

Enter Orchis

News from Faville Grove Sanctuary

Madison Audubon Society

September 2, 2009
Vol. 2, Issue 5

Fall Schedule

Regular seed collecting at Faville Grove Sanctuary begins Saturday, September 5 and continues every Saturday from 9:30 a.m. until noon and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., as well as every Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to noon through October. We will meet at the sanctuary sign on [Prairie Lane \(click for a map\)](#) and travel from there a short distance to our collecting spot for the day. We will post work locations for anyone who arrives late. Bring gloves, sunscreen and insect repellent, and hand clippers if you have them.



The seed barn in fall.

In addition to seed collecting, planting is tentatively set for the morning of Saturday, November 14, so save that date. This year, we will plant the field north of Prairie Lane below the Lake Mills Ledge.

We will also need help with other activities in preparation for planting, and we hope to conduct some controlled burns this fall (always on short notice). Please send email to favillegrove@live.com if you would like to be notified of these other activities.

Volunteer Days Grant Renewed

Faville Grove Sanctuary is among 21 sites nationwide selected to participate for a second year in National Audubon's TogetherGreen Volunteer Days program, with funding from Toyota. The award is based on our record of attracting volunteer support during the first year of the program, and on our plans for the coming year.

Looking back on the first year as we prepared our annual report to Audubon, we impressed even ourselves with the strong showing of support from our volunteers: 246 individuals volunteered in the sanctuary on 75 different days for a total of 2155 hours. Of these volunteers, 200 had not volunteered previously at Faville Grove, and of these 200, 40 returned to help out one or more additional times during the year. Volunteer accomplishments included seed collecting, seed cleaning and mixing, planting 40 acres of prairie (our biggest single event, with 85 volunteers) as well as seeding additional acres of savanna, brush clearing, controlled burning, weed control, plant and animal monitoring, web site development and various other aspects of sanctuary management.

The few large volunteer events that we held were fun, brought in new volunteers and engaged school groups and others new to the sanctuary, and we are planning several large events again in the coming year, including prairie planting in early November. But the real bread-and-butter of sanctuary management is in the many small-group work parties held most Wednesdays and Saturdays and on the spur-of-the-moment. These events are where we really get to know each other and build community, and where volunteers really get to know the sanctuary, its inhabitants, and what's involved in its management.

Our primary goal for the coming year is to increase involvement in these smaller work parties. Every additional set of hands makes a big difference in what we can accomplish for wildlife in the sanctuary. Volunteering is a great way to learn about the plant and animal communities in the area and strengthen your ties to the land; it's a great way to get to know like-minded members of the human community; and it's good exercise for body and mind alike. So come on out and give it a try!

Summer in the Sanctuary

by John Pinzl, 2009 summer intern

On the Friday before the last week of our internship, with rainy weather momentarily dampening our anticipation for a field trip to Dorothy Carnes' Park, Dave suggested watching a slideshow featuring Faville Grove Sanctuary through the years. As my four fellow interns, Dave, Roger, Lars, and I craned our necks to get a clear view of the computer in the upstairs room of his and Roger's home, Dave began the slideshow with a click of the mouse. Pictures of various prairie plants and different areas of the sanctuary illuminated the screen and I couldn't help but reminisce on my summer, specifically my experiences with the internship. The slideshow, along with everyone's comments on the images, enhanced the vividness of my memories. Slide transitions set the pace for

history of the Faville Grove Sanctuary. This realization impressed upon me how quickly and profoundly things such as invasive species, human misuse and mismanagement, and other human agents, can degrade a landscape. However, our work this summer, that of previous years' crews, and the vast accomplishments through it all, attest to the importance of our internship in the restoration of degraded landscapes and the protection of remnant prairies.

As a result of our work this summer, all of the sites on which we spent considerable time were dramatically improved. These improvements were not brought on by natural forces and a lack of human intervention that had aided the spread of invasive species in the first place, but by parsnip predators, brush cutters, and



hard work on the part of our intern crew. With these implements, we pushed back an impenetrable thicket of aspen saplings, cottonwood bunches, and other brush that stand where the prairie docks had once jumped the fence into a former farm field along the western border of Faville Prairie. Although much of the thicket remains, the prospect of restoring this area to the open prairie that the landscape was reverting to at the time of the prairie docks' feat seems more promising. The Zoology Ridge, an area that was permeated by sweet clover, wild parsnip, and Queen Anne's lace three months ago, is now rid of such weeds (although only temporarily for many) thanks to contract spraying, Roger's mowing, and our crew's 'walk-throughs' on dew-filled mornings. My attempt

to visualize how many white feed-bags we filled with sweet clover, garlic mustard, and parsnip were foiled as I recounted how much we had accomplished this summer.

