

***SEEDLINGS, the Newsletter
of Kalamazoo Area WILD ONES
Native Plants, Natural Landscapes***



What more substantial service to conservation
than to practice it on one's own land?
--Aldo Leopold

August-September, 2013—Contents

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Water Runs Free, Wildlife Thrives

***Nate Fuller Guides Wild Ones to Hidden Pond Preserve,
a Model of Restored Farm Land, for August Field Trip***

NATE FULLER, CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR for the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC), will be our guide for the Wild Ones field trip to Hidden Pond Saturday, August 24, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Hidden Pond Preserve is a 67-acre in-holding within the Barry State Game Area. It was an old farm slated for development, but a conservation-minded family bought it with the intent to give it to SWMLC. Following several years of the Conservancy working with the family to transform the land from an intensively farmed and grazed farmstead to a diverse natural area, they officially donated the land to SWMLC last year.

Over the years the Conservancy has worked to restore the hydrology as well as plant communities. After drain tiles were removed, a pond formed on top of a hill (hence "Hidden Pond") and scores of wetland plants responded on their own despite intensive agricultural use for over 100 years. In addition, nearly 50 rolling acres of what had been row crops were planted with a diverse savanna and prairie mix that is now thriving. Interestingly, the same seed mixes show great variety of species dominance depending on the growing season in which they were planted.

The Conservancy collaborated with the DNR to complement each other's management goals and succeeded in adding 25 acres of complementary prairie planting and removing a large earthen dam on adjacent state-owned land. A few smaller dams

were removed from the stream corridor as well, and the water runs free from its source springs to Glass Creek for the first time in five generations.



Hidden Pond emerged, together with long suppressed wetland and upland wildflowers, after drain tiles were removed from a former farm field at the Conservancy's Hidden Pond Preserve

All the structures were removed from the preserve including a huge dairy barn and a homestead with several outbuildings. The wildlife has responded, and this summer there were Cerulean Warblers nesting in a big oak where a house used to be and Henslow's Sparrows nesting in the former corn field.

There are mowed trails, but people will be welcome to poke around off trail, so boots and bug spray are probably a good idea. There are wetlands, streams and a pond on site, so those who really want to play in the water should bring their rubber boots.

Carpooling: Nate will meet with carpoolers at the Meijer's on Gull Road, in the parking lot behind the Burger King & Bennigans, at 9:00 a.m.

Directions for Driving: Take M-43 north through Richland and Delton about 15.5 miles to Stevens Rd. Turn left (west) onto Stevens Rd., which will turn north and become Miller Rd. Go two miles and turn right onto Guernsey Lake Rd. Go 0.2 miles on Guernsey Lake Rd. and turn left (north) onto Otis Lake Road. Go about 3.5 miles on Otis Lake Road. The preserve will be on the left side of the road. It has a gravel parking lot with a wire fence and a Hidden Pond Preserve sign set back off the road.

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Wild Ones Fall Plant Exchange Sunday, Sept. 22, 1-5; Share Your Bounty, Find New Plants, & Celebrate!

FALL IS AN IDEAL TIME TO PLANT FOR NEXT SEASON, as well as an ideal time to thin out those crowded plantings and bring your extras to the fall plant exchange at Tom and Ruth's place, 2502 Waite Ave. in Kalamazoo.

There will be plants available from Ruth and Tom's gardens and from many members of the chapter. There will be refreshments and socializing as well as native plants. No plants are for sale; this is strictly an exchange.

We do ask that attenders should bring only plants **native to Michigan**; and all plants should be potted up carefully and **identified with species labels**. If in doubt as to whether your plant is a native, call or e-mail to inquire; or simply bring yourself, to enjoy, celebrate, and find some plants for your property.

The house will be open for rest and conversation, and for shelter in the event of rain. As always, we proceed, rain or shine. The location is 2502 Waite Ave., one block west of Oakland Drive and one block south of Winchell. We'll block off space near the



Wild Ones plant exchange: botanizing, socializing, exchanging—better uses of driveways

driveway so you can drive up to drop off or pick up plants; but you may have to park some distance from the house.

