

Autumn 2019

419 S. Franklin St.
Janesville, WI 53548

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THE NATURALIST

Thanks for your support- from Neil

This will be my last article as president of G-RAS. I have enjoyed the last five years of serving you and the cause of conservation, restoration and celebration.

As a chapter of the National Audubon Society, we look for and celebrate our fellow mortals – the birds and animals and flowers and trees that we share the earth with. I have just finished reading “Braiding Sweetgrass - Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants” by Robin Wall Kimmerer. She points out that we have much to learn from the earth and other living beings who share it with us. I hope that we have modeled the attitude that respects everything that is alive – even garlic mustard as we pull it and burn it.

Of course, in order to have a good connection with the natural world, we need to get close – just like with the human people around us. The property we own has been chosen for its conservation value – Raccoon Creek and Spring Creek are surrounded by trees and flowers,

some of whom have been part of the landscape for a long time. Sunny Peace Prairie has a rolling landscape, which makes it ideal for restoring a native prairie.

Part of our work is to preserve what’s good in our environment, and part is to restore the land to the way it used to be – wetlands, woodlands, grasslands. The G-RAS work crew has been tireless (actually they do work hard enough to get tired!!) in removing invasive brush and planting oak trees and mowing the reed canary grass and wild parsnip and ragweed, so that the native seeds that have been waiting have a chance to grow.

We are glad to join with other Audubon chapters around the country to advocate for conservation both locally and nationally.

I hope that you’ll make the time to come out and walk the trails. Bring your binoculars and your flower guide. Join me and all of us as we conserve, restore and celebrate our natural world.

Taylor property acquisition progresses slowly



G-RAS made an offer to purchase the 39 acres at 6400 W Cleophas Rd in Beloit Township that was accepted January 31 this year. Progress has been slow because of the amount of old machinery, tires, and other non-natural items on the property. A considerable quantity of this was removed by the end of July – over 300 tires, for example. There remains a sizable amount to be cleared. So the closing date has been extended.

A phase II environmental assessment was

completed. It showed minor amounts of contaminants, none of which have impacted the valuable springs on the property. Those springs are crucial as feeders for the East Branch Raccoon Creek, which G-RAS is protecting in much of our other property along Cleophas Road.

Good news! We have been notified that the Department of Natural Resources has approved our application for cost share on the purchase – amounting to over \$65,000. We will be taking part of the balance from our bank account and borrowing part. We are looking for donations from individuals and groups to help cover the price.

“Our e-mail lists were lost. If you would like to receive the G-RAS newsletter by email, please send your address to Neil Deupree, deupreen@char-ter.net. Sorry for the inconvenience.” I had hoped to get them back, but it’s not happening. Neil

G-Ras Annual Meeting Sunday, October 27

Members and friends of Green-Rock Audubon Society are invited to attend our annual meeting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, October 27. It will be held at the Three Waters Reserve in the clubhouse of the former Decatur Lake Golf Course, N3941 Golf Course Rd, Brodhead, WI.

The complimentary lunch will be prepared by Chef Ryan Boughton (tentative menu below). The program will consist of a president's report, a treasurer's report, land management report, nominations and election, networking over lunch, and a presentation by the Southern Wisconsin Land Conservancy. There will be a tour of the building and grounds, which are being restored and renovation. The event will conclude at 4 p.m., although



Three Waters Reserve, N3941 Golf Course Rd, Brodhead, WI

people are welcome to walk through the property.

G-RAS member Ted Odell has been a part of the Three Rivers Reserve planning team. Over ten years ago he gave an easement on his property on Decatur Lake to Green-Rock and asked us to monitor it so that it stays a natural area. It is now a part of the Three Rivers Reserve and will also be protected by them.

