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July 2025: Blue Mounds Area Project eBulletin

Conservation and Community. Together.



IN THIS ISSUE

Author: BMAP Outreach Ecologist Sam Anderson, ecologist@bluemounds.org

- BMAP's Updates
- Workshops, Trainings, & Events

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Outreach Ecologist's Update

Sam Anderson

Hello BMAP,

I trust you all are enjoying the summertime! Many of you have probably been busy mowing, cutting, pulling, and spraying stubborn invasive species in your grasslands and woodlands. Others may be busy collecting seed as our early summer species mature or even senesce. Our BMAP events have been well attended this summer, exploring the dry prairies, savannas, and wetlands of the Blue Mounds area. With groups like The Prairie Enthusiasts, Southern Driftless Grasslands, The Ice Age Trail Alliance, UW Extension, and others, every week of the growing season offers ample opportunity to get out and learn about land management in our region. There is always something new to see in southern Wisconsin!



Michigan Lily (*Lilium michiganense*) -
Credit: Sam Anderson

This season's site visits with BMAP members have been excellent, especially given our mild, wet summer! I'm still accepting [BMAP's Site Visit Questionnaires](#) for a few folks who may be interested in a late-season site visit. BMAP also only has 3 more community events this summer, with 1 remaining property tour and 2 remaining walks with a naturalist. There are still plenty of opportunities for us to get together and enjoy the summer!

As our growing season begins to wane, don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or observations. I am always happy to communicate via [email](#) or over the phone if you want to discuss plant ID, restoration techniques, or other land stewardship questions.

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restoration community in SW Wisconsin.

If you have appreciated any of our summer Site Visits, Property Tou Conversations, or Walks with a Naturalist, consider an additional [donation](#) we can continue serving the SW Wisconsin region.

All the Best,
Sam Anderson
Outreach Ecologist
ecologist@bluemounds.org.

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BMAP on Facebook

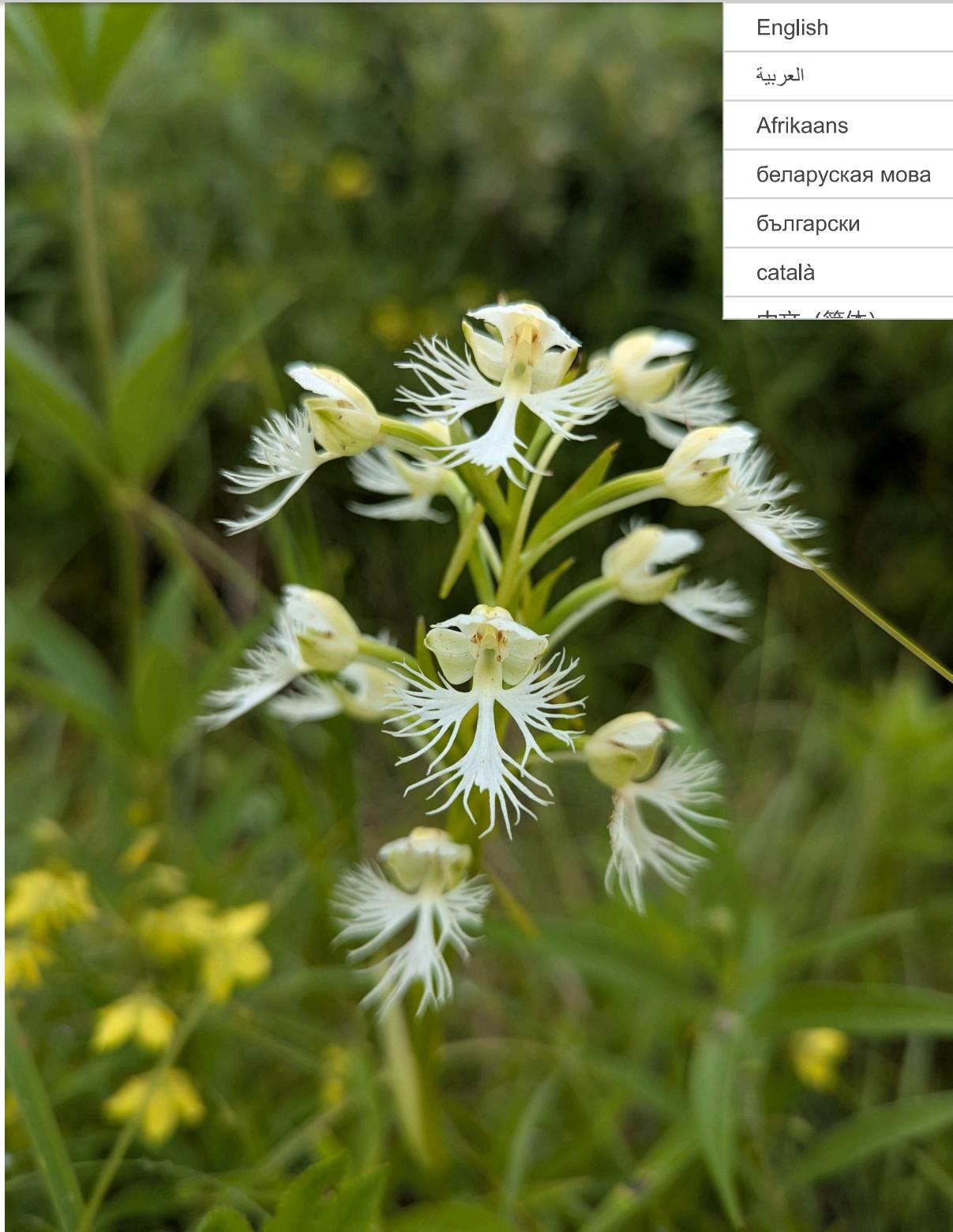
The [Blue Mounds Area Project](#) Facebook page is a good place to find information about upcoming events, but it's a one-way flow of information. Did you know we also have a Facebook group? Joining the [BMAP Facebook group](#) is a great way to connect with other BMAP members. To facilitate engagement, we'll soon begin posting regular conversation starters.

