



The Blue Mounds Area Project

Promoting Ecological Restoration and Stewardship of Native Habitats

Happy 20th
Anniversary!

Summer 2017
Volume 20 Number 2

Revisiting the 50%
Rule of Thumb for
Seed Collecting (p1)

Greetings from the Blue
Mounds Area Project
Board of Directors (p2)

Muralt Bluff Hike Event
(p3)

I Needn't Have Worried
(p4)

Great Lake Early
Detection Network
(GLEDN) (p5)

Rotational Grazing (p6)

Announcements (p7)

Events (p8)

www.bluemounds.org

Revisiting the 50% Rule of Thumb for Seed Collecting

Amy Alstad, BMAP Ecologist

An unwieldy five gallon bucket bangs against my hip, anchored by my belt. I am armed with a clipper and bags of many shapes and sizes. Crucially, I have also come prepared with a pair of gloves, since even the deceptively silky seeds of Indian Grass can begin to chafe your hands as you stripseeds from countless stalks into the bucket.

Collecting prairie and savanna seeds is one of my very favorite stewardship tasks. One part treasure hunt, one part moving meditation, this task permits me the double pleasure of marveling at the richness of one prairie while harvesting the seeds to establish or diversify a second prairie.

Of course, care must be taken so this annual task doesn't harm the prairie from which we are collecting the seeds. In order to avoid population declines from overharvesting seed, the general rule of thumb is "take half, leave half." In other words, it is generally thought as long as collectors take no more than 50% of the seeds of any one species, plenty of seed will remain to keep populations stable over time.

However, new research suggests this rule of thumb needs revisiting. In fact, a study of mesic and wet mesic remnant prairies in Minnesota found sites frequently harvested were distinct from sites not being harvested. Unharvested sites had 44% more native species compared to frequently harvested sites¹. These patterns were unrelated to other possible explanatory factors such as soil characteristics, patch size, latitude, or land-use history. All of the seed collection occurring in these study sites was performed with a modified agricultural combine. Frequently harvested sites were harvested either annually or every other year for eleven years, while infrequently harvested sites were harvested two or three times in eleven years.

The authors report the frequency of seed harvesting did not affect populations of most prairie species, which were equally abundant in frequently harvested, infrequently harvested, and unharvested prairies. However, they did find fourteen species which were substantially less common in frequently harvested sites, leading the authors to classify these fourteen species as 'sensitive' to harvest.

These sensitive species, whose populations were sometimes reduced by as much as 50% with frequent seed harvesting, included several familiar species such as black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), mountain mint, (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*), grey goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*), meadow blazingstar (*Liatris ligulistylis*) and bastard toadflax (*Comandra umbellata*). Unlike many prairie species, which are long-lived and do not rely on seeds for reproduction as they are capable of vegetative spread², the sensitive species identified in the study tend to be relatively short-lived species and not capable of vegetative reproduction. Interestingly, the total number of seeds produced per species was not related to its sensitivity to harvest frequency.

This study suggests that, instead of using a uniform seed collection target (e.g., taking 50% of the available seeds) across all species, we should set individual targets for species based on their life history characteristics. While grasses and several other dominant taxa such as asters can likely sustain seed harvests of 50%, other taxa including annuals, biennials, and other short-lived species, as well as those reproducing exclusively by seeds, are likely to decline over time with intensive seed harvesting. In The Tallgrass Restoration Handbook, Packard and Mutel recommend harvesting no more than 10% of the total seeds of any non-clonal or short-lived species³.

Several good resources are available to help you determine the life span and clonality of particular species. Illinois Wildflowers (www.illinoiswildflowers.info) is a highly informative website with detailed descriptions of native plants, including whether a species is capable of clonal reproduction or is reliant on reproduction by seeds. Determining whether a species is monocarpic (i.e., it dies after producing seeds) or polycarpic (i.e., produces seeds many times during its lifetime) is also helpful, as populations of monocarpic species are more likely to decline over time with heavy seed collection. Many field guides, such as Wildflowers of Wisconsin and the Great Lakes Region by Black and Judziewicz, indicate whether a species is annual, biennial or perennial. Keep in mind the lifespan for perennials varies considerably.