At the annual meeting, members will be asked to vote on the slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee and approved by the

The tentative menu is:

Hickory smoked pulled Chicken sandwiches

Grilled portobello mushrooms

Curry Chickpea salad with squash and garden veggies

Local Fall Coleslaw with red cabbage,

Ten Eyeke Apples, walnuts, shaved carrots, Dijon vinaigrette

Garden Roasted Beets served with Chevre

& roasted tomatilla sauce on the side

Maple pumpkin bars

Iced Tea

Rosemary Lemonade

Ice water

Desserts

Nominations for new officers

Board. **For President:** Joni Denker. Joni has been a part of the G-RAS board for several years and has a Beloit College degree related to conservation and the environment. **For Secretary:** Norm Aulabaugh. Norm is the project manager of the Sunny Peace Prairie – the 75 acre reserve that he and Carol conceived of and gifted to G-RAS. **For Board Members:** Fred Faessler and Carol Aulabaugh. Fred is an active member of The Prairie Enthusiasts (TPE) whose Jason Briggs Wetland is contiguous with G-RAS property. Carol is a part of the Sunny Peace Prairie management committee. **Continuing officers are:** Sharon Bishop, **Vice President:** John Meland, **Treasurer;** **Board members:** Grace Burns, John Patterson, Neil Deupree; **Committee chairs:** Victor Illichmann, Steve Reischel, Susan Johnson.

In memory of Roberta Fitzsimmons

In July we received a donation of \$150 from the family of Roberta Fitzsimmons. Her daughter, Jeanette Oliver, commented: "She was revered for her beautiful gardens ... and shared her great love of birds with her husband, Kenneth." Their many birdfeeders on the farm are always full of beautiful, and sometimes unusual birds, whose songs add to the wonder of the farmland and woods. Roberta died Wednesday, June 5, 2019, at age 90.

Sunny Peace Prairie Bird Count

Submitted by Norm Aulabaugh
Sunny Peace Prairie

Quentin Yoerger and Aaron Haycraft recently completed a breeding bird count at the Sunny Peace Prairie. Quentin and Aaron visited the property in April, June and July of 2019, to complete the count.

Quentin and Aaron are accomplished birders. They were part of the top birding team who recorded a remarkable 193 species while birding from Door County to the Horicon Marsh on May 21, 2019 as part of The 2019 Great Wisconsin Birdathon. Quentin Yoerger is Chair of the Records Committee for the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology which publishes the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II.

A total of 49 species were recorded at the Sunny Peace Prairie. There is a link to the complete list in the blog entry on the Green-Rock Audubon website.

This bird count will become part of the database documenting the plant, mammal, and bird populations at the property prior to completing the restoration. Having this



Norman Aulabaugh Photo

Quentin Yoerger and Aaron Haycraft completing the breeding bird count at the Sunny Peace Prairie.

The beginning database will allow us to track the changes over time due to the land being restored. We expect all our initial database records to indicate vast changes in future years due to the restoration work being conducted on the property.

It was fascinating to watch Quentin and Aaron work. Most identification was done by listening to bird calls. It was also interesting to note that an app on a smart phone makes a convenient way to record the counts. Technology is for the birds!

There is a short two minute video about the bird count on our YouTube channel. Go to YouTube.com and search for Green-Rock Audubon. You will find the video there. Enjoy.

G-RAS makes plans strategically

Our board has met four times with the consultant that we engaged to assist us in planning. Lots of ideas were discussed. Priorities were chosen. The final draft will happen sometime in October. We'll keep you posted.



Tim Timmis/Audubon Photography Awards
Whooping Cranes

From the National Audubon Society Urge Congress to Protect the Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act has a proven track record of success in providing a safety net that protects our most vulnerable wildlife. It has prevented 99 percent of the species under its care from going extinct, including America's symbol, the Bald Eagle. But the White House has released new rules that weaken it. We should allow this critical law to continue to protect wildlife for future generations, not undermine it.

For more information see:

<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/endangered-species-act>

Please ask your members of Congress to stand up for the Endangered Species Act.

Annual Scholarship Grants Awarded

The G-RAS board has selected two college students for our annual scholarship grants.

Noah Brown is a sophomore at UW-Stevens Point majoring in natural resource planning. He grew up through Boy Scouts and eventually became an Eagle Scout, which helped him discover a passion for natural resources - protecting and managing them to better suit our future generations.

