The Blue Mounds Area Project

Promoting Ecological Restoration and Stewardship of Native Habitats

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Tour of Member Projects

Denise Thornton, BMAP Member and Freelance Journalist

About a dozen Blue Mounds Area Project (BMAP) members turned out for a tour of BMAP member projects September 11, 2004. They viewed a prairie remnant, a prairie restoration, and a stream restoration. The trip focused on member properties to highlight what landowners are doing and hopefully build a stronger community. "We were interested in showing both successes and problems. It wasn't a parade of prairies to show off the best of the best," said BMAP newsletter editor John Raasch. "We wanted people to see different stages of habitat restoration and learn from each other. We have a lot of members who have projects. If you see someone with a project a little further along, it can be encouraging."

The first stop was the prairie restoration project that John and his wife Julie are working on in Primrose Township. They purchased their property from a home builder in 1998 and then discovered they owned a prairie remnant. "There are many small remnants in this area," John said, "but people often aren't aware of them. Sadly, the spot where our house stands might have been another remnant. If people check before building, they might be able to save some very valuable plant communities. Prairie and savanna remnants are out there, but they are often overgrown by brush because no one is trying to protect them."

"After our house was built, we noticed the hilltop covered by flowers. We asked Bob Wernerehl, who was the BMAP's staff ecologist at the time, to come out and look at it. He identified about two acres of valuable dry-mesic prairie, including at least two dozen prairie plant species. He emphasized the fact that it was undisturbed. Whatever was growing there was probably the local ecotype. He suggested we start by burning off the thatch layer to see what else appears. A lot of prairie plants can be hiding as seeds or barely surviving among the weeds, waiting for a fire to release them."

Burning sets back some invasive plants, but John and Julie found it can bring out other weeds. An enormous bank of sweet clover seed was lurking on the site and burning stimulated its germination. This plant is a biennial and if you conduct a second spring burn the following year you can knock it out. But if weather prevents the second burn, which is what happened to John and Julie, you have to suppress it by mowing or face five-foot plants that will drop even more seed.

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"Every year is different," John said. "You have unexpected problems, but there are ways of dealing with them. We are really hoping to stimulate conversation between BMAP members so different people aren't solving the same problem over and over again."

The second stop on the trip was a young and thriving prairie owned by Mark Koeppl and Brian Outhouse. This prairie was designed and installed on 20 acres formerly growing in unmanaged brome grass. Mike Anderson of BioLogic Environmental Consulting in Fitchburg worked with the owners, selected the species, and did the planting in the fall of 2000.

Mike did a site evaluation of the soil, light, and surrounding land use, and talked with the owners to get an understanding of what they wanted to see. He also tried to work with plants where they have historically grown. The land was planted with 57 forbs, three shrubs, and nine species of grasses.

"At John and Julie's place, they are working with an existing prairie remnant where they are trying to encourage prairie *(cont. page 7)*

Message from the Board

Paul Kaarakka, Membership

A great autumn to you all from the BMAP Board of Directors. To reduce some of the work load on our tireless—but busy—BMAP President, Carroll Schaal, we decided to rotate the task of writing the "Message from the Board" through the other board members. I get first crack at it, so you might notice an emphasis on the importance of BMAP member participation in our organization.

The first Annual Tour of BMAP Member Projects was a fine success. We had a gorgeous day and great sites to visit. We've already had some inquiries about sites for next year, so expect a similar event next year. Many thanks to BMAP member Denise Thornton for writing an account of the trip which appears in this newsletter and to board member Donn D'Alessio for organizing the outing and volunteering his stream site for a visit. Thanks also to Mark Koeppl and Brian Outhouse for allowing us to visit their impressive prairie planting, to John and Julie Raasch for inviting us to visit their prairie remnant, and to former board member Mike Anderson for helping lead the trip.

We have other good news. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded the BMAP a $30,000 grant to work on improving habitat for endangered species. Thanks to BMAP ecologist Bob Wernerehl for putting together a successful proposal for this grant. We will tell you more about this project in a later newsletter.