Seeing the slides of previous intern crews, volunteers, and other individuals doing the same work that we had performed over the last three months, I wondered how these various other individuals involved with the restoration of the sanctuary felt as a result of their work. They undoubtedly felt the same sense of pride, accomplishment, and connection with the land as our internship crew did. Thinking of the people we had the opportunity to meet and work with throughout the summer, it was evident to me that the land provided a common basis upon which individuals from all backgrounds pulled together and collaborated to work

the transparencies within my imagination as I plunged into a prairie-induced mental narrative of my summer internship with the Madison Audubon Society on the Faville Grove Sanctuary.

Appropriately, the primary element of the internship upon which my imagination dwelled was the sanctuary's land itself. The foremost thing I noticed was how much the sanctuary landscape had changed over time, in terms of both the years covered by the slideshow and the three months that our intern crew had worked on it. From the picture of prairie docks 'jumping' the fence from Faville Prairie to its Milwaukee Audubon annex 45 years ago, to the image displaying the abundance of prairie docks in Snapper Prairie prior to the flooding last spring and summer, I realized that the land as I knew it was only a small segment in the long

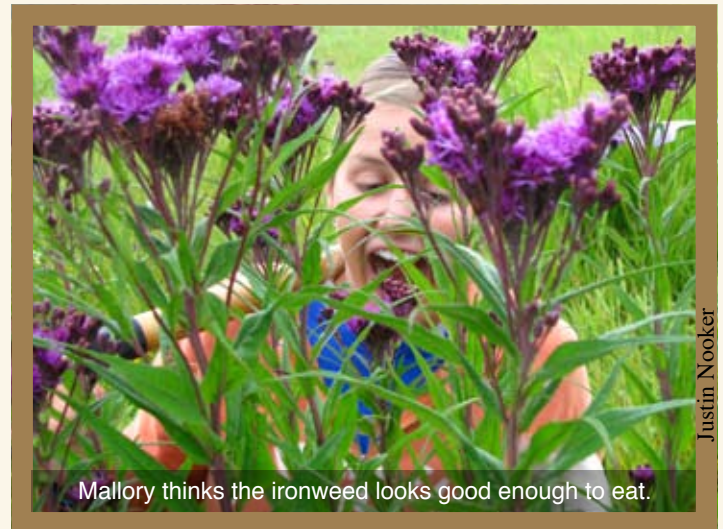
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towards the common goal of improving a landscape that they all care about.

Over the past three months, surrounded by my fellow interns, whose knowledge of the ecological elements that surrounded us ‘on the job’ was remarkable, and Lars, our fearless leader, whose expertise on anything ranging from bird calls to plant species was extraordinary, I have learned more firsthand than I could have ever imagined. I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to work with Matt, Mallory, Justin, Ben, and Lars, all of whom share a deep passion for the outdoors and the conservation and restoration of the environment. Furthermore, meeting and working with volunteers and those who have caught the ‘Prairie Bug’ such as Nolan Kollath, Lars’ neighbors Steve Bower and Leslie DeMuth, and Jim Kerler, has been rewarding in that it truly impressed upon me how a diverse group of individuals can form such a homogenous and tight knit community of conservationists and stewards of the land. The primary individuals amongst this group of stewards are Dave and Roger, whose prowess as conservationists and passion for the sanctuary’s well being is manifest in the unmatched quality of the sanctuary as well as the incomparable experiences provided by the internship program. Without Dave and Roger, neither the internship nor much of the sanctuary would exist. It was a privilege to have

clover, Queen Anne’s lace, and wild parsnip lining the bike path downtown and most of the roadsides I regularly drive will make it difficult to travel without a parsnip predator and weed bag within reach. On the other hand, the internship has strengthened my appreciation for both the subtle and profound aspects of ecological systems. My deeper understanding of the ways in which even the smallest organisms play a vital



Mallory thinks the ironweed looks good enough to eat.

Justin Nooker

role in such systems’ functioning has impressed upon me the need to both appreciate these various elements and work to ensure their integrity. The internship addressed both of these requirements on numerous levels. In essence, I feel that my experience with the internship has made me a better conservationist, a better environmentalist, and better prepared for a career in environmental law.

As the last slide faded from the screen, it was impossible for me to determine which had benefited more from our internship on the Faville Grove Sanctuary; the sanctuary itself or the individuals working to improve it. During the following ride to Dorothy Carne’s Park, the above changes wrought through the relationships formed between people and the land, as well as between each other, were more evident to me than they had ever been. These changes and experiences share the common characteristic of reaffirming how profoundly we are all connected to the land and how profoundly our well-being relies on the ecological health of our own backyards. Regardless of where my fellow interns and I find ourselves in the coming years, I am confident that our time spent together on the Faville Grove Sanctuary this summer will be at the forefront amongst the experiences that have shaped each of our outlooks on, and passion for, the natural environment and the outdoors.



