

# A Prairie Rendezvous



SUMMER VOL. 10, NO. 3, 2008  
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## SPECTACULAR 2008 PLANT SALE

by Jamie Ellis

The crowd says it all: people like plants. And these people like native plants—plants of the prairie and woods of central Illinois. 2008 marked the 15<sup>th</sup> time Grand Prairie Friends grew and sold native plants for sale to the general public. May 10 saw crowds of people who descended upon Lincoln Square Village to buy little bluestem, orange butterflyweed, wild bergamot and more to add beauty and a sense of pride to their home garden and landscape. Of course shoppers were also treated to a selection of woodland wildflowers grown by John Marlin. The plants didn't stop there since the CU Herb Society, the Prairie Hosta Society and the CU Business and Professional Women's Club also had a great selection of plants to choose from.

Of course the sale would not have been a success if not for the efforts of tireless volunteers. Many volunteers picked and cleaned seed; stratified and planted seed; transplanted and transported seedlings; and finally helped to sell a great selection of native plants. A special thanks goes to Lynne Scott who secured our space in Lincoln Square; Jim Payne who supervised the cashiers; and Andy Coyle who donated a great selection of woodland wildflowers. We thank everyone for his or her help, and we look forward to another great sale in 2009.

Grand Prairie Friends wishes to thank these volunteers, and we offer our sincerest apologies if anyone's name was inadvertently left off of this list.

Anna Assarsson	Stacy James	Jim Payne
Misty Barron	Stacy James	Mike Polito
Drew Becker	Laura Kammin	Terry Rathgeber
Tiffany Bone	Linda Klippert	Beverly
Eileen Borgia	Betsy Kuchinke	Rauchfuss
Andy Coyle	Jesse Kurylo	Deepak Reddy
Bob Craft	Marilyn Leger	Phillip Rezin
Brad Danner	Heidi Leuszler	Alan Rider
Jamie Ellis	Derek Liebert	Richard Schicht
Autumn Ellis	John Marlin	Lynne Scott
Isaac Ellis	Glen Martin	Michael Sczerba
Jim Fay	Nohra Mateus	Valerie Sivicek
Merry Jo Fay	Kevin Mazur	Gergana
Mary Ann Feist	Molly McNicoll	Slavova
Ted Frank	Sandra	Cecily Smith
Patricia Franke	McVicker-	Greg Spyreas
Sarah Freyman	Rosenfield	Robert Stanton
Abhishek	Alison Meanor	Andrew Stumpf
Goswami	Mike Miller	Ingrid Swanson
Rachel Gushee	Dirk Mol	Bob Vaiden
Bruce Hannon	Brenda Molano-	Jackie Vaiden
Kerry Helms	Flores	Bill Wasson
Rachel Hills	Carol Jo	Rick Winkel
Matt Hohman	Morgan	Deb Winkel
Phil Hult	Dan Olson	

## MAKE THE RAIN GO AWAY WITH RAIN GARDENS

by Stacy James, *Prairie River Networks*

April showers bring May flowers, but showers from February to June are creating serious problems in the communities and farmland of east-central Illinois. Finished basements flooded for the first time in decades. Backed up storm sewers caused street flooding and automobile accidents. Corn plants are literally choking to death under pools of standing water. The ground is just too saturated to efficiently absorb the unusually high amount of rain.

Urban areas are particularly prone to

flooding because of the abundance of impervious surfaces such as rooftops, streets, and parking lots. These surfaces absorb little if any rainfall, resulting in large volumes of stormwater runoff. The storm drains that receive this runoff often discharge directly into streams, causing streambank erosion, reduced water quality, and harm to fish and other aquatic species.

One key component to reducing urban flooding is to increase the amount of pervious, or porous, surfaces. There are a

number of ways to incorporate pervious surfaces into our homes and communities. If properly installed, these areas can capture significant amounts of rainfall that then soaks underground. When rainwater is sequestered where it falls, there is less flooding and property damage.

One of the best ways homeowners can reduce the amount of stormwater runoff leaving their properties is to install rain gardens. Rain gardens are shallow, vegetated depressions that temporarily

(Continued on page 9)

## A Prairie Rendezvous

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**Editor:** Brenda Molano-Flores

**Assistant Editors:** Jamie Ellis, Mary Ann Feist, and Lynne Scott

**Production Designer:** Ray Meredith

*A Prairie Rendezvous* is a publication of Grand Prairie Friends for the restoration community of East Central Illinois. In February 2004, the membership of GPF voted to broaden the group's Constitution and By-laws bringing the missions of GPF and Prairie Grove Volunteers together and the two groups merged.