cont. page 2, see SEED COLLECTING

Greetings from the Blue Mounds Area Project Board of Directors

Paul Ohlrogge, BMAP Board President

The world seems small today. I can't help but reflect that a few days ago I was in the Philippines and experiencing life with the equator heat. Many of you know I spent many years in the Philippines and started my career there as a Peace Corps Volunteer in 1981. Every time I travel to that part of the world I learn something new and it is fun to learn. I was able to observe and learn about ecosystems near the sea. How special that was. So different from here where we have four seasons compared to the Philippines with basically two seasons of rainy and dry. It is really hot there and it is refreshing to be home. One learns a lot when traveling and seeing new places. I notice the grassland hills and the type of plants blooming and growing in abundance near the ocean. It's fun to see the birds and insects attracted to these places. I observed the ecosystem of the sea and marveled at coral and the life in the ocean. Stunningly beautiful!

It is good to be home and continue the projects here. One of the first things I did was go to my favorite spot on the knob; it is popping up and growing. It was nice to sit in the quiet and reflect on where I have been and what I am seeing. I always enjoy looking for any new blooms and surprises. A few monarchs showed up and I got excited about that.

Summer is here! Though, I did hear someone comment recently that fall is getting close.....brother! By the time you read this newsletter we will be two thirds of the way through our summer series of landowner picnics. Thanks to all of you for attending these educational events. It is great to share stories and strategies on good conservation work. It is fun to learn about the unique spot we live in. The Driftless region is incredible and we are so lucky to continue the legacy of this area. Thanks for all you do.

Here at BMAP we will be transitioning a bit as Amy Alstad, our ecologist, will be leaving us for a new position. Amy has been a wonderful



ecologist and has participated with many BMAP members with a property visit. She has also been a presenter at regional educational events and last winter was one of our winter series speakers. Thank you Amy for your contributions to BMAP! Some good news is she will be still in our region, working on important projects within the natural resource field and she has indicated that she would like to stay connected with us and may become a BMAP board member.

I value lifelong learning and have learned from a lot from Amy, BMAP members and friends of BMAP. Recently I was out for a stroll at the Iowa County Farm west of Dodgeville. What a glorious spot. A colleague shared information on the meadowlarks, bobolinks and other grassland birds. I learned something new that day. We have some fun educational events coming up in the near future with the hope we all learn a little more. Please note the calendar and plan to come and attend.

Have a great August, September and Fall. Paul 🌿

SEED COLLECTING *from page 1*

Some, like compass plant (*Silphium laciniatum*) may live for a century or more, while others consistently live less than a decade. These shorter lived perennials, which include prairie phlox (*Phlox pilosa*), wood betony (*Pedicularis canadensis*) and Canada milkvetch (*Astragalus canadensis*), are good candidates for conservative seed collection targets, just like annual and biennial species.

In addition to considering the life history traits of individual species, the savvy seed collector will also use knowledge of a collection site to help guide safe seed collection rates. If a species is rare at a site, collection rates should be reduced to allow that species to build its numbers up to a stable level. In scenarios where the needed information is lacking, err on the side of caution by alternating each handful of seed for the bucket with a handful of seed thrown on the ground. Note that seed collectors are always required to obtain explicit permission from the owner or steward of a site before collecting any seeds.

The next time you find yourself on the autumn prairie, filling your bags and buckets with the seeds for your next planting, you can help use information on species life history characteristics and population levels at that site to set appropriate seed harvest targets, and ensure the future health of the collection site. 🌿

The author thanks Rich Henderson for sharing his expertise on this topic.

1) Meissen et al. 2015. Risks of over-harvesting seed from native tallgrass prairies. *Restoration Ecology*. 23:882-891.

2) Dalglish & Hartnett. 2006. Below-ground bud banks increase along a precipitation gradient in the North American Great Plains: a test of the meristem limitation hypothesis. *New Phytologist*. 171:81-89.

3) Packard & Mutel. 2005. *The Tallgrass Restoration Handbook: for Prairies, Savannas and Woodlands*. 2nd Ed. Island Press, Washington DC.