Members of Wild Ones will be available to answer questions, help people set out the plants they bring, and choose appropriate plants to take home.

Copies of Nancy and Tom Small's best-selling book *Using Native Plants to Restore Community in Southwest Michigan and Beyond* will be for sale for \$25. Also available will be copies of the video, "Gardening for Life," a documentary film of the Wild Ones conference at the Kalamazoo Nature Center in 2008, that featured an address by

Professor Douglas Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home*. The cost of the film is \$5, **free to new members**.

All proceeds from the book and film go to the Nancy Small Memorial Fund, for environmental education and restoration. Donations to the fund are welcome.

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Registration Now Open for Wild Ones Conference

October Brings Bill McKibben to Kalamazoo, with Many Climate-Change Programs AND Wild Ones/KNC Conference to Form Kalamazoo Climate Action Plan

BILL MCKIBBEN WILL SPEAK HERE, in Miller Auditorium, on Thursday, Oct. 10, at 7 p.m. McKibben is the founder of 350.org and author of *The End of Nature*, a prophetic book on climate change first published almost 25 years ago. His talk is sponsored by the Kalamazoo Nature Center, the WMU Center for the Study of Humanities, and the People's Food Co-op. Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones is a co-sponsor, as are several other environmental organizations along with university departments, schools, and institutes.

October Conference on Biodiversity and a Climate Action Plan

The many climate-change programs in conjunction with McKibben's visit and talk include a Wild Ones/Kalamazoo Nature Center conference on "Biodiversity and Climate Change: Towards a Climate Action Plan for Kalamazoo" at the Nature Center all day on Saturday, Oct. 19. Keynote speakers will be Dave Karowe, WMU Professor of Biological Sciences, and Laurel Ross, Director of Urban Conservation for Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History and an originator of the Chicago Climate Action Plan for Nature. Other speakers include Tom Small, Wild Ones; Binney Girdler, Professor of Biology, Kalamazoo College; Chris Hoving of Michigan DNR; Mark Miller of Kalamazoo350; and Monica Patel, Ann Arbor Ecology Center and AnnArbor350.

ADMISSION TO THE CONFERENCE IS FREE, BUT SPACE IS LIMITED; PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. YOU MAY REGISTER NOW AT

<https://naturecenter.thankyou4caring.org/climatechange>

You have the option of ordering a box lunch, for \$10, catered by Peoples Food Co-op

A Climate Action Plan for Kalamazoo—and for Nature

The objective of the conference is to begin the process of forming a Climate Action Plan for Kalamazoo, including a Climate Action Plan for Nature. Participants in the all-day conference will have the opportunity to share their ideas and concerns with speakers, facilitators, Nature Center staff, and Wild Ones members.

Other events and programs during September and October, before and after McKibben's visit, include a **Town Hall Meeting** on climate change with local politicians and candidates for office, **workshops** on home energy efficiency, environmental **films**, an **art exhibit** and competition, and talks by Paul Clements on **The Politics of Climate Change**, Cybelle Shattuck on **Faith-Based Response to Climate Change**, Dave Karowe

on **The Effects of Climate Change on Birds**, Tom Small on **Climate Change and Transition to a Resilient Community**, Ron Kramer on **Climate Change as a Moral Crime**, Don Cooney on **Divesting from Big Oil**, and Mark Cowell on **Consequences of Climate Change for America’s Biological and Agricultural Landscapes**.

Besides Bill McKibben, the list of programs includes yet another international figure, Michele Oka Doner, speaking on **The Ocean as Inspiration, The Ocean as Fabricator**. Oka Doner’s work is often architectural in scale and inspired by nature, from the ocean to the galaxies. One study of her work summarizes its inspiration: “Oka Doner's work is fueled by a lifelong study and appreciation of the natural world, from which she derives her formal vocabulary . . . Through her devotion, Oka Doner has learned to speak the language of the cosmos, acting as a sculptural interpreter of nature's vast lexicon.”

All of the events are **free and open to the public**. They will be at the Kalamazoo Public Library, WMU, KIA, The Little Theatre, and various other venues around the community. For a complete schedule of all events and of the KAWO/KNC conference, consult the Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones web site (Kalamazoowildones.org).