*A Prairie Rendezvous* is published quarterly. Article submissions should be sent electronically to the editor at [gpf@prairienet.org](mailto:gpf@prairienet.org) or by mail to the GPF P.O. Box (above). Member submissions are gladly welcomed.

Grand Prairie Friends is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to natural community preservation, restoration, and education in East Central Illinois. Our stewards help coordinate volunteer workdays at native prairie, savanna, wetland, and woodland remnants. Inquiries and tax-deductible donations should be sent to the GPF P.O. Box (above).

[www.prairienet.org/gpf](http://www.prairienet.org/gpf)

### **GPF Board of Directors** (term ends)

Jamie Ellis, President (2009)

Derek Liebert, Vice-President (2009)

Jim Payne, Treasurer (2009)

Lynne Scott, Secretary (2007)

Nate Beccue (2008), Paul Marcum (2008), and Dan Olson (2008)

Two board positions are vacant and unfilled.

Board meetings are the third Monday of the month at 5:30 p.m. and are open to the public. Directions to the meeting location can be obtained by contacting the President.

### **GPF Committees**

For information on volunteering and getting involved with any committees, please contact the following:

Membership & Volunteerism: Brenda Molano-Flores

Stewardship: Betsy Kuchinke, Paul Marcum, and Dan Olson

Education: Lynne Scott

Publicity: Derek Liebert

Land Acquisition: Dan Olson and Jim Payne

Fund Raising: Derek Liebert and Lynne Scott

### **Submission Deadlines**

☞ **Fall Issue** (Sept., Oct., Nov.): **Aug. 1**

☞ **Winter Issue 2008-09** (Dec., Jan., Feb.): **Nov. 1**

☞ **Spring Issue** (Mar., Apr., May): **Feb. 1, 2009**

Printed on Recycled Paper

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Jamie Ellis, President, GPF

As I flip through the pages of the recent TNC magazine I received in the mail, I am in awe and heartened by conservation success stories. At the same time, I am saddened by continued degradation of our natural environment reported within the same pages. If you read this column, you'll notice I seem to be stuck on a theme: knowing that bad things happen, wanting to do something yet feeling a bit powerless in what I can do.

That being said, I'm happy to report a few things as Board President. The annual Native Plant Sale on May 10 went remarkably well. Many thanks goes to the volunteers who spent their valuable time to make the sale a success. As our major yearly fundraiser, most of the money goes to hire summer interns.

Brandon Cheek and Justin Meissen, who started on June 2 as our 2008 summer interns, will gladly be spending their time pulling weeds, picking seeds, cutting brush and generally sweating in the sun this summer to help maintain many prairie, woodland and wetland natural areas. They will also be spending time with and learning from our volunteer stewards as well as professional biologists and land managers. I hope you get a chance to meet them this summer and pass on some of your knowledge.

We're still working to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors. Are you a person familiar with GPF? Are you willing to lead and serve an organization dedicated to natural areas protection and stewardship in east-central Illinois? Please call or email me. We want you.

The Board is embarking on a new exercise called guided organizational assessment led by staff from the Land Trust Alliance. We will be taking a candid look at who we are as an organization and work toward becoming a stronger, more effective land trust.

Take care, stay cool and by all means, get outside and enjoy our natural world.

# HERE KITTY, KITTY: COUGARS IN ILLINOIS

by Jean Mengelkoch

A wild male cougar (*Puma concolor*) was shot by police officers in Roscoe Village of Chicago – not too far from downtown – on 14 April 2008. DNA tests confirm that the Chicago cougar is the same cougar that was seen and cut its paw near Milton, Wisconsin on January 18. DNA also verifies that the cougar is related to those in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Cougars, also known as mountain lions, pumas, and panthers, were extirpated in Illinois in the 1860s. However, the Chicago cougar is the third confirmed wild cougar in Illinois since that time and all three of the confirmed cougars have been documented in the last 10 years.

In July 2000 a wild male cougar was found in Randolph County. It appeared to have been struck and killed by a train. The stomach contents of the cougar consisted of a small fawn, suggesting that the animal was able to hunt in the wild. In addition, the DNA of the animal

was of North American origin. In December 2004 a hunter in Mercer County found another dead cougar. This male cougar appeared to have died as a result of an arrow wound. The cougar's stomach contents included both wild game and grasses.

All three of these cougars are

concrete, DNA confirmed they were all of North American as opposed to South American heritage (most captive cougars are from South America), and most had eaten game which indicates an ability to hunt and survive in the wild. Also, the fact that all three were young males makes sense according to their

natural history. Young male cougars are transient and can travel long distances to find a suitable area to establish their own territory. Although there are only three cougars have been officially documented in Illinois in the last 100+ years, there have been many unofficial sightings over the years. Investigations of sightings have yielded misidentifications of coyotes, bobcats, large domestic cats and dogs, and escaped exotic cats. It is possible that more wild cougars have been seen in Illinois, but to be "official" it must be proven that the cougars are, in fact, cougars and that they are wild.