Advertise in the Blue Mounds Area Project Newsletter

Deadline for ads in the fall newsletter is October 15, 2017

1/6 page vertical (2 3/8" x 4 7/8") \$35.00
1/3 page square (4 6/8" x 4 7/8") \$55.00

Contact editor Marci Hess,
mhess5599@gmail.com, for more details.

Muralt Bluff Hike Event

David Cordray, BMAP board member



Photo by Debra Noel

Between the driving rain and my steamy breath trapped inside my rain hood, I can't quite make out what I'm looking at. A large swath of red lines the entire lower third of the bluff. Another swath of powdery-blue covers the middle of the steep bluff. Occasional patches of white are interspersed throughout. I think I hear a voice say "red, white and blue," but my hearing is compromised by the amplified patter of rain drops against my rain hood. Eager to confirm my suspicions, and a few long strides later, there is no longer any doubt.

Before me stands the largest colony of prairie smoke I have ever seen (red). Patches of pussytoe, rock cress and rock sandwort are scattered about (white), and above all the prairie smoke is a tremendous display of bird's-foot violet (blue).

On a very rainy May 20th, Tom Mitchell led twelve wind- and rain-battered enthusiasts on a Muralt Bluff prairie hike few will ever experience. Armored with raingear and umbrellas, we took advantage of a unique opportunity to experience the prairie "in the wet!"

The steep slopes were more of a challenge to navigate, and plant identification proved more difficult due to some flowers closed up - including blue-eyed grass. But in general, the thirteen of us got along just fine in the rain.

Mitchell and John Ochsner, who was instrumental in protecting Muralt Bluff, started us off with a series of water-proof Green County WI maps showing the geology and natural history of the area. Following this, Mitchell, who is site manager of Muralt Bluff State Natural Area, led us down a dark, tree-lined access path. I could only imagine what others were thinking: "This doesn't look like prairie" and "Why am I out here in the rain?" That all changed when we reached the opening, exposing the north face of the bluff where the patriotic display of red, white and blue flowers greeted us.

Tom explained how The Prairie Enthusiast's Prairie Bluff chapter hold weekly work parties where they have been steadily hand-removing invasive brush and invasive species such as sweet clover. They use fire to control clonal woody species such as gray dogwood, but limit fire to small patches to keep from overstimulating the tall, warm-season prairie grasses. Over the last two years, the Prairie Bluff chapter has invested more than 2,000 hours of on-the-ground management. And their efforts were clearly evident!

As we zig-zag up the steep slope, placing our feet both for traction and to reduce flower trampling, we are greeted to many more plant species, including fringed puccoon, kittentails,

small skullcap, blue-eyed grass, flowering spurge and yellow star grass. Once on top, Tom shows us large patches of wood betony, needle grass, prairie dropseed, prairie violet, shooting stars, sky-blue aster, rough blazing star, bastard toadflax, Hill's thistle, silky aster and many others. From here we wander over to Iltis Savanna to learn about the chapter's savanna restoration efforts.

At this point, with rain and cold finding its way into our inner core, the group decides to limit our tour to the pasture-degraded North Muralt (strange to think of what we've just seen as degraded) and save the high-quality South Muralt for a more traditional sunny-day tour.

I watch the line of raincoats and umbrellas carefully navigate the slippery downslope path back to the parking lot. The scene reminds me of a funeral procession. While the symbolism may hold true for the majority of Wisconsin's prairie landscapes, it's not true for Muralt Bluff. We had all just spent time in an ancient relic landscape, experiencing our natural history. A landscape and natural history nearly lost if not for groups like the Prairie Bluff chapter and Tom Mitchell working to preserve it for future generations! 🌿

For more details: www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/content.asp?contentid=261

I Needn't Have Worried

Mike Anderson, BMAP board member



Photo by Julie Raasch

Barbara Borns



Photo by Julie Raasch

Mike Anderson talking to members during the walk.

Rarely do I wait 17 years between visits to my prairie plantings but that's how long it had been since I last saw the prairie Barbara Borns, Fred Townsend and I planted in the spring of 2000. I have to admit, I was a little nervous walking to the prairie with 40 some people during BMAP's June 2017 tour of Barbara and Fred's Black Earth area property, despite recent positive reports from Barbara and Amy Alstad, BMAP's ecologist.