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Establish a “Living Classroom”

Kalamazoo Wild Ones Launches New Mentoring Program; Apply Now If You’d Like Advice & Help

By Dave Wendling

IF YOU HAVE HAD A SITE VISIT AND STILL FEEL THAT YOU NEED MORE HELP getting started with native plants, then the KAWO Site Visit Committee’s new Mentor program beginning this fall is just what you need. We are looking for three to four Mentees for the first year of the program.

To qualify, the mentee must be a member of the chapter and maintain membership throughout the program, have had a previous site visit, and be willing to commit an approximately 100 square foot area to a native garden (it doesn’t have to be in one location). You should be committed to this native garden for at least three years, hopefully longer, since native plants take time to put down their deep roots. You also must be willing to put in the time, labor and expenses necessary for the garden.

If you qualify we’ll match you with a more experienced member who is willing to share his or her time and knowledge. As the mentee, you’ll be given assistance in the planning of a small native-garden area. Examples of native gardens include—but aren’t limited to—rain gardens, prairie or savanna gardens, woodland gardens, pollinator gardens, perennial gardens, native-plant borders.

We ask that you value your mentor’s offering of his or her time by putting in the effort to educate yourself, with guidance from your mentor. You can also take advantage of the chapter’s programs, including meetings, field trips, visits to members’ yards, and plant exchanges. Valuable information can also be obtained on the national Wild Ones webpage.

Your new garden becomes a living classroom where you gain firsthand knowledge of native plants and discover wonders of nature interacting at your door. We

hope this garden will inspire you to attempt a larger renovation or restoration in future years, or can just be enjoyed on its own for years to come.

To apply contact Dave Wendling at davewndlng@aol.com or call 269-624-6945. Someone from the committee will contact you to see if you qualify for this year's program.

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OVER 2000 MILKWEEDS DISTRIBUTED FOR PLANTING THIS YEAR! MIGRATING MONARCHS NEED YOUR HELP

By Ilse Gebhard

IT IS LATE JUNE AND EVERY TIME I GO OUT ON OUR DECK I have the privilege to experience the wonderful smell of common milkweed blossoms. The cool spring and abundant rain have been ideal growing conditions for the milkweeds and other native plants next to the deck. Lush, soft leaves await monarch females to lay their eggs. As Dr. Karen Oberhauser, monarch expert from the University of Minnesota, put it, "the milkweed is in eerily good condition" for this time of year.

The growing conditions are excellent, but many of those beautiful milkweed plants are still waiting for monarchs and their eggs. Some monarchs have been sighted in Kalamazoo County and some eggs and larvae spotted, but the numbers are very low in comparison to other years. Because of the all-time low of monarchs at the Mexican overwintering sites, this is distressing but not unexpected.

So our campaign to Bring Back the Monarchs by assisting in the spread of milkweeds, their only host plant, is doubly important. And it's been a good year for our efforts thus far. Not only did established milkweed plants benefit from the growing conditions, so did the more than 2000 Common, Swamp and Butterfly Milkweed plants raised in greenhouses over winter and given away for planting this spring.

Many Thanks to WMU for Their Contributions

Chris Jackson and Steve Keto not only grew milkweeds in WMU's greenhouse but other native plants as well. Many were planted at Kleinstuck Preserve and various locations on campus. Many more were shared with Wild Ones, some of which were passed along to the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy for planting at their preserves. Others were used for Wild Ones projects around Kalamazoo, and some went to individuals who are starting or expanding Monarch Waystations.

Wild Ones members Mike and Carol Klug also grew milkweeds in their greenhouse. These were given away at the Wild Ones spring plant exchange, the Van Buren County Conservation District native plant sale, and at eight monarch and native plant presentations and two butterfly-garden tours. In addition some of the plants were given to the Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery, Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, and the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy for planting on their properties. Thanks to Mike and Carol for getting milkweeds into the hands of so many people.

With the money raised by the Wild Ones Monarch Committee last winter, Kalamazoo's native plant nursery, Hidden Savanna, raised milkweeds for us in their greenhouse. These were given away, one per customer, at six Hidden Savanna sale days in May and June. Thanks to the donors who made that possible.

