

The Tallgrass Journal

Goose Lake Prairie Partners, 5010 N. Jugtown Road, Morris, IL 60450

Volume 11,
Issue 1



2014 Brings Change, Opportunity and New Ideas

Happy New Year! We hope you have stayed warm (if you live here in the Midwest) and safe. The Goose Lake Prairie Partners continue to work and plan for 2014 even if you don't see us at the Center.

January 16th was a work day at the Center as volunteers took down the Christmas tree, boxed up our ornaments and snowflakes, worked on our library of books, and began to warp the loom and create patterns for new rugs for this year.

We are also excited to be planning our next fundraiser to help support our educational events. The last two years we have been

blessed with beautiful quilts made by two of our Prairie Partners. This year you will have the opportunity to win another beautiful handmade one-of-a-kind gift. Raffle tickets can be purchased at our events or at the Visitor's Center after March 1st.

We are also planning to add new logo items to the gift shop in 2014. We hope you will stop in and make a purchase. All the monies from our gift shop help the partners add to the displays in the Center and support the educational events at the Park

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Park Notes:

Spring is just around the corner. Conservation workers will be busy cleaning up from the harsh winter and preparing the park for our 2014 visitors.

Whether you love to walk the trails, bird watch, view the natural beauty and wildlife, or take photographs, Goose Lake Prairie offers many hours of beauty and enjoyment for the whole family.

This year the trail panels around the Nature Trail are being replaced with beautiful color images and information. We hope you will take the time to enjoy these new features.

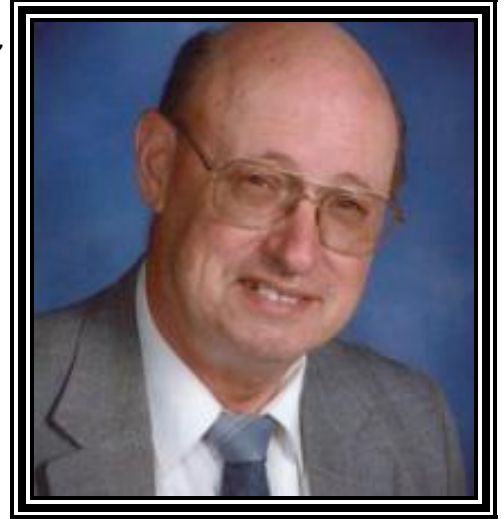
Call the park ahead if you want to see if the Visitor's Center is open. (815) 942-2899. The Prairie Partners will return March 1st weather permitting to staff the Visitors Center on weekends.



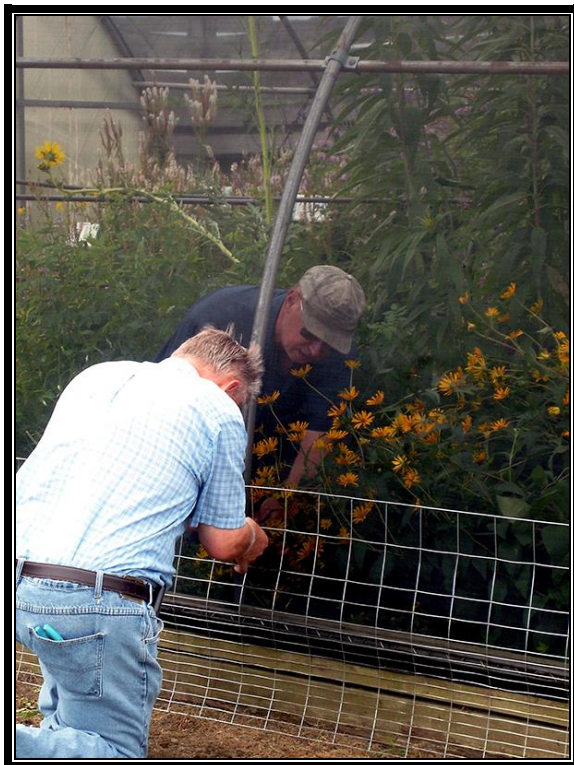
Art Rohr educating young visitors in the Butterfly Barn

Remembering Art Rohr

On December 16, 2013, we received the news that our partner and friend, Art Rohr passed away at home in his sleep. The only way to really celebrate his life is by showing you in pictures the depth and breadth of his commitment to Goose Lake Prairie and the partners. A veteran and a retired postal worker, Art loved nature, reading, wildlife and wood-working. His family has set up a memorial in Art's name through the Prairie Partners. He will truly be missed!



