



# GRAND PRAIRIE FRIENDS

---

## February 2022 Newsletter

---



### ***Sweet Connections with Nance Woods***

***This valentine month, GPF received a "sweet" note from new GPF member, Amber Lake. I quickly forwarded the note to Paul Nance, son to Nance Woods donors (2001), Jean & Jim Nance. From there, the note became even "sweeter" as Paul shared stories of his family heritage at the site. Grand Prairie Friends is honored to own and manage the 14-acre Nance Woods property in perpetuity, plan a spring hike and visit.***

**Amber Lake:** "I wanted to drop a note to let you know the rather hard to ignore coincidental way I came across this organization.

"Several months back, I had become interested in tapping the maple trees on our property to make a little maple syrup. I marked all of my maples before fall and asked my husband for a beginner's maple tapping kit and the book called

*The Encyclopedia of Country Living* for Christmas. He delivered on both.

"As I read through the pages of this massive book I finally came upon the section of tapping maple trees. To my surprise and astonishment in the text of this massive book was a maple syrup making tip from a woman from my tiny town of Neoga, Illinois, her name was Jean Nance. I was floored that someone else around here had the same interest. However, I had never heard of this woman and this book is old, this was the 50th anniversary edition, after all.

"I tried to look her up with no results. Then, I came across an article on your website with her name, Jean Nance- James Nance Woods. I was again astonished to find that the 14-acre plot she donated to Grand Prairie Friends was only a couple miles from my home.

"After some reflection and mentioning this chain of coincidences to friends I just had to wonder if this was a bit of divine intervention. I'm almost certain the story doesn't end here.

"As a lover of the outdoors as well as being keen to the funny little things life gives us sometimes, I just wanted to share with you how I came to know Grand Prairie Friends."

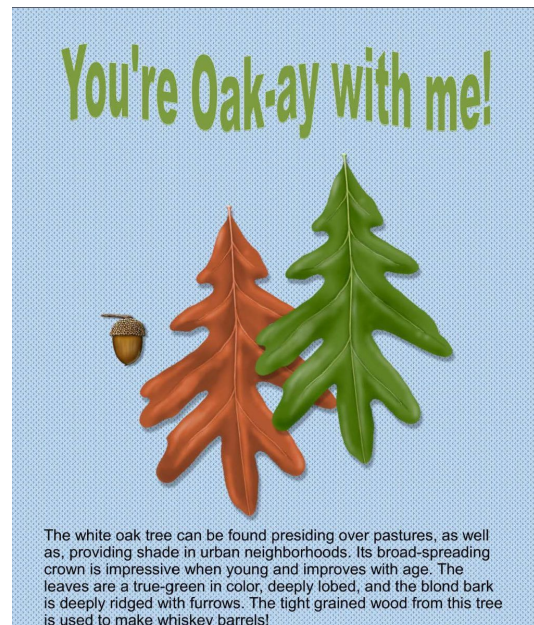
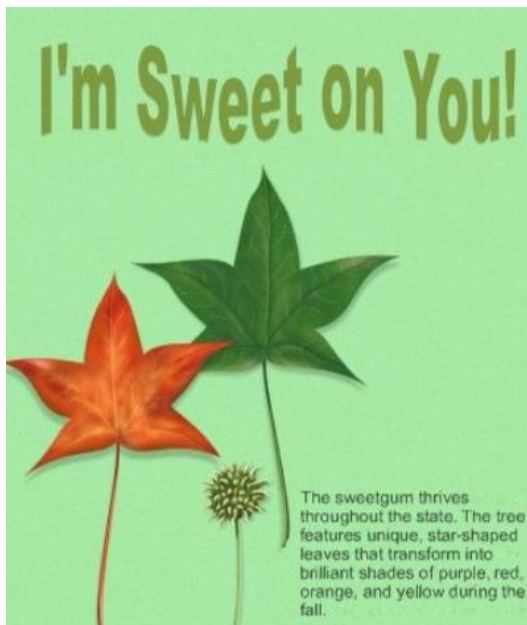
**Paul Nance:** "Hi Amber, I am one of Jean and Jim Nance's four children. Mom and Dad bought 80-acres near Neoga (including open fields and the woodland) in the 1960s. Dad had dreamed of creating a tallgrass prairie, and he slowly began planting native plants in the open fields. They moved to "New Prairie Farm" in the mid-1970s, built a house and lived there for about a decade. Dad continued to expand his prairie plantings, until by the time they left it was quite magnificent.

