



THE BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT

Promoting Ecological Restoration and Stewardship of Native Habitats

Spring 2002 Vol. 5 No. 2

Tom and Kathie Brock Receive 1st Annual Bur Oak Award

The first annual Bur Oak Award for Outstanding Land Stewardship was awarded to members Tom and Kathie Brock at the BMAP annual meeting last March. The Brocks have been rejuvenating the long-neglected prairie and savanna on their Town of Vermont property. Thanks to their stewardship, more than 400 species of plants are thriving on their 145-acre property, including several endangered and special concern species, with new species appearing each year.

Prior to starting their efforts, the prairie had become overgrown with undesirable vegetation, such as red cedar, buckthorn, and sweet clover, which was severely suppressing the sun-loving prairie plants.

Consequently, removing weedy and invasive trees, shrubs, and flowering plants has been a top priority for the Brocks. Since the woody vegetation was removed the prairie plants have flourished. Hand-weeding and controlled burns also have stimulated the prairie plants.

The Brocks hand-collect native flower and grass seeds

from their property and use them to plant new areas. Thanks to their management and planting efforts, the prairie has expanded from less than one acre to more than 30.

Their oak savanna was also seriously degraded because of cattle grazing, excessive brush, and a lack of fire. Brush removal, hand weeding, and several burns have revealed large, handsome bur and white oak trees and many savanna plants.

In addition to extensive efforts on their prairie and savanna, the Brocks are also returning agricultural fields to prairie. Two CRP fields have already been planted using seeds collected from their property and other nearby sources and plans are underway to restore more fields in the next several years.

The Brock's efforts clearly exemplify the Bur Oak award's criteria of "sensitivity to the environment" and "enhancement

of the habitat of threatened, endangered or special concern species or rare plant communities." Thank you Kathie and Tom for your thoughtful stewardship and wonderful example. *



Bob Wernerehl, BMAP staff ecologist, presents the first annual Bur Oak Award to Kathie and Tom Brock. In addition to a framed certificate, the award included a cloth hand-printed with bur oak leaves. Photo

Annual Meeting Seats Five New Officers

Carroll Schall

On February 23rd approximately 25 enthusiastic members gathered in Mt. Horeb for the BMAP Annual Meeting. Following a short slide presentation summarizing the mission and activities of the Project, the first annual Bur Oak Award for Outstanding Land Stewardship was presented to members Tom and Kathie Brock for their outstanding prairie and savanna restoration work in Vermont Township. (See full story above). The Bur Oak Award will become an annual event. Visit our website and make a nomination for 2002!

The Annual Report was presented by Treasurer John Bird, President Carroll Schaal, and Ecologist Bob Wernerehl. This was followed by an open discussion on issues facing the BMAP. Several members provided ideas for reducing costs, raising

money and improving services. A new BMAP brochure and a new logo were unveiled. Members were encouraged to take copies of the brochure and distribute them. Thanks to Julie Raasch for volunteering her time for brochure layout and design and to Mike Anderson for creating the brochure text.

Five members were nominated and elected to the Board of Directors and will join the four existing Directors. New Board of Directors members include Donn D'Alessio, Andrea Hoerr, Ruth Kellesvig, Mary Michal, and John Raasch. Continuing Directors include Mike Anderson, John Bird, Carroll Schaal, and Peter Weil. Directors serve staggered two-year terms.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of committees, their roles, and methods for increasing membership. *

Message From the Board

Carroll Schaal, President

Dear Members,

The Blue Mounds Area Project completed its sixth year of operation in 2001. As you read through the Annual Report insert, you'll note many accomplishments: developing landowner forestry plans, conducting youth education workshops, and hosting international visitors, to name only a few. However, perhaps the most significant achievement was the establishment of the BMAP as a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation. For a "project" that grew out of Brian Pruksa's research on oak savanna diversity, this is a major milestone.