He leaves behind his sons, Gerald (Joan) Rohr of Harwood Heights, IL, and Dennis (Jenny) Rohr of Yorkville, IL, a daughter, Jeannette (Michael) Rateike of Joliet, IL; seven grandchildren, Jeremy Rateike, Katherine Rohr, Megan Rateike, Nathaniel Rohr, Melody Rohr, Marcella Rohr, and Nickelas Rohr; his sister, Dorothy (LaVern) Koehn of Oxford, IN; one niece, Amanda Armstrong of Fowler, IN and her children, Jenna, Keith, and Liam.



Congratulations Char McDade on your Retirement!



We are excited to announce the retirement of our Partner Friend and Office Coordinator, Char McDade on December 31, 2013.

We can't even begin to count the hours and care she spent helping us get ready for our events, working the gift shop, and bringing her grand kids to enjoy the festivities. She was our constant supporter, cheerleader and a ray of sunshine behind the desk!

She will be missed in the office, but she and her husband John are joining the Goose Lake Prairie Partners as volunteers. We couldn't be happier.

Enjoy your travels and time together and we will look forward to your contributions as partners.

Thank you Char for everything!



The use of native Illinois prairie plants in landscape design has grown in popularity as more people have become interested in prairie reconstruction and restoration. The growing interest in prairies can be attributed to many things, including the cultural link to pioneer Illinois, the great variety of prairies and prairie plants, and the opportunity for hands on research and work outdoors. Individuals involved in this type of work believe that they are helping to protect and perpetuate a nearly vanished landscape type. Prairies have been in Illinois for thousands of years where they have survived droughts and storms, but not the onslaught of John Deere's steel plow.

Prairies are a vanishing part of the natural heritage of Illinois. These valuable biological resources tell us what the landscape of Illinois was like during pioneer times. Many reconstructed prairie landscapes of today are intended to recapture parts of the past and preserve it for the future. It seems only logical to do these things in the prairie state of Illinois where the prairie's legacy, the rich dark soils, made Illinois one of the most productive agricultural sites in the world.

However, prairie plants remain virtually unknown to most people because the only prairie that remains is confined to railroad rights-of-ways, fencerows, and pioneer cemeteries. In this modern age, many people are unaccustomed to any type of a landscape planting that differs from the traditional bluegrass lawn or the flower beds with their neat, orderly rows of begonias, geraniums, petunias, or dahlias. Visit prairies during all seasons to see how these plants appear in nature. Learning about prairie plants is the first step in incorporating them into landscape designs.

Instead of traditional plantings, why not consider the use of native prairie plants in your gardening plans. Prairie plants are well suited to the soils and environment of Illinois. Consider the following before purchasing seed or nursery stock:

- Prairie plants are perennials that do not require replanting every year like many herbaceous ornamentals.
- Prairie plants are nearly free of disease and insects. Bluegrass lawns and ornamentals like roses and other flowers require constant care, including mowing and the application of fungicides, fertilizers, and insecticides.
- Due to their extensive root systems, prairie plants are resistant to drought and dry conditions. Bluegrass, other turf grasses, and most ornamental plants are usually very susceptible to drought, often requiring frequent watering.
- Native prairie shrubs are resistant to cold winter temperatures, unlike cultivated roses and other ornamentals, which are killed or severely injured, especially if left unprotected.
- Considerable variation may be found in the heights, leaf sizes and shapes, flower color, and flowering times of



- A prairie landscape is educational. Few areas of prairie remain in the state, so these plantings help individuals to learn about these plants which caused Illinois to be known as the prairie state.
- Prairie plants attract butterflies and other interesting insects.
- Prairie grasses are spectacular during the fall when they assume their russet, yellow, bronze, and orange colors. Many non-native ornamental plants do not have any fall color.
- Prairie plants, including shrubs, have ornamental features other than flowers that make them attractive through-out the year.
- Using prairie plants will reduce noise, conserve gasoline and oil, reduce pollution, and help to reduce accidents associated with lawn mowers.
- Prairie plantings provide valuable habitat for certain insects, birds, and other animals that live in grasslands. Prairie plantings can serve as valuable benchmarks for the comparison of soils and soil organisms with sites having other uses.

