

The Tallgrass Journal

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

Volume 10, Issue 1



Park Landmark Removed by Susie Johnson assisted by Joe Nyhoff.



On a snowy Saturday (January 26), the old corncrib on Jugtown Road in the Heidecke State Fish and Wildlife Area was burned to the ground. Morris Firemen did a practice burn, assisting the park in removing this old landmark. The firemen watered down the archery stand and the trees close to the crib before lighting the torch.

The corncrib sat next to the archery range and was often used as the background for the many photographers that took photos of deer and birds around that area. Several Turkey vultures have roosted on the top and many other birds have made nests in the structure. Several arrows were found stuck in the narrower north end of the corncrib going to show that they still could not hit the broadside of a barn. Staff and Prairie Partners used the crib to lead people to the archery range or the parking area just in front.

According to former Superintendent Joe Nyhoff, the corncrib sat on a farm owned by Roland Bargo prior to becoming park property. Mr. Bargo was known for being the longest serving Township Road Commissioner in the State of Illinois. Information on Mr. Bargo can be found by in a book written by William S. Miller in 1974, titled "Growing up in Goose Lake." An oral history was collected by Judi Johnston, who served as park interpreter.

While there was a bit of sentiment attached to this structure, never in the history of the period that the crib was part of the park was it used for anything, and the crib was in a very run-down condition.

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Park Notes:

The prairie looks beautiful. Our park staff is keeping the visitor areas ready, so why not plan an outing? There are many trails to choose from according to the length of trail you want to walk.

The staff cautions you to bundle up, and be prepared for the elements.

Good walking shoes, a hat and a bit of water are a must. Yes you may bring the dog for a walk also, but remember to pick up after him/her and when you return from the prairie fields, check your pets as well as yourself for ticks and other varmints..

**Stay Informed
Check
the Website
<http://gooselakeprairie.org>**

Calendar of Events

Call the park desk for more information on any of the activities: 815-942-2899

March to November—Prairie Partners open the Visitors Center Sat-Sun 10am-4pm.

From April through August—Guided Wagon Rides and Walks.

June 15th—Cabin Festival 10am to 3:00pm. Notice the Festival is the third week of June.

See the website: <http://gooselakeprairie.org> for a full activity schedule for 2013.

Prairie Partner work days:

The first work day of the year was held January 29th. We took down the Christmas Tree and decorations, started a new rug on the loom and cut denim strips for weaving. We also added a new bulletin board in the desk area.

Our next work day is Feb 13th. We will work on the weaving project and complete the book processing.

Continuing work dates will be listed on the website.

WE ARE ALWAYS SEARCHING FOR NEW PARTNERS. COULD YOU BE ONE?

Holiday Party In November Was A Great Success.

Two Partners, Becky Sipple and Bev Mansfield made sure our Holiday Party was a success. They planned stars and God's Eyes as the decorations for the 2012 Holiday Tree.

Hot apple cider, cookies and fun was the emphasis and we all had a fine time finishing the tree and hanging paper snowflakes in the windows. We hope you visited the center in November and December and saw the results of our work.



Becky Helps Children with God's Eyes



Bev Helps Children with Five Pointed Stars.

Keep the Prairie Partners Gift Shop in mind when you visit our center...

Many Nature Books are available, some Jewelry items, Handmade Leather Pouches, Clothing & Hats commemorating the Prairie Park and Hand-woven Rag Rugs.



\$4.00 each

Flowers NEW to our Plant I.D. Books in 2012

During the summer of 2012, Park Volunteer Art Rohr identified 4 plants that were not in the park plant listing.



Lance-Leaved Violet (*Viola lanceolata*) is white with a long tapering base. The leaves are 2 to 6 inches long and up to 1 inch wide with a blunt or rounded tip and a tapering at the base. The Lance-Leaved Violet is found in bogs, swamps and wet spots. The Flower is slightly irregular,

about 1/2 inch across with 5 white petals that are pale yellow at the base. The two side petals are smooth (not bearded); the lower petal has numerous reddish purple lines.