The original idea of providing community-based ecological outreach has grown beyond many people's expectations. While our continued presence in the area as a voice for conservation has been established, incorporation is just a milestone. We can and should celebrate this momentous event, but in many ways it is only a beginning. There are challenges and some tremendous opportunities ahead for our "new" organization.

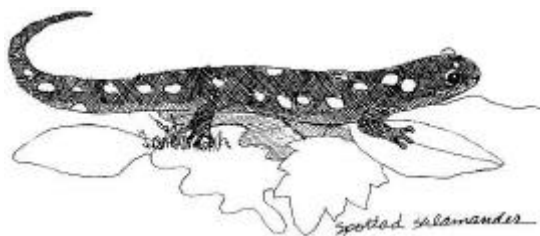
Throughout the enclosed Annual Report you'll find reference to these challenges and opportunities, in addition to the year's highlights. To help us meet these challenges and maintain our momentum, now as much as ever, **we need your support.**

How can you help? First, renew your membership if it's past due. If you have renewed, thank you! Dues are a major source of revenue for us and are essential in helping us match the grants that support our Ecologist's work. (If you are unsure of your status the address label on this newsletter should include your "paid through" date.)

Second, please consider making an additional donation of \$25, \$50, or more. Show your support for our plans to help landowners preserve and restore the natural landscape by helping us raise the funds necessary to make those plans come true. We've enclosed a donation envelope for your convenience.

Finally, encourage a friend to join or make a donation. More people must be involved if we are to succeed in preserving our native biodiversity. Also, we are always looking for volunteer help in planning and conducting activities. We are a volunteer-based organization and many types of skills are needed. Let us know what skills you have to offer.

In closing, I want to thank all of you for your support over the years. Special thanks is extended to Jon Becker at Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren, s.c. for donating his attorney skills to guiding our incorporation and successful tax exempt application, and to Rob Horwich and Community Conservation Inc. for their sponsorship, mentoring, and support. *



Officers Elected, Committees Formed

Elections of Officer positions on the Board of Directors were conducted at the March 12th Board meeting. The following board members were elected to Officer positions by unanimous vote:

- **President:** Carroll Schaal
- **Vice President:** Michael Anderson
- **Treasurer:** John Bird
- **Secretary:** Mary Michal

In addition to Officer elections, the following committees were formed during the board meeting:

- **Membership:** John Raasch (chair), Jack Saltes, Carroll Schaal
- **Education and Events:** Michael Anderson (chair), Andrea Hoerr, Ruth Kellesvig, John Raasch
- **Communications:** Peter Weil (chair), Michael Anderson, David Haskin, John Raasch
- **Land Stewardship:** Donn D'Alessio (chair), Michael Anderson, Jim Elleson, Andrea Hoerr, Ruth Kellesvig, Mark Mittelstadt, Peter Weil
- **Fundraising:** Carroll Schaal (chair), Jim Elleson, Mary Fritz, Kent Mayfield, Jim Zerwick
- **Finance:** John Bird (chair), Kent Mayfield, Carroll Schaal

All committees can use additional members (many hands make light work, after all) and interested members are invited to join the committee of their choice. This new committee structure should help spread out the workload and improve the efficiency and functioning of our organization. *

BMAP Nominated for the Virginia M. Kline Award for Excellence in Community-Based Restoration

BMAP members Dave Marshall and Wendy Weisensel have nominated BMAP for the Virginia M. Kline Award for Excellence in Community-Based Restoration. The purpose of the award is to "recognize a group of individuals who have dedicated their collective time, skill, and efforts for community-based ecological restoration, utilizing the human community's role in the restoration of ecological communities."

The award is named in honor of Virginia M. Kline, a retired University of Wisconsin-Madison ecologist who served for 21 years as the UW-Arboretum Ecologist and Research Program Manager.

The award, which is sponsored by the Friends of the Arboretum and the Aldo Leopold Foundation, consists of a \$2,000 cash prize and an engraved plaque. Additionally, the winner's name will be engraved on a plaque that will be permanently displayed at the UW-Arboretum Visitor Center.