The move to our office space in downtown Mount Horeb went smoothly and we've been holding our monthly meetings there throughout the summer. The Upper Sugar River Watershed Association (USRWA) is sharing their office with us, but we have our own area, and Carroll Schaal donated a computer for our use. We also started printing the newsletters in the office using the USRWA's photocopy machine. The printing costs for the summer newsletter were about half of what our normal commercial cost has been, so we're looking forward to using those savings for other activities. One disadvantage is that we now have to assemble and fold the pages of the newsletter by hand before labeling and sorting for mailing, but we worked the bugs out of the system and we're hoping a few members will help us next time. Several BMAP members have already volunteered for this task and we will be taking them up on the offer. Please consider volunteering one or two evenings a year to help out with this important part of the BMAP's mission. It's actually a pleasant way to spend an evening swapping stories about Parsnip burns and pulling Sweet Clover. If you contact me at 608-437-7349 or info@bluemounds.org, I'll make sure you get an opportunity to fold and label newsletters.

There are other great projects where BMAP members can help us. For instance, the BMAP has been invited to make an exhibit for the Mount Horeb Historical Museum on the ecological history of the Driftless Area. Although we have good prospects for funding the actual building of the exhibit, we're finding it difficult to obtain funding for designing the exhibit, which requires planning and searching through the museum archives for appropriate materials. The board is not able to tackle this project by themselves. It will require some interested members to help bring the idea to fruition. Please let us know if you can help us move this project forward.

Another possibility recently suggested by member Warren Gaskill is to start a service for welcoming people who have recently bought land in the BMAP area. The idea is to send new landowners a packet that would offer information about the BMAP and other conservation organizations, a "toolbox" of ideas and resources for alternative landscaping and native habitat restoration, and perhaps some "green" advertising or links to businesses which could help landowners accomplish their goals. The board is just beginning to work on this, so there is plenty of opportunity for members to step forward and have a significant role in shaping this project. And once the idea has been implemented, there will be a need for people to make sure that packets are assembled and mailed. We are very excited about this idea because it has great potential to reach a lot of people that we aren't reaching right now, with the hope that many more acres of native habitat will be saved or restored.

And there are always the smaller—but equally important—tasks, such as planning and arranging the winter speaker series, maintaining our website, managing membership information, writing articles for the newsletter, and organizing volunteers. These tasks have fallen to the board, which currently consists of only four members. The BMAP needs very much to have some new faces and fresh energy to keep us going strong and allow us to move forward with our work. We know from your feedback that you put great value on the BMAP's work, but we have no paid staff to make sure things get done. The BMAP is genuinely an organization of members for members. Please consider offering some of your time to serve on the board. You have a lot to offer and it would help the BMAP enormously! We meet one evening a month and hope board members can contribute a little extra time each month to maintain our momentum. Don't be shy! Talk to one of us today and we can get you involved at whatever level you think you can manage.

The BMAP is genuinely an organization of members for members. Please consider offering some of your time . . . You have a lot to offer and it would help the BMAP enormously!

Even if you're not on the board, we're delighted to have members come to the monthly meetings and participate in the discussion. Our December meeting is specifically designated as a time for organizing volunteers and we invite all of you to come, have some refreshments, and tell us where your interests lie. We will come with some ideas for where we need people the most. The meeting will be in our new office at 207 E. Main Street, Mount Horeb, Tuesday, December 14, at 6:45 PM. Note that this is the second Tuesday of December. Please come!

And finally, as the year draws to a close and you consider your charitable giving for the next year, I want to encourage everyone to think of the BMAP. We have had some wonderful donations this year which have helped us a lot, and we thank those members for their generosity. I hope that all of you who find the BMAP's mission important will be sure to renew your memberships generously as well.

Thank you.

German Valley Stream Restoration Update

Carroll Schaal, President

Beginning in 2001, the Blue Mounds Area Project (BMAP) provided landowners in the Gordon Creek Watershed in southwestern Dane and southeastern Iowa Counties with information about water resources and public and private programs designed to protect those resources. Funded by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Fisheries Management and Habitat Protection Program, the project's purpose was to promote opportunities under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) new Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and other public and private programs that help protect and improve stream health. Education efforts also stressed the link between good land stewardship and healthy streams and included information about new state standards for controlling polluted runoff.