Marsh Phlox (*Phlox glaberrima*) is a very showy flower. It is smooth, usually hairless plant typically less than 2 foot tall, with stalkless, opposite leaves. The leaves are up to 5 inches long and 5/8 inches wide. It is widest

near the rounded bases and gradually tapers to pointed tips. The flowers are individually stalked on branching, rounded clusters at the top of the plant. Each flower is 1/2 to 3/4 inch wide, with a narrow, tubular, green calyx with 5 bristle-like teeth. The deep magenta tubular corolla flares into five broad lobes. Blooms spring-summer.

The Prairie Indian Plantain (*Arnoglossum plantagineum*) is a native perennial plant which grows to about 3—4 foot tall and is unbranched, except near the inflorescence. The stout central stem is hairless and often has red and green stripes running

along its length. The alternate leaves are up to 8 inches long and 4 inches across, becoming smaller and fewer as they ascent the central stem. Their texture is thick and rubbery. These leaves are hairless and broadly ovate.



The inflorescence flowers branches into several flattened clusters of greenish white flowerheads; each cluster of up to 100 flowers. Each flowerhead within a cluster looks like an unopened bud. However, close inspection reveals 5 white flowers surrounded by 5 green bracts with white strips. Blooms late spring-midsummer.

Butterweed (*Senecio glabellus*) is a member of the Aster family. The stems stand upright, smooth and can grow up to 3 feet tall. The leaves alternate, are deeply pinnate lobes with coarsely serrate margins. Leaves are broader at the tip than at the base. The central stem and small side stems terminate in rather tight clusters of compound flowers. The flowers consists of 5 to 15 yellow ray florets



surrounding numerous yellow disk florets. Each compound flower is about 1/2 inch across, and a cluster of flowers is about 1 to 5 inches across. Fragrance resembles the fragrance of buttercups. The achenes have small tufts of white hairs, and are distributed by the wind. Root system is shallow and fibrous. Likes wet to moist By late summer, Butterweed dies down and becomes inconspicuous.