Thank you Dave and Wendy for your thoughtful nomination. Whether or not we win, it's nice to know we're appreciated. *

Meet Your Board of Directors

Have you ever wondered who arranges BMAP's public events? Secures the funding? Writes the articles you read in this newsletter? If so, read on and you'll find out: Presenting your Board of Directors.

Michael Anderson has been with BMAP since it reorganized in 1998, working on the Education and Events, Land Stewardship, and Communications committees. He also creates the BMAP newsletter. Michael is the owner of BioLogic Environmental Consulting where he works with landowners to help them understand, appreciate, manage, and restore their land. Michael lives at the urban edge of Fitchburg with his wife Pat where they tend a 65 species rich backyard prairie planting. When he has spare time, he is inclined to go canoe camping, traveling, hiking (really just an opportunity to botanize), or sit still and read.

Donn D'Alessio and his wife Julie Hayward have worked on restoration of native vegetation on their property in Blue Mounds Township since 1995. They have been members of the Blue Mounds Area Project since its organization.

Andrea Hoerr and her husband Doug moved to southwest Wisconsin 5 years ago. Andrea's lifelong passion for natural landscapes and land preservation led to an interest in prairie restoration. Andrea works as a computer engineer for TDS Telecom, which helps provide funding for the restoration efforts on their property in Iowa county. She is excited to be part of BMAP's mission and participates on the Land Stewardship and Education committees. In her spare time, Andrea enjoys hiking, motorcycle trips, and weaving.

Mary Michal and her husband Dave Haskin live north of Barneveld in the Town of Brigham. When they moved to the country 6 years ago, they were anxious to learn more about land stewardship. That led them to the BMAP. Mary and Dave have attended numerous educational and stewardship programs offered by the BMAP and are busy restoring prairie and oak savannah on their land. Mary is an attorney with the law firm of Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren, s.c., and her law firm has donated legal assistance to the BMAP. When not practicing law or knocking back autumn olive, Mary likes to visit prairies, bicycle, and cross country ski.

John Raasch and his wife Julie reside in Primrose Township. John is a University of Wisconsin research specialist developing alfalfa that produces enzymes for converting biomass into ethanol and potatoes resistant to late blight disease. John and Julie moved to Primrose Township a few years ago and were happy to discover (helped by BMAP ecologist Bob Wernerehl) a prairie remnant on their land. John now wants to help other landowners learn about and care for their own islands of native flora and fauna. When John and Julie are not defending their two-acre patch of grassland from invasive weeds, they are often found taking care of their vegetable garden or trying to tire-out their energetic border collie.

Carroll Schaal, his wife Pam and children John, Anna, and Peter, reside in Mt. Horeb. Carroll is a Team Leader for the Lakes Partnership program in the DNR, working in Madison. Looking to get involved locally when he moved to town in 1994, he was drawn to the community conservation aspect of the BMAP. His work with citizen-based management of the state's 15,000 lakes strikes an interesting parallel to the mission of the BMAP. This experience and an educational background in water resource management and community planning are some of the skills he brings to the BMAP. In his

spare time he is likely to be found biking, canoeing, skiing, or coaching soccer.

Peter Weil and his wife Lynne moved to Black Earth in 1998. Peter works as a

computer consultant for the Laboratory of Genetics at UW-Madison. A strong interest in prairie restoration and woodland management on their property naturally led Peter and Lynne to BMAP. Peter maintains the bluemounds.org web site and listservs, and serves on the communications and land stewardship committees. Peter also assists with training service dogs for WAGS, does computer consulting, and tends to various restoration, land management, and gardening projects at home. He also enjoys hiking, birding, and biking.