Matt and John declare victory over the brush at Snapper Prairie.

Justin Nooker

been selected by them for the internship and to have had the opportunity to get to know them.

Possibly the most profound change that I witnessed as a result of the internship was a change in my own perspective. On one hand, my perspective towards the local environment has suffered a “fall” from the bliss that accompanies ignorance of the severity and proliferation of many of the problems associated with the degradation of our landscapes. The amount of sweet

Flood Recovery Along the Crawfish—One Year Later

The unprecedented flood last summer left many of us wondering what will become of our cherished restorations and prairie remnants that appeared so heavily damaged when the waters receded. Last summer following the flood, areas that should have shown colorful and diverse displays of sunflowers, orchids and lush grasses looked like nothing more than mudflats of swirling flies and mosquitoes with the tattered remains of a few barely recognizable prairie plants still encrusted in silt. One glance at these areas and our reaction was a feeling of total devastation and panic with a lingering sense of curiosity as to what would happen next. To our knowledge, there was no information on the impact of prolonged summer flooding in prairie ecosystems. This led to many questions and much speculation as to how the prairies would respond. Will species return from dormant roots or from the seedbank? How will reed canary grass and other invasive species respond to this disturbance? What will happen to the already threatened silphium borer moth? And what about the orchids!? One year later, some of our questions have been answered but many outcomes are yet to be seen.

There already appeared some glimmers of hope a few months after the flood, signaling to us that not all had been lost. Surprisingly, a few species on Faville and Snapper Prairies, including spiderwort, prairie rose, rattlesnake master, prairie loosestrife, big bluestem, and Indian grass, actually resprouted from damaged living tissues and proceeded to flower. Incredibly, these plants were entirely submerged in water for up to a couple weeks but had the resilience to recover in the same growing season. Additionally, many sedges and spike rushes resprouted from their roots and retook the bare ground. Signals of recovery on the restorations were not as clear, although, species such as obedient plant and ironweed could be found

blooming in some areas and large stands of blue joint grass appeared to look healthy. Sadly, there were also pests such as smooth brome and reed canary grass that persisted through the flood and appeared to be recovering well.

Today, near the end of the first full growing season, things are still far from how they were and it's hard to know exactly how things will eventually pan out. Many species appear to be steadily recolonizing by roots and/or seeds but other species are yet to be detected. As a general observation, there seems to be a shift towards wetland species and a few oddball prairie plants that were better able to cope with the flood. On Faville and Snapper, wetland pockets seem to have expanded with a corresponding shrinkage in prairie. Plenty of bare ground is still abundant in the most heavily impacted areas, including the two remnants, with a profusion of annual weeds such as mare's tail



and ragweed filling in unoccupied space.

Interestingly, some prairie plants were more abundant this year than ever before. It's hard to imagine that Faville Prairie has ever displayed a stronger bloom of spiderwort or prairie roses. In late June a solid haze of deep blue could be seen on the ridge from any distance and the fragrance of rose flowers was intoxicating, generating a deep, steady hum

from the mass of bees foraging about. Further down the ridge on Martin Prairie the rattlesnake master had expanded over several acres of the restoration with a thick stand of hearty, robust plants, flowering at eye level. Walking through the sea of rattlesnake master transplanted you out of Wisconsin, evoking thoughts of traveling through the yucca plains of Mexico.

Just as some species have tolerated or even benefited from the flood, other species have declined greatly or have yet to be seen at all. Prairie dropseed seems to be most drastically set back of all the grasses



Justin Nooker

A white cloud of rattlesnake master on Martin Prairie.

as large clumps lie lifeless, failing to resprout. A few weeks ago, however, one small flowering plant was spotted on Faville Prairie, indicating that some roots remained living, as it is unlikely that a seedling would be flowering in the first year. Other species, such as wood betony and shooting star, have not been detected since the flood. As for the orchids, we have not seen many encouraging signs of recovery. Arboretum staff located one non-flowering small white lady-slipper earlier this spring but the eastern prairie white-fringed orchid has not yet returned. Even under normal circumstances, however, this orchid appears to be short-lived, with populations fluctuating from year to year, and recovering from low numbers through recruitment from a well established seed bank, suggesting that the eastern white-fringed prairie orchid is likely to reappear once again.