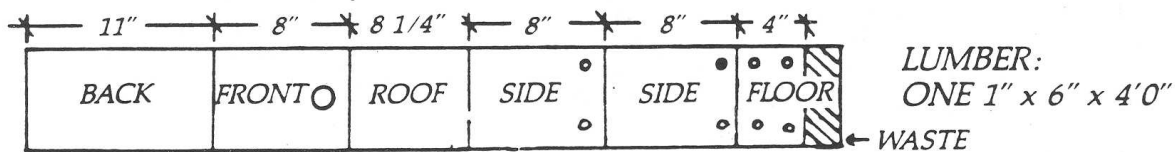
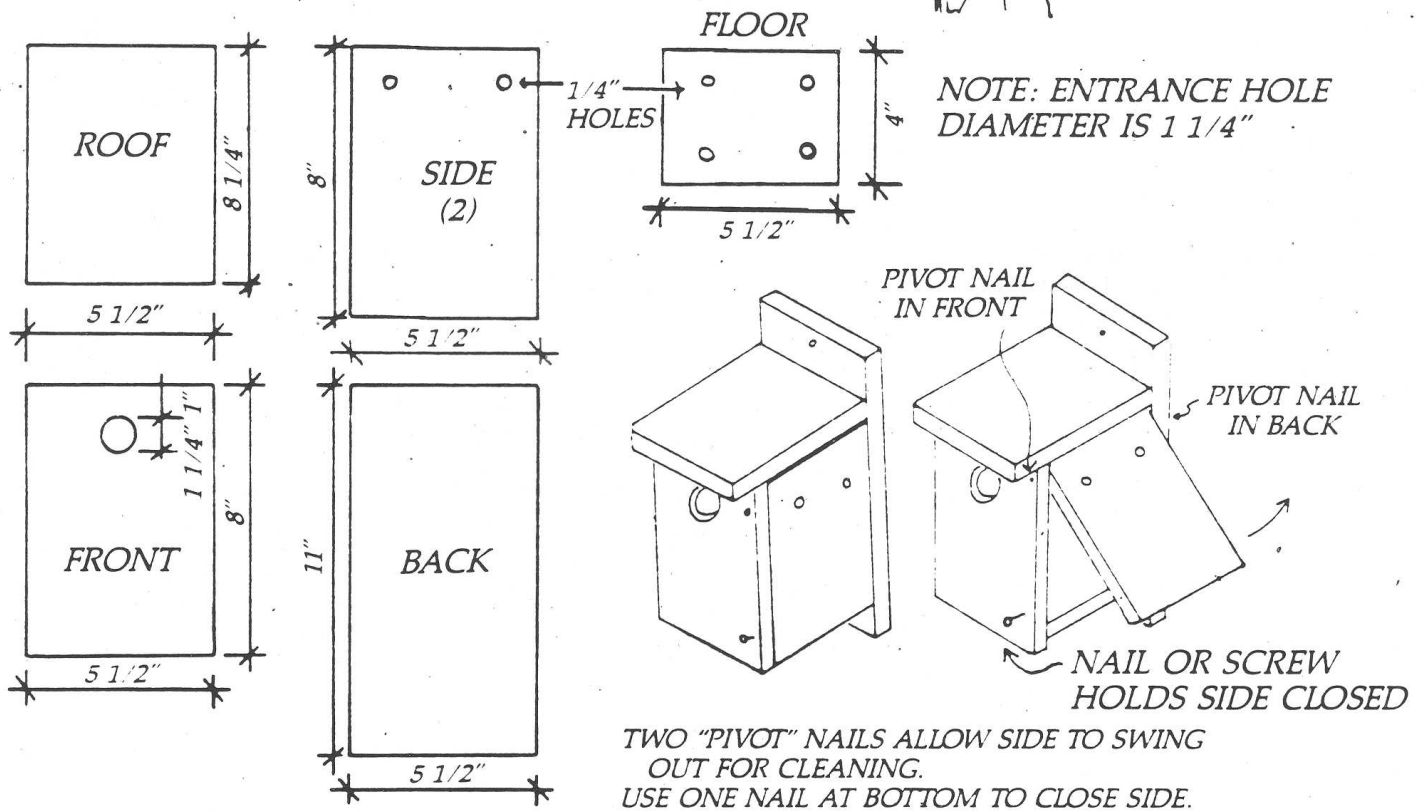
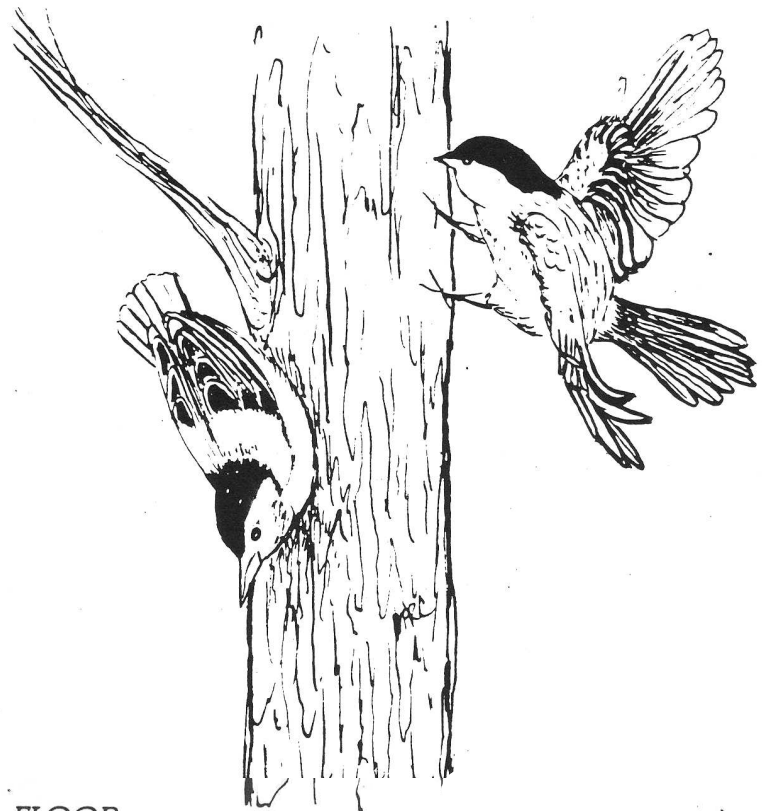
Identifying plants is an ongoing project at Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area.