One area we concentrated on was the German Valley Branch of Gordon Creek, where there is a high potential for significant ecological improvement. German Valley Branch, which runs along County Highway E southwest of Mount Horeb, is on the federal list of most impaired waters, but current restoration efforts could help remove it from this list and upgrade it to Class II Trout Stream status. Because current temperatures are not optimal for Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*, a native fish) and this stretch of water is close to high numbers of already established Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*, a nonnative fish) proposed management strategies are for the latter species. However, restoration of German Valley Branch will provide expanded habitat for American Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra appendix*, non-parasitic), Mottled Sculpin (*Cottus bairdi*), and other native species unique to clear, coldwater ecosystems and intolerant of degraded conditions. Improvements in German Valley Branch, which is a feeder stream, will also greatly contribute to the health of the downstream Gordon Creek fishery.

Like many of our area streams, water quality in German Valley Branch has slowly improved from better soil erosion and pollution control practices and reductions in livestock herds. However, the habitat for native coldwater species is no longer there. Years of excessive runoff and sedimentation created shallow, wide channels with steep erosive banks. The riparian (stream-side) habitat has also become overgrown with shallow-rooted, invasive plants that not only limit diversity of flora and fauna, but also add to stream bank instability.

By 2003, there was a large enough number of landowners interested in restoring German Valley Branch that the Dane County Land Conservation Department was persuaded to designed a project and develop a funding package to restore the habitat of the lower four miles of the stream from County Highway Z upstream to Mayflower Road.

Elements of the project included:

- Clearing the banks of invasive woody vegetation, mostly box elders.
- Reducing the slope of the stream banks.
- Narrowing and deepening the stream channel through the placement of wooden LUNKERS structures, weirs, and rock.
- Limited backfilling, regrading, and seeding with native prairie vegetation.

The LUNKERS structures provide an underwater cavity where fish can loaf or hide below an overhanging bank. Weirs help aerate and focus the current, keeping the channel narrow and swiftly flowing. The net effect is an attempt to recreate natural trout stream conditions. Approximately 20,000 linear feet of stream was reshaped and stabilized with 290 LUNKERS structures and 100 weirs. About 17 acres of surrounding land were seeded with a mixture of wet-mesic prairie vegetation, which will eventually provide habitat for grassland songbirds.

Participating landowners include Gary and Sherry Karls, Don D'Alessio and Julie Hayward, Daniel Atkins, Glenn Spaay, and Thomas Curran. Though the landowners did not have to financially contribute to the project, they agreed to provide maintenance and allow access for public fishing along the restored stream for at least ten years. The majority of funding for the project came from a WDNR Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) grant and a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) grant. The BMAP received $10,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. Originally intended to enhance the upland habitat component of the project, this grant was mostly diverted to the stream restoration component when other project funding was reduced.

Donated materials and volunteer labor for the construction of the LUNKERS structures provided approximately $50,000 in matching contributions. Volunteers from the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association (USRWA), the BMAP, Trout Unlimited, and the Dane County Sportsman's League dedicated several days of labor prefabricating the LUNKERS structures in an adjacent farm field. Joe Daniels Construction Company of Madison was a very capable general contractor. The total value of the project, including donated labor, was approximately $230,000.

The WDNR will be monitoring the stream to evaluate changes following the restoration project. Based on the results from similar projects, the professionals involved feel the restoration of this portion of German Valley Branch will be an unquestionable success. According to Dave Marshall, WDNR biologist, "Now that the habitat is there, I expect that species will migrate upstream from Gordon Creek and quickly populate the restoration site."

Future restoration work of the German Valley Branch of Gordon Creek is being planned upstream of the current site. A similar project is also underway on nearby Primrose Branch. The BMAP will continue to assist landowners with ongoing management and maintenance of the stream restoration work and assist in future efforts. Thanks to all those who helped make the project a success and watch for announcements of future volunteer LUNKERS building opportunities!

Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area Project Receives Grant

Paul Kaarakka, Membership

The Nature Conservancy announced that the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area (MRPHA) project has received a $56,000 grant from Environmental Defense's Center for Conservation Incentives. The grant will fund project coordinator Kristin Westad's position for the coming year or two and help pay for a farm transfer consultant to help farmers keep their land intact when they leave it. The Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development Council in Dodgeville is the recipient and administrator of the grant.