Many prairie plants, due to their use by Native Americans and pioneers, have an interesting story associated with them. Rattlesnake master was regarded as an antidote for the bite of the prairie rattlesnake (massasauga) by Native Americans who passed this belief on to the pioneers. Compass plant, a member of the sunflower family, received its name because its leaves are held vertically in a north to south plane, supposedly helping pioneers to find their way across the treeless prairies. Many others are reported to have medicinal values while others are known for the fragrances found in their flowers, fruits, stems and leaves.

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Part 1: Establishing a Prairie Garden (cont'd)

THE PRAIRIE GARDEN SITE

Once you have made the decision to start a prairie garden, a planting site needs to be carefully selected and evaluated. It should be an area with good soil that is free of contaminants such as oil or tar, debris such as bricks or limestone rock, and without the potential of herbicide drift, salt spray, or any type of disturbance that will disrupt the prairie planting. The site should permit the graceful combination of the plants with physical factors such as sunlight, wind, and topography. Consider the following when selecting a prairie garden site.

Sunlight: All prairie plants require large amounts of sun and are ideally placed in a location where 75 to 100 percent sunlight will be received. Prairie plants not only require large amounts of sun, remember that sunlight can also be used to enhance the beauty of your planting. Consider how the early morning and late evening rays of the sun will strike your planting. Sunlight at these times can greatly enhance the fall colors of little bluestem or the flowers of prairie roses, shooting stars, or prairie gentians.

Wind: The gentle movements of prairie plants, particularly the grasses, are very aesthetically appealing and soothing to the mind. The pioneers remarked that the wind moving the prairie grasses was much like the waves on an ocean. Designers of prairie gardens should try to create this effect in their plantings and not place them where the wind will be obstructed.

Topography: Variations in the topography of a planting add variety and greater dimension to the planting. Higher elevations may also allow certain plants to be seen in better detail. If the planting site does not have any variations in topography, consider bringing in soil to create gentle knolls.

Existing features: Roads, buildings, fences, utility poles, all need to be considered if they will impact the planting site. Roads detract from the planting by creating an unnatural border. Buildings, fences, and utility poles can cause problems if fire is used in the management of the site.

PREPARATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRAIRIE GARDEN

In many ways, the preparation of the site is much like the methods involved in vegetable gardening. If the site has a bluegrass or fescue sod, this should be removed by taking off the sod with a sod removal machine or by using a non-selective herbicide to kill the grass. If you decide to use an herbicide, a 1% solution of Roundup applied as a foliar spray will kill most grasses and broadleaf plants present on the site. Once the sod is dead, it should still be removed because it will interfere with the growth of prairie seedlings and the design of the planting.

Once the sod has been removed, the soil should be cultivated to prepare the site for planting. It is not necessary to cultivate deep into the soil. This procedure may cause problems later because the soil may not be firm enough. Use a tiller and cultivate the upper six to eight inches of soil. The soil should not be cultivated intensively. That would create a loose planting bed for the prairie plants, and could result in poor plant survival because the soil will be too loose around the root systems.

Many sites will be enhanced by the construction of a dirt mound, thereby creating variations in the topography of the site. This can be accomplished by bringing soil in from another part of the property or by purchasing soil. If the soil comes from a site other than your property, make sure that it is very similar to your soil. Also make sure that it does not contain the seeds of aggressive exotic plants such as sweet clover or teasel which could threaten the success of your planting.