Building Bird Houses

This pattern for a bird house is taken from "Wood Projects for Illinois Wildlife; Homes and Feeders for Birds and Mammals." published by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Heritage; it is no longer available. This design is a nice home for the following birds and mice.

- HOUSE WREN
- BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE
- CAROLINA CHICKADEE
- WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH
- PROTHONOTARY WARBLER
- PRAIRIE DEER MOUSE
- WHITE-FOOTED MOUSE

Some information on these inhabitants is on the following page.



Bird Houses, continued.

We are including three of the birds the bird house is good for (from the same book). Who would have thought that a White Footed Field Mouse would like the same house?

Prairie Deer Mouse and White-footed Mouse

The prairie deer mouse and white-footed mouse are frequent occupants of nest boxes placed for house wrens, chickadees and bluebirds. They are distinctively marked by brown or grayish backs, white bellies, long tails and very prominent eyes. While they may occasionally be a nuisance if they take up residence in a house, they are both rather appealing and interesting native mammal species found throughout Illinois.

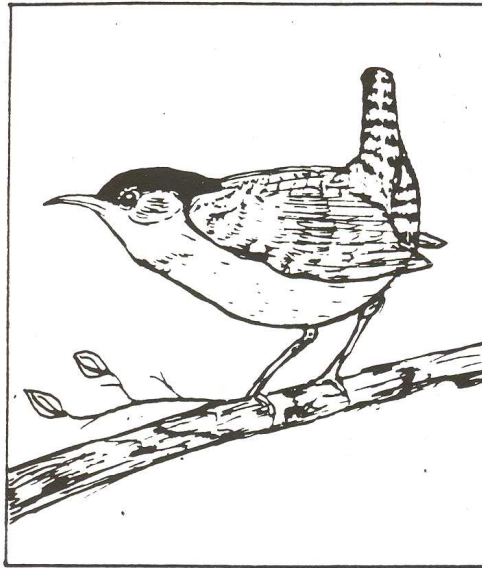
They can be a fascinating occupant of nest boxes in their own right. Some people intentionally place nest boxes for these two native mouse species on fenceposts along fencelines near their cabins or at nature centers. A wren house as shown on page 4 is appropriate for use by these two mice. Nest boxes should be on posts about 3 or 4 feet above the ground.

As the mice raise their families they can provide a constant source of enjoyment and fascination for children who may occasionally open the side of the box and peek at the bug-eyed occupants within. Mice will winter in these boxes, so the entry hole should face the east or southeast to avoid prevailing northwest winds.



The only problem with mouse use in nest boxes is that if birds return to a songbird nest box in the spring and enter a box occupied by deer mice or white-footed mice, the mice might kill and eat the birds in order to defend "their" box. Nest boxes for house wrens, chickadees, nuthatches, tree swallows, bluebirds and other small songbirds should therefore be left open in the winter to prevent their use by wintering deer mice and white-footed mice. Boxes intended for these mice should be left closed in winter.

**ALL TEN BIRDHOUSE TYPES
FROM THE BOOK ARE FEATURED
ON THE BULLETIN BOARD
IN THE CENTER.**



House Wren

The house wren is one of our most common and enjoyable backyard birds. Its beautiful bubbling calls are a joy to hear during the summer.