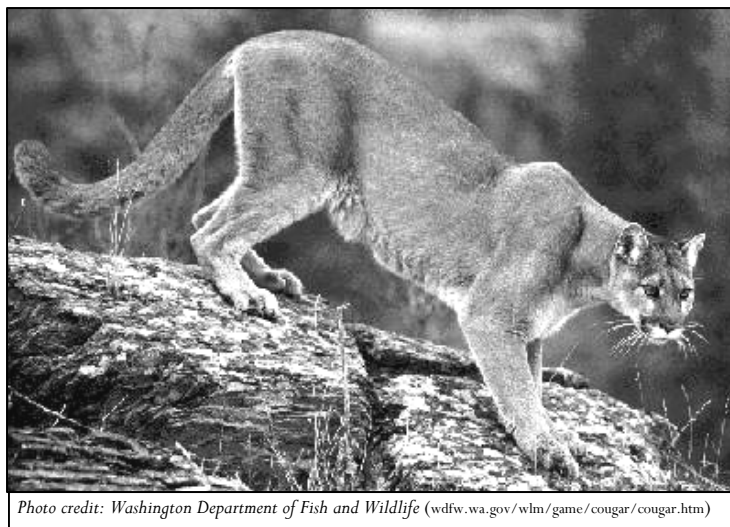


Photo credit: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife ([wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/cougar/cougar.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/cougar/cougar.htm))

considered wild because of several factors. None possessed signs of having worn a collar or being pit tagged (a pit tag is a microchip inserted under the skin), none had excessive wearing on their foot pads indicative of pacing on

## PASSING OF A FRIEND

To our friends and fellow conservationists with Grand Prairie Friends,

It is my sad task to let you know that my husband, Gary Beland, passed away in May. While we have not been able to be as active in recent years, you have been in our hearts and on our minds often.

I am proud of the work Gary was able to do as Volunteer Coordinator for Prairie Grove Volunteers. It didn't take most folks long to discover his passion for the preservation of all things wild. And while he didn't mind getting dirty, his chosen mission was educating the people who live around the wonderful sites stewarded by GPF. So even when we attended work days, he usually spent as much time trying to drum up support for his latest idea as he did tackling the invasives.

We both thoroughly enjoyed coordinating the educational programs at local libraries, bringing the experts to the far reaches of the GPF/PGV coverage area.

And I will keep fond memories of the people we met and worked with during our years with both organizations. We helped plan a prairie conference, served on the statewide steering committee of the VSN, and witnessed the merger of PGV and GPF.

I hope that you are able to continue the fine work you are doing, well into the future. Just don't forget that the next generation needs to hear why conservation of the wild places is important!

God bless,  
Donna Beland

# Grand Prairie Friends



## Activity Calendar



### SUMMER 2008

#### Volunteer Stewardship Activities

Urbana Park District Workdays: Enjoy a natural area close to home. Help remove invasive species, improve trails, collect seed, and plant native species. Tools and refreshments will be provided. Call 217-384-4062 to register or for more information.

Second Saturday of every month:

9-11 a.m.: Busey Woods--Meet at APNC (see inset box for address).

1-3 p.m.: Weaver Grove--Pull off south of intersection of Main St. and Smith Rd

Fourth Saturday of every month:

9-11 a.m.: Meadowbrook Prairie--Meet at Race St. parking lot.

1-3 p.m.: Perkins Road Site—Meet at Dog Park, ½ mile east of the Cunningham Ave. on Perkins Rd. The group will then walk down to the lower restoration project area.

Every Sunday: Red Bison. Workdays held every Sunday unless otherwise noted. Members and non-members welcome. Meet at the University YMCA at 1:00 p.m. Contact Mike Polito (mpolito@uiuc.edu [until May/June] or redbison@gmail.com) for more information.

Saturday June 28: Shortline Railroad Prairie. Help restore GPF first prairie remnant by removing non-native vegetation. Wear long sleeves and bring gloves and drinking water. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at APNC (see inset box) to carpool or 9:45 at the site. For more information contact Paul Marcum (333-8459, 390-6141).

Sunday June 29: Loda Addition Seed Collection Workday. Come out and collect early season seed for the new Loda Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve Addition. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at APNC (see inset box) to carpool. For more information contact Paul Marcum [217-333-8459 (w), 217-390-6141 (c)] or James Ellis (217-244-5695).