Although many native species are showing promising signs of return, some noxious weeds are coming back stronger than ever. Sweet clover, more so than any other weed, appears to have benefited greatly from the disturbance. An enormous flush of first-year seedlings has emerged in some areas, forming a solid ground cover on the old field sites adjacent to Snap-

per and Faville. Next year promises to be a challenging time controlling this invasive biennial weed. The situation is less obvious for the status of reed canary grass. Unfortunately, ripe seeds were falling as flood waters were rising, washing seeds all up and down the floodplain. At this point there is little we can do but step up our control efforts as we did this spring, and continue treating isolated population of reed canary grass throughout the floodplain, with the help of summer interns, volunteers and hired contractors.

Despite the heartbreaking reality of this unnatural natural disaster, much valuable knowledge can be gleaned from this event. Future restorations will benefit from what we've learned about the tolerance of individual prairie species to flooding events, allowing us to better customize seed mixes to flood-prone sites. We also have a better understanding as to how the depth and length of inundation affects remnant prairies and restorations of various ages. As would be expected, there appeared to be a greater impact on restorations that were inundated under deeper water for a longer period of time. At the same time, despite receiving the greatest level of disturbance, our remnant prairies seem to be recovering better, both in terms of diversity of species present and lack of noxious weeds.

Above all, the flood of 2008 has further impressed upon us the urgency and importance of our work at Faville Grove Sanctuary. Small, isolated prairie remnants, like Faville and Snapper, must be expanded if we are to maintain their diversity over time. By transferring seeds out of remnants to restore nearby lands, we are helping to preserve and expand the populations of a multitude of prairie plants and animals that once dominated the river floodplain. By restoring the surrounding landscape we are allowing genes to flow over a much larger area, thereby strengthening the genetic pool and creating an added level of insurance when local disasters do occur. One particular case has helped to affirm the importance of this concept. Worries about the fate of the threatened silphium borer moth were assuaged when a new population of individuals was discovered on the opposite end of the sanctuary, outside the flood damaged area. By enlarging habitat size across the landscape, we helped to prevent the local extinction of at least one species, ensuring the survival, as Leopold puts it, of one more "cog in the land mechanism." We plan to continue expanding the habitat area of the refuge by restoring more land, further stabilizing and reviving the great Crawfish Prairie.

Where Am I?



Visitors to Faville Grove Sanctuary will have an easier time with this question thanks to Life Scout Bill Mulligan and his fellow Boy Scouts and friends. For his Eagle Scout project, Bill recently made and installed nine routed cedar signs identifying various parcels within the sanctuary. Many thanks to Bill and company for a terrific job!

Pictured at the right with the parking sign are (from left): Phillip Buelow, Alex Mulligan (Assistant Scoutmaster), Miguel Quintana (First Class Scout), Rob Waters (Eagle Scout), and Bill Mulligan. Greg Waters (Boy Scouts Committee Chairperson), below left, also helped oversee the installation.



We're on the Map!



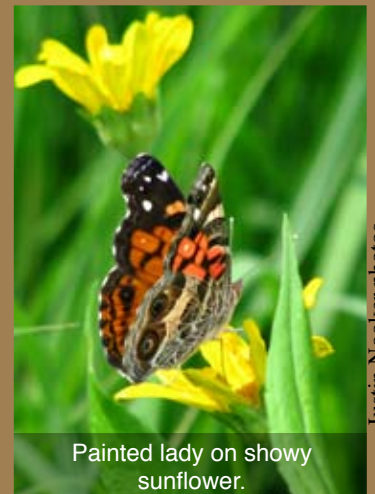
To make the sanctuary even more visitor friendly, Bob Marshall of Middleton volunteered to prepare this map. Great job, Bob! We plan to include the map in a sanctuary brochure to be developed, and will post it in a new kiosk that is being built for installation on upper Prairie Lane.



Painted lady on rattlesnake master.



Monarch caterpillar on Sullivant's milkweed, a threatened species.



Painted lady on showy sunflower.

Justin Nooker photos

Recent sightings at Faville Grove



The Tillotson Oak gets a well deserved hug from intern Matt Weber and Lars Higdon.

Justin Nooker

In 1940, Aldo Leopold wrote his most melancholy essay, *Exit Orchis*, published as cows were about to be turned out to pasture on the Faville Grove Prairie. Today at Madison Audubon Society's [Faville Grove Sanctuary](#), we are working to increase habitat for orchids and all their ecological associates. *Enter Orchis* is published sporadically and distributed electronically to friends of the sanctuary. The newsletter is a collaborative effort by Roger Packard (rpackard@uwalumni.com) and David Musolf (dmusolf@uwalumni.com), volunteer sanctuary managers and Lars Higdon (favillegrove@live.com), restoration ecologist and land steward. Please pass it along to anyone you think may be interested. We welcome pictures, articles, and other contributions, as well as comments and address updates. And we encourage you to stop out for a visit soon!