The MRPHA includes over 40,000 acres of southwestern Dane and southeastern Iowa Counties and is rich in high-quality prairie and oak savanna remnants. This portion of southwestern Wisconsin contains more than 60 prairie remnants, representing one of the highest concentrations of native grassland habitat in the Midwest, and provides habitat for 14 rare and declining grassland bird species.

The Blue Mounds Area Project (BMAP) is part of the coalition of public and private partners working on the MRPHA project to provide landowners with information and other resources they need to protect the area's natural and cultural resources.

Kristin was a featured speaker at the BMAP's annual meeting last spring, where she gave an overview of the MRPHA project's goals. She has helped the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) enroll landowners in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), two set-aside programs that pay landowners to restore environmentally-sensitive agricultural lands by planting native grasses, trees, and other vegetation. She also helped landowners enroll in the new Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), which offers incentive payments for farmers to keep their land in grassland rather than converting it to crops or residential development. And, through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Kristin helped dairy farmers fund pasture improvement.

For more information about the MRPHA project, you can contact Kristin Westad at 608-935-2791 x134. You can also find more information about the project on the web at http://nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/wisconsin/news/news1584.html and http://nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/wisconsin/preserves/art9039.htm.

Announcements

USDA Invites Public Comment on CRP

The United States Department of Agriculture has invited public comment on several issues important to the future of CRP. A notice seeking public comment on CRP was published in the Federal Register on August 10, 2004, and is available via the internet at www.gpoaccess.gov/crpcomments/.

Issues include:

1. How to manage the large acreage set to expire from CRP.
2. How to manage future CRP sign-ups and acreage.
3. How to evaluate the program's environmental effectiveness.

Please submit comments in writing by December 8, 2004. The USDA prefers you submit comments is via the internet at www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/. You can also submit comments by sending an email to srprule.crprule@wds.usda.gov or a letter to Director, Farm Service Agency, Room 4714-D, Stop 0513m, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, 20250-0513.

New Booklet for Identifying and Managing Pasture Weeds

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Agronomy and the Extension Service recently published a new booklet—*The Dirty Dozen and Beyond, Identifying and Managing 25 Pasture Weeds in Wisconsin*. The list now includes six annuals, six biennials, and 13 perennials. There is also more information about controlling invasive species, some of which harbor pests that can attack agricultural crops. To obtain a copy, contact Colleen Smith at UW–Madison Department of Agronomy, 1575 Linden Drive, Madison, WI, 53706. You can also call 608-262-7702 or email clsmith8@wisc.edu.

Small Grants Program for Prairie Research

Prairie Biotic Research, Inc., is a Wisconsin nonprofit organization established in 2000 to foster prairie biotic research. One way we do this is through our Small Grants Program that funds grants of up to $1000 for the study of any grassland taxa in the United States. We are especially eager to support independent researchers (individuals lacking institutional support), but invite anyone to apply. From 2002 to 2004, we awarded twelve grants to researchers in seven states to study insects, plants, mammals, reptiles, and spiders. Half of these grants supported graduate student research.

In 2005, we expect to fund four grants of up to $1,000 each. We have additional geographically restricted funds for research in southeastern Wisconsin and for research in Iowa.

To request a grant application form, contact Michael Anderson at Prairie Biotic Research, Inc., P.O. Box 5424, Madison, WI, 53705, or at prairiebioticresearch@hotmail.com. Proposals must be received by January 15, 2005.

To become a supporter, please donate to our Small Grants Program. Any amount is welcome. Prairie Biotic Research, Inc., is run entirely by volunteers and we maintain no offices so our overhead is very low. You may specify that your entire tax-deductible donation go to researchers through our Small Grants Program. You may also specify: a geographical region; one of three taxa (plants, invertebrates, or vertebrates); support for graduate student research; or support for the endowment fund for our Small Grants Program. Thank you.

Care of Backpack-Style Fire Pumps

Jim Sime, BMAP Member

Editor's note: Jim's personal fire pump is a pre-1940 unit. It still works fine and has greater range than new versions. According to Jim, this is a good indication that fire pumps are pretty much indestructible. I think it is a good indication that Jim knows how to take care of his equipment and we should all heed his advice. You should also read through this before actually disassembling your pump or you might end up with "extra" parts after you reassemble it!

There are two components of this major fire-fighting tool: the brass pump and the water container of metal, fabric, or plastic with its various straps, caps, and hose.

