



August Newsletter

[The Prairie Unseen, by Fred Delcomyn](#)

[Summer Celebrations; New Land, New Residents, & Pollination](#)

[Blazing Star Society Enrollment Open](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

The Prairie Unseen

by Fred Delcomyn, GPF Board Member

The distinctively barred feather of a red-tailed hawk caught on the seed head of wild bergamot from the previous year.

“Look! Up in the sky! It’s a bird ...”

Hold it! Let’s just stop the familiar Superman lead-in right there. When you visit a prairie, what do you do? If you’re like me, you look down – down at the prairie plants and grasses. Or you might look up a bit – up if you’re looking at 8’ tall compass plants.

But do you look overhead? Perhaps occasionally to look at clouds, but probably not all that often.

To take a cue from Superman, however, there’s more to prairie than the plants on the ground and the clouds in the air. There are birds as well, like dickcissels and so many other grassland birds.

Even the grassland birds don’t exhaust the possibilities, though. Silently patrolling the skies above Illinois prairies are red-tailed hawks. These hawks are a common sight sitting high on light poles in cities, but before the settlers came, the prairies were their hunting grounds.

A hawk in the air, though a common occurrence, is not a common sight for most people. We humans rarely look up, and the hawks are almost always silent, so years might even go by without you seeing one on the hunt.

Ah, but that doesn't mean that you can't know they are present. Like a coyote, another silent prairie hunter, a hawk can be detected by the signs it leaves behind. Imagine a hawk spotting an unsuspecting vole in the prairie. It swoops down through last year's growth of wild bergamot and a small breast feather gets snagged on a seed head. The hawk takes off again, maybe with lunch in its talons, leaving behind a silent reminder that it was here.

Next time you visit a prairie, don't just admire the flowers. Look for the little signs that other living things, things you might never see, also visit.

Your Summer Celebrations; New Land, New Residents & Pollination

May

Grand Prairie Friends closed on a 3-acre property that is located at the "entry-way" to the entire Warbler Ridge preserve. This grassy wooded area sits along both sides of Daileyville Road as visitors enter the site. While access is important, this parcel also serves as a critical buffer of protection to your Embarras Ridges Land & Water Reserve. This purchase was made possible through private donations from three Blazing Star Society families- Jenny Hunt & Kristi Mercer, Tom & Beverly Rauchfuss and an Anonymous donor. We hope to have a public ribbon-cutting in the coming months.

June

Pollination celebrations! For the last eight years, GPF preserves have participated in U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service program to help the Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchids. This summer, after eight years, we are honored to say that our sites were able to DONATE pollen, instead of only receive pollen this year! Way to go Grand Prairie Friends!



July

Bats were abundant in July! GPF Bat citizen scientists counted 180 bats emerging from one of the new bat habitat structures. Your restoration efforts are working!



August

You return! The return of "First Saturday of the Month" stewardship at Warbler Ridge with COVID precautions in place; also, watch your mailbox for your

summer donation opportunity from GPF, **we need you to keep up this good work!**



Blazing Star Enrollment is Open!

Our Shared Conservation Value

Grand Prairie Friends is a family of conservation-minded supporters that share a passion for the long-term care and stewardship of our natural areas, prairies and forests, in east-central Illinois. You are a vital member of that family.

Your Opportunity for Future Conservation

Together, we will continue to protect the land we treasure today and forever. As a member of the Blazing Star Society, you will help to ensure that the natural areas conservation work important to you will continue through your annual gift.

[Blazing Star Society members](#) donate unrestricted, annual gifts to Grand Prairie Friends at \$1000 and above. Memberships include individuals and their immediate family member (i.e. spouse or partner). Members will be recognized at events, in the newsletter, annual report, and more. Members will be invited to participate in special members-only outings and gatherings throughout the year.

Join others that share your passion to ensure that the beauty of the Grand Prairie region persists.

We look forward to your membership in the Blazing Star Society. [Join online](#) or contact Sarah Livesay, Executive Director (Sarah@grandprairiefriends.org), or talk to any Board member, for more information.

Upcoming Events, Join US!

In the interest of health and wellness, visit GPF's website and facebook for event changes or cancellations as our communities deal with the COVID-19 situation.

Contact volunteer@grandprairiefriends.org



August 2020 Board Meeting

Monday August 24th (5:30pm)

Monthly Grand Prairie Friends Board Meeting hosted on zoom. Email sarah@grandprairiefriends.org for link to join.



Bat Citizen Scientist Monitoring

Sunset, throughout the summer (any date)

It's Working! Bats are taking up residence in the newly restored bat habitat areas at Warbler Ridge! Help us collect data counts on bats including the endangered Indiana Bat and threatened Northern Long-Eared Bat that live here. Training provided, contact Diane Wilhite

volunteer@grandprairiefriends.org



Stewardship Saturday at Warbler Ridge

Saturday September 5th (9am-11am)

Join us to steward and enjoy Warbler Ridge Conservation Area. All ages welcome, equipment provided and covid-safe measures in place. Meet at the Daileyville Road/ Red Barn Trailhead parking area.



September 2020 Board Meeting

Monday September 28th (5:30pm)

Monthly Grand Prairie Friends Board Meeting hosted on zoom. Email sarah@grandprairiefriends for link to join.



Fall Membership Meeting

Friday October 16th (7pm)

Does Mother Nature Need Help to Heal?

Recent findings may give new direction to the approach of “restoring” natural areas. Join our special guest, Jeff Walk, Director of Conservation at The Nature Conservancy of Illinois, as we ask, “to restore or not to restore?”, there is more to the question! Everyone welcome!



**GRAND
PRAIRIE
FRIENDS**

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

DONATE



Copyright © 2020 Grand Prairie Friends, All rights reserved.

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

