



THE BLUE MOUNDS PROJECT

Seeking to Inspire, Inform and Empower Private Landowners in the Southwestern Region
Of Wisconsin to Enjoy, Protect and Restore Native Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health

Spring 2000

Message From the Board

Carroll Schaal, President

Greetings and Happy Summer!

Despite vacations and the general attitude of summer relaxation, the Blue Mounds Project has been on the move! We are making progress toward the goals we set for ourselves at the annual meeting. Here's a quick rundown.

Our membership is holding steady. Renewals (check your mailing label for expiration) and new memberships trickle in even though we haven't given it any special effort...yet. Some kind of a membership campaign may be on the horizon. However, more importantly, we have achieved our goal of seven active board members. We have two great additions—John Bird and Peter Weil. John, a long time Town of Vermont resident, is bringing much appreciated professional accounting skills to the Treasurer's duties. Peter has become our official webmaster, providing much needed communications support. Be sure to bookmark our website—www.bluemounds.org—and check it periodically for the latest news about the Project and land stewardship. Someday soon, I hope you will be able to use our website and our list serve, which is still being developed, to find, share, or trade advice, seeds, volunteer labor, equipment, or whatever you need to assist you in managing your landscape for biodiversity.

We continue to sponsor and inform you about excellent educational events and opportunities. Mark Leach's July talk on Oak Savanna Restoration was one particular highlight that got a substantial write up in the local papers (pictures and everything!). If you were unable to attend, Bob Wernerehl made a video of Mark's talk that can be borrowed. Contact Bob to borrow the tape, (608) 795-4244 or rwemere@midplains.net. Our shelf at the Prairie Bookstore remains stocked and popular and has been moved to a more prominent location (thanks John!).

Our land stewardship and outreach efforts are renewed and strong, flexed by \$30,000 in grants from the Wisconsin DNR and Wisconsin Environmental Education Board. Most of this grant money is funding our forest stewardship project, which runs through next year. While our efforts will be more focused and concentrated on select properties, the Board remains committed to maintaining the initial concept of the Project by providing assistance to all members and conducting site visits for new members when possible.

Finally, we are making headway with bylaws and the paperwork for incorporation as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. We are on target for completion by the March 2001 annual meeting. One issue we are struggling with is the role of membership: is there sufficient interest among our members to participate in the election of the Board, or would it be better for the Board to be "self-perpetuating"? A self-perpetuating Board recruits and chooses its own Directors from the general

membership, much as we do now. If you have an opinion on this or other organizational matters, please give me a call (608-437-6247) or email us at info@bluemounds.org.

I hope you agree things are moving in a positive direction. As always we are interested in your feedback. Take care and enjoy the coming change of season!

BMP Receives Award From Iowa County Farmers

The Blue Mounds Project received the Wildlife Habitat-Club Award at the June Iowa County Farmers Appreciation Days. Alice in Dairyland presented Robert Wernerehl, Project Ecologist, with the award in recognition of our hard work to enhance habitat for wildlife in Iowa County. Numerous landowners in Iowa County have received assistance from the BMP.

Immediately following the presentation, local landowner and farmer Lee Fahrney, received the Wildlife Habitat-Private Landowner Award. In his acceptance speech, Fahrney praised the work of the BMP and Wernerehl saying "The Blue Mounds Project has a lot to offer the private landowner in terms of awareness and advice in restoring and protecting habitat." He went on to say, "Bob's visit was a very positive experience." Fahrney has conducted several projects on his land including tree plantings, prairie restoration, and wetland creation.

Controlling Invasive Plants: A workshop for landowners

Sunday, October 8th, 2000 – 1 PM to 4 PM.

Invasive plants have become a major land management issue. You're probably familiar with a few of these common invasive species: garlic mustard, honeysuckle, buckthorn, multi-flora rose, wild parsnip, autumn olive, Japanese barberry, white mulberry, box elder, dame's rocket, and others. If you want a good diversity of native species and healthy, functioning natural systems on your land, these invasive plants are a serious threat and need to be controlled.

But what is the best way to control them? Come to this workshop and you will learn a variety of techniques! We'll show you simple methods for applying a glyphosate herbicide, such as Roundup. This type of herbicide is considered quite safe to use and bio-degrades very rapidly in the environment. We'll demonstrate the use of an interesting new herbicide application device called a "stem pick". These are small vials containing herbicide that fit over a cut stem and are left on so

that the plant slowly absorbs the herbicide. We will also show and discuss mechanical control methods such as propane torches, weed wrenches, and brush cutters.

We'll meet on the 120 acre farm of Pat Handrick, located 3 miles south of Mt. Vernon. Pat has been quite successful in controlling woody invasives and we'll view the fruits of his labor.

Wear sturdy boots, long pants, and bring or wear a long sleeve shirt. If you would like to try some of the tools and techniques, bring work gloves, rubber gloves, and safety glasses, if possible.