Fred and Barbara purchased the land they call home in 1988. Prior to the purchase they asked a friend, Dr. Evelyn Howell from the UW Madison Department of Landscape Architecture, to assess the property's ecological value. Evelyn's response: Buy it! Their 59 acres includes several prairie remnants, numerous groundwater seeps that coalesce

into a shallow stream with exposed layers of limestone bedrock, and a mixture of oak savanna, oak woodland, and oak forest. And, of course, the prairie planting we were walking towards.

Immediately upon entering the prairie we were treated to a dazzling wildflower show of deep blue spiderwort, bright yellow golden Alexander, snow white Canada anemone, and the bright, bright pink of prairie phlox. In my experience, prairie phlox does not establish readily from seed, yet here it was showing off its brilliant color in large, dome-shaped flower clusters topping each plant. Waiting in the wings for their moment of color were rattlesnake master, ox-eye sunflower, pale

purple coneflower, all four silphiums, stiff and showy goldenrod and an assortment of asters, to name only a few.

Barbara related the prairie has been burned only two or three times during its 17 year life. A fluffy layer of thatch attested to this relatively low burn frequency. Many of the weeds commonly inhabiting prairie plantings, such as thistle and sweet clover, were absent. Perhaps the lengthy burn rotation, which reduces disturbance frequency, has kept the weeds in check?

Departing the prairie for a downhill trek through oak woodland it was difficult to see any direct effects from a 1997 timber harvest, but easy to see the restoration work that's been occurring since the harvest. Barbara recounted the unsightly slash the loggers left and how that led her to hire a local restoration contractor, first to clean up the slash and then to begin ecological restoration of the woodland. This has included removing invasive woody and herbaceous species, conducting prescribed burns and seeding. I noticed red and white oak saplings, a woodland rarity in much of southern Wisconsin.

The downhill trek took us past a prairie remnant where pale spike lobelia was blooming. Its long spike of abundant, pale blue flowers made it very easy to find and admire. We took time to notice the flowering horse gentian, aka, Tinker's weed, wild coffee, and feverwort.

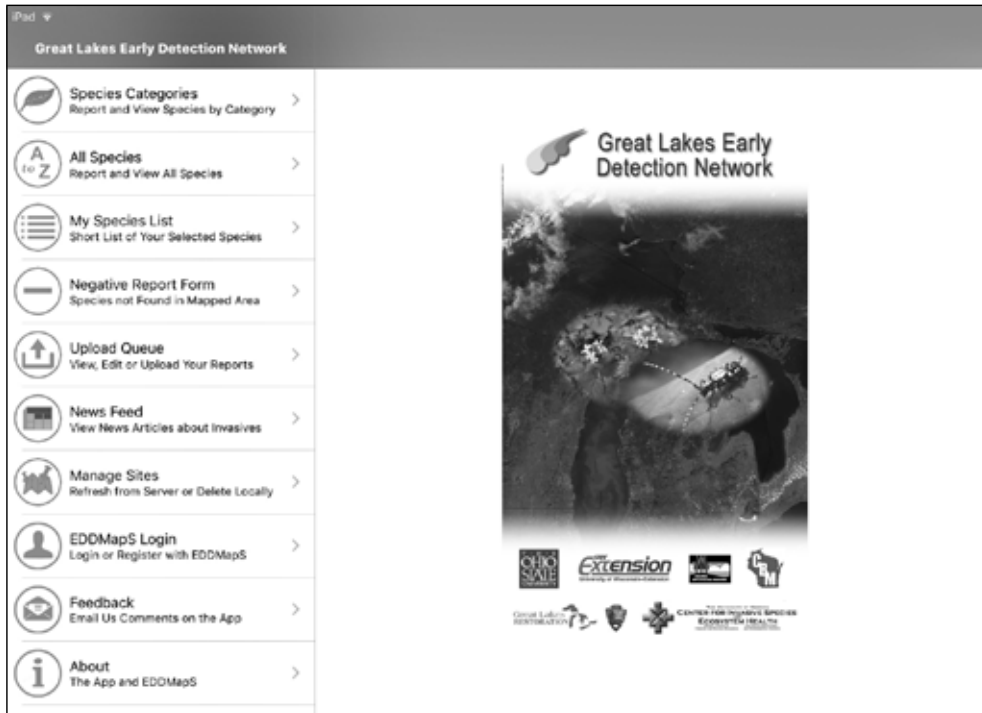


Photo by Julie Raasch

cont. page 8, see NEED'N'T

Great Lake Early Detection Network (GLEDN)

Marci Hess



Here's the menu of options once you've chosen a category.



