

Executive Committee

*S. H. Sentoff, President
R. S. Hensey, Vice Pres.
M. F. Boyle, Sec./Treas.
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Newsletter #117

Fall 2014

President's Corner

I'm sure the weather this winter kept a lot of you away from the prairie, but the weather's nice now and it's safe to come back. Read on for the details on upcoming events I hope to see you at the Annual Meeting and at some of the work days this fall.

Steve

Annual Meeting

We'll continue our plan of summer annual meetings, and this year it will be held on Saturday, August 23 at the parking lot at the preserve. The meeting will start with a Potluck Picnic at 12:00 noon. Family members and friends are welcome. Bring a hot or cold dish, salad or dessert with a serving utensil, and your own plate and silverware. Cold drinks will be provided. There are a number of picnic tables there, but bring a lawn chair if you can.

Starting at about 1:00 p.m., we will hold a brief business meeting in which we will elect members of the Executive Committee, present awards for last year and briefly outline the plans for next year. The slate of officers is the same as last year, and so the nominations are: President, Steve Sentoff; Vice President, Scott Hensey; Secretary/Treasurer, Malcolm Boyle; and general board members, Jim Dohren, Linda Fisher, Herman Jensen and Rob Kaiser. As always, nominations are open at the meeting for others who are willing to serve on the board.

We schedule the annual meeting at this time of year, so that you can see it in its glory. This is a great time for a visit and to see what you are protecting. We'll run a short tour of the West Loop for those who are interested. Even if you don't want to take that walk, there will be plenty to see just from the parking lot.

Awards

Prairie Steward Awards are given for accumulating 10, 25 and 50 hours, and for every additional 50 hours of volunteer work for the Stewardship Group. These awards are for total career hours through the end of June, 2014. This

year's recipients by category are

50 hours	Mike Kalscheur
600 hours	Jim Dohren
900 hours	Bill Dawe
	Monica Sentoff
1000 hours	Malcolm Boyle
2500 hours	Scott Hensey
4750 hours	Steve Sentoff

The list is a bit shorter this year, perhaps due to the particularly harsh winter we had, but there are also many active volunteers who just happen to be between awards.

Award certificates will be presented at the Annual Meeting. Please come to acknowledge these contributions and to take your well-earned bows.

Recent Accomplishments

In the first half of 2014, we scheduled nine work days. Four of those were brush clearing days, but we had to cancel the February 1st work day due to the deep snow, and for the three other work days we worked in the MacQueen Woods, because that was just about the only area that we could reasonably get to. Participation was also lower than usual, but Malcolm Boyle, Scott Hensey, Rob Kaiser, John and Brian King, Ginger Poloskei, Steve Sentoff and Sarah Stanfield braved the weather and helped with the clearing. We did manage to open up a bit more of the woods and build a couple of big brush piles, which the Forest Preserve District burned off for us.

We also had two seeding work days. These were in March, when it was still cold, but most of the snow was gone and we could get to the ground. We raked in varying amounts of Wild

Quinine, Prairie Dock, Pale Purple Coneflower, Wild Bergamot, Prairie Blazing Star, Dropseed, Purple Prairie Clove, White Prairie Clover, Round-headed Bush Clover and Tick-trefoil. With the somewhat better weather, we got a few more participants. The rakers included Barb Anderson, Malcolm Boyle, Danny Chen, Scott Hensey, Rob Kaiser, Ginger Poloskei, Audrey Schuurmann, Steve Sentoff and two students from West Chicago High School.

Of the remaining scheduled work days, one was to Nachusa Grasslands, which had to be postponed into July due to the weather; one was a Dame's Rocket weeding day, where only Scott Hensey and Steve Sentoff showed up; and the final one was the Prairie Path clean-up day (see report below).



Sweet Clover Crew

Wednesday Work Days

In addition to the scheduled work days, though, we have a core team of Wednesday volunteers: Malcolm Boyle, Jim Dohren, Scott Hensey and Steve Sentoff. Most weeks we're out doing whatever we think is the highest priority work at the time. Early in the year we did clearing projects. As with the scheduled work days, we had to cancel a couple of Wednesdays due to the weather, and also to adjust the location of our work because we couldn't get through the deep snow.