Once the soil has been placed on the site, it should be shaped according to the design plans that you have made. The mound should be shaped so that it appears to be a natural part of the planting. This will make the planting much more aesthetically pleasing to you and to other observers of the site.

Some sites, due to construction activities, may have a very tight clay soil which will need some improvements in richness and porosity before planting the prairie garden. Incorporate sand and peat or a good topsoil into these sites using a garden tiller. Work the site until these materials are thoroughly incorporated into the soil. The amount used will depend upon local soil conditions.

**This article is an excerpt from Prairie Establishment and Landscaping – National Heritage Tech. Publication#2
Next Issue: Planning your garden, What to Plant and When to Plant**

Goose Lake Prairie Partners Special Events for 2014

Event	Date	Time
25th Annual Cabin Festival	June 07	10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
<p>See authentic pioneer crafts done by the Prairie Partners and Friends as they re-enact in authentic dress. Visit the Cragg Cabin history exhibit and prairie life presentations. Park your car in the visitor center parking area. Walk the trail to the Cabin or ride the wagon. Some demonstrators and vendors will have items for sale. The gift shop will be under the tent. The event is to celebrate cabin living and life in the 1830's Location is in and around the Cragg Cabin North North-East of the Visitor's Center. Our Cabin Trail is handicapped accessible.</p>		
8th Annual Nature Photography Contest	August 17 (Sunday)	Noon – 3:00 p.m. Accept photo entries.
	August 21 (Thursday)	6:00 p.m. Closed contest Judging in Auditorium.
	August 22 (Friday)	Partners Prepare exhibit.
	August 23—24 (Sat-Sun)	Exhibit Days during Center hours.
	August 24 (Sunday)	Exhibit Closes 3:30 p.m. -- 4:00 to 4:30 p.m. Photo pick up.
<p>The Nature Photo contest offers budding photographers a chance to display the best photographs from their many trips to State Parks in Illinois this past year. While we would hope that everyone visits the GLPSNA for their entries, we know you will find a few nice shots in the many parks in Illinois. See our website for details. All activities are in the Visitor's Center.</p>		
17th Annual Prairie Day	September 20	10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
<p>The Annual Prairie Day is a celebration of the prairie environment normally held in conjunction with National Prairie Week at the Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area. Presentations on the environment and nature play an important part of the day's activities as well as highlighting on the special features of the park itself. Various presentations, educational talks, and projects for children are the special offerings of the day. All special amenities of the park are open, the Cragg Cabin, the Visitors Center, butterfly barn, nature trails with wagon rides etc. Prairie Day began as an annual activity in 1997. It traditionally falls on the third Saturday of September. Located in and around the Visitor's Center.</p>		
Natural Resource Tour	September ?? <i>(3rd or 4th wk. - date not confirmed)</i>	9:00 a.m. - 2 p.m. <i>(Project aimed at 5th Grade School Children.)</i>
<p>Directed by the Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District; This event is closed to the public. The Prairie Partners are responsible for the Cabin History Presentations to area schoolchildren. Activities happen in and around the visitor's Center.</p>		
Annual Holiday Open House	November 8	1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
<p>We will be decorating the Christmas tree once again with homemade ornaments. If you would like to contribute to our tree, come join us. Children will make holiday ornaments. Hot apple cider and homemade cookies will be served. Partners will be in 1830 period dress. Located in the Visitors Center.</p>		

Park Happenings

- ◆ Heidecke Lake opens April 1st for Fishin
- ◆ Partners begin to staff the Visitors Center on weekends beginning March 1st (weather permitting)
- ◆ New items with logos from Goose Lake Prairie and Heidecke Lake will be added to the Gift Shop.
- ◆ Remember if you are looking to schedule your group please call the park first for what is available.

Gifts To The Park Are Tax Deductible.

Goose Lake Prairie Partners are looking for a few new items to add to the Visitors Center as well as the park itself. If you or your organization is looking for a special project why not consider the following items:

1.) Choose a park trail and monitor it to keep it pristinely clean for our visitors.

2.) Volunteer to work the Visitor Center Desk during the weekend to

help keep the center open when park staff isn't available.