This is a screen shot of the app when you'd be taking the photo.

We all know the damaged non-native species do. They exclude our native species — insects, plants, animals and other biota – reducing biodiversity, crop yields, recreational enjoyment of our waters, and lowering land values.

While awareness of the damage invasives do has expanded, it isn't always clear what we as individuals can do. With the technology of smart phones and tablets, there is a fun new app available to help map locations of invasions. This app is the Great Lake Early Detection Network (GLEDN) and has been developed specifically for our area.

It's an easy-to-use and intuitive app. Wisconsin First Detector Network (WIFDN) has videos to (www.fyi.uwex.edu/wifdn/get-involved/report-invasive-species) assist with downloading the app and getting started. Once the app is downloaded, you can choose from these categories: aquatics, birds, crustaceans, diseases, fish, grasses, herb/forbs, and insects.

Embedded in the app is a fact sheet about each species. Each fact sheet includes photos, species descriptions, currently mapped locations of infestations and an explanation of why it's an ecological threat.

Data is collected with a single point or with a polygon. The larger infestations are noted with a polygon which can be drawn to the exact

shape of the invasion. If you use the polygon option, the app calculates the size of the infestation. Each record automatically ascertains the GPS points using the WSG84 datum format.

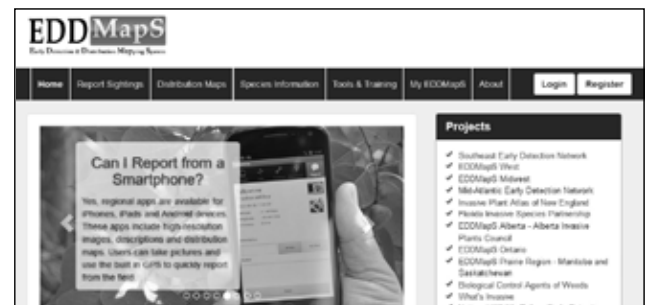
Each record is verified so a photo is required. This verification process ensures the credibility of the records.

You can create your own species list or use one generated for the Great Lakes region. You also have the choice to use the scientific name or the common name. You can note the habitat types and note the infestation's density – low, medium, or high.

Once finished collecting the data, each report needs to be specifically submitted. Until it is, the info remains stored in your phone or tablet. This is a valuable option because you don't need to use the data on your phone plan to submit the reports; you can wait until you have a wi-fi connection. Reports can be uploaded all at once or one at a time. The biggest downfall is there is no spinning circle to alert you that the upload is in progress. Patience is required. You will see a message on your screen when the upload is complete.

GLEDN can assist land managers especially with large tracts of land. One can decide if any and all species will be reported or only a select few. Once GLEDN has assisted with the documentation, management activities on these patches of invasives can be tracked with the Invasive Species Management Tracking System (ISMTrack) www.ismtrack.org/index.cfm?action=about This is a separate system from GLEDN but can be used in conjunction with the info tracked from the app. The annual cost for the management software is very reasonable. For a private landowner using ISMTrack on their property, the fee is \$25/year. For non-profits, the cost is \$50/site or \$200 for 5+ sites. Contact WIFDN for training and additional information.

Data from this app is used inconjunction with EDDMapS (Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System, www.eddmaps.org), a national database of invasive species. Once the data is collected using GLEDN, downloading to EDDMapS provides mapping capabilities without needing GIS software knowledge. Additionally, as a national database, it allows us to see trends and species movement. 🌿



Screen shot of the EDDMapS database home page.

Rotational Grazing

Marci Hess

"Is it easier to get more land or improve production of land you already have?" This is the first question Gene Schriefer at the Iowa County Extension office asks when talking with livestock owners. As I researched this article, the consensus is this practice will reward those who apply it.