Sunday July 13: Buffalo Trace Prairie. Help pull sweet clover!!!!. Bring gloves, drinking water, and wear long sleeves. Bring a snack too if you'd like. Workday will start at 8:30 a.m. (latecomers are more than welcome). Directions to Buffalo Trace Prairie: From I-74, take Route 47 North away from Mahomet. At first asphalt road to the left, turn left (2100 N) and turn left again at the next intersection (300E). Drive south to the parking lot on the left across from the cell-phone tower. Walk out on the bike path to the prairie between the 0.2 and 0.3 Mile mark on the bike path. Contact Phil Hult and Gail Snowdon for more information (217-586-4511).

- APNC (Anita Purves Nature Center) is located at 1505 N. Broadway Ave. in Urbana.
- NATURAL RESOURCES STUDIES ANNEX: 1910 Griffith Drive, Champaign. Griffith Drive runs south from St. Mary's Road just east of the Illinois Central railroad viaduct (next to St. Mary's Cemetery).
- Workday reminders and updates will be posted on the ecostewards listserv.
- Please leave your pets at home. Pets are not allowed on Nature Preserves. Activities such as prescribed burnings may endanger pets, even if they are on leashes or otherwise supervised.
- Please wear clean clothes and boots as a general precaution. After a workday wire brush or scrape lug soles clean. Also, do not wear the same clothes that were used to visit a site with mature exotic seed into another site before laundering them. This is to avoid becoming unwitting carriers of the very invasive species that we are trying to control!



## Certified Interpretive Guide Workshop

**Sugar Grove Nature Center in Funks Grove  
McLean, IL  
and  
Heartland Community College  
Normal, IL**

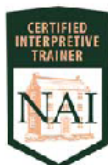


**Mondays, September 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2008  
9:00 am – 5:00 pm (CDT) each day**



### What to Expect in this 32-Hour Course:

- History, definition and principles of interpretation
- Making your programs, purposeful, organized, enjoyable, relevant and thematic
- Incorporating tangible things and intangible ideas into your program
- Presentation and communication skills
- Completion of certification requirements (open book exam, program outline, 10-minute presentation)
- Certified Interpretive Guide Workbook



### Instructor: **Bob Carter, Certified Interpretive Trainer and CIG Instructor**

Bob Carter is a professional educator with 25 years of experience as a heritage interpreter, interpretive consultant, and as an outdoor and environmental educator. He is on the faculty in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Northern Illinois University where he teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in elementary education, outdoor education, environmental education, and interpretation.

### Registration Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Second Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (Required for registration confirmation and updates):  
\_\_\_\_\_

*application continued on following page*

*application begins on previous page*

**Registration Costs (Check one registration category please)\***

- \_\_\_ \$353.00 Full registration (includes certification, materials, NAI associate standard membership, instructor fee)
- \_\_\_ \$328.00 Full-time student registration (includes certification, materials, NAI student standard membership, instructor fee)\*\*
- \_\_\_ \$308.00 Full registration for current NAI members (includes certification, materials, instructor fee)\*\*\*
- \_\_\_ \$371.00 Registration with no NAI membership (includes certification, materials, instructor fee)

\_\_\_ \$130.00 I would also like to purchase the set of six interpretive texts that will be used during the open book exam. (Note: copies of these books will be provided for you to use in taking the test, so you do not HAVE to buy them for the workshop. However, the price provided is a discounted cost offered as part of the certification program. Texts are:

- Environmental Interpretation by S. Ham
- Interpretation of Natural and Cultural Resources by D. Knudsen, T. Cable, & L. Beck
- Interpretation for the 21st Century by L. Beck & T. Cable
- Interpretation for Park Visitors by W. Lewis
- Sharing Nature with Children by J. Cornell
- Interpreting Our Heritage by F. Tilden

plus \$27.00 Sugar Grove Facilities Fee (Required)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed (Registration, optional text purchase, required facilities fee)  
-- Make checks payable to **Sugar Grove Nature Center**

\* Snacks and refreshments will be provided. Lunch is on your own. Please remember to bring your water bottle and coffee/travel cup to help reduce waste. Workshop will begin at Sugar Grove. Other details will be provided in your registration confirmation.

\*\* Must provide proof of status as a full time student.

\*\*\* Must provide proof of current NAI membership with registration.