You Can Germinate Milkweeds Yourself

Additional milkweeds and native plants started at the greenhouse at Kalamazoo College are being held over for planting in the fall. Their greenhouse is not equipped for rapid plant growth in winter. But you don't even need a greenhouse to start milkweeds for fall planting. Dave Wendling sowed milkweed seeds in plug flats outside last winter. They germinated this spring, and he was able to turn over to the Kalamazoo Nature Center well over 500 seedlings, which they are tending this summer for fall planting on their property and for giving away at events and to their CSA members.

Ilse Gebhard also started milkweeds outside in winter. From mid-May onward, some of the seedlings were big enough to give away at monarch presentations and garden tours. Others will be tended during the summer to be given away at events like the August 17 Oshtemo Fun Day and the Wild Ones Fall Plant Exchange.

An unexpected bonus from our outreach efforts this spring at the Van Buren County Conservation District native plant sale was connecting Monarch Watch with the Van-Kal Permaculture Group. Last fall we sent to Monarch Watch (at the University of Kansas) some of the milkweed seeds we collected. This spring Monarch Watch returned to us, for the cost of shipping, over 1500 seedlings of Common, Swamp and Butterfly Milkweeds that the Van-Kal Permaculture Group continued growing during the summer and will distribute in the fall.

Still More Good News: Monarch Waystations

Four Monarch Watch Waystations were registered for the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. They include two butterfly gardens and two native prairie restoration areas. Nationwide there are 6455 Waystations registered, with **Michigan #1 at 557** and Texas #2 at 502.

A joint project of Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones and Downtown Tomorrow Inc. is a new native-plant pollinator garden/monarch waystation in the Edison/Washington Square neighborhood on Portage St. Downtown Tomorrow Inc. is rehabilitating buildings in the area, and this 60 square foot "Edison Neighborhood Monarch Haven" not only adds beauty to the area but hopefully will make it more attractive for someone to purchase the adjoining building for commercial development.

A small Burr Oak was planted and several native shrub species, as well as 170 native prairie forbs and grasses and Wild Strawberries as ground cover. Blooming should start in spring with Golden Alexanders and continue through fall with Stiff Goldenrod; and monarchs will find Common and Butterfly Milkweeds to lay their eggs on.

This fall we will again be collecting milkweed seeds both for distribution locally and for sending to Monarch Watch. Especially needed are Swamp, Butterfly and Poke Milkweed seeds. We'll continue outreach efforts throughout the winter, promoting the planting of milkweeds and registration of waystations. We will again grow some milkweeds for distribution, although on a smaller scale.

Why Is This Program So Important?

Bring Back the Monarch, a joint project of Monarch Watch and national Wild Ones, is crucial to saving one of America's favorite species. According to Chip Taylor of Monarch Watch, numbers are down across the U.S., mostly because of habitat loss. Overuse of herbicides along roadsides and elsewhere is turning diverse areas that support monarchs, pollinators, and other wildlife into grass-filled landscapes that support few species.

Since milkweeds are the only plants on which monarch females will lay eggs and the larvae will feed, it's vitally necessary to replace plants lost to development, roadside maintenance, and agriculture. And since adult monarchs need nectar to reproduce, this program also encourages planting of nectar-producing native flowers. The Bring Back the Monarch program's goals are to restore 20 milkweed species to their native ranges throughout the United States. Wild Ones members and 50 local chapters are working at the "plants-roots" level to educate the public and to plant local varieties of milkweed.

SO HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If we are going to make a real impact, we all need to participate in some way.

- **Make a financial donation** to support the growing of milkweeds for distribution next spring. Checks can be written to Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones (KAWO) with a notation for Monarch Committee in the memo line;
- **Grow milkweed plants** in plug flats for events like plant exchanges. Seeds and instructions will be available at monthly meetings, or contact Ilse Gebhard (gebhard.ilse@gmail.com);
- **Join the Monarch Committee** or express an interest in being contacted when we need help; please let Ilse Gebhard know. The committee will meet this fall and winter to make plans for next year;
- **Plant milkweed in your yard** and register it as a Monarch Watch Waystation. Seeds and information will be available at meetings, or go to www.monarchwatch.org. This would be a great time to register your yard; let's keep Michigan #1;
- **Motivate non-members** to plant milkweed on their properties, or share ideas on how to do that. Ilse Gebhard has a Power Point presentation; if you belong to a group looking for programs, please let Ilse know.