At any time you can also post:

- **Restoration-related questions**
- **Requests for help with burns**
- **Extra seeds or plants to share**
- **Photos of what's growing in your prairie or woodland**
- **Anything else that relates to ecological restoration in WI**

To join the group, [visit the group](#) and click Join Group. The group is open to all landowners and allies in the Driftless Area of WI or surrounding areas who are working to restore native biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Upcoming BMAP Events

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Eastern Fringed Prairie Orchid (Platanthera leucophaea) - Credit: Sam Anderson

BMAP 2024 Walk With a Naturalist

Take a chance to explore a new location or natural community here in southern WI with some members of the BMAP community!

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Leader: Sam Anderson
Aug 02, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Dane County, Co Rd KP & Scheele Rd, Berry, WI 5352

DALC Welsh Trail Section
 Leader(s): Barb Barzen (DALC), WI Master Naturalist
Sep 06, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
6596 County Hwy T, Spring Green, WI 53588, USA

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BMAP 2025 Property Tours

Prairie Spirit Wildlife Sanctuary

Aug 16, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM CDT
1811 Spring Rose Rd, Verona, WI 53593, USA

Owned by John Barnes and Kel Mattice, the sanctuary is a former dairy farm just south of Verona. Moving from dairy to beef, then to crops and pasture, this 200 acre restoration is an excellent example of adaptive land management

In case you missed our 2025 Winter Conversations:

Restoration at the former Badgerland Munitions Property

Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance

Hear from a representative of the Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance about their efforts in the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant, including management goals, progress, and highlights.

Coyotes in Our Grasslands

Carl Anderson

Learn about coyotes' behavior and impacts on grassland communities in southern Wisconsin. Gain a better perspective on the importance and complexity of Wisconsin's most abundant wild canine.

Garlic Mustard: Natural History and Management

BMAP President Greg Jones & BMAP Outreach Ecologist Sam Anderson
 Join our presentation on the natural history and science behind Garlic Mustard, and how WI landowners manage the invasive species in their woodlands.

Other SW Wisconsin Events & Resources

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Marsh Betony (Pedicularis lanceolata) - Photo Credit: Sam Anderson

Know of a local event that might be of interest to BMAP Members? Send the information to ecologist@bluemounds.org

Southern Driftless Grasslands Events

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how agriculture and conservation intersect

[Ice Age Trail Alliance Events & Workdays](#)

If you are looking to get to know the natural communities in the area, or are hoping to build skills in land management, the IA has a variety of events including hikes and workdays in the Blue Mounds area throughout the year.