**Payment Method:** \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Complete registration form and return with payment to:

**Angela Smith, Director**  
Sugar Grove Nature Center  
4532 N 725 East Road  
McLean, IL 61754

**Registration deadline is August 7, 2008**

<b>Need More Information?</b>		
Sugar Grove Nature Center Angela Smith 309.874.2174 <a href="mailto:sugargrovenc@earthlink.net">sugargrovenc@earthlink.net</a>	NAI Certification: <a href="http://www.interpnet.com">www.interpnet.com</a>  Bob Carter 815.753.9070 <a href="mailto:carter@niu.edu">carter@niu.edu</a>	Heartland Community College Janet Beach-Davis 309.268.8513 <a href="mailto:Janet.Beach-Davis@heartland.edu">Janet.Beach-Davis@heartland.edu</a>

## What is that Purple Thing Hanging in the Tree?

It's a sticky trap that Illinois Department of Agriculture officials and cooperators are using to identify where the invasive pest, Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is. Approximately 2,700 are being placed in the 100 mile buffer zone outside the last known infested area. An additional 750 traps are being placed in the metro Chicagoland area while another 250 are being placed in high risk areas in the southern half of the state.

### How does the trap work?

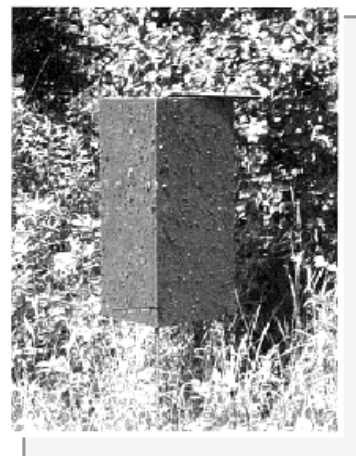
The trap uses Manuka oil as an attractant to lure the beetle to it if EAB already in the area. The surface of the trap is coated with a sticky material which causes the EAB to adhere to it.

### How long will it be there?

The traps will be hung in early spring before the EAB flight season begins. The EAB flight season is from May through August. The traps will be removed systematically after the flight season is complete. Then the traps will be examined for the presence of EAB.

### Will the traps bring EAB into the area?

No, the traps will not bring EAB into an area that is not already infested. It will simply help officials determine if EAB is already present in the area.



- State-issued EAB Quarantined Area
- Focus area in which IDA will be placing highest concentration of purple traps (approx. 2,700)
- Traps will be placed in highest risk areas, less concentration of traps.

### What is Emerald Ash Borer?

A metallic green colored, wood-boring beetle that is lethal to all North American ash trees.

### Where was it discovered?

In 2002 in the Detroit/Windsor area. It was first discovered in Illinois in June 2006 in Kane County.

### How did it get here?

It most likely hitched a ride in wooden shipping material from Asia.

### What does it do?

EAB chokes ash trees to death by devouring the layer under the bark.

### Save the Ash— Be Part of the Solution

Have you or your neighbors purchased or received firewood, landscape trees, logs, timber, or branches? All EAB finds in Illinois are believed to be directly related to importation of ash tree material from infested areas. If you answered yes, take the Symptom Checklist quiz on the right.



### Symptom Checklist

After you have determined you have an ash tree, check for the following symptoms:

- Distinct D-shaped exit holes in the bark
- S-shaped tunnels on surface under the bark
- Sprout growth at the tree base
- Unusual activity by woodpeckers
- Die-back on the top third of the tree
- Vertical splits in the bark



If your tree has 2 or more symptoms, contact a local tree expert or your local county extension office, or report signs by sending digital photos to [agr.eab@illinois.gov](mailto:agr.eab@illinois.gov) and be sure to include contact information. Need help identifying an ash tree? Go to [www.emeraldashborer.info](http://www.emeraldashborer.info)

For questions regarding the EAB trapping program, please contact IDA at 800-641-3934 or visit our EAB website:

[www.IllinoisEAB.com](http://www.IllinoisEAB.com)



# BECOME A MASTER NATURALIST

by Daniel J. Olson

Enhance your love for all things natural by signing up to be a Master Naturalist. The East Central Illinois Master Naturalist Chapter will be again offering the yearly class beginning on Tuesday Aug. 26, 2008. Classes are Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. No prior experience or education is required to take the class and become a Master Naturalist. If you are interested in natural science disciplines such as anthropology, botany, ornithology, geology, ecology, and a variety of other related topics, this class is for you! Become part of the group that is living and learning the unique natural resources of Illinois. To apply you can stop by the Champaign

County Extension office or apply online at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/champaign>. Look for the Master Naturalist quick link at the bottom of the page.

To be certified as a Master Naturalist, participants will attend class sessions as well as complete a certain number of volunteer hours with participating organizations. To maintain certification and membership, participants are expected to continue to volunteer and earn continuing education credits.

Applications are due by Aug. 1 and class size is limited. If you have any questions email Dan Olson at [dolson@ccfpd.org](mailto:dolson@ccfpd.org).