Ilse Gebhard is chair and coordinator for the chapter's Monarch Project Committee.

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Community Projects Committee Succeeds at KPS

Patience and Perseverance Pay Off in Establishing Large Native Planting for Kalamazoo Public Schools

By Paul Olexia

THE GOAL OF OUR CHAPTER'S COMMUNITY PROJECTS COMMITTEE is to establish and maintain native-planting projects around the community, in order to educate the public about our organization and the value of using native plants in landscaping. Over the years, with a quite small group of volunteers (we can do better, and *you can help*), we have engaged in a number of plantings, some on our own and some in collaboration with other groups, on both public and private lands.

Not all have been successful, but some have done well. The next time you visit the People's Food Co-op, take a few minutes to walk around the west and south sides of the building and enjoy the results of our joint efforts with that organization. In addition

we have had successful collaborations with the Montessori School on Merrill St. and with El Sol School in the Vine St. neighborhood.

Several years ago, under the excellent guidance of Nancy and Tom Small, we established two native wetland planting projects of our own along Axtell Creek, near Crosstown Blvd. One is near the law office at the corner of Howard St. and Crosstown, and the other is a bit further downstream, just west of Paris Cleaners. We are struggling to maintain the one near the law office, but it is surviving and the one near the cleaners is thriving.

Taking on a Large, Complex New Project

Last summer (2012) one of our members suggested that we consider restoration of a native planting at the Kalamazoo Public School (KPS) Administration Building on Howard St. just east of Oakland Drive. There's a circular area 60 feet in diameter in a visitors' parking lot in front of the building. The area had been planted in native plants several years ago but had not been maintained, and although parts of it were heavily invaded by alien species, some of the original natives still persisted.

Given our limited resources, both human and financial, we considered what we might realistically be able to accomplish. Our preliminary assessment was that approximately 1/3 of the area was so badly degraded that our best approach would be just to herbicide it and put in new plants. For the remaining 2/3 of the site (approximately 2,000 square feet) we thought we might, with a lot of effort, be able to remove the aliens, save most of the existing natives, and add more natives. The Executive Committee of KAWO was generous in honoring our request to help purchase plants and herbicide for the project. Nevertheless, we faced a daunting task, especially considering the very modest number of volunteers who regularly help with our projects.

We hoped to start the project this spring. I decided to consult with the person in charge of grounds for KPS. However, we were informed that he had no staff and we should talk with an administrative assistant at the KPS building, Lynn Chio, who, as it turns out, was invaluable in bringing the project to fruition; and we remain grateful for her invaluable assistance throughout the project. But Lynn suggested we talk first with the President of the School Board.

To Begin With, Good News—Then Not So Good

The President assured us she was quite interested in improving the plantings and in using native plants. Obviously this was good news. But she also had some ideas of her own regarding the circle. For one thing, she wanted to add some boulders from a construction site to the center of the circle. She also was concerned about the appearance of any planting, meaning that she did not want it to look “unkempt” or “messy.” She initially said she didn't want any plants more than one foot high and that she'd like sections of the garden planted in only one species which could be identified for educational purposes.

I responded that if she wanted something like a formal English Garden, she would need to find someone else to work with. Among other considerations, I thought we needed to try to change public perception about what is “beautiful” in the way of plantings. In addition, there's a very limited number of native prairie plants that never get over a foot high. I pointed out that a major reason we establish native plantings is to create reasonably natural habitat in order to attract insects and birds; and monocultures, even of native plants, do not provide the best of habitats.

Even though we both were wishing for success, visions of a successful collaboration began to fade. Finally, we both began to realize that with some compromises on both sides, we might make progress. We agreed to a second meeting to look for common ground.

Natural? or Neat and “No Mess”?

