



Missouri Native Plant Society Hawthorn Chapter Newsletter

Volume 25, Number 1
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The Hawthorn Chapter of the Missouri Native Plant Society Newsletter is published monthly. Send your submissions to:

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Future Activities

Watch email for notices of impromptu hikes. **Please offer suggestions of your favorite walking destinations** to Paula or Becky; we will get them posted as soon as weather permits. If you do not communicate by email and have a suggested destination or want notice of a walk, call Paula to get on the phone list.

January 11: Monday Regular Membership meeting, 5:30 pm at the Unitarian Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd. 6 pm Planning discussions for 2010 activities. Election for President and Secretary are on the agenda. Please come with ideas.

January 21: Thursday Lunch with Native Plant enthusiasts 11:30 am at Uprise Bakery [RagTag Theater]; Hitt Street just south of Broadway.

January 23: Saturday Pot Luck Lunch and Propagation Workshop – 11:30 to 3 pm at Laura Hillman 7900 Cave Creek Drive. **See article on Page 5.**

February 18: Thursday Lunch with Native Plant enthusiasts 11:30 am at Uprise Bakery [RagTag Theater]; Hitt Street just south of Broadway.

March 8: Monday Regular Meeting speaker Jean Everett PhD [see reference below] Meeting time TBA

Late April we put up our booth at Columbia Earth Day

For more information contact Paula at 573-474-4225.

Thanks to Jean Everett and Vanessa Melton for their contributions this month.

Program for March 8 Meeting

Submitted by Jean Everett

The program for the March membership meeting will be given by Jean Everett, Ph.D., Senior Instructor, Department of Biology, College of Charleston, SC. She will elaborate on the longleaf pine ecosystem which was once the most extensive and diverse system in the Southeast – 90 million acres of open stands of stately longleaf with a lovely ground layer filled with bunch grasses mixed with an incredible array of wildflowers. This amazing system has been reduced and fragmented by many forces, and now less than 3% remains functionally intact. Longleaf systems have many similarities to prairies, both with unparalleled beauty. This richly illustrated lecture will describe the longleaf system and what happened that it is now so nearly extirpated.

Volunteer is needed for the position of Hawthorn Secretary. Please step forward and call Vanessa.

Prairie Chickens Might Be Making Comeback in Missouri

By Kim McGuire

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

12/03/2009

Edited by Becky Erickson

About 93 percent of the prairie chickens' original range in Missouri is gone. And the prairie chicken seemed to be following suit. Today, fewer than 500 birds are estimated to remain in the state. That's why the Department of Conservation [MDC] embarked last year on a five-year project that involves taking prairie chickens from Kansas and relocating them to the Wah' Kon Tah Prairie, which is also owned by the Missouri chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

Max Alleger, MDC Grassland Bird Coordinator, and other conservation officials say the key to protecting Missouri's prairie chicken population is restoring lost habitat. At both Dunn Ranch and Wah' Kon Tah Prairie, the Nature Conservancy has been setting small, carefully controlled fires to help clear out small, woody plants and restore the native prairie grasses preferred by the birds. MDC has also been working with landowners who have property near prairie chicken leks, on similar land management strategies, Alleger said.

For the past two years, MDC biologists have moved the birds in two phases - the males in the spring and the hens in late summer - in hopes of enticing the birds to stay put. The strategy, which has been tested in Wisconsin and Minnesota, involves moving males first so the birds will have time to establish new homes - called leks - before females and their chicks arrived. So far, about 200 birds have been moved, and only about one-quarter of them remain alive. Those involved in the effort to protect Missouri's dwindling prairie chicken population say the birds may be rebounding after a couple of lackluster breeding seasons.

The first year birds were moved to Wah' Kon Tah, the males ended up at an existing lek. Since then, however, they have begun to establish new leks; a good sign the birds are laying the foundation for future reproductive success. Also promising is the fact that relocated birds are nesting at their new digs. This year, conservation officials discovered seven nests and hope to find next year that chicks born at Wah' Kon Tah are reproducing as well.

Already, at the Nature Conservancy's Dunn Ranch, one of the state's longtime prairie chicken strongholds, credible sightings have been reported recently, giving managers there hope the birds are in better shape as they head into next year's crucial mating period. "We are seeing more birds now than we did last spring, which is an indication there's been reproduction," said Randy Arndt, the Conservancy's Grand River Grasslands site manager. "While this past spring was wet, we didn't get the kind of 5-inch rainfall that just ruined nesting events the year before."

Because of concerns about the Dunn Ranch population, the Nature Conservancy canceled earlier this year the popular prairie chicken viewings where bird watchers can view the birds' elaborate courtship rituals from a blind. Arndt said it was too soon to say where viewings would resume next spring. That call, he explained, will probably be made sometime in February after monitoring the birds this winter. "We're really hoping to hold the viewings," Arndt said. "We're certain that they don't interfere with the chickens. But this year, we just couldn't take any chances."