House wren boxes are likely to be used if they are 5 to 10 feet above the ground and located under the eave of a building or in a tree. This is the only kind of bird house which can be free-hanging from an eye-screw. All other bird houses need to be firmly anchored. House wren holes are too small for house sparrows or European starlings to use. Don't put a perch on the nest box. Perches invite sparrows to try using the nest. If you have a perch on a wren house, take it off.

The entrance hole for a wren house should be 1-inch in diameter. The 1 1/4-inch hole size shown on page 4 also allows use by chickadees and nuthatches, but not house sparrows.

House wrens generally nest in wooded, shrubby habitats. Their nests are characterized by twigs and the six to eight eggs are finely speckled with reddish spots. Sometimes wrens will take over the nest of a tree swallow or eastern bluebird after puncturing the eggs of the other birds with their bills.

As soon as one family of wrens leaves a house, clean it out so another brood of young ones can be raised.

Black-capped Chickadee and Carolina Chickadee

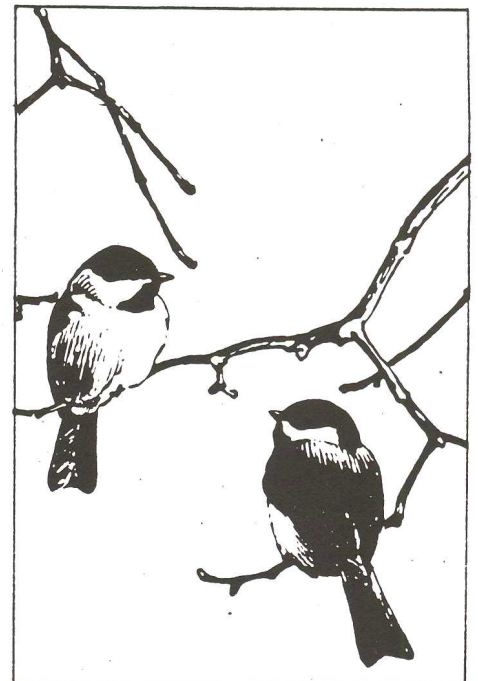
Illinois has two species of chickadees: the black-capped, occupying the northern two-thirds of the state and the carolina, occupying the southern one-third. Many people enjoy these delightful birds at their feeders every winter but don't realize they will also nest in yards and woodlots with mature hardwood trees.

The house shown will be used by chickadees if placed in the proper habitat: either mature hardwood shelterbelts and woodlots in agricultural areas or mature hardwood forests in other parts of the state. The house should be mounted 5 to 15 feet high with 40 to 60 percent sunlight. About an inch of sawdust should be placed in the bottom of the nest box. The chickadee needs an entrance hole 1 1/8 inches in diameter. The 1 1/4-inch diameter hole shown on page 4 also allows use by wrens and nuthatches, but not house sparrows.

White-breasted Nuthatch

The white-breasted nuthatch is also well-known at winter bird feeders as it hangs upside down to eat suet and probe for insect larvae under the bark of trees. It will also nest in mature hardwood forests in habitat similar to that used for chickadees.

As soon as each brood of young leaves the nest box, clean it out so more birds can use it. Nuthatches need an entrance hole 1 1/4 inches in diameter. This allows use by house wrens and black-capped chickadees, but not house sparrows. Houses should be about 12 to 20 feet above the ground.





*"Patriots Dream"
PP Fundraiser 2013*

Partners Hold Quilt
Fundraiser 2013
To Benefit the Goose Lake
Prairie State Natural Area.

"Patriot's Dream"

Twin Size Quilt

1 ticket for \$1.00

OR

6 tickets for \$5.00

The drawing will be held
September 21, 2013
at the Prairie Day Event.

**This lovely quilt has been a project
of Prairie Partner Susie Johnson
who did the piecing. The quilting
was donated by Ann Register.
" A Patriot's Dream"
will fit perfectly
on a day bed or a twin sized bed.**

You need not be present to win. Whether you win or not, your contribution to Goose Lake Prairie Partner events and activities is greatly appreciated. Ask for tickets at the visitor's center desk.