I began by pointing out our most significant limitations, namely labor and money. The President said she might be able to find funds for buying plants and also to provide some assistance with planting. At that point, our plan changed completely. Rather than try to salvage what already was present on the site, we decided to herbicide the entire site and purchase all new plants starting with bare ground.

As for the second problem, the “neatness” factor, I suggested we probably could create a list of plants that “normally” don’t get over two feet high and, while it would be a restrictive list, it would provide reasonable diversity. In addition we developed a plan with an inner circle of boulders and an outer ring at the periphery consisting of a number of small plots, each of which would be planted in only one species. The remainder of the site would be planted in a mix of species. The circle of boulders would greatly reduce the number of plants we would need and the amount of labor to put them in. We estimated that the boulders would occupy an area approximately 20 feet in diameter. So, of the 30-foot radius of the site, we would be planting a 20 foot wide “donut-shaped” area.

I also mentioned two other considerations: plants will move around; and some species will proliferate while others may not survive. There always is an “experimental” component to native plantings. I suppose that if I understood the plants and the soil better, I would have fewer “experimental surprises,” both positive and negative.

Our Community Projects Committee (Bruce Alden, Harry Bird, Catherine Niessink, Tom Small, and I) met a number of times to create a list of relatively short prairie plants that would be suitable. We also received invaluable suggestions from Chad Hughson. Finally, we had a list of approximately 30 species, some of which might “push” the two-foot limit. The next step was to find how many of these species were available from regional native plant growers, namely Hidden Savanna Nursery and Wildtype Nursery. And we needed to find out what quantities of each were available since we estimated we would need at least 2,000 plants. In the end we were able to find about 25 species that were available, some in smaller numbers than we had hoped. When I suggested to the School Board President that the cost of the plants (and mulch) might be around \$3,000, she did not blink. It looked like we were “on our way.”

Too Many Agencies, Too Little Communication

It’s difficult to know for sure how many different individuals or organizations were involved in this project. But a lack of communication between all of them threatened the project at a couple of points. On our side of the “equation” was our committee and the growers who could tell us which species they had and how many of each. On the other side, the president was communicating with the person in charge of the grounds who, in turn, was arranging for outside contractors to do the work (hauling boulders, preparing the site, etc.)

Site preparation became somewhat of a contentious issue. Our plan was to herbicide the site to get rid of all surface vegetation, then mulch it and plant into the undisturbed soil. Two days after we applied herbicide a crew was there rototilling the soil (and no doubt bringing a host of new seeds to the surface). We expressed our concern

but, of course, little could be done at that point. About a week later a ring of boulders appeared approximately 20 feet in diameter with the center filled in with gravel. I asked Lynn Chio if site preparation was complete but no one had communicated with her either. She did, however, know how to get answers to our questions and that was crucial. Apparently more boulders were to arrive—at some unspecified time.

Too Many Boulders, Too Much Mulch

About two weeks later a truckload of boulders was dumped into the area to be planted. Then a few days later a couple of more truckloads were added. After a day of heavy rain some heavy equipment, brought in to move the boulders to the center area, compacted the wet soil – not the best conditions for planting.

In the meantime we grew increasingly apprehensive. We needed to arrange for: 1) delivery and spreading of mulch; 2) picking up plants or having them delivered (we had no place to store them on the site for an extended period prior to planting); 3) arranging for KAWO volunteers to help plant; 4) arranging for a planting crew, and 5) concern about availability of water – to list the major issues. Again, Lynn was invaluable in solving the other side of the equation, and just prior to “the last minute” things began to become coordinated.

Mulch was delivered Monday afternoon and three of us spent the remainder of the day spreading most of it. The company providing it was unusually generous and the calculated eleven yards needed to cover the site two inches deep was enough to cover it three to four inches deep. We finished spreading mulch the next day. Wednesday the majority of the plants were delivered (some already had been picked up). In total there was the equivalent of over fifty 38-cell plug flats. We wanted to start planting Thursday morning so that if we didn't get finished we could finish on Friday rather than starting later and have the project sit idle through the weekend. We managed to convince our collaborators to double the crew size from the original two to four and were told they would be there at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday. I tried to get some of the plants sorted to facilitate following our planting plan.