## UPDATE: LODA CEMETERY PRAIRIE NATURE PRESERVE ADDITION

by Jamie Ellis

Members and friends heeded the call in 2007 and stepped up to buy nine acres of adjacent around Loda Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve in the southwest corner of Iroquois County just north of the town of Loda. We successfully raised the money and closed the deal on November 15 last fall. Well, what have we done since then?

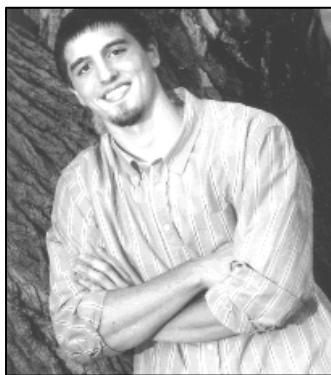
Seeds were collected last summer and fall, as reported by Paul Marcum, but

not enough to plant the new addition. So for this summer, we will rent back the property to the former landowner to be farmed. The area we want to plant will be rotated from corn last summer to beans this summer. Farming that land will control weeds that are bound to pop up. Going in this fall or early winter to plant after a crop of beans will be more ideal than going in after corn since there is less residual crop-plant material left on

the soil surface. We will then have all summer and fall to collect as many seeds from as many species as we can.

Paul Marcum has scheduled some seed collecting workdays this fall to give you a chance to come out and help make our new prairie planting a success. Please look for other opportunities to help process seed and plant that seed in the fall or early winter.

## GPF SUMMER INTERNS



**Brandon Cheek**

When I heard about Grand Prairie Friends I automatically decided to try to get the internship because it sounded like a good learning opportunity and a way to give back to the local environment in my area. I grew up in St. Joseph but have been going to school at Augustana College in the Quad Cities. I am currently majoring in biology there and I am also pursuing an

environmental study minor. Lately I have been concentrating a lot of my classes towards animal behavior and evolution. This has always interested me since I am always wondering how everything has become the way it has today and why some organisms act the way they do. My environmental study minor

is a recently new idea brought up by my advisor at Augustana. He looked at my credits and noticed I have taken a lot of the classes required to get the minor, so I decided to go ahead and pursue that as well.

These two concentrations in college really influenced my decision to pursue the internship at Grand Prairie Friends. The environmental study minor is an obvious match because it focuses on the Grand Prairie Friends mission statement: "to preserve and restore natural communities." My biology major was also a good match, but for different reasons. I really wanted to get hands-on experience in the field by learning from other biologists. There is only so much a book can teach in the classroom, but by actually going out into the field and physically practicing or observing the different field techniques of biologists is irreplaceable. I am really excited of this aspect of the internship and will try to get the most out of the experience. Besides the general interests I have from school, it really is important to me to have a positive influence on the world around me. Whether it is global change or local change,

*(Continued on page 11)*

# INHS 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

by Susan Post

**S**eptember 26, 2008, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., I-Hotel, corner of St. Mary's Road and First Street, Champaign IL.

*Conservation of Natural Resources in the 21st Century - The View from Illinois:* This day long symposium will feature eleven speakers plus a final address by Dr. Peter Raven, internationally known conservation biologist with the Missouri Botanical Garden. Symposium topics will cover a range of issues important to the future of biological resources including Dr. Kayri Havens from the Chicago Botanic Garden on Rare Plant Conservation in Illinois and Dr. Louis Iverson from the USDA Forest Service on Potential Effects of Climate Change on Midwestern Forests



O'Shea, entitled "Serpents, Sorcery and Snakebite in Papua New Guinea, the Land of the Unexpected", 10:00 a.m. - noon at the I-Hotel.

**Illinois Natural History Survey Public Expo** from noon to 6:00 p.m. will feature numerous interactive booths and exhibits on the natural history of Illinois and the work of Survey scientists. Our featured exhibit will be Mr. Dan Capps and his internationally known insect collection! The expo will take place on the grounds of the Natural History Survey at 1816 South Oak Street, Champaign. All events are free.

We ask that you register for the Symposium and the **Mark O'Shea** presentation on our website.

**September 27, 2008**, All Day Event  
Public presentation by herpetologist and TV personality Mark

Visit <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/150/index.html> for more information.

*(Continued from page 1)*

store rain, imitating temporary wetlands and rain-fed ponds. Rain gardens can be placed at the end of downspouts and in spots where water naturally pools. A typical size for a residential rain garden is about 80 square feet with a depth of 8 inches. If the soil is relatively permeable, the pooled water should soak into the ground and disappear within 24 hours of a storm. Moisture-loving native plants such as river oats, gray sedge, cardinal flower, and New England aster thrive in rain gardens.