3. Consider purchasing an item for the park. At the current time our "Want list" includes:

- Caterpillars for the Butterfly Barn. (Seasonal)
- New mounted bird or mammal species
- Park benches to strategically place around the park on various trails.
- New folding chairs for our events.
- New folding tables with plastic tops
- Fund a mural for the Auditorium.
- New bird cam for the center.
- Purchase a chain saw art piece to sit in The Bird Corner

Tax deductible gifts are recognized with a "certificate of gift" which can be used for tax deductions.

Call 815-942-2899 for information.

PARK CONTACTS:

Joe Giacone, Site Superintendent
Susie Johnson, Prairie Partner President
Bev Mansfield, Vice-President
Rebecca Sipple, Secretary
Jackie Martin, Treasurer/Purchasing Agent
Norma Hedges, Gift Shop Chairperson
Jo Fleming, Historian.

The Mission of the Goose Lake Prairie Partners

The mission of the Prairie Partners is to help the Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area in the following ways:

- To understand, maintain and attract the public to the park by producing various festivals, educational events and displays centered around early life on the prairie and on the natural environment of the park.
- To provide assistance and funds as needed by the park and its staff for equipment, supplies and other items for improvement and maintenance.

Monetary or Time Donations Are Always Welcome.

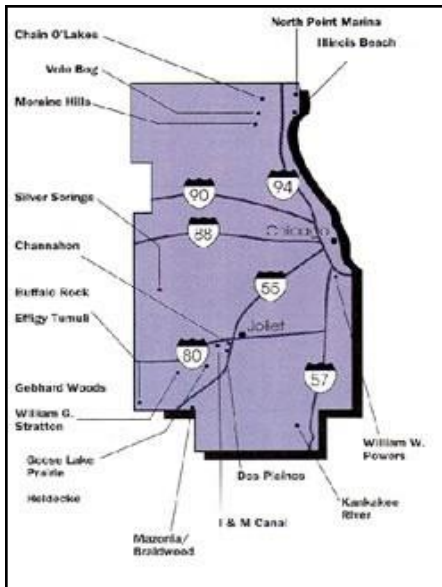
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We are on the Web.
<http://gooselakeprairie.org>

Are you Familiar with
 IDNR Region 2:

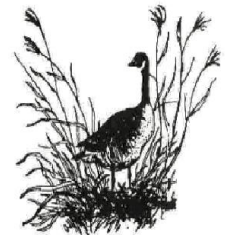


Map courtesy of the
 American Park Network

Illinois Department of
 Natural Resources
 Region II Office
 2050 W. Stearns Rd.
 Bartlett, IL 60103
 847/608-3100

Do you use Google Earth?
 Download [DNR Sites Overlay](#)
 for Google Earth.

Take Only Memories.
 Leave Only Footprints.
 Thank You Very Kindly.



Buffalo Rock State Park & Effigy Tumuli	Illinois and Michigan Canal State Trail
Chain O'Lakes State Park	Kankakee River State Park
Channahon State Park	Mazonia/Braidwood State Fish & Wildlife Area
Des Plaines Fish and Wildlife Area	Moraine Hills State Park
Gebhard Woods State Park	North Point Marina
Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area	Silver Springs State Fish & Wildlife Area
James "Pate" Philip State Park (Tri-County)	Volo Bog State Natural Area
Heidecke Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area	William G. Stratton State Park
Illinois Beach State Park	William W. Powers State Recreation Area

Learn More
 About Nature
 In Illinois
 Visit Our
 State Parks.

FROM THE EDITOR:

I have enjoyed putting together my first issue and providing information that I hope you will find of interest and useful. Feel free to email me anytime with comments, ideas for articles or just general information about the Park or volunteering with the Goose Lake Prairie Partners. My email address is jschaible@yahoo.com. Don't forget to check the website as well. Our web address is: <http://www.gooselakeprairie.org> or like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/prairiepartners2012>

We look forward to seeing you at the Park!

Jackie Martin

We welcome winter walking, cross country skis, and bird watching.
 No motorized vehicles on park trails. Please stay on marked trails.