

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

SUPPLEMENT—June, 2011—Contents

- **JUNE FIELD TRIP to restored woods and meadows**
 - **JUNE-JULY COMMUNITY WORK DAYS**
 - **OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST**
 - World Oceans Day**
 - No Child Left Inside Week**
 - **GOOD NEWS! From Far and Near**
 - D.C. Bags the Bags**
 - PFC Does All Native Landscaping**
 - **NOT SO GOOD NEWS!**
 - Oceans, the Basis of Planetary Life, Are Deteriorating Rapidly**
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***Midsummer Field Trip Takes Wild Ones to Laura
Strehlow's Restored Woods and Meadows***

On Saturday, June 18, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Wild Ones member Laura Strehlow will follow up her January program by leading us on a tour of the property where, for the past 20 years, she has worked to restore her 30 acres of woods, wetland, and meadow.

“Much of the restoration of my property has focused on the backyard,” she tells us. “I’ve created an understory and significantly decreased the lawn area. Other areas of the property were mowed perpetually, even though they were not part of the yard. I’ve let those areas go wild, and planted some natives to augment the invasives!

“I’m really happy with the small area of meadow restoration to the west of the house. It’s a joy to see in the summer and I admired the tall grasses this winter, too. We’ve created a mowed path (0.8 miles) through the woods and meadow. I’ve tried to re-introduce some spring ephemerals with variable luck. The woods are relatively young, with scattered older trees.

“There will probably be mosquitoes and maybe some gnats, although I think they are a bit earlier. The most important step towards restoration of this land has

been the implementation of a conservation easement with the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy in 2009.”

Laura has a B.S. in Pharmacy and a B.A. in Botany from the University of Washington in Seattle, and a Master’s degree in Biological Sciences from Western Michigan University.

DIRECTIONS:

From Kalamazoo: Take US 131 North to “D” Avenue; turn left (west). Continue through the four-way stops at Ravine Road and 6th street. Eventually you’ll cross into Van Buren County and over Pine Creek. Turn right at the sign to Timber Ridge at 23 ½ Street. Go north until the stop sign at 2nd Avenue. Turn left on 2nd Avenue. The address is 25768, and the house is on the north side of the road. If you see the SWMLC sign, you’ve gone past the house. It takes 20 to 30 minutes to drive from Kalamazoo.

Please turn left into the driveway of the house across the road and park facing the hedgerow. My neighbor Jim has generously allowed us to park there.

From the West: Take M-40 through Gobles to CR 390. Turn right on 390 until it ends at CR 657. Turn left on 657, wind around to the right and keep right when going around Clear Lake. The road becomes 2nd Avenue at Clear Lake. Continue about 0.7 miles; you’ll see the SWMLC Conservation Easement sign on the north. Please park as described above.

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***PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE WILD ONES
COMMUNITY WORK DAYS IN JUNE AND JULY***

Axtell Creek wetland plantings

Monday, June 13, 10:30 – noon

Remove old plant material and clean up. We’ll concentrate on the planting in front of the law office at the corner of Howard and Crosstown. Meet in the parking lot behind the law office.

Plant rescue – Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy office

Saturday, June 25, 9:00 – noon

SWMLC office is at 6851 S. Sprinkle Road, Portage, between Milham Ave. and Bishop Ave., on the east side of Sprinkle (Milham does not come through to

Sprinkle from central Kalamazoo). We'll try to put a sign or flag in the driveway. For more information and directions, e-mail us or telephone the Conservancy office at (269) 324-1600.

The Conservancy wants to remove the now overgrown native planting that Wild Ones helped to establish some years ago; then they'll start all over again. Conservancy volunteers will work with us to rescue as many plants as possible. Many of these will then be available for Wild Ones projects.

Maple Street School Rain Garden – maintenance and invasive removal

Monday, July 11, 10.30 – noon

Park on Maple Street. The planting is on the east side of the school, at the top of the hill that rises up from the playing field.

Because the school administration has decided to “maintain” the planting by mowing it, we may be doing a plant rescue. Or we may be working elsewhere down on Axtell Creek. Please stand by for possible changes in where we will meet.

Axtell Creek sedge-meadow - remove invasives.

Thursday, July 28, 5:30-7:00

We'll also do some planting and seeding.

The “meadow” is at the foot of the Maple St. School playing field. Park on Maple St. next to the planting, or across Howard Street in the law office parking lot.