The benefits of rain gardens are numerous. Not only do they reduce flooding, but they also recharge groundwater, remove pollutants, and provide wildlife habitat. Rain gardens absorb more water than traditional lawns and don't have to be mown! In addition, they are a delight to gardeners who want to put in wetland prairie plants that might not flourish in typical garden beds.

Champaign-based Prairie Rivers Network is Illinois' statewide river conservation organization and an advocate of rain gardens because of their benefits to natural waterways. Our advocacy program includes the production of a 4-page



*The rain garden on the north side of Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation.*

rain garden brochure, which provides information about what rain gardens are and how they should be installed. This brochure is available on the home page of our website ([www.prairierivers.org](http://www.prairierivers.org)) and hard copies can be obtained by calling our office at 217-344-2371. Prairie Rivers Network also gives a rain garden presentation, which elaborates upon the information provided in the brochure. If you are interested in seeing this presentation, please call our office (217-344-2371). And finally, Prairie Rivers Network has been involved in the installation of several rain gardens in the Champaign-Urbana area.

If you would like to see a rain garden with your own eyes, there are rain gardens at Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance Foundation (302 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Champaign)

and on the University of Illinois campus next to Allen Hall. In the near future, you will be able to view rain gardens at Scott Park after the Champaign Park District renovates the park.

Rain gardens are a great and simple way to reduce your ecological footprint while beautifying your property. The results are instantaneous, and the rewards last years and years!

## REVIEW: *HERBACEOUS PERENNIAL PLANTS*

by Jim Fay

The recent publication of the third edition of what the American Horticulture Society deemed “One of the Great Garden Books” offers an opportunity to get a feel for how prairie plants are perceived as fitting into the larger, mainstream horticulture picture.

The book is Allan M. Armitage's *Herbaceous Perennial Plants: A Treatise on Their Identification, Culture, and Garden Attributes*. Armitage's trademark wit and well traveled expertise is evident in this third edition, as it was in previous editions. Also evident is his dismay that native wildflowers such as prairie plants are not nearly as appreciated in this country as they are elsewhere, such as Europe.

*Liatris* experienced a “meteoric” rise in popularity in the 1980's, largely because it was included in “Dutch mix” seed packages exported to America from Europe. The flower that is a native wildflower across much of North America became known as a “Dutch” flower and is still regarded that way in many circles.

Joe Pye weed — Armitage says perhaps we should call it “Joe Pye plant” to de-emphasize the “just another weed” connotations associated with it — is, according to him, “one of the architectural building blocks of British gardens.” He wonders, along with the Europeans, why American plants are “so well used and cherished there and so scorned and ignored here.”

Europeans use prairie and North American goldenrods in developing a variety of popular hybrids. In this country, on the other hand, goldenrods are, or at least until recently have been, largely been dismissed as a nuisance weed. Perhaps, he says, it is because they give the impression they cause hay fever, but that bad rap belongs to ragweed.

Incidentally, in this third edition Armitage adds another goldenrod to his list of horticulture entries — *S. speciosa*, or showy goldenrod, which he says “has become a favorite of Midwestern gardeners.”

In this edition Armitage merely alludes to a well known case of floral identity theft that he described in some detail in the previous edition.

In 1937 a German nurseryman chose a particularly attractive specimen of *Rudbeckia fulgida* var *sullivantii* from a Czechoslovakian nursery to take back home. It was propagated vegetatively there, and in 1949 it was marketed under the name “Goldsturm.” The cultivar proved to be extremely popular — indeed, it took the horticulture world by “sturm.” It was so popular and has remained so to the extent that putative “Goldsturm” appeared in the perennial trade around the world in stunning profusion, and winning awards in the process. It became evident that all these plants probably could not be the clone of a single specimen. Today is it commonly

assumed that most “Goldsturm” out there have somewhere in the family tree either seed propagated plants or Sullivant's coneflowers that, thanks to public demand and auspicious labeling, became “Goldsturm.”

In this third edition Armitage says that if he wants honest-to-goodness “Goldsturm” he deals only with nurseries that can assure him they have the real thing. But, he says, the wildflower, Sullivant's coneflower, is almost as good.

An interesting observation about cardinal flower:

“One forgets the morphology, taxonomy and everything else, however, when the hummingbirds arrive.”

The best sentence in the book is this one in the middle of the paragraph dealing with black eyed Susan:

“Life is good.”

One should not assume from these examples that the book is just a collection of breezy, personal observations and biases. On the contrary, the 1109 pages are packed with solid, useful information, notably about how to propagate the various plants and how to distinguish between excruciatingly similar specimens. For example, anyone trying to sort out the plants that fall under the name “coneflower” will appreciate this matrix, below.