The **brass pump** is composed of three parts: a **piston tube** (with check valve) that moves inside a **cylinder tube** (with foot valve), and a **gland nut** (with O-ring) which is at the top of the cylinder and seals the moving surface between the piston tube and the top of the cylinder.

The cylinder has a ball-bearing **foot valve** that almost never fails, though it might stick. It should be free to move. Give the cylinder a shake and listen for the ball to rattle at the end where the hose attaches. If the ball rattles it is free. If the ball is not free you will need to disassemble the bottom of the cylinder. Note the order of assembly so you can reassemble it correctly! Unscrew the fitting, taking care to not lose the washer, the rings, et cetera, that seal this fitting to the bottom of the cylinder. If the ball is stuck or corroded to its seat, you need to free it with a plastic or soft metal rod. Take care to not scratch the ball or its seat. A shot of W40 will dissolve most gums and help prevent corrosion. Store the cylinder dry to prevent future corrosion or sticking.

The **gland nut** contains a packing seal between the piston and the cylinder. This packing seal consists of a neoprene O-ring or, in the D.B. Smith pumps, a special U-ring. The gland nuts are interchangeable. The seals are not. Failure here is evidenced by water leaking near the gland nut when pumping. This leakage indicates a poor seal. The pump will also suck air past the gland nut instead of completely filling with water through the check valve. You should be able to stop this seal from leaking by carefully tightening — but not too much — the gland nut. If it still leaks, oil the seal and wipe it clean. These seals can last a very long time, but often fail in a year or so because of poor lubrication, grit, corrosion of the piston tube, or excessive tightening of the gland nut. Keep it lubricated during use, wipe off any grit and most of the oil before storage, and loosen the nut when the pump is not in use. Also, check the piston for roughness or corrosion. Polish the piston tube with a SOS pad or with a plastic scouring pad to remove any roughness. Anything more

abrasive than fine steel wool will defeat your efforts by scratching the brass tube. If it continues to leak, replacing the O-ring or U-ring should fix it. Store the piston completely dry. Wipe the piston with a cloth slightly dampened with oil to apply a light coating for protection against corrosion. Thick coats of oil collect dirt and grit.

The **check valve** is screwed onto the end of the piston opposite the nozzle. This assembly is the weak link. Partial failure here shows up with water dribbling from the nozzle when the pump is not actually pumping. This will not stop the pump from functioning, but it is annoying. The check valve consists of a brass fitting with a ball held in place with a spring and a spring retainer. Theoretically, this spring should not ever lose its elasticity. Wrong! These things fail too often, leaving you with a perfectly good—and expensive—brass fitting that leaks because of the weak spring. Chapin valves—identified by a star shaped retainer clip—can be disassembled so the spring can be stretched or even cheaply replaced. The internal ball (1-4999), spring (1-5505), and retainer clip (1-5658) are still available from Chapin (800-444-3140). The valve body is no longer available. D.B. Smith valves—identified by a brass pigtail on the ball—have resisted efforts to stretch the spring in the assembled valve or efforts to reassemble the valve after removing the retainer. A new D.B. Smith valve, however, is available from many forestry supply companies for about $10.00. Check the operation of this valve by poking the ball with a plastic rod or pencil to see that it moves. Then blow through it. If you can force air through it against the spring it will leak. Occasionally some debris in the valve prevents the ball from seating. Clean and polish the seat with a "lead" pencil (not really lead, but graphite). Scour the seating surface with the "lead". Allowing water to freeze in the piston will blow out the spring retainer and destroy the valve, which will no longer pump at all. Carry a spare replacement valve in your emergency supplies because failure here is a major problem — other malfunctions are usually just annoying.