Since getting more land isn't always possible, improving production becomes the focus and rotational grazing is the solution. It results in profits from your pasture. It is also known as managed grazing or prescribed grazing. However it is called, it optimizes the number of animals without increasing acreage; it results in healthier animals, healthier pastures, and greater livestock production per acre. This practice is effective for either beef or dairy cattle. Beef cattle will have higher weight gains and dairy cattle will produce more milk per acre. Pat Leonard, a Lafayette County farmer who has used rotational grazing for 15 year, has found his milk production increased an average of 15-20 lbs per day once he began this practice. His family farm is consistently in the top 10 in Lafayette County for milk production.

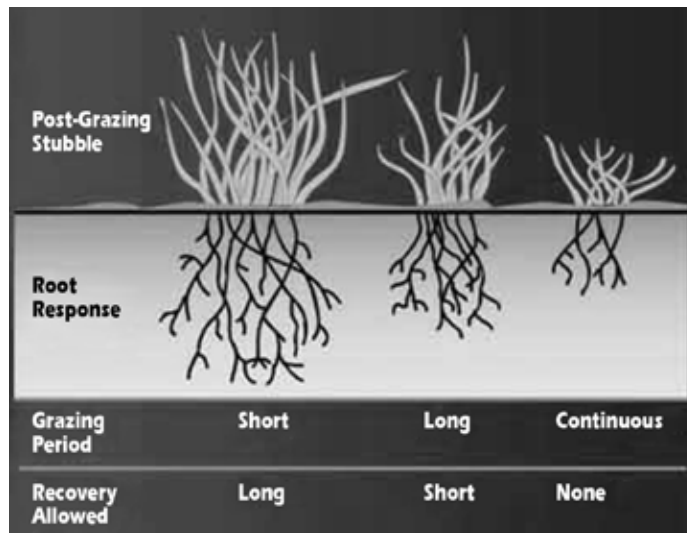
Continuous grazing results in the lowest yields since there's no grass recuperation time. It's hard on plants; it uses up their root reserves and slows their recovery. Livestock having full access to pastures eat the most desirable plants first, create trails that increase erosion, and allow no time for grasses to recover. Rotational grazing allows forage plants to renew. Leaves are more palatable than stems, and new growth is more nutritious than older tissue. Plants have a chance to lengthen their roots and restore vigor to the plant. "Having fresh grasses and clovers provide the highest quality proteins, which produces quality milk at a lower cost," said Pat Leonard. This is a very important point – rotational grazing helps keep family farmers competitive and producing quality product.

Increased labor and time are perceived drawbacks to this management practice. On the front end, there is a need for time and money to be invested but the increased production



A comparison of the recently grazed paddock to the one the cattle are newly moved to.

Photo by Marci Hess



Courtesy of Colorado State Extension

and subsequent time savings make this investment worthwhile. Training the cattle to move between paddocks is fairly easy. Mike Balch, a rotational grazer in Iowa County, uses a cow bell to collect the cattle and move them to a new paddock. He says "by using this method, if I need someone else to move the cattle, it's simple and the cattle are responsive." Checking cattle in a 2-5 acre paddock is much quicker and easier than in a 40 acre pasture.

Good fencing is required to make this a success but it doesn't need to be expensive. Here's an example of how spending on infrastructure gets additional productivity. Typically, 40 acres will produce 1 ton of forage per acre. The fencing investment for this same 40 acres will improve grass by 50%, resulting in an additional 20 acres of forage. That's 20 fewer acres you need to hay! And, according to Gene Schriefer, 50% is a conservative estimate.

Livestock water systems are another consideration once paddocks are created. Robert Bauer at Southwest Badger RC&D explained that how this is handled is very site specific but there are a number of inventive ways to keep this a manageable task.

Once in operation, cost reductions in equipment, herbicide, fertilizer, and labor are realized and a healthy soil profile develops. Fertilizing is not always necessary in this well-managed system, because manure and urine will be fairly evenly distributed, providing the required NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium) for plant growth.

Producing good healthy soil is a result of rotational grazing. The outcome of allowing some portion of a pasture to regenerate is the accumulation of soil organic matter (humus), which captures and stores the moisture and nutrients from rainfall. This positive feedback loop is crucial to soil fertility and productivity. With no bare ground, soil compaction from rainfall is reduced and runoff and erosion are eliminated. When soil fertility is preserved, yields increase.