	<i>Coreopsis</i>	<i>Echinacea</i>	<i>Ratibida</i>	<i>Rudbeckia</i>
Leaf arrangement	Opposite	Alternate	Alternate	Alternate
Ray flowers	Yellow	Purple <sup>1</sup>	Yellow	Yellow
Shape of disc	Flattened	Raised	Columnar	Raised <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>cream colored in *E. pallida*  
<sup>2</sup>columnar in *R. laciniata*

# JOB OPENING: NATURAL RESOURCES SPECIALIST

## Macon County Conservation District Mission

To promote the conservation of natural and cultural resources by acquiring, maintaining, and restoring natural areas and cultural sites so as to leave them unimpaired for future generations.

The Macon County Conservation District has a full time Natural Resources Specialist position open. The selected candidate will be self-motivated with well rounded knowledge of applied and theoretical ecological restoration practices. Must also possess supervisory and computer skills. For more information go to [www.maconcountyconservation.org](http://www.maconcountyconservation.org) click on "Get Involved"

Compensation: Starting (D.O.Q.)  
Date Posted: June 1, 2008  
Worksite Location: TBD  
Hours/Schedule: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
May include some weekends

Application deadline: Open until filled

## Summary Description

Under general direction of the Operations Manager, performs a wide variety of assigned and self initiated tasks and projects designed to improve the ecological health of Conservation District lands. Work involves planning, directing and participating in natural resource activities requiring the coordination of work between assigned personnel,

departments, volunteers, consultants and contractors.

## Qualifications

Four year degree with major courses in Natural Resource Management, Restoration, Ecology, Biological Sciences or related field and three years experience in natural resource work. Including one year supervisory experience. Knowledge and experience working with the principles, practices, and techniques of natural resource management as applied to Illinois ecosystems. Must have a valid Illinois driver's license -- CDL Class A and a current Illinois Pesticide Applicators License or obtain within six months of employment. Completion of the Midwest Ecological Prescription Burn Crew Member Training, or NWCG S130, S190 or equivalent prescribed fire training within one year of employment.

## Some Essential Functions

- ✧ Supervise assigned personnel including seasonals, volunteers, consultants and contractors in restoration and land management tasks
- ✧ Develop, coordinate, plan, carryout and supervise natural resource management programs and projects including field inspections, flora/fauna studies and inventories, prescription burning, invasive and exotic species control, reforestation, prairie/grassland seeding, wetland and wildlife management.
- ✧ Develop and evaluate annual project budgets and long term goals, and resource needs. Implement or revise programs.
- ✧ Please see website for more information and essential job functions.

*(Continued from page 8)*

I want to be part of it. And since this organization is involved in improving the natural habitats around my "stomping grounds," it was an easy choice to want to be part of Grand Prairie Friends.

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My name is Justin Meissen, and I am very excited to be an intern with Grand Prairie Friends this summer. I am a student here at the University of Illinois, and this fall I will be starting my junior year at the university. I am majoring in Integrative Biology, and hope to go into a conservation biology or restoration ecology career. I also am the new president of Red Bison, and spend lots of my time during school with the organization.

I am originally from Durand, Illinois, a small town (population 1100) roughly 20 miles northwest of Rockford. I grew up on farms and

forest preserves. Most of my weekends as a child involved days in my grandpa's timber near his farm, where I developed my passion for nature at a young age. Here I searched for frogs and salamanders, snakes and mushrooms, and found them in no short supply. I got a little older, my grandparents sold the timber, and houses and manicured lawns sprouted up where the oaks and elms used to be. That was when I first realized I wanted to protect the natural areas that I loved so much.

I wanted to become an intern for Grand Prairie Friends mainly to gain experience with managing natural areas. I also hope to educate myself further in the practices of natural lands management and restoration, and also in the ecology of the region. I am excited to get to know the site stewards, researchers, and volunteers that all contribute to Grand Prairie Friends. I am sure I will get a fantastic lesson in conservation from you all!



Justin Meissen

# GPF VOLUNTEERS HELP WILL-TV



During the most recent WILL-TV fund drive, GPF volunteers Jim and Mare Payne, Jean Mengelkoch, and Paul Marcum took 72 calls over the course of their three-hour shift, raising \$7,883 for WILL-TV on February 25. It was the first time WILL had programmed "Antiques Roadshow" during a pledge drive and it proved very popular. The other two hours of our shift were episodes of "The History of Television."

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Grand Prairie Friends

## *A Prairie Rendezvous*

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**... and more**

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