Day One: Chaos and Collaboration

We volunteers arrived at 8:30 Thursday morning and found the crew had just arrived and was ready to start. I hastily began to drag out flats into appropriate locations. Not surprisingly, the ground was very hard due to the compacted soil and planting was not going very quickly. Two of the volunteers (Catherine and Bruce) started to help plant and worked the entire day. Tom Small and Jeff Weiss were able to help until around noon when they had to leave. I was running around trying to place flats at appropriate sites and answering questions as best I could. What started out as somewhat hectic began to verge on chaos, which was averted only by fatigue. By 4:30 p.m. that day we had filled in the space to be planted and had a few plants left over. The planting crew expressed their gratitude to the volunteers for their hard work. And hard work it was. It would have been impossible for the crew to have completed the planting without the valuable assistance from our volunteers.

In many respects, a few exceptions aside, this joint effort between KPS and KAWO represents a nearly perfect collaboration. Each participant made major



A landscaping crew and Wild Ones volunteers begin planting over 2000 native wildflowers and grasses in front of the Kalamazoo Public Schools administration building on Howard Street

contributions toward a common goal and it would have been difficult, if not nearly impossible, for either to have had such success alone, especially in such a short period of time.

As of this writing (approximately one month later) we are seeing very good survival rates, probably somewhere near 90%. We didn't expect 100% survival and we can replace plants that haven't survived with extra plants we have. We were able to set up a sprinkler system (with Lynn's help) on a timer. For a few days after the planting I did



Work completed successfully, the still-standing survivors gather to celebrate. Wild Ones volunteers include Catherine Niessink, Bruce Alden, and Paul Olexia (taking the photograph)

some supplemental watering, but the sprinkler has been a major help. We have been exceptionally fortunate with all the rain we have had since the planting. The Tuesday

following the planting we had about two inches of rain, and only at one point have we gone more than a week without more rain.

It's Not Over Yet, and You Can Help

As we look to the future, we will need to be vigilant for growth of exotic species as well as return of some original native plants that we might not want. We probably will want to thin out some of the more aggressive plants at the site over the next few years, and we may decide that some species just don't seem to do well at the site and replace them with others. It well may be another two years or more before the plantings reach maturity.

In the meantime, please stop by the site and enjoy the work of your Community Projects Committee. Better yet, join forces with us to help make this community more environmentally friendly and natural. To paraphrase Doug Tallamy's charge – We have destroyed so much of nature that the only way some species are likely to survive is if we create natural habitat by converting other spaces into more natural settings.

You can contribute beyond your own yards and learn more about native plants through participation in our Community Projects. Check the latest *Seedlings* or the website for dates and times of projects or contact me at polexia@kzoo.edu. Opportunities are limitless, tuition is free.

Paul Olexia is co-chair of the chapter's Community Projects Committee.

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More Events of Interest to Wild Ones

Saturday August 17, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Bring Back the Monarch Booth at the Annual Oshtemo Fun Day
Flesher Field, 3664 South 9th St, Kalamazoo MI
Display, monarch and milkweed handouts, free milkweed plants and seeds, hands-on activities for kids

Sunday, September 15, 11:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

11th Annual Southwest Michigan Community Harvest Fest!
Tillers International, Cook's Mill Learning Center, 10515 OP Ave., E., Scotts, Michigan
\$10/car, \$1/person for buses of 10 or more, bicyclists free
For information about speakers, music, exhibitors and more, visit www.fairfoodmatters.org/harvestfest.

Wild Ones is set to promote our chapter at the Harvest Fest. It would be wonderful to have several members share the benefits of native plants with attendees. If you can devote a couple of hours to being at our Harvest Fest table between 11:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., please contact Dave Wendling at davewndng@aol.com or [269-624-6946](tel:269-624-6946).

