meet at Miami Woods Prairie Forest Preserve parking lot on the east side of Caldwell Ave., two blocks north of Oakton Ave.

PERKINS WOODS (Evanston)—From I94 exit at Old Orchard Rd., east to Crawford St., south on Crawford to Grant St., east on Grant to Ewing St., site is at the corner of Grant and Ewing.

SAUGANASH PRAIRIE (Chicago)—Meet at the edge of the Forest Preserve along the south side of Bryn Mawr Ave. at Kilbourn Ave. (south of Peterson Ave. and east of Cicero Ave.)

SOMME NATURE PRESERVE (Northbrook)—Meet in the Post Office parking lot, Dundee and Western Avenues.

SOMME PRAIRIE GROVE, WOODS, AND SEDGE MEADOW (Northbrook)—Take Dundee Rd. two miles west from the Edens Expressway to Waukegan Rd. Go north a few hundred feet on Waukegan and meet at the unpaved parking area on the west side of the road.

WATERSMEET/SKOKIE SEDGE MEADOWS (Northfield)—Exit the Edens Expressway at Lake Avenue West. Go west to Wagner Rd., turn north then take Wagner to Winnetka Rd. Go east on Winnetka 3/4 mile. Park on the south side of the street.

WAYSIDE/RR PRAIRIE (Morton Grove)—Meet at Wayside Woods Prairie Forest Preserve parking lot on Lehigh Ave. (a few blocks east of Waukegan Rd. and just north of Dempster Ave.

BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE FALL WORKDAY SCHEDULE

The Guardians are volunteers working to restore the native Illinois prairie near Lake-Cook Road. We invite you to join us when we eliminate weeds, collect seeds and the ever popular brush-cutting. Dress for the weather, bring insect repellent and sun protection. Tools, camaraderie, homemade snacks and beverages will be provided.

All work days are on Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to noon.
September 10 • October 8 • November 5

DIRECTIONS: Take Lake-Cook Road to Hastings Road (one street west of railroad overpass and one mile west of Milwaukee Avenue.) Turn north on Hastings into the second lot on the right (one lot past the Computer Discount Warehouse.) Park at east end of the lot nearest the prairie.

QUESTIONS: Call 708/677-7001 (daytime) or 708/520-5822 (evenings) with questions. Ask for Lee.

2

WIND

Would that I might ride
the curl of your breath
through a bending countryside.

3

Two daisies so fair
whispering in the air

Why should I care to
call you "so fair"

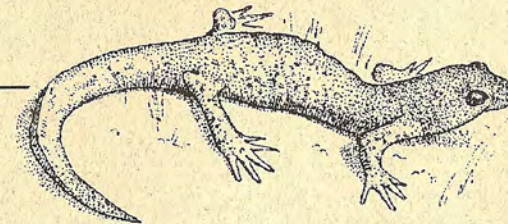
You look pretty simple to me
not as elaborate as a purpole oddity.

White petals, yellow center
nothing very imaginative there.

"Simple subtlety," I'd say.

What makes you so fair?
Fragrance, none.
Velvet, ruffled petals, none.
Growing alone on a scrawny stem.

Nothing, then.
Except
those silent, subtle whispers
in the air



To contribute to *Brush Piles*.

Your photos and cartoons would look great on these pages. Your features, anecdotes, essays, announcements, requests, poems, comments, and letters are also welcome. To discuss your ideas, call Barbara Rose, 312/248-4817 *before* the deadline. Deadline for the Winter 1995/96 issue is **October 30** (for December, January, February).

Brush Piles Crew

Editing: Leslie Borns, Barbara Rose, Joanne Softcheck
Layout/Production: Kathy and Chuck Lapinsky