Now for the **water container**. You can install an optional **air bleeder** by mounting a rubber umbrella valve (Tessman Seed Company, 800-286-0679, SP Kit 02CH) through a flat area—at least 1 1/4" diameter — of the cap or the top of the tank. Drill a 13/64" mounting hole through the center of the flat area. Drill a 1/8" air bleed hole 3/8" away from the mounting hole. Pull the rubber tab (lubricate with liquid soap) through the mounting hole from inside to the outside of the tank. The umbrella will cover the bleed hole on the inside. This permits air to bleed into the tank while preventing water from getting out and running down your neck. Plug the original bleed hole with epoxy putty. Epoxy putty stops leaks in metal tanks and other hard surfaces. *(check list on page 6)*

Backpack-Style Fire Pumps Check Lists:

Brass Pump:

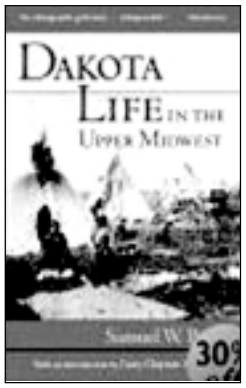
_____ Foot valve rattles (store cylinder dry).
_____ Bottom of cylinder doesn't leak at hose fitting.
_____ Gland nut can be snugged enough to stop leaking (loosen after use).
_____ Neoprene ring inside gland nut is soft enough to seal (oil before each use).
_____ Spare neoprene O-ring or U-ring in emergency kit.
_____ Piston dry inside and out (remove check valve for drying, store lightly oiled).
_____ Check valve ball not stuck (check with pencil or plastic rod).
_____ Check valve spring strength okay (cannot blow air past ball against spring).
_____ Check valve gasket intact (neoprene O-ring seals valve fitting to piston tube).
_____ Nozzle holes clear.
_____ Nozzle retainer chain and nozzle gasket functional.

Water Container:

_____ Hose not collapsed or kinked (replace with 36" length of 1/2" radiator hose).
_____ Hose functional, not frayed or leaky.
_____ Metal, fabric, or plastic tank not leaking (use epoxy putty to repair metal tanks).
_____ Filler cap gasket seal satisfactory (coat lightly with Vaseline).
_____ Filler cap air bleed hole open or replaced with rubber umbrella valve.
_____ Filler cap tether or chain functional.
_____ Filler cap alignment arrows visible (mark location of cam tabs on cap).
_____ Tank alignment arrows visible (mark location of cam slots on top of tank).
_____ Shoulder straps functional (not frayed, solidly attached).
_____ (Optional) Hip Belt buckles functional (belt not frayed, solidly attached).

Book Review: Dakota Life in the Upper Midwest

Bob Wernerehl, BMAP Ecologist



Dakota Life in the Upper Midwest. *By Samuel W. Pond, introduction by Gary C. Anderson, published by Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002.* Originally titled The Dakotas or Sioux in Minnesota as they were in 1834 and published in 1908.

I found this book an invaluable aid in understanding Native American life and conditions in the early 19th century in the Upper Midwest. The book is very well written and engaging, not a common praise for authors of that time. The introduction explains that the author spent a great deal of time learning the language of the Dakotas and was the leading expert in the region at that time. He actually lived and traveled for months with the various bands along the Minnesota river, making his accounts clearly first-hand and vivid.

The book is filled with interesting stories and anecdotes, often favorably comparing Dakotas with white soldiers and traders in the same territory. There were no settlers in that region in 1834. One example is a story about a small company of soldiers marching over the prairie "panting like over-driven oxen" led by a Native American twice their age walking "apparently with no great exertion."

What is remarkable is that this was written at a time when commenting on the positive attributes of the native inhabitants of Minnesota was generally strongly discouraged and often roundly criticized. Yet time after time this New Englander takes a common aspect of Native American life and finds a way to critique the European culture of that same time putting things on even ground.

Pond even weighs in on the frequent comment made by Europeans that Native American men were lazy and let their wives do all the work. His detailed descriptions of the work and hardships faced by men clearly neutralizes this argument. Pond was very well read for his day, making references to the ancient European authors Homer, Virgil, and Caesar. You will likely expand your knowledge of the English language while reading this book through Pond's use of interesting old words such as signalized, calumny, contumely, and opprobrious.

Fascinating for those interested in natural history are the accounts of deer and muskrat hunts. Those who think bison were common in the region during this time might be surprised to find the Native Americans around the Mississippi River in Minnesota hunted almost entirely deer, with only a very few elk being taken. Muskrat hunts were of prime importance for use in the fur trade, beaver not being at all common on the prairies. There are also interesting accounts of the Dakota uses of native plants, primarily as food sources.

The number of subjects covered by Pond were surprisingly high, making this book thorough and detailed, yet not ever getting bogged down. The book is a valuable addition to any Midwesterner's library.