Gene Schriefer says, "Rotational grazing makes pastures and farms more resilient, especially as we experience more frequent droughts and higher temperatures indicative of the changing climate. Remember the super hot year of 2012?" Rotational grazers had lush, nutritional grass in their pastures. Grasses allowed to renew grow taller which provide a microclimate of shade and collect water. The positive feedback loop becomes more important in drought times.

Another aspect to consider is having a paddock or two in warm season grasses. They are ideal for those hot dry months of June and July in The Driftless Area. They have a different management technique but are good livestock feed.

There are numerous environmental benefits to this management. Preventing erosion and barnyard runoff are at the top of the list. Runoff is particularly nasty in our karst landscape

cont. page 7, see GRAZING


(fractured limestone under the topsoil) of The Driftless Area. Preventing this runoff from contaminating streams and wetland areas reduces nitrate and pesticide leaching, which contaminate our groundwater and are detrimental to humans, livestock, and wildlife. The resulting healthier soil from the management means a healthier stream corridor with healthier livestock, healthier wildlife and healthier groundwater.

In addition to the benefits mentioned, this management extends pasture time, averaging 1-2 fewer months a year requiring hay feeding. What could you do with an additional 1-2 months if you didn't need to make hay? Build the fences and let the cattle do the work to improve forage and soil conditions.

Who doesn't want more productive land? Who doesn't want to make it as productive as possible and as well managed as possible? Each pasture and each farm will have unique opportunities and grazing systems are designed according to the individual's goals. Technical and financial assistance are a phone call away!

NRCS has many assistance options through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NRCS can write the prescribed grazing plan for free; this provides info about the soil, its expected yield and what seeding (if needed) is best suited for the site. With this info, we'll know the how many animals the pasture can support and can layout paddocks to aid pasture rest and rotation. Rotational times are set by nature and the grass growth not by the calendar. Understanding pasture management is part of the assistance NRCS provides. NRCS also provides financial assistance for interior fencing, cattle lanes, water tanks, water pipelines, wells, windbreaks, and rock surfacing around water tanks, and seeding cropland to pasture or interseeding existing pasture. There is additional money available for beginning farms.

Technical assistance for Lafayette, Green, and Iowa can be found by contacting Gene Schriefer at Iowa County Extension. gene.schriefer@ces.uwex.edu or 608-930-9850.

Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development Council offers grazing plan writing for NRCS financial assistance and mentorship support to landowners and beginning livestock farmers for Lafayette, Green, Iowa, Grant, Green, Sauk, Richland, Crawford, Vernon, and La Crosse Counties. Contact Robert Bauer, Grazing Broker at Southwest Badger Resource Conservation: robert.bauer@swbadger.org or 608-732-1202. 

Announcements

BMAP to Monitor Monarch Butterflies

The Blue Mounds Area Project will receive \$1450 from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to help monitor Monarch Butterflies. BMAP's project, Workshop - How to Monitor Monarch Butterflies, was among 21 projects selected for assistance by the 2017-18 Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Partnership Program.

"We're very excited to be partnering with so many excellent groups of volunteers," said Eva Lewandowski, who coordinates the Citizen-based Monitoring Program for DNR. "The projects that are receiving contract awards will contribute high priority information about Wisconsin's natural resources across the state and stretch state dollars further by providing matching funds and in-kind volunteer hours."

Through the Citizen-based Monitoring Partnership Program, the DNR works with community and school groups, conservation organizations and other agencies to gather critical information on plants, animals, water and other natural resources. Projects are selected through a competitive review process with projects eligible to receive up to \$5,000 in funding per year.

Since it started in 2004, the Partnership Program has helped fund 261 high priority natural resource monitoring projects statewide.

More information on the Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Network is available at www.wiatri.net/cbm.

Expanding our Understanding of Pesticide Impact on Invertebrates

In an effort to keep up with the constantly expanding information available about pesticides and their impacts on pollinators and other invertebrates, the Xerces Society created the Impacts of Pesticides on Invertebrates database (pesticideimpacts.org). The database is a collection of summaries of recent research articles; it does not include the articles themselves, but does provide links to the publications.

www.xerces.org/2017/04/28/expanding-our-understanding-of-pesticide-impacts-on-invertebrates

Thank You New and Renewing Members and Donors

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Events

Monarch Citizen Science Workshop August 8th, Tuesday and August 10th, Thursday 5:30-7:30 pm

State Bank of Cross Plains, Mount Horeb Branch (1740 Springdale St, Mt Horeb)

The Driftless Area is critical breeding habitat for Monarch Butterflies, and scientists need your help to better understand this species.