Unfortunately, at press time we did not have bios for two additional board members-**John Bird** and **Ruth Kellesvig**. John is a continuing board member who has been providing much needed and much appreciated professional accounting services. Ruth is a new board member, but is no stranger to BMAP-Ruth's Perry Township farm was the site of a daylong, outdoor environmental education class co-sponsored by BMAP for 150 sixth graders last fall. *

Have you ever wondered who arranges BMAP's public events? Secures the funding? Writes the articles you read in this newsletter, seals it shut and mails it to you?

Introducing Wisconsin Family Forests

Wisconsin Family Forests (WFF) is a grassroots, community-based organization for private forest landowners that focuses on promoting sustainable forestry. Community connections are strengthened as neighbors share their forest management experiences, work together to complete joint management projects, and pool their resources to learn about sustainable land management.

Local WFF alliances, usually formed at the township level, are the substance of Wisconsin Family Forests. Each alliance operates independently at the local level as it focuses on issues of common interest to the community. The sole function of WFF, Inc., the statewide organization, is to support established alliances and to offer assistance to landowner groups interested in forming alliances in their own communities. Thus, the focus of Wisconsin Family Forests remains at the local community level.

For more information: write Wisconsin Family Forests, PO Box 682, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-0682; phone 715-213-1618; email info@wisconsinfamilyforests.org; or visit their website at <http://www.wisconsinfamilyforests.org>. *

Natural Range Limits: Don't Worry, Be Happy?

Rich Henderson

With the rise in the popularity of restoring prairie has come an increase in the incidence of prairie species being planted outside of their natural or original ranges. This is often done unknowingly, but not always. Some well meaning people have become so enchanted with prairie that they readily plant prairie species outside their natural ranges, and even plant prairie in areas where it was not present in the past. An attitude of “don't worry, be happy” seems to have been adopted by some.

Why worry about this issue? Isn't prairie an endangered ecosystem that can use all the help it can get? Yes, it is endangered, and it certainly needs the help, but the wrong help may prove just as bad as no help at all. Thus, those of us concerned about prairie conservation should be concerned about the issue of planting species outside their natural range, and take it seriously rather than dismissing it as something only “purists” worry about. When your goal is to restore prairie, you should make every effort to avoid planting species outside their natural range, and, where feasible, we should all try to correct mistakes made in the past, at least the more blatant ones.

The reasons for paying attention to range limits are varied. First and foremost is that the plant associations within native prairie remnants are often quite different across the geographic range of prairie in the Upper Midwest. Distances of only 10 miles can result in prairies, even those on similar soils and soil moisture regimes, having different species associations. This is the consequence of range limits. In Wisconsin alone there are 48 prairie species that are not naturally found across the entire prairie/savanna region of southern and western Wisconsin. This is approximately 15% of the state's total prairie flora. The causes behind these range limits are not well known, but are likely varied, ranging from varying rates of spread since the last glaciation, to variances in climate, disease, insect pests or large herbivores, to competition from other plant species, to regional differences in soil and substrate.

Whatever the reason behind them, these range limits give local “flavor” to prairies across the Midwest. This local variation contributes to the diversity of the prairie ecosystem across its entire range. Thus to fully conserve the prairie ecosystem, we should be striving to conserve this local variation.

The second reason for paying attention to range limits is one of aesthetics. Personally, I would find it rather boring to have all prairie plantings across the Midwest composed of the same species. No matter where you go you would be seeing the same species over and over again. This homogenization is analogous to the loss of local human cultures to a ubiquitous cosmopolitan culture where every city starts to look the same.

Third, planting species into wild settings outside their natural range runs the risk of eventually fouling up scientific inquiry and understanding by producing a type of biological pollution, if you will. Future investigations into ranges of species, what they are, what determines them, how they change

over time, will be compromised. We still have much to learn about the prairie ecosystem and its plants. Widespread planting of species across the landscape into new regions is going to hamper our ability to discern what is natural or introduced and thus compromise or understanding of the species. In the case of rare species this confusion may even hamper the protection efforts of natural wild populations.