"They kept bees and chickens, and briefly owned two Scotch Highland cows and a bull. I don't remember how many years they maple sugared, but the family benefited many times from samples of their product.

I've attached four pictures of the sugaring operation. That's Dad, tapping trees and tending the fire to reduce the sap. As I remember, one year they tried to boil down the sap in the house, and everything was covered with a fine layer of sticky film!"



Jim & Jean Nance donated the 14-acre [Nance Woods](#) property to GPF in 2001.







# **Native Plant Sale** **Online**

May 1 - May 13, 2022  
Pickup Week of May 16, Urbana



Over 40 varieties available. Make your list now, many varieties sell-out fast.  
**Plant Catalog open now at [www.GrandPrairieFriends.org](http://www.GrandPrairieFriends.org)**



**Grand Prairie Friends is hiring!** We are looking for [seasonal interns](#) and an administrative team member. If interested in the admin position, [contact Sarah](#) for details.



# Upcoming Events!

Please send all questions to Diane Wilhite [volunteer@grandprairiefriends.org](mailto:volunteer@grandprairiefriends.org)



## Stewardship Saturday at Warbler Crossing

**Saturday, March 5, 9-11 am**

Join us to maintain and enjoy Warbler Ridge Conservation Area the first Saturday of each month: all ages welcome, equipment provided. Meet at Daileyville Road parking area, 17161 Daileyville Rd, Charleston.

[Stewardship Saturdays at Warbler Ridge | GrandPrairieFriends](#)

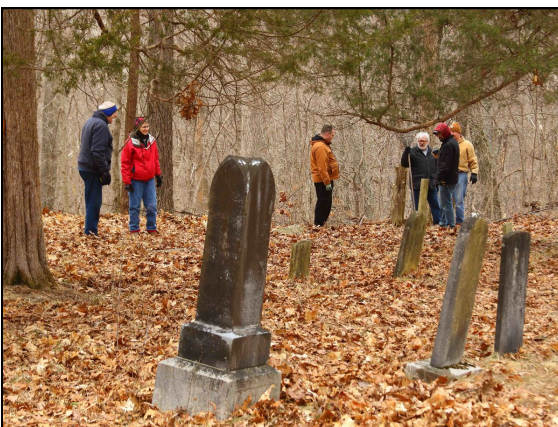


## Bats Back from Migration; Bat Training Time

**Tuesday, March 16, 5:30-6:30 pm, Zoom**

Training for anyone interested in learning more about GPF's bat observation program at Warbler Ridge. RSVP to receive Zoom link.

[Bats Back from Migration - Zoom | GrandPrairieFriends](#)



## Cemetery Stewardship Workday at Warbler Ridge

**Saturday, April 2, 9-11 am**

Continue our efforts to restore McKenzie-Waltrip Cemetery at Warbler Ridge.

[McKenzie-Waltrip Cemetery Workday | GrandPrairieFriends](#)



## Spring Membership Meeting

Friday, April 8, 6:30-8 pm, UI

Extension Auditorium

801 N. Country Fair Dr., Champaign

Join us for the Spring Membership Meeting. Enjoy a presentation by Jamie Ellis and Fred Delcomyn on their new book "*A Backyard Prairie: The Hidden Beauty of Tallgrass and Wildflowers*". They will walk us through the years of restoration of Delcomyn's prairie near Urbana, IL.

See old friends, Get an exciting update on GPF's new projects, upcoming events, and volunteer opportunities. [Spring Membership Meeting | GrandPrairieFriends](#)



## 1,500 Trees or Bust! Planting Day at Warbler Ridge

Saturday, April 9, 9-11 am

Hickories, Oaks and Pecans, Oh My!

Help us grow Warbler Bottoms.

[Stewardship Saturdays at Warbler Ridge | GrandPrairieFriends](#)





## Spring Open House; "Telling Nature's Story"

**Saturday, April 30, 1-4 pm**

The first 100 guests will hike the book trail and select a children's nature book! Live Storytelling, self-led story hikes along warbler trail, nature crafts and more hands-on fun.

[Warbler Ridge Spring Open House – Telling Nature's Story | GrandPrairieFriends](#)



Be a Part of this Good Work! Become a Member or Donor!

**DONATE**



*Copyright © 2022 Grand Prairie Friends, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).