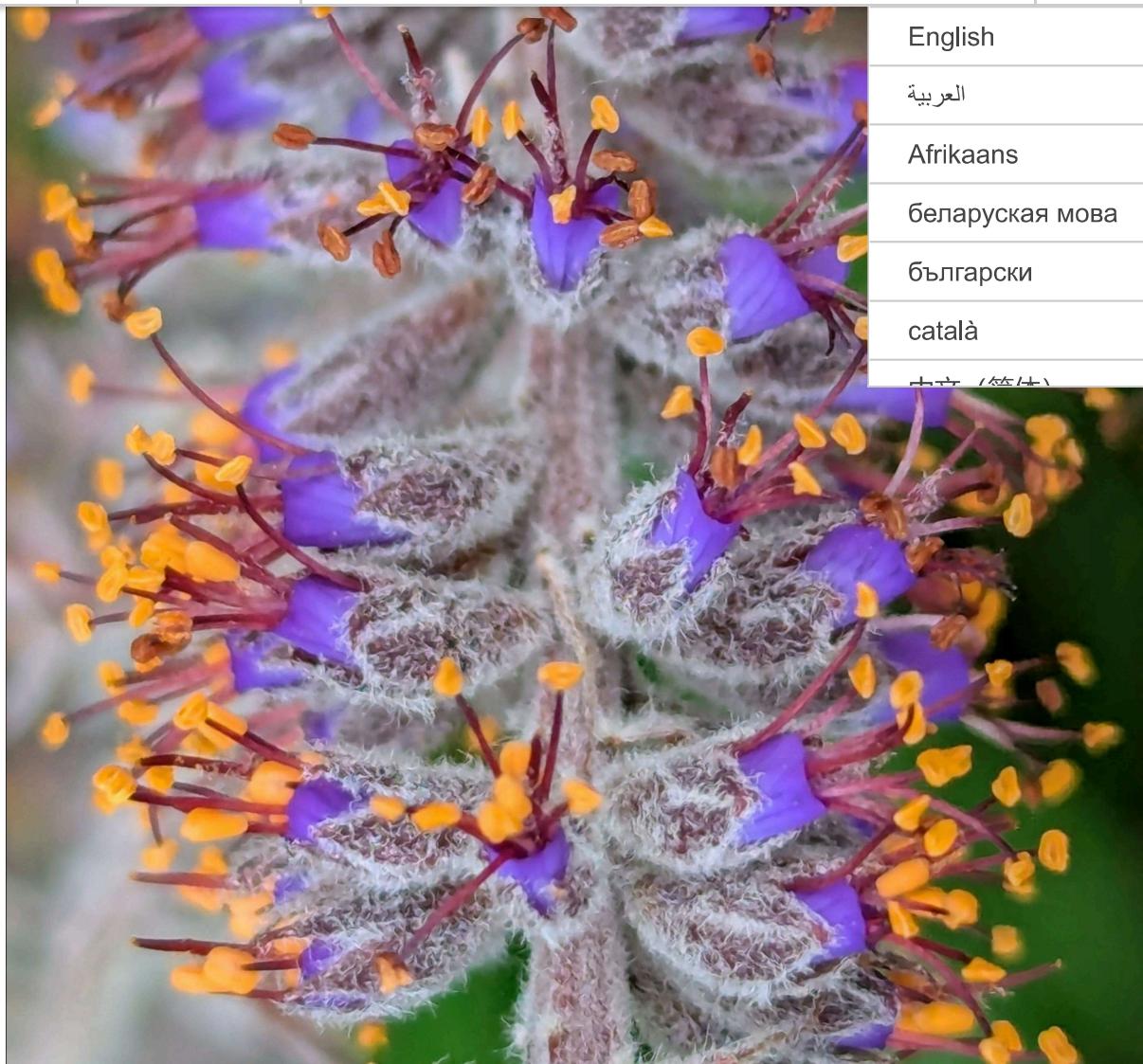
[Dane County Parks Events](#)

Dane county parks has a whole host of educational events and restoration workdays for folks interested in enjoying and restoring grasslands and woodlands.