Thank You New and Renewing Members and Donors

Member Changes and Donations Since the Last Newsletter

Basic & Student

Steve Austin/Anna Parise
Rebecca Christoffel/A Williams
Dianne Greenley
Wayne Hakes
Patrick Handrick
Harriet Irwin
Jan Ketelle
David Ladd
Barbara & Jerry Larson
Eugene M. Roark
Roland & Ruth Rueckert
Scott Wiener

Contributor

Mary & Joe Skupniewitz

Supporter

Merel Black
Maggie Jones

(cont. from page 1) plants and discourage weeds," said Mike. "At Mark and Brian's it was a true restoration. We didn't try to save anything in that field because there wasn't anything to save."

The first growing season after planting, the plot was mowed three or four times to keep weeds from setting seed and prevent the faster growing weeds from overtopping and shading out the slower growing prairie plants. "The second season we had a lot of biennial thistle out there," said Mike. "They blew in and continue to blow in from a pasture to the south, so we mowed twice more during that season to prevent those thistles from dropping seed. The following growing season, there were still a few thistles, and we did spot mowing to control patches. This spring was the first time there was enough fuel to allow a burn. Usually you can burn the second or third season, but the mowing makes your field decompose, so it took longer."

"I would call this prairie very successful," Mike concluded. A lot of it has to do with the fact that the soil wasn't very fertile, which helps keep the weed pressure down. I've probably seen 80 to 85 percent of the species that we planted."

The final stop on the tour was a stream restoration project along County Highway E southwest of Mount Horeb. This BMAP member project focuses on a 4-mile stretch of the German Valley Branch of Gordon Creek.

"It was a real education to me," said BMAP board member Donn D'Alessio. "Our portion of the creek was one of the most degraded because of the heavy growth of box elder, which killed all understory, and the banks eroded. It was wide, shallow, and slow-running. That is the opposite of what trout like. The county used heavy equipment, took down the trees, and burned them on the site. It didn't cost the owners anything except we now have an easement for anyone who wants to fish and we had to pledge to maintain the planting. They planted blue grass and fescue on the bank to stabilize it, and then they planted a mixture of prairie grasses and forbs."

"The DNR had done an assessment on different streams and felt this one had a lot of potential," said BMAP president Carroll Schaal. "With a little help, it could become a productive coldwater stream. The project grew out of willing land owners, a county government that wanted to do the project, funding from the federal government, and the interest of Tout Unlimited and the Dane County Sportsman's League. Willing land owners who want to see their land restored to a more natural condition is the key."

Volunteers from Trout Unlimited had acquired experience in the Upper Sugar River Watershed. They had a network which included several dozen volunteers, some experienced enough to provide supervision. They spent several days building LUNKERS structures made of rough-cut oak from a mill near Spring Green to recreate the over-hanging stream banks of a healthy trout stream. "It ended up being worth almost $50,000 in matching contributions toward the grants," Carroll said. "We've been putting oak LUNKERS structures in streams for 20 years. Oak is a really hard wood and once it gets away from sunlight and air, it will last a long time. This is the headwater to an existing trout fishery. I'm sure the fish have moved up and are in there right now."

"We have a lot of members out there with properties very similar to those we visited on this field day," Carroll concluded. "We want to make it an annual event. There is a lot to be learned. We are trying to encourage people to look at native species in their land management, and the best teachers are their neighbors. If people want to make suggestions or volunteer their property for the next field trip, please let us know."

Calendar of Events

December 6-7, 2004

Landscaping With Native Plants: An Evaluation of Environmental and Social Benefits
DePaul University Student Center — 2250 N. Sheffield Avenue, Chicago, IL

During this two-day scientific conference, scientists and researchers will present a snapshot of the state of knowledge of the benefits of native landscaping. Conference participants will be encouraged to identify gaps in the current knowledge base and define future research priorities. Who should attend? Landscape architects, botanists, economists, government officials, landscaping contractors, ecologists, hydrologists, engineers, landowners, and others interested in native landscaping. Cost: $75.00. Scholarships may be available.

For more information, visit http://128.248.232.70/glakes/ce/courseDetail.asp?GID=259 or contact Jim Van der Kloot, 312-353-3161, Danielle Green, 312-886-7594, or Lauren Umek, 773-325-4639.