The drawing for the quilt will be at Prairie Day, September 21, 2013. The prize must be picked up in 15 days or a new winner will be chosen. We must reach at least \$200.00 in ticket sales or the quilt will not be let go. In that case, the raffle date will be changed to allow a longer period to sell.



*Samples of the
machine
embroidery in the
white squares...*

Park Happenings

- The 2012/2013 five firearm deer hunting seasons and the archery deer season finished as of Sunday, January 20th at Sunset.
- Heidecke Lake will open for the 2013 fishing season on April 1, 2013.
- Heidecke Lake boat ramp rehab should begin in March. Work being completed includes replacement of the three concrete ramps, new ramps lengthened by ten feet, replacing of several wooden deteriorated docks with aluminum docks, and removal of gravel bars at the end of existing ramps.



If you are looking for an interesting program for your club or group, why not consider a Nature Program? Call the Park Desk for more information.

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. Normally the Center is only open on weekends if volunteers

work the center.

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
- Donate a chain saw art piece to sit in Bird Corner.
- Video surveillance for the museum.

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

PARK STAFF

Joe Giacone, Site Superintendent
Char McDade, Office Coordinator
Susie Johnson, GLPP President
Bev Mansfield, Vice-President
Rebecca Sipple, Secretary
Jackie Martin, **Treasurer/Purchasing Agent**
Norma Hedges, Gift Shop Chairperson
Jo Fleming, Historian.
Tom Kaluzny, Board Member

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.

Text in this publication is the sole responsibility of the authors of the articles and not the responsibility of the Park or the Prairie Partners.

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Phone: 815-942-2899

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



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



Prairie Insects in Winter



In spring, summer, and fall the prairie is alive with insect activity. Bees hum, mosquitoes buzz, butterflies and moths flit from flower to flower, crickets sing. Where are all the pesky flies, mosquitoes and beetles in the winter? What happens to the grasshoppers and the crickets? The prairie insects have disappeared - but are they really gone?

In cold weather most common insects cannot function. So, as winter nears, some insects look for

shelter in the prairie soil. Some insects build their own houses, and some search for places to lay their eggs.

The honey bee queen and worker bees pile up into a ball in the center of the hive. The bees in the center are warm. The bees on the outside get cold, so they push their way into the middle of the ball. Those who were in the middle are pushed toward the outside of the ball. Therefore, the ball of bees keeps moving a little all the time.

Adult flies and mosquitoes find places outside in caves or holes in tree trunks - any place that offers a little protection from the cold. Most of them are females that mated during the summer. The eggs they carry inside them can develop into more flies and mosquitoes when spring comes.

Most species in the order Coleoptera (Beetles), have a life cycle of one generation a year. The winter may be passed in any of the life stages, depending on the species. Many overwinter as partly grown larva - they look like short

worms and tunnel down into the ground; many overwinter as pupa in chambers in the soil or in wood or in other protected areas, and many overwinter as adults. For example ground beetles and cucumber beetles dig down into the ground where it is warmer.

Some butterflies, like many birds, migrate to warmer areas for the winter. Other hardier species will rest in tree trunks or on branches until spring. Still others will spend the winter in various stages of development - egg, larva or pupa. Most commonly, butterflies winter in the pupa stage as does their relatives, the moths.

The *prairie in winter* is cold and snow-covered and the ground is frozen. But hidden away are the insects that keep the prairie alive with sound and activity during the spring, summer and fall seasons. Winter is quiet and pristine on the prairie, but not completely still. Can you find the wintering insects?

This article is available through the Leon M. Lederman Science Education Center at Fermilab Flora and Fauna Virtual exhibit. The entire article can be found at http://ed.fnal.gov/entry/exhibits/prairie_winter/prairie_winter.html

Photo is from Fermi Lab; a great place to visit.

This is your gentle reminder that motorized vehicles are not allowed on the park trails or property.