Later in the year, we worked on weeding. And there were lots of weeds to work on. Perhaps the extra moisture we had this spring helped them along, but for whatever reason we had robust growth of Dame's Rocket, Garden Heliotrope and White Sweet Clover. The last one is a biennial and may have been turned on by the burn on the west side of the preserve two years ago. We pretty much got rid of the Dame's Rocket and Heliotrope, but for the White Sweet Clover all we could do was to try to clear out the highest priority area in the West Loop Prairie. We really need to find some other technique(s) to get rid of this problem. We

thought we were making progress with pulling in past years, but apparently there was still a considerable seed bank waiting for the next opportunity to germinate.

Bird Monitoring

On May 10 Marilyn Bell, Herman Jensen, Mike Kalscheur and Steve Sentoff monitored birds at the preserve for the Annual DuPage county Spring Count. Unlike recent bird counts, this time we had very nice weather and fine birding conditions. As a result, we had very good results. We recorded 60 species and 372 individual birds. Our typical species count for the spring is a bit under 50, so this was excellent. Since the birds are likely here every year, this gives us a better idea of how many species actually use the preserve, even if sometimes they are hunkered down where we don't find them.

Prairie Path Cleanup

Each year we schedule a work day in conjunction with the Prairie Path clean up day and work along the section of the Geneva Spur that runs adjacent to the prairie. This time we had an excellent turn out: Carl Castillo, Jim Dohren, Lisbeth Garcia, Scott Hensey, Aaron Hernandez, Evan Hernandez, Courtney Jones, Nate Kunzer, Vera Miller, Binh Nguyen, Yosue Perez, Ginger Poloskei, Monica and Steve Sentoff, plus two West Chicago H.S. students all showed up to work on our section. With such big number we got our piece done, and also cleaned up trash that had blown into the preserve from the neighboring American Standard parking lot.

When we reached Industrial Dr. we met up with a crew from Mapei that was working on the section from the airport to that point. As you can see in this photo, all together we made up a pretty big crew of volunteers and collected a lot of trash.



Registration

It's time to renew our membership records, and there's a registration form included with this newsletter. [For those of you getting the newsletter electronically, the registration form is on the More Information page of our web site, or directly at www.wcpsg.org/registration.pdf.] Our by-laws state that anyone can be a member just by registering, so it's an easy and painless

process. No dues are required for membership, but all members are encouraged to donate time, money, skills and/or equipment to further the purposes of the stewardship group. If our records show that you've participated in some activity in the last year, you will automatically be continued as a member. If your phone number or address, or any of the other information has changed, please fill out the registration form and send it back to us by mail. Or you can send the same information in an e-mail to info@wcpsg.org, and we can take care of it that

way. This helps us keep our records up-to-date. And don't forget to tell us if you'd like to switch to electronic delivery from the newsletter, if you're still getting paper mail.

We're quite a frugal organization, but we always need a few dollars to keep our equipment running. If you'd like to make a (tax-deductible) donation, please make your check out to The Conservation Foundation, who take care of our finances for us, and send it to the address on the registration form. It will get credited to our account. Thanks.



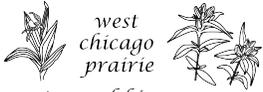
The West Chicago Prairie Stewardship Group is an affiliate of The Conservation Foundation

Schedule of Upcoming Events

Except as noted below, all events start from the WCP parking lot located on the east side of Industrial Drive between Western and Downs.

Saturday	August 23	12:00 noon - 3:00 p.m.	Annual Meeting and Picnic <i>Join us for a potluck picnic, followed by our annual meeting and a field trip.</i>
Saturday	September 6	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Restoration Work Day <i>General seed collection, mostly forbs.</i>
Sunday	September 21	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Restoration Work Day <i>Collection of grasses and forbs, also a good visit.</i>
Saturday	October 4	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Restoration Work Day <i>Clearing invading brush and/or raking in seed.</i>
Saturday	October 18	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Restoration Work Day <i>Clearing invading brush and/or raking in seed.</i>
Saturday	November 1	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Restoration Work Day <i>Clearing invading brush and/or raking in seed.</i>
Saturday	November 15	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Restoration Work Day <i>Clearing invading brush and/or raking in seed.</i>
Saturday	December 6	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Restoration Work Day <i>Clearing invading brush and/or raking in seed.</i>
Saturday	December 20	8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Field Trip - Meet at MacQueen Entrance <i>Winter resident birds. Annual DuPage Christmas count.</i>

Other workdays may be scheduled, depending on the field conditions. Reservations are not required unless you are coming with a group of 10 or more. Special field trips can be arranged for groups.



stewardship group
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