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Two Important Observances This Year Focus on Educating and Involving Youth in Restoring Nature

Wednesday, June 8

World Oceans Day

The theme for both this year's and next year's World Oceans Day is “**Youth: the Next Wave for Change.**” And change is definitely in order. Consider the warning from the chief of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the “Not So Good News” further on in this SEEDLINGS.

June 18-25, 2011

No Child Left Inside Week

Many organizations and individuals throughout the state and the nation are now participating in the “No Child Left Inside” Program—an effort to insure that young

people experience nature directly and intimately. Only through experience will we value, love, and want to preserve the natural world which we have done so much to degrade; and it must begin with the children.

[The following is an excerpt from “The Grace of Summer,” by Nancy and Tom Small, which originally appeared in *BeFriending Creation* (July-Aug., 1996), the newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness. It has been reprinted in the Summer issue of the Wildflower Assn. of Michigan newsletter. The full essay, revised, will appear in the forthcoming book, by Nancy and Tom Small, *Using Native Plants to Restore Community in Southwest Michigan and Beyond*.]

WHAT CAN WE GIVE TO OUR CHILDREN?

We can't give our own children and their friends quite the same images and experiences of nature that we had as children. The world now contains fewer toads and frogs and monarch butterflies, fewer nearby fields and neighborhood vacant lots. Nor can we pass on our still vivid images and memories as effortlessly as we eventually hand down the family treasures.

Rather, we must insure that these children, from an early age, experience nature often and deeply enough to gain real appreciation of what it is and of our true place in it. We must make sure their knowledge is intimate and detailed enough that they won't be fooled or satisfied by the ersatz nature of theme parks and malls or the neatly trimmed lawns and shrubs of suburbia. We can't even depend on the exotic images of television nature programs to lead children to appreciate their own local heritage. Let us, therefore, while nature is at its most accessible in summer, immerse our children in its sights and sounds, as these are revealed in our yards and parks and, more fully, in fields and woods and swamps.

What, in practical terms, can individuals do to accomplish this? We can keep ourselves and our neighbors informed about local opportunities for introducing children (and adults) to the beauty and strangeness of the natural world, and see that the children (at least) take advantage of them. By providing ideas, expertise, materials, transportation, or perhaps nothing more than another adult presence, we can encourage teachers in our children's schools to organize activities which involve children with nature.

CAN WE KNOW THE ULTIMATE VALUE OF A GIFT?

If we don't have children of our own, we can make a point of taking young people with us when we go nature-watching. We can give the children of our friends and

neighbors gifts of books, both fiction and non-fiction, which deal with nature. Or native plants for the child to begin a garden all his or her own. Don't hesitate if the parents and the child don't already have an interest in such things. As teachers for many years, we recognize that we can't know what might ultimately be the truly life-changing gift to a pupil, or a child, whom one barely knows and who quickly passes on, out of our lives.

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And here's an excerpt from "The Freedom of Silence," a poem by Michael Robinson, of the Cree Nation, Canada:

I sit now and watch
my children watching me.
To their lives, there must
be a new beginning,
a new place to learn
that has no boundaries
of time or profit.
I must teach my children
to set out again
until they discover their place
to begin.

For more information on how to spend a memorable day outdoors with your child and help build the next generation of nature enthusiasts, visit www.michigan.gov/nochildleftinside. The Kalamazoo Nature Center, which promotes the No Child Left Inside program, offers many opportunities for family involvement with nature.

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Good News from Faraway and Nearby

Not All the News from D.C. is Bad News

In January of 2010, the District of Columbia implemented a controversial 5-cent bag tax for paper and plastic bags given out by retail food establishments and liquor stores. Just three months after the tax went into effect, the number of bags given out dropped from a monthly average of 22.5 million bags to around 3 million bags.

The law encourages shoppers to use reusable bags that create less waste, and the revenue from the tax is being used to clean up the Anacostia River, recently

named one of the most polluted rivers in the country. The tax raised \$2 million for cleanup efforts in its first year.

The New People's Food Co-op in Kalamazoo Will Emphasize Local Food and Feature Entirely Native-Plant Landscaping

[Here's the joint People's Food Co-op/Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones news release prepared by Heather Crull of PFC and Vicki Berglund of Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones. The store is **now open**, it's wonderful, and the native plantings are almost complete.]