MDC biologists will return to Kansas this spring for more trapping and will probably be using more drop nets to help catch more birds at once and lessen the amount of time the team spends on prairie chicken habitat.

Lunches . . .

The December lunch at Uprise Bakery drew ten Hawthorn members. We exchanged some seed and discussed plans for some of the winter and spring activities.

Hope YOU ALL will join us in January - - -

**January:
Lunch with Native Plant
Enthusiasts!
11:30 am at Uprise Bakery
Hitt Street just south of Broadway**

In Memory of Jim Whitley [21 April 1921 to 17 December 2009]

submitted by Becky Erickson

I hope a few of you understand this is one of the most difficult documents I have ever tried to write. I'm sure that to a purest, I have some of this chronologically out of order or not perfectly correct as it is all brought up from my memory. I also hope the reader understands that Jim was a friend to us all in every sense. If you had any interest in good ecology and environmental practices he would be at your beck and call.

Jim Whitley and John Muir had the same birthday, but growing up and working on his parents' truck farm growing up near Trenton MO, he never guessed he would accomplish comparable feats. He did what he could to get out of work, but his father told them to sharpen tools or sort seed while they 'rested' from field work on 5 acres of tomatoes and many more of popcorn. He wanted, rather, to go swimming or picking berries. In his meanders, he knew the wild Thompson River before it was channelized, and Gooseneck Lake wetland in all its wild native splendor, before it was drained for bean fields.

Jim was an average high school student. Feeling the jump into a university was too much of a challenge, he opted for an advanced education at the junior college at Trenton. World War II erupted when Jim was 19. He enlisted in the Navy and was sent to a remote base in Idaho. One of the boys stationed there had rheumatic fever which spread throughout the base. Penicillin had just been purified [discovered in the soil at Sanborn Fields on MU campus] and was used to save Jim's life. Keeping up his healthy vitality was a daily task for the rest of his life.

When Jim recovered, he decided to go to MU to learn bio chemistry to help his family farm be more productive. In the research to get his PhD, he was on the team to study the effects of folic acid on brain development and its importance in fetal development. Jim worked on the family farm where he supervised and practiced the judicious use of herbicides and pesticides in the summer and spent several winters living in New Mexico.

Jim had followed the development of the Conservation Commission which was elevated to the Missouri Department of Conservation. He aspired to work for this admired institution. When he was finally hired as a water quality specialist, he was asked to do research to discover which herbicides could be used to eradicate unwanted vegetation and algae from ponds without harming animal water life. He polluted only a few small ponds at Baskett Area at Ashland and wrote a report to use NO herbicides, but to introduce high quality native water plants early in the establishment of a new water body. This report blossomed into his well known book *Plants for Missouri Ponds*. Jim was promoted to supervisor of the MDC Research Center in Columbia. Jim was the first supervisor to hire women to full time positions within MDC. He valued their skills, knowledge and abilities.

Due to his expertise in water quality standards, Jim was called on several times to testify in courts of law regarding illegal dumping of toxins in Missouri waterways. Occasionally his comments were quoted out of context by misunderstanding reporters, but the results were for the best in the end. Jim spent many days of personal time and use of his private airplane to fly representatives from Washington DC Sierra Club over large confined pig and chicken operations in MO which lead to well defined environmental regulations for such operations. Because of his fly-over photos with testimonials from Ken Midkiff, they saved one Ozark creek from gravel mining. And he worked with Denny Donnell to clean up lead mine tailings.

Jim and Otto Fagen planted high-quality Missouri-source water plants in Otto's strip pits and a few other local ponds. Jim farmed these wonderful plants which he supplied to the City of Columbia for Stephens Park Lake, Forum wetland, and Flat Branch Park bikeway; to St Louis Forest Park wetland restoration; to several MDC lakes and wetlands; and to many private individuals. Jim gave workshops and seminars to several Columbia schools, and to Master Gardeners on the use of water plants in back-yard water gardens and in lakes. His last five good years were spent assisting Becky Erickson with the Missouri Ecotype Program seed production. He helped regularly with species development, planting, harvesting, and seed processing.

Jim had been a long-time contributor to Native Plant Society. He was president for a couple of terms, and he led hikes and gave workshops until a year before his death. While he and his wife, Joann, took their turns as NPS officers, they hosted the winter holiday wine and cheese party in their home. Most of us who did not venture far from the beaten path, but who came to Sierra Club and NPS social activities knew him as an expert open-fire chef who could smoke up chickens or pork chops or burgers for 2 or for 40 people with perfection. Jim found rare plants that were in danger of eradication and he found ways to move them by root stock or by seed to correspondingly good and protected habitats so they would persist for future generations. For these efforts he received the State Native Plant Society Stewardship Award. He was always helpful and available for every activity the Hawthorn Chapter had calendared. For these efforts he received the Blazing Star Award.