[UW-Extension Forestry Events](#)

UW-Extension Forestry (within the Natural Resources Institute) offers classes and events all year long. The Learn about your Land on-line courses are particularly focused on providing landowners resources and connections to agencies, non-profits, and community groups.

Naturalist's Notebook **Online Resources for Naturalists**

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Close-up of Leadplant (Amorpha canescens); Photo Credit: Sam Anderson

Our last E-Bulletin gave me a chance to highlight some of my favorite written resources that I use to get to know the plant communities of Wisconsin, so I thought it might be good to follow up with some of the electronic resources that naturalists and land managers use personally and professionally to get to know our state a bit better!

Land History Resources

All plant communities you interact with, from remnants to heavily degraded sites, have a history. Any glimpse you can get into that history will give you some valuable context that will naturally shape not just your perspective, but your approach to land management.

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survey through the Department of Agriculture. These surveys are almost century-old snapshot of our state, with enough records of houses, barns, hay piles, and individual trees. I use these surveys to provide a bit of historical context for any of my site visits, and recommend that landowners use them to get acquainted with their property.

[Wisconsin Historical Bordner Surveys](#)

The Wisconsin Land Economic Inventory of the Depression Era was an effort to catalogue the landscape and potential resources of our state to promote economic development. Primarily characterizing the land in terms of agriculture and forestry, most Bordner Surveys include information on dominant tree species, wetlands, and other plant communities.

Plant/Insect Identification

Plants and insects form the biological basis of our terrestrial ecosystems, so a sound understanding of their diversity is an important skillset for any landowner. You may find yourself out in a grassland or woodland and see a plant or insect that you've never seen before. If you've got cell service, either of these apps will suggest identifications to the best of their ability. If not, you can always take a picture and upload it from civilization. For the most accurate ID, you will want to get detailed photos of reproductive structures like flowers or fruits. Otherwise, you may end up with a suggested ID of 'dicot,' which doesn't help anyone.

[SEEK](#)

Seek is designed by the same folks behind iNaturalist (more about that later). Leveraging iNaturalist's massive image library, they can suggest an ID without the added requirements of uploading images or having an iNaturalist account. If you do use iNaturalist, you can also add your observations directly from Seek.

[Picture This](#)

I've never personally used Picture This, but the folks that I know who have tried it generally seem to enjoy it. Picture This also uses AI algorithms, with the added feature of also assessing plant health and pests, like smuts, vine borers, or gall wasps. Many gardeners and indoor plant folks seem to appreciate this app.

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Birds aren't just an integral part of our landscape that we often indicators of high-quality habitat. Many nonprofits [Wisconsin Bird Alliance](#), [Pheasants Forever](#), [Ruffed Grouse Society](#), government agencies (WDNR, Fish and Wildlife etc.), and landowners understand the importance of birds to our natural systems, so a familiarity with birds is important in a naturalist's toolkit.

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[eBird](#)

Run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, eBird is a bird-specific platform for documenting and sharing bird sightings and identifications. Using 'Checklists,' birders can document the species they see for any given location/outing, which can be used by ornithologists studying larger ecological trends. eBird can also suggest birding locations so you can make the most of your next outing!

[Merlin](#)

Also run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Merlin is a go-to identification app for beginning birders. Merlin uses location data to suggest identifications, but most folks I talk to enjoy the excellent song recordings on Merlin. Each species has a list of high-quality birdsong for each species that make it easy to compare what you hear/record with definitive examples.

My Go-To

[iNaturalist](#)

Most folks have heard of iNaturalist at this point, and for good reason! iNaturalist allows you to upload photos of organisms you find and suggests identification for species you may be unfamiliar with. Beyond that, other users can suggest or confirm your identifications, and iNaturalist can track where, when, and characteristics (flowering/fruiting) of the species that you find. These data are hugely beneficial to scientists, but iNaturalist can also be used to help you find new species, see what other people have seen in your area, and can suggest the best time to catch plants in flower.

Since it is so easy to use, stores your observations, and connects your observations to larger communities of naturalists and scientists, iNaturalist is my personal favorite for nature-based apps.

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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.

Thanks to all our members for your support!

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