BMAP received funding from the WNDR Citizen-Based Monitoring Program to help train volunteer citizen scientists to collect information about Monarchs. Participants in this workshop will learn about the biology and life cycle of Monarchs, and receive training in how to select a monitoring site as well as collect and submit data to the Monarch Larval Monitoring Project.

Space is limited to 20 participants, and participants must be willing to commit to regular monitoring (approximately 30 min time commitment per week) during the 2018 monarch breeding season. To reserve your spot, or with any questions, please email Amy Alstad at ecologist@bluemounds.org. More information on the Monarch Larval Monitoring Project is available at www.monarchlab.org/mlmp.

Last BMAP Summer Gathering for 2017 August 17th, Thursday — 6:30 pm (Potluck following the tour) Hosts Jerome & Jackie Helmenstine, 4785 County FF, Blue Mounds

This 305 acre property includes a mixture of oak woodlands as well as restored prairie enrolled in CRP and CREP. Jerome and Jackie have also worked with NRCS and Trout Unlimited on stream restoration, and actively monitor kestrels, bats, deer and other wildlife on their property.

Directions: The property is approximately 4 miles west of Black Earth, and is located on the west side of County Road FF, between the junctions with County Road K and County Road F.

Seed Planting Demonstration November 4th, Saturday — 10 am Taproot Farm and Fruit, 4140 Pikes Peak Rd, Ridgeway

Amy Alstad is working with the Xerces Society to install pollinator habitat in her family orchard. Over the course of the summer, they have done a trial of several different site preparation treatments. Join BMAP to learn which treatment was most effective in suppressing weeds, discuss considerations in designing an appropriate seed mix, and help broadcast native seeds into the prepared beds.

NEEDN'T *from page 4*

Despite its common name, the native horse gentian is actually in the Caprifoliaceae (honeysuckle) family. As we continued downhill the canopy closed enveloping us in shade and the soil moistened as we neared the small stream where honewort and long-style sweet Cicely grew in abundance.

Given the choice to stop for food and refreshments or a visiting another prairie remnant nearly everyone chose.....the remnant, of

course! Passing the well stocked potluck food tables we made a short trip to the remnant with an abundance of prairie dock, very showy hoary puccoon and more pale spike lobelia. Then, we headed back for food and refreshments.

Thank you Barbara and Fred for sharing your land and your stories with BMAP and for being good land stewards. I should have known your prairie would be a show stopper and that I needn't have worried.

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, nonnative 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.

The Blue Mounds Area Project Newsletter is published three times yearly.
We welcome your comments, submissions, and advertisements.

Deadlines for submissions for 2017 newsletters: Spring Newsletter — March 1, 2017
Summer Newsletter — July 1, 2017
Fall Newsletter — October 15, 2017

Send submissions to: newsletter@bluemounds.org
Editor: Marci Hess, mhess5599@gmail.com — Designer: Julie Raasch, jul@creative-zoo.com

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ecologist@bluemounds.org

If you are interested in assisting or volunteering for the Blue Mounds Area Project, please contact us:
info@bluemounds.org

New BMAP number is
608-561-2627 (or, 608-561-BMAP)

Blue Mounds Area Project Membership Form

Name(s): _____

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Renewal New Member Gift Membership for _____

Membership Level:

Student \$15 Basic \$30 Contributor \$50 Supporter \$100 Sponsor \$500 Patron \$1000
 Other contribution to further the BMAP mission _____

TOTAL _____

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

Yes, I would like to receive information about site visits.

Make check payable and return to: BLUE MOUNDS AREA PROJECT, PO BOX 332, MT. HOREB, WI 53572



The Blue Mounds Area Project

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**“An understanding of the Natural World and what’s in it is
a source of not only a great curiosity but great fulfillment.”**

— *Sir David Attenborough*



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