Kalamazoo, MI – With the help of several community partners, the People's Food Co-op (PFC) will create a showcase of plants native to Southwest Michigan at its new store at 507 Harrison St before it opens on May 31. The project will help convert the contaminated brownfield site into a healthy, thriving natural landscape for both people and wildlife.

More than 50 different species of wildflowers, grasses, and sedges are in the landscape plan, along with oak, redbud and dogwood trees, sand cherry and New Jersey Tea shrubs. “The native plants selected for the PFC gardens will provide interest and beauty all year round, as well as food and shelter for wildlife,” says Tom Small, co-founder of the Kalamazoo Area chapter of Wild Ones (KAWO), an organization dedicated to native plants and natural landscaping. “We’ve planned the landscaping to produce nectar and pollen for the entire growing season, with seeds and fruits for every season.” The landscape design will also incorporate a rain-garden swale that will help to retain and channel stormwater.

Volunteers planted a variety of shrubs and trees on Saturday, May 7, and will be adding prairie and wetland grasses and wildflowers before the store opens. An open invitation is extended for interested individuals to help with the plantings.

According to trend-spotters such as Garden Media Group, “eco-scaping” for sustainability and biodiversity is part of a shift towards “gardening with a purpose.” Landscaping with native plants fits well with the mission of the PFC, as it will support the larger community and will restore the brownfield site contaminated by the paper industry decades ago. “We are actively promoting local products and a healthy environment, and are excited to landscape with plants and seeds sourced from area nurseries,” says Chris Dilley, general manager of PFC. “Fostering cooperation and community is another touchstone for the PFC. We're thrilled to work together with the KAWO, Co-op owners, and community members to get everything in the ground.”

“We're grateful,” Small adds, “for the resident experts and growers that have been instrumental in this project, supplying advice, plant lists, and the plants themselves, including Chad Hughson, Gina Frasson-Hudson, Steve Allen, Mary Ann Menck and Tyler

Bassett.” KAWO provided funding in memory of Nancy Small and will assist with signage to help people enjoy and learn about the value of native plants. Support for the rain garden was provided by a grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation.

For additional information, please contact Chris Dilley (269-492-6468, chris@peoplesfoodco-op.org), Tom Small (yard2prairy@gmail.com), or visit www.peoplesfoodco-op.org.

Our heartfelt thanks to all the Wild Ones volunteers who participated in the plantings and our congratulations to Chris Dilley and all the PFC staff and volunteers for the wonderful success of all their labors—and on schedule.

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Not So Good News

NOAA Warns of Rapid, Unprecedented Ocean Changes

[The following is condensed from a posting on the CLIMATE PROGRESS newsletter for May 19, 2011.]

A combination of climate change, overfishing, pollution and other threats is changing the world’s oceans at an “unprecedented” rate, the head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said yesterday.

“For the oceans as well as the rest of the planet, the rates and scales and kinds of changes that are under way now are absolutely unprecedented,” NOAA chief Jane Lubchenco said in remarks at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. “And they are happening even faster than our ability to measure or track some of them, much less have institutions that are responding in a fashion that is appropriate.”

She touted the national ocean policy that President Obama implemented by executive order last year. The policy created a National Ocean Council to coordinate federal planning on a wide range of issues, including climate change, pollution, oil drilling and fisheries. It also calls for regional bodies to use marine spatial and regional planning, a kind of ocean zoning, to balance competing uses of coastal waters and protect ecologically sensitive areas.

That kind of approach will be important as the climate changes, Lubchenco said. “It’s pretty mind-boggling to think that we are changing the actual chemistry of the ocean, the physical structure of the ocean, the biological contents of the ocean,” she said. “The scale at which our activities play out is really beyond most people’s ability to comprehend.”

[**Editor's Note:** Wild Ones speakers and advocates should emphasize in their actions and their educational efforts the importance of not polluting surface waters (and therefore the oceans) with industrial fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides and how restoring natural systems locally is essential to the restoration of global systems, i.e., the oceans. Celebrate World Oceans Day, June 8, by helping young people to understand their role, now, in protecting their own future. Help them be “the next wave of change.”]

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SEEDLINGS is edited by Tom Small and appears five times a year. The next regular issue, for July-August, 2011, will come early in July; **deadline for submission is Thursday, June 30**. Please send submissions, comments, and suggestions to Tom at yard2prairy@gmail.com.