December 14-17, 2004

Chicago Wilderness S-290 Intermediate Fire Behavior Training
Brookfield Zoo — 3300 Golf Road, Brookfield, IL

This classroom-based skills course is designed to prepare students to undertake safe and effective fire management operations. It is the second course in a series that collectively serves to develop fire behavior prediction knowledge and skills. Each course will be taught to National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards. Class size is limited to 40 students and preference will be given to Chicago Wilderness members. Cost: $140. Prerequisites: S-190 Introduction to Fire Behavior (or equivalent). Application Deadline: December 3, 2004.

For more information, contact Stephen Creech, Wildfire Management and Training Specialists, 4123 Stoutes Creek Road, Bloomington, IN, 47404. Phone: 812-334-3295. Email: stephen.creech@insightbb.com.

Board Meeting Schedule

Your voice is important. This is your organization and we value your input. Please attend a board meeting.

December 14 — January 11 — February 8

Meetings begin at 6:45 PM and end at approximately 8:30 PM.
They're held at 207 E. Main Street (west of Sole Sapori).

Winter Lecture Series

Mark your calendars now for the upcoming annual BMAP Winter Ecology Lecture Series. This winter the series will cover a range of historical and contemporary land use issues. In January we will begin with a talk on the natural and presettlement history of the driftless landscape that includes the Blue Mounds area. In February, we will move to the present and discuss a very timely topic: land use and land use planning. Finally, in March we will focus more precisely on the impact land use has on our area streams.

All lectures will be held in the upper level of the Mt. Horeb Community Center (former library) located on Maple Street just one block north of Main Street. All events will begin at 7:30 pm and end before 9:00 pm. Refreshments will be served. Future announcements will provide more details. The topics and schedule are:

Thursday, January 13

Natural History of the Driftless Region. Speaker Bob Wernerhel

Thursday, February 10

Land Use and Land Use Planning in the Blue Mounds Area. Speaker TBA

Thursday, March 10

The Impacts of Urbanization on Area Streams and What You Can Do About It. Speaker Carroll Schaal

Our Mission:

The Blue Mounds Area Project is a community–based organization that seeks to inspire, inform and empower private landowners in the Southwestern Wisconsin region to enjoy, protect and restore native biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Our Objectives:

1) Promote understanding, appreciation and conservation of native woodlands, prairies, wetlands and savannas and their special species in an economically viable manner, through community outreach programs and private contacts.
2) Act as a clearing house for information from people and organizations involved in preserving native biodiversity including information about plant, animal and habitat identification, management, restoration, seed sources, native plant nurseries and invasive, nonnative species.
3) Encourage cooperative, volunteer restoration and management activities.
4) Identify public and private land use changes that may affect ecosystem health and promote community–based stewardship of the unique natural heritage of the Blue Mounds and the Southwestern region of Wisconsin.

The Blue Mounds Area Project Newsletter is published quarterly.
We welcome your comments, submissions, and advertisements.

Deadline for submissions: January 21, 2005

Send submissions to:
Editor, Blue Mounds Area Project, PO Box 332, Mount Horeb, WI 53572
or jaraasch@tds.net

Editor: John A. Raasch, jaraasch@tds.net — Designer: Julie Raasch, jul@creative-zoo.com

BMAP Board of Directors

If you would like to be a member of the BMAP Board please contact

Carroll Schaal
(608) 437-6247
schaal1@mhtc.net

Vounteers Always Welcome!

Blue Mounds Area Project Membership Form

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

Membership Status:
❍ Renewal ❍ New Member ❍ Gift Membership for _____

Membership Level:
❍ Student $15 ❍ Basic $30 ❍ Contributor $50 ❍ Supporter $100 ❍ Sponsor $500 ❍ Patron $1000
❍ Other contribution to further the BMAP mission

TOTAL _____

All contributions are tax–deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Make check payable and return to: BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT, PO BOX 332, MT. HOREB, WI 53572

"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers but borrowed from his children."

— *John James Audubon*

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www.bluemounds.org

HAVE YOU EXPIRED?? Please check the address label for your membership expiration date. If you're receiving a complimentary or trial copy, please consider joining.