

PRESS RELEASE, August 23, 2009

From: Goose Lake Prairie Partners, volunteer group for Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area.
Effective: August 23, 2009

The Goose Lake Prairie Partners have been named as the 2009 outstanding volunteer group of the year by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The award was presented during a public ceremony at the Illinois State Fair Saturday, August 22nd. The award was presented by the IDNR Assistant Director John Rogner to Susie Johnson, GLPP President; Bev Christensen, Vice-President; Jackie Martin, Secretary/Treasurer; Jo Fleming, Director and member since February 1983; Pat Christensen, Director; Tom Kaluzny, Cabin Festival Chairman; Andrea Kaluzny, member; Audrey Kaluzny, member; Harry Christensen, member; and Chuck Johnson, member. IDNR representatives for this group are Joe Giacone, Site Superintendent, Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area, and Christopher Rollins, Region Two Land Manager.

The Partners and the Friends of the Prairie are receiving this award for their impact on the park's operations, infrastructure, and events. The Partners keep the visitor center open on weekends February through November. They demonstrate crafts related to the Prairie, host visiting groups, and organize and participate in annual events. Their fundraising efforts paid for the Cabin Festival and Prairie Day events, fixing the windmill and piping to the cabin's pond, canvas cover for the prairie wagon, a new bird cam and television, and several tents for putting on the events.

The Partners have been putting on annual events such as Prairie Day (12 years) sponsored by Midwest Generation and Cabin Festival (25 years). Each year they try to expand the events with new demonstrations and return the best of the older ones. This was the second year they hosted Earth Day in the Park sponsored by the IDNR Education Department for a class of fourth graders. A drawing decided which school is selected to participate at Goose Lake Prairie.

The partners assist with the butterfly program at the park and helped install the new netting this year. They have become the receiver of donations to the park. Among these are the fossils and native Indian artifacts collections. They are assisting with funding of some of the permanent exhibits, which are special to GLP. They are sponsoring the Nature Photography Contest/Exhibit for the third year in a roll with assistance from MQB Corp Real Estate Brokers.

The 12th Annual Prairie Day is September 19 from 10 to 3, and the event usually draws several hundred people to the park from as far away as Chicago, Rockford, and Champaign. Each year visitors from Europe or Asia happen to visit and end up spending the day with the other guests.

The Partners and Friends are always interested in working with individuals or groups who would like to visit the Prairie or would enjoy volunteering. Additional information about the park and the Partners can be found on the website: <http://gooselakeprairie.org>. Download the current issue of the Tallgrass Journal, a quarterly publication, published by the Partners, or call the park at 815-942-2899 or drop by at 5010 N. Jugtown Rd, Morris, IL

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