There is no fee, but registration is required. The workshop will be lead by Bob Wernerehl, The Blue Mounds Project Ecologist, and landowner Pat Handrick. Call Bob at 608-795-4244 to register, or register through our website at www.bluemounds.org. Directions will be provided upon registration.

This workshop is funded in part by a 2000-2001 grant from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. © 2000 by The Blue Mounds Project, Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

BMP Web Update

Peter Weil, Web Master

I am pleased to announce that BMP's web site, located at www.bluemounds.org, has been up and running since mid-July. The site features downloading and viewing of BMP newsletters, recent press releases, announcements detailing our upcoming restoration and woodland workshops, and an online survey form for woodland owners. We plan on adding much more to the site—including a more attractive design—and would like to hear your ideas and suggestions.

One promising use of the web is to show the work of the BMP through photographs. If you have photos depicting a restoration or relevant features of your property, please consider submitting them for publication on our site. Pretty pictures are also gladly accepted! We are looking for volunteers with an artistic flair and some graphics skills to help spiff up the BMP logo and the design of the site. If you have a suggestion or would like to help us out, please contact me at 608-767-7985 or plweil@facstaff.wisc.edu.

Last, not least, the BMP listserv is in the final stages of testing. Members who are on our current email list will soon be receiving instructions on how to subscribe to the new list. If you have a new email address or would like to be added to our email list, please contact us at info@bluemounds.org.

Sugar River Watershed Association to Host Picnic in the Park

Marcia Hartwig

The Upper Sugar River Watershed Association (USRWA) is hosting a Picnic in the Park on Saturday, September 9, 2000 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Donald Park on Patricia Hitchcock's farm. The day's activities will include a business meeting, door prize drawing, tours, demonstrations, and a logo contest. Food and beverages will be provided.

Last winter, folks who live, work, and play in the Upper Sugar River Watershed met to share concerns for the watershed and discuss forming a watershed association. The group has been meeting ever since and has developed bylaws, elected officers and will be developing an action plan this fall. The group developed the following mission statement: The Upper Sugar River Watershed Association will serve as a forum for the preservation and enhancement of the watershed resources through an impartial partnership among diverse community interests.

As a first step towards this mission statement, USRWA is hosting a meeting to raise awareness of the watershed and its many treasures. You'll get to meet the interim board of directors and hear more about the formation of the Association. There will be a small business meeting at which the board will present the bylaws for adoption. Following the business meeting, there will be a door prize drawing including prints from local and national artists and other fabulous items. In the afternoon, there will be prairie and streambank tours. Come and see the what last year's habitat enhancement and streambank restoration project on Deer Creek looks like now. Demonstrations on fish assessment, fly fishing, fly tying, and the use of forestry equipment will be also be given.

Various groups in the area will have displays sharing information on their activities. Come and see who's doing what, and where. The Upper Sugar River Watershed is fortunate to have so many groups taking part in the protection and enhancement of the natural resources found there. Take advantage of this opportunity to meet your watershed neighbors!

As part of the picnic, USRWA is sponsoring a logo contest. Judging will take place throughout the day. Everyone who registers for the door prize drawing will get a ballot to vote for their favorite logo. The winner of the contest will receive \$100 and USRWA will get a logo.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to become a member of the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association. Please consider joining this grassroots organization in making the watershed a better place to live, work and play. But don't forget the best part—FREE FOOD! That's right! All you have to do is call Marcia Hartwig at 608-224-3746 to reserve your spot! USRWA will need to know how many are coming with you. Please call to help us get an idea of how much food we'll need. Everyone is welcome to attend! See you then!

Marcia Hartwig is the Sugar River Initiative Coordinator.

Woodland Owners Survey

Hopefully by now you've received a questionnaire from BMP on your attitudes and perspectives towards forest management and an invitation to a forestry workshop. If you have not filled out the survey, PLEASE do so even if you only have a small amount forest land. Of course, some of you who live in town and do not have a "forest" still received the mailing. Perhaps you can pass it on to someone you know who is not a member and has a woodland? We would like to hear from as many folks as possible. If you lost track of the survey, let us know and we will send you another, or you can fill it out electronically at our website, www.bluemounds.org/woodlands_survey.html.

Some of you may have received two surveys. In addition to all the Project members, we sent a copy to every significant

landowner in Vermont and Brigham townships. We tried to screen out BMPmembers, sorry if you got a duplicate.

We will be compiling the results and will report on them in a future newsletter.

Websites of Interest to Conservationists

All of these links are accessible through the BMP website: www.bluemounds.org.