Fourth, it leads to misinformation. Every restoration is an educational tool. Including species in them not natural to the local area misleads or misinforms the general public and the novice student of the prairie ecosystem.

Now, it is certainly true that ranges are not stationary in time. Think of the movement of plants into this region after the last glacier. Therefore, what was the range limit of a plant in 1850 might not have been its limit in 2000 had European settlers not moved in and disrupted things. This concept is sometimes used as justification for not worrying about moving a species 20, 50, even 100 miles outside its known range, as long as the climate and soils are conducive to its growth and reproduction. However, I consider this to be a weak justification that is both highly speculative and rather illogical. For example, why would a plant species with dispersal and reproductive abilities that would allow it to expand its population front 50-100 miles within 100-150 years not already have done so while it had the opportunity in the previous several thousand years?

Conversely, if its reproductive and dispersal abilities are so low that it only made it, say, half way across the prairie regions of Wisconsin after 6,000 years of opportunity, why should we assume it would have moved 50-100 miles, or even 10 miles, in the past 150 years had European settlers not intervened? The point is that the ranges of most prairie plants have had 6,000 years to stabilize in southern and western Wisconsin, and even longer in Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota. Those that had not yet stabilized by 1850 are likely so slow in their dispersal that another 150 years would not have been enough time for them to move more than a few thousand feet, let alone tens of miles.

Another criticism leveled at concerns about range limits is that data is so spotty that we really don't know where the range limits of many species actually occur. This is true for some species. However, I don't believe this should be used as an excuse to plant these species anywhere without careful consideration. Instead, we should be looking harder for natural populations so we can more accurately map their ranges. However, we need to be careful in assessing the new populations that we find to be reasonably certain that they are indeed natural and not adventive or planted.

I hope we all give careful thought to what species we choose to use (and their genetic sources for that matter) in our prairie planting and restoration efforts. This is especially true for “wild” locations that might pass for natural remnants 50 to 100 years into the future. But we should also be careful even in our backyard plantings. Backyard plants have been known to escape to the wild, and well-meaning people may move seed off site to use locally elsewhere, with or without our knowledge, thinking the planting is representative of local prairie heritage.

Information on range limits can be found in:

- 1) Plant Species Composition of Wisconsin Prairies: An aid to selecting species for plantings and restorations based upon University of Wisconsin-Madison plant ecology laboratory data. 1998 (second edition). Technical Bulletin 188. WI Department of Natural Resources. 58 pp.
- 2) Atlas of the Wisconsin Prairie and Savanna Flora. 2000. Technical Bulletin 191. WI Department of Natural Resources. 226 pp.
- 3) UW-Madison Herbarium website <http://wiscinfo.doit.wisc.edu/herbarium> has various distribution maps covering WI and a link to a USDA website that has maps for Iowa and Illinois.
- 4) Vascular Plants of Minnesota: A checklist and atlas. 1992. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. 306 pp.
- 5) Plants of the Chicago Region. 1974 (second edition). The Morton Arboretum. Lisle, Illinois. 922 pp. *

(Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the Winter 2001 issue of *The Prairie Promoter*, the quarterly newsletter of The Prairie Enthusiasts. We thank them for their permission to reprint.) *

Old Friend, New Name

The Dane County Natural Heritage Foundation, a local area land trust since 1983, has amended its name, and is now the **Natural Heritage Land Trust**.

The Natural Heritage Land Trust is still the same organization dedicated to the conservation of natural areas and open space in Dane and the surrounding counties. The Natural Heritage Land Trust has kept the best portion of their name – *natural heritage* – while adding *land trust* to better explain who they are and what they do.

See the Natural Heritage Land Trust website www.nhlt.org for more information. *

Websites of Interest to Conservationists

Invasive Species Control You'll find excellent invasive species control information at the joint website of The Nature Conservancy and the University of California-Davis. The site has general and species-specific control methods, weed photos and other identification tools, reviews of equipment and chemicals, sample weed management plans, and a downloadable weed control handbook. You'll find it at <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu>.