In spite of all these important achievements and accolades, Jim's fondest memories were of a glass of good wine, hunting with his beagles, flying to Mexico and Alaska, raising a litter of raccoons and of caring for his Daffodil Patch. This spot on his land in north Boone County was his favorite retreat. He even went so far as to pollinate and develop from seed a new variety of daffodil. As he learned more about upland wildflowers, he collected and sowed seed compatible with the habitat at the Daffodil Patch.

Both of these quotes summarize Jim's life philosophy:

Go my Sons, burn your books. Buy yourself stout shoes. Get away to the mountains, the valleys, the shores of the seas, the deserts, and the deepest recesses of the Earth. In this way and no other will you find true knowledge of things and their properties. Peter Severinus, 16th. century Dane educator.

Spirit of Life sat on the moon: She said, I have given you the beauty roses, the call wolves, and the gurgle of brooks. Relax. Sit. ENJOY. Anonymous

Jim was a kind friend; effective in his efforts; true to his word and his work. His wealth of knowledge and patient presence will be sorely missed. Hopefully some of us have learned from him enough to carry on his work. Toast your memory of him.



Propagation Workshop

Submitted by Becky Erickson

The Propagation Workshop this year will be a joint effort with Wild Ones and Master Naturalists on 23 Jan {Sat} at 11:30 am. Laura Hillman will be our gracious hostess [7900 Cave Creek Drive].

Wild Ones traditionally has a winter pot luck in January so Laura is inviting everyone to bring a vegetarian dish for a buffet to open at 11:30 am. After a meal of tasty and creative vegetarian [cheese and eggs = ok] culinary delights, we will adjourn to the garage where we can get messy with pots, dirt and seeds about 1pm.

Please bring any and all extra pots you have stored from last summer's planting. We need to share the 3-inch and 4-inch pots for stratification and germination. If you want to germinate several different species [2 to many] please bring a perforated flat with a lattice support tray filled [full] with potting medium. Please bring at least one five-gallon bucket or a small bag of course potting medium. Please bring seed from your garden or seed from outings to wild areas with appropriate identification; enough to share with others.

Laura's house [7900 Cave Creek Drive] can be found on Google Maps. But if you can't get that on your internet, here are some directions from Columbia: South on Providence and Route K; about a mile south of Rock Bridge Elem School; Left on Hill Creek; then left on Cave Creek where you go straight across a small bridge and up the hill into Laura's drive.

PLEASE respond to Becky by email [beckyerick@socket.net] or call 657-2314 [leave a message!] to make reservations for the workshop. This way Laura and I can have an idea of how many are coming.

If there is a snow storm [>3"] on 22 Jan, there will be a notice sent by email and other arrangements will be announced for 30 Jan. Those who give me a phone number will be called if schedule is changed.

Holiday Party

Submitted by Vanessa Melton

The annual Holiday Party was held on December 13th at 2 pm at Vanessa Melton and David Silvey's house. The weather was great for mid-December, and as usual there was great food and great company. Thanks to everyone who came and made it such a wonderful event. Because of the many requests, here is the recipe for the Christmas Wassail I made. For the punch I made for the party, I left out the clove-studded oranges, aromatic bitters, and the rum.

Christmas Wassail

...from the Nov/Dec 2009 issue of Hobby Farm Home magazine. Makes 18-20 punch-cup-sized servings.

6 cups apple cider
2 cups cranberry juice
2-3 oranges
¼ cup sugar
1 tsp. whole allspice
6 sticks whole cinnamon
16 whole cloves
1 tsp. aromatic bitters
1 cup rum
additional whole cloves for studding oranges

Insert as many whole cloves as desired into oranges; set aside.

Place allspice, cinnamon sticks, and 16 whole cloves in the center of a cheesecloth square. Draw up corners so it becomes a small sack and secure with string. Set aside.

In a large pan combine cider, cranberry juice, sugar, bag of spices and clove-studded oranges. Heat just to boiling, then immediately reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add rum and bitters; remove from heat. Place oranges in a punch bowl, remove and discard spice sack, and pour wassail over the oranges.

Or, this mixture could be prepared in a crock pot but allow enough time to heat mixture.

Volunteer is needed for the position of Hawthorn Secretary. Please step forward and call Vanessa.

Please Step Forward For Service

Please contact one of the officers ready to volunteer a little time to a very good environmental and educational service. We need people to serve as officers, to grow plants for fundraising and we need people to man our information booth at events such as Earth Day and Chestnut Festival.

___ Local Chapter (\$6.00 no state information)

___ Student (\$11.00)

___ Regular (\$16.00)

___ Contributing (\$26.00)

Includes both Chapter and State dues.

Make check payable to: **Missouri Native Plant Society.**

Send check and this form to: Paula Peters, 2216 Grace Ellen Dr., Columbia, MO 65202

MEMBERSHIP FORM Missouri Native Plant Society—Hawthorn Chapter July 1 through June 30.

Name _____

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(circle preference) **Email** **Regular mail**

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