His application included his interests and desires: *“My higher education will help influence the future environment by:*

- *Enhancing skills and strategies to work with landowners on environmental protection practices*
- *Writing policies to help ensure the environment will be well protected*
- *Educating students and community members about environmental issues and conservation needs*
- *Sharing my love of nature with others to inspire their experiences and passion*
- *Creating more opportunities for others to learn and experience so many things nature has to offer.”*

Holly Barnett is a freshman at UW-LaCrosse majoring in psychology with a minor in neuroscience. She graduated from Milton High School this spring.

She describes her interests: *“I enjoy volunteering and singing. As a high school student, I was heavily involved in and enjoyed being a Milton Show Choir*

member for four years. I am so honored to receive a scholarship from the Green-Rock Audubon as I agree with their mission to restore and protect the environment. I believe that our environment can have a profound impact on our brains and behavior. If we focus more on protecting the environment, I believe that our physical condition would be positively affected. I hope to make a difference in the future by learning more about and sharing this idea with others.”

Each of the students has received a \$1000 scholarship. It was made possible through an annual grant to G-RAS from the Gibbs Foundation through the Stateline Community Foundation.

Last year’s scholarship winner was Josh Cullum, who is now a sophomore in Wildlife Ecology at UW-Stevens Point. Among other things that he has been occupied with, he mentions this: *“I became more involved in The Wildlife Society here on campus and became a co-leader on the Wild Bird Project. Right now, we are working out the details of an intensive study of the Eastern Whip-poor-Will population in Necedah NWR. This is an incredible project and an amazing opportunity for me to conduct undergrad research.”*

We are grateful that our small contributions have encouraged these students in their commitment to the natural world.

The Concert of the Trees

Submitted by Norm Aulabaugh

This story was told to me by a lady who grew up on a farm near Janesville. One day, long-long ago, her father handed her and her sister a gunny sack full of walnuts and a shovel. The father instructed the girls where and how to plant the walnuts. They did and many of the walnut trees grew. The walnuts were planted in straight rows. The trees were pruned regularly so they would grow trunks unmarked by knots.

Many years later, the two sisters visited the walnut grove. They spread a blanket on the ground and lay on their backs gazing up through the walnut trees into a clear blue sky. They began to hear music. The walnuts became an orchestra, standing straight and tall, wearing great green hats. Melodious music filled the grove. The ladies could not see the conductor, but the presence of a conductor was evident. The



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G-RAS Lands Fall 2019 Report

Prepared by Victor Illichmann

Androne Woods: The date for our Garlic Mustard/Brat Event has been changed to Nov. 9th. We are partnering with the Rock River Conservationists on this event. We would like to have 20+ torches to burn garlic mustard. The plan is to work from 8 AM till noon and then serve a brat meal. Our neighbor, John West, has mowed the trails. Another neighbor, Dave Dummer, has been doing much work for us. Neighbors like this are really special. We have a grant from the DNR. It is a cost share. If we can get 695 hours of volunteer time at \$15 per hour by August of 2021, we will get \$6,600. This would more than cover our out of pocket expenses. To cover our out of pocket expenses we need at least 300 hours of volunteer time.

Cleophas Reserve: We have been mow-

ing to keep the weeds from seeding out. The 10 acres we are restoring has had the canary grass sprayed. We will repeat this spraying next year so we can seed this area to prairie vegetation. We will contract this work out next year.

Gabower-Reilly Reserve: The Reserve area has excellent color this year. We have the first prairie dock we've had there blossom.

Spring Creek Reserve: We are working on 3 acres east of the creek. We have brush to kill and fallen trees to burn. We are working towards a pending EQIP contract for \$3,608. We have a contract to remove approximately 1/4 mile of fence row on our west boundary. This is in preparation for a 2022 restoration of a 7.9 acre field and a few acres north and south of this field. We will try to get this in CRP or EQIP to help with the cost. When I was mowing fire breaks I saw many monarchs, they are using the prairie thistle for nectar.

★ Trees

Continued from page 5

trees swayed in time to the music moved by the breezes filtering through the grove. The concert lasted for over an hour.

Imagination is the faculty to form new ideas, or

images of external objects not present to the senses. Walt Disney said, "Our future lies in the imagination of our children." I would like to add senior citizens to that thought. Peace.

In memory of Lois Allen, G-RAS Historian

There is a scrapbook three inches thick of photos and news articles and events on our shelf. It was Lois Allen's gift to G-RAS. She came to most events and took pictures and compiled them. In addition, she was involved in the restoration work at G-RAS in the 1990's, assisting with controlled burns and garlic mustard control.

Another gift from Lois is her designation of Audubon as a destination for memorials. To this point, we have received over \$1200 in her memory. The G-RAS board voted to use the money to fund permanent signs along the nature trails on our properties.

Lois died July 21 at age 82. We appreciate her dedication and her gentle spirit.

Tom O'Brien's legacy contributes to G-RAS

Green-Rock Audubon has received the first annual contribution of \$13,100 from the trust fund that Tom O'Brien, previous G-RAS president and treasurer, set up to benefit our local chapter on an ongoing basis. We are grateful for his generosity, his farsightedness, and his commitment to our vision and mission.

Green-Rock Audubon Society



Protecting Wildlife for Tomorrow

Join Green-Rock Audubon Society

Your Name: _____

Your Mailing Address: _____

Your E-mail: _____

Would you prefer to receive the newsletter electronically? ___

Two Ways to Join

___ I wish to join Green-Rock Audubon Society, I understand that I will not receive the Audubon Magazine, but all dues will go to G-RAS. Dues: \$10 Senior or Student, \$15 Single Membership, \$20 Couple

• To pay by mail, make checks payable to G-RAS, and mail this form along with the check to this address:

Green-Rock Audubon

Attn: John Meland

8235 N. Oak Ridge

Milton, WI 53563

• To pay online visit <https://www.greenrockaudubon.org/donate>

___ I wish to join the National Audubon Society's normal membership of \$35 per year which includes the Audubon Magazine. (Please visit <http://audubon.org/> to complete this membership.)

Volunteering Interests

I would like to volunteer for...

- Whatever is Needed
- Burning
- Brushing
- Spraying
- Seed Collecting
- Planting

I can volunteer at:

- Whenever is Needed
- Androne Woods
- Cleophas Reserve
- Spring Creek Reserve
- Gabower-Reilly Reserve
- The Pond (Janesville)

Donate Beyond Membership

I would like to donate to...

- Whatever is Needed
- Purchasing Herbicides
- Purchasing Spray Equipment

I want my donation to support G-RAS's efforts to manage or maintain...

- Androne Woods & Reserves
- Cleophas Reserve
- Spring Creek Reserve
- Gabower-Reilly Reserve
- Forest Prairie Park (Monroe)

(Please mail checks according to the directions above or visit our web-site.)

Volunteer Coordinator:

Victor Illichmann

viccarol@sbcglobal.net

608.752.8342

Times I can usually volunteer:

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

Membership Form Inside

Green-Rock Audubon Society (G-RAS) membership for one year with quarterly newsletter Green Rock Naturalist from Green Rock Audubon Society (all dues go to G-RAS).

- Senior or Student membership \$10
- Single person membership \$15
- Couples membership \$20



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Board of Directors

To contact the directors e-mail greenrockaudubon@gmail.com

President, Neil Deupree: 608.752.8342

Vice President, Sharon Bishop

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Director, Grace Burns

Land Manager, Victor Illichmann

Sunny Peace Prairie Project Manager, Norm Aulabaugh

Membership Chair, Steve Reischel

Education Chair, Nadine Whiteman

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Bird City Janesville hosts events



Swift Night Out counted chimney swifts as they entered the chimney at Washington School two nights in early September. The numbers were not as impressive as last year, when over 1000 swifts swirled around the chimney. But the more than fifty observers still had

the treat of seeing the swifts diving into the opening. This year the counts were in the neighborhood of 200 and 300. It was a good event that drew both veteran swift watchers and first-timers.

The end of July saw a purple martin event that was held at Prairie Woods Golf Course. About a dozen people saw a few martins near the houses that Bob Fulton has installed near the parking lot there.

THE ROCK COUNTY CONSERVATIONIST

Saturday, October 19th, 10 am-Noon: Prairie Seed Collection at Crossridge Park, Milton.

Saturday, November 9th, 8 am-Noon: Workday and lunch at Androne Woods on

Cleophas Road, Beloit, co-sponsored by G-RAS and Rock County Conservationists (Rain date Sunday, November 10th).