Cyber Sedge This site has 6,574 images of plants in the *Carex* (sedge) genus ranging from whole plant illustrations to detail illustrations. Based on the illustrations created by Harry Charles Creutzburg for Kenneth Kent Mackenzie's (1940) North American Cariceae. The site is produced by The Texas A&M Bioinformatics Working Group, which includes "campus faculty, staff, and students with research and educational interests in the expression of biodiversity data using new information technologies." You'll find it at <http://www.csd.tamu.edu/FLORA/carex/carexout.htm>. *

Take A Minute....

Please take a minute to turn to the back page and check your mailing label to see if your membership has expired. If it has, or is close to expiring, we would greatly appreciate your renewal. If you've been receiving a complimentary copy, please join.

This cost of producing and mailing the newsletter is one of our highest recurring expenses. Your membership provides us with the funds we need to continue producing the newsletter. It also shows us you support our efforts. Renewing without being asked saves volunteer time and BMAP money that can be used for land protection. (*Editor's note: if this request looks familiar, it's because it was included in the last newsletter. However, membership expiration dates were inadvertently omitted from the mailing labels, hence the repeat performance.*) *

Calendar of Events

Enlightening Tours of Prairies, Savannas, and Open Woodlands Various dates, May through June

Various times

Various locations

Wonderful, fun, and informative field trips lead by knowledgeable guides to a variety of habitats located throughout southern Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota. Learn to identify the wildflowers and animals you see. Investigate the effects of various management and restoration techniques. Get outside. Sponsored by The Prairie Enthusiasts. Visit their website for full details: <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org>. *

2002 North American Prairie Conference

June 23-27

Kirkville, Missouri

All things prairie. This year's conference theme will be "Promoting Prairie," with subtopics including: prairie biodiversity, restoration and reconstruction, initiatives to preserve prairies, education and outreach, native landscaping, and use of prairies for environmental improvement. Visit www.napc2002.org or call Sharron Gough at 417-876-5226 for more information. *

Want to list an event? Mail it to Michael Anderson, 2505 Richardson St., Fitchburg, WI, 53711 or email it to biologic@chorus.net.



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, 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.

BMAP Board of Directors	Board Members	Staff Ecologist
President–Carroll Schaal	Donn D’Alessio	Bob Wernerehl
Vice Pres.–Michael Anderson	Andrea Hoerr	
Secretary–Mary Michal	Ruth Kellesvig	
Treasurer–John Bird	John Raasch	
	Peter Weil	

The Blue Mounds Area Project Newsletter is published quarterly. Send your comments, suggestions, submissions, and advertisements to the Editor: Michael Anderson, Blue Mounds Area Project, PO Box 332, Mount Horeb, WI 53572 or by email to biologic@chorus.net.

Blue Mounds Area 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 BMAP mission _____

TOTAL _____

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

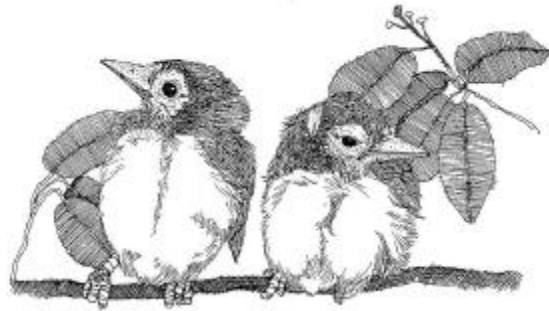
SITE VISIT REQUEST:

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

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

My daughter is quiet beside me in the front seat, until at last she sighs and says, with a child's poetic logic, "This reminds me of the place I always like to think about."

–Barbara Kingsolver, "The Memory of Place"



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORTED STANDARD
PERMIT #5
BLACK EARTH, WI 53515

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.