The **University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee** has a field station near Saukville in Ozaukee County, just north of Milwaukee. Each year they offer a series of natural history workshops that are reasonably priced and staffed by real experts in their field. They also offer guided nature walks. www.uwm.edu/Dept/fieldstation/home.html

The EPA's website features abstracts from the **1995 Midwest Oak Savanna and Woodland Ecosystems Conference** and links to previous conferences. www.epa.gov/glnpo/oak/oak95/abstracts.html

Wisconsin State Cartographers Office. Maps, aerial photographs, satellite imagery, products and publications, and a worthwhile link section. www.geography.wisc.edu/sco

Agriculture Ecosystems Research Group, an "ad hoc group of researchers and farmers concerned with finding crops and agricultural practices that will economically benefit farmers while protecting and sustaining the environment." www.uwex.edu/ces/forage/ageco.htm

Gathering Waters is a "land conservation organization formed in 1995 to assist land trusts, landowners and communities in their efforts to protect Wisconsin's land and water resources. Established by a coalition of land trusts, Gathering Waters serves as an education and technical assistance center for land trusts and landowners alike." www.gatheringwaters.org

Calendar of Events

Program and Education Committee

Mike Anderson, Wendell Burkholder

Managing Woodlands in Southwestern Wisconsin Workshop

Sept. 9, Saturday, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Amcore Bank, Mt. Horeb (morning) and various field sites (afternoon)

BMP is sponsoring this workshop. Advance registration required, \$10 for BMP members, \$25 for nonmembers, includes lunch. To register call (608) 795-4244 email to info@bluemounds.org.

Sugar River Watershed Association Picnic

Sept. 9, Saturday, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

See page two for details.

Prairie and Savanna Restoration Workshop

Sept. 16, Saturday, 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Middleton Public Library (morning) and various field sites (afternoon)

BMP is cosponsoring this workshop. Advance registration required, \$20, includes lunch. To register, (608) 356-2801. For more info, (608) 277-9960 or email to biologic@chorus.net.

Controlling Invasive Species Workshop

October 8th, Sunday, 1 PM to 4 PM

BMP sponsored. See page one for details.

27th Annual Naturals Area Conference

October 16–20

St. Louis, Missouri

Contact: www.conservation.state.mo/nac.

10th Annual Prairie Invertebrate Conference

November 4

Riveredge Nature Center in Newberg, WI

Contact: Andy Larsen, 262-375-2715, or by email at: andyl@mixcom.com.

Board Meeting Schedule

Your voice is important; this is your organization and we value your input. **Please attend a board meeting:**

Sept. 5, 7:00 pm, John Bird's deck, Black Earth.

Oct. 3, 7:00 pm, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mt. Horeb.

Nov. 7, 6:30 pm, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mt. Horeb.

The church is located at 315 E. Main Street in downtown Mt. Horeb. Look for a limestone church with a tall steeple two blocks east of the downtown stoplight. Enter through the back door and go up the half flight of stairs on the left. The front door is handicap accessible.

Our Mission:

The Blue Mounds 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, non-native 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.

BMP Board of Directors	Board Members	Staff Ecologist
President-Carroll Schaal	Michael Anderson	Bob Wernrehl
Vice President-Vacant	Reed Cockrell	
Secretary-Mary Fritz	Wendell Burkholder	
Treasurer-John Bird	Kent Mayfield	
	Peter Weil	
	Jim Zerwick	

The Blue Mounds Project is sponsored by Community Conservation, Inc., a nonprofit organization.

The Blue Mounds Project Newsletter is published quarterly. Send your comments, suggestions, submissions, and advertisements to: Newsletter Editor, Blue Mounds Project, PO Box 332, Mount Horeb, WI 53572.

Blue Mounds Project Membership Form

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____ **CITY:** _____

STATE: _____ **ZIP:** _____ **E-MAIL ADDRESS:** _____

MEMBERSHIP STATUS:

_____ Renewal. _____ New member. _____ I cannot join at this time, please keep me on your mailing list.

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

General (individual or family)	\$25.00 / Year	_____
Student/limited income (individual or family)	\$15.00 / Year	_____
Other contribution to further the BMP mission		_____
	TOTAL	_____

All contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law

SITE VISIT REQUEST:

_____ Check if you would like to receive a site visit from the BMP ecologist (we will contact you for additional information and to arrange the visit).

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE AND RETURN TO: BLUE MOUNDS PROJECT, PO BOX 332, MT. HOREB, WI 53572

William Rudolph Smith, a gentleman traveler from Philadelphia, described the open character of the oak savanna near Blue Mounds during an 1837 visit:

“The groves surrounding, and interlacing, and sprinkling, and dotting the vast ocean of open field, can be threaded as easily with a carriage, as if you were driving through a plantation of fruit trees, set or growing irregularly. The undergrowth is generally of small bushes readily passed over, the black currant, the furred and smooth gooseberry, the red and the white raspberry, the blackberry, the haw, the wild plum, and the crabapple; all these indigenous fruits are found throughout the territory; the strawberry literally covers the prairies and the groves.”

**The Blue Mounds Project
PO Box 332
Mount Horeb, WI 53572**

**TIME TO RENEW?? Please check the address label for your membership expiration date.
If you're receiving a complimentary copy, please consider joining.**