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Native Trees and Shrubs Now Available from Two Southwest Michigan Nurseries, open through September & October

WILD ONES MEMBERS MIKE AND CATHY MCMINN have just opened the **Treecology Native Tree and Shrub Nursery**. Treecology will be open Fridays and

Saturdays or by appointment from September 6 through the month of October. Located at the home of Mike and Cathy McMinn in Delton Mi., 9167 Guernsey Lake Rd. Contact Treecology at [269-623-5715](tel:269-623-5715) or by email: treecology@mei.net.

RANDY COUNTERMAN, formerly with SWMLC, is teaming with Mary Ann's Michigan Trees and Shrubs to open a new native tree and shrub nursery, **Native Landscapes** (www.Native-Landscapes.org). Randy has taken over Mary Ann's stock and added still more. His location is 33081 E. Red Arrow Highway, Paw Paw, MI 49079. Call [269-929-3455](tel:269-929-3455) for an appointment or attend one of the fall sale days: Saturdays, Sept. 14, Oct. 19, and Oct. 26.

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Important Facts and Information

Don't Let What's Out of Sight Be Out of Mind

Some native plants, such as the Common Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*), have root zones that extend 16 feet into the ground! Other root systems extend not so far, but much farther than you might think. When you dig up a Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), you may observe only 8 to 12 inches of roots. But you have severed an additional 12 to 24 inches of fine, fibrous, threadlike roots. These fibrous roots provide an important pathway for water to infiltrate the soil. They also help the plant acquire water during dry periods.

Disturb the soil of your native-plant gardens as little as possible. There's lots more there than meets the eye.

Increasing Ocean Acidity Endangers Life

Australia's ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies [warns](#) that the world's oceans are becoming more acid, with potentially devastating consequences for corals and the marine organisms that build reefs and provide much of the Earth's breathable oxygen.

The acidity is caused by the gradual buildup of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere, dissolving into the oceans. Scientists fear it could be lethal for animals with chalky skeletons which make up more than a third of the planet's marine life.

Nitrogen Overuse Threatens the Environment

Overuse of nitrogen in farming is causing far more environmental devastation than many currently comprehend. A recent *National Geographic* article addresses this issue: "Runaway nitrogen is suffocating wildlife in lakes and estuaries, contaminating groundwater, and even warming the globe's climate. As a hungry world looks ahead to billions more mouths needing nitrogen-rich protein, how much clean water and air will survive our demand for fertile fields?"

A marine wildlife die-off in Florida provides another perspective. Along 50 miles of northern estuary waters off Brevard County and the Kennedy space complex, about 280 manatees have died in the last 12 months. As the manatee deaths peaked this spring, hundreds of pelicans began dying along the same stretch of water, followed this summer by scores of bottlenose dolphins.

"We may have reached a tipping point," said Troy Rice, who directs the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program. Mr. Rice's fear, widely shared, is that an ecosystem which supports more than 4,300 species of wildlife is buckling under the strain of decades of pollution generated by coastal Florida's explosive development. The nitrogen pollution which is part of the problem is largely generated not by farms but by development: suburban septic fields and the fertilizers used on conventional urban landscapes.

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Woman's National Garden Association Promotes Native Plantings

The Woman's National Farm and Garden Association is celebrating its 100th anniversary by promoting the planting of at least 100,000 native plants. You can contribute to the tally by providing information about your new plantings, either seeds or plants. The project will continue through June 2014. For information about how to report your plantings and help in the celebration, go to <http://www.wnfga.org/focuses/environmental-concerns/>

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Quotations for Contemplation

Recreation . . . is not the outdoors, but our reaction to it. Daniel Boone's reaction depended not only on the quality of what he saw, but on the quality of the mental eye with which he saw it.

--Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

--William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"

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The drawing of a Monarch butterfly is by Amelia Hansen (www.ameliahansen.com). It's one of her many illustrations from Nancy and Tom Small's book *Using Native Plants to Restore Community in Southwest Michigan and Beyond*, now in its third printing.

SEEDLINGS is edited by Tom Small and appears five times a year, with a few additional brief supplements. The next regular issue, for **October-December, 2013**, will come early in October. **Deadline for submission is Friday, September 27, 2013**. Please send submissions, comments, and suggestions to Tom at yard2prairy@gmail.com.

For more information and news, check us out at www.kalamazoowildones.org and www.facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes