

***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

July-September, 2015 — Contents

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**Drawing by Amelia Hansen
from *Using Native Plants
to Restore Community***

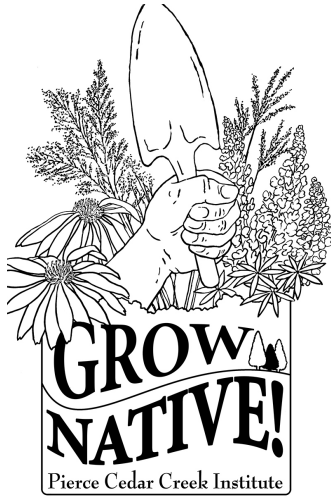
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Jen Howell will lead July Field Trip to Pierce Cedar Creek Institute's "Grow Native" Demonstration Plantings and Restorations

FOR KALAMAZOO WILD ONES JULY 18 FIELD TRIP, Jen Howell, Stewardship Manager for Pierce Cedar Creek Institute in Barry County, will take our group on a hike to view "Prairie Construction Projects at PCCI: Both Large and Small Scale."

To feature "small scale" prairie restoration projects, she will show us the butterfly garden (now one of their four certified Monarch Waystation sites) that was planted by Hastings Middle School students in 2004. Our tour will also feature the PCCI "Grow Native!" program, both Phase I, the Visitor Center

berm planting, and Phase II, the Education Building berm planting, just now being prepped for a fall planting.



To view large-scale prairie planting projects, we'll hike down the Tallgrass Prairie Trail through PCCI's newest prairie planting (2014), immediately adjacent to their oldest planting (1999). Jen will focus on the prep and planting process of the 2014 planting. "This planting," she tells us, "was by far my most challenging prairie project, and I could certainly offer some suggestions to help folks avoid their own aggravation!"

After Jen discusses with us the success and failures of that project, she'll highlight the hedgerow removal project that took place in 2013, a fairly aggressive measure to provide habitat for ground-nesting bird species at PCCI.

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, a nonprofit environmental education center located in Barry County and serving residents throughout West Michigan, has focused on building awareness and understanding of the natural world through a variety of environmental programs and activities since opening its doors in 2001. The Institute conserves a total of 661 acres. Each year the Institute works to protect and preserve this resource by removing invasive plant species and reintroducing native plants to the property. This results in the creation and preservation of a variety of habitats where local wildlife thrive and where visitors learn about, experience, and enjoy the natural world. The Institute's *Grow Native!* Project is an important aspect of this stewardship effort.

Over the years, Institute staff and volunteers have converted over 82 acres of fallow farmland into native prairie habitat. In 2013, to increase awareness and understanding of the historical and environmental value of native plants and provide a highly visual example of the efforts taking place on more remote areas of the property, the Institute replaced the non-native grasses and invasive weeds on the Visitor Center berm with a native prairie planting. This first phase of the *Grow Native!* Project included 6,600 native wildflower and grass plants planted on the berm by staff members and volunteers.

Further plans to enhance the aesthetics of the Institute's main campus include replacing non-native grasses and invasive weeds on the Education Building berm and the parking lot berm with native prairie plants. This will be accomplished in two additional phases: the Education Building berm will be planted in 2015, and the parking lot berm in 2016. Both Kalamazoo Wild

Ones and the Nancy Small Memorial Fund contributed funds towards the Phase II plantings on the Education Building berm; and Ilse Gebhard has registered the planting as a Monarch Way Station, with signage provided by the KAWO Monarch Fund.

The tour of PCCI will begin from the PCCI Visitor Center at 10 a.m. Saturday, July 18, and last until about 1 p.m. Wear sturdy shoes and bring insect repellent. There is no admission charge.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS FROM KALAMAZOO:

Travel East/North on M-43 (Gull Road) through Delton, to the village of Cloverdale. Look for the Michigan Department of Transportation sign: "Pierce Cedar Creek Nature Preserve." Turn right (east) on Cloverdale Road and travel approximately 4.5 miles—portions of the road are unpaved. The entrance is on the right (south).

CARPOOL at the Meijer's on Gull Road near Sprinkle. Meet in the parking lot outside the fenced-in garden center at the northeast corner of the lot. **Departure at 9:15 a.m.**

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August Field Trip Includes Extensive Plantings at Homes of Two Members and at Skyridge Church

THE WILD ONES AUGUST 8 FIELD TRIP will begin with special native plantings at the Portage homes of two Wild Ones members and conclude at Skyridge Church of the Brethren with native plantings that Wild Ones helped to establish.

The tour will start at 10 a.m. at the home of Rick and Diane Oakes at 7234 Jamaica Lane, near the intersection of Sprinkle Road and Romence Road/Bishop Avenue. After looking at their gardens for about an hour, we'll drive to Ruth Caputo's at 10970 Poplar Bluff Court near Osterhout Avenue and Oakland Drive. Then, after another hour, we'll move on to Skyridge Church at 394 S. Drake Road between West Main Street and West Michigan Avenue. The tour will conclude around 1 p.m.

Replacing Lawn with Natives

Rick and Diane Oakes bought their house in July, 1993. Located on a small lot, it was a new house with no landscaping. "We started our landscaping plan with rocks obtained from Diane's dad," they write, "then we added some trees and created a small garden in the back yard for perennials. The rest of the yard was put into lawn.

“In September of 2011, we joined the Wild Ones group. We quickly learned how native plants can help the environment and wildlife. Over the past four years, we’ve converted most of our yard into gardens. We collect rain water from the roof into three rain barrels.”

The native plants in the Oakes’ yard include Redbud trees, Snowberry, White Meadowsweet, Spicebush, Thimbleberry, Virgin’s Bower, Brown Fox sedge, Little Bluestem, Virginia Wild rye, Bottlebrush grass, Prairie Dropseed, Northern Sea Oats, Side Oats Grama, Switch Grass, Pennsylvania Sedge, Sea Oats, Sensitive fern, Ostrich fern, Wood fern, Tall Bell flower, Spotted Bee balm, Hairy Beardtongue, Sneezeweed, Rattlesnake Master, Eastern Prickly pear, Blue Vervain, Lion’s Foot, Cup Plant, Downy Sunflower, Swamp milkweed, Butterfly weed, Milkweed, Wild Petunia, Cardinal Flower, Anise Hyssop, Doll’s Eyes, Prairie Smoke, Marsh Blazing star, Turtlehead, and Ironweed.

“Prior to planting natives,” says Diane, “our biggest challenge was that our soil was clay. However, the native plants in our yard met the challenge and seem to love the clay. And we love to walk the gardens in the morning with a cup of coffee.”

Holding Back Invasives and Increasing Biodiversity

When Ruth Caputo moved into her new house 11 years ago, the roughly one-acre lot was occupied by a variety of invasive plants ranging from Asian honeysuckle to meadow grasses. She envisioned a colorful prairie and began by seeding the sunny areas with a native grass mix and adding forbs she had started from seed. After a few years of weeding out aggressive weeds that moved in from the surrounding area, she realized the tall grasses from the native grass mix were taking over. She’s spent a lot of time trying to control switch grass, Indian grass, and big bluestem. She now has the tall grasses pushed to the back of her lot and is waiting to see how this works.

After joining KAWO, Ruth applied for a naturalized yard permit from the City of Portage. The design included having a traditional landscape in front of her house. She was supported by her neighbors, but was opposed by the developer because of concerns over attracting homebuyers to an area that looked unkempt. The permit was eventually granted with the proviso that Ruth put lawn around her rain garden.

After removing many honeysuckle bushes over three or four years, Ruth started reclaiming her woodland. It’s now expanded and matured to where the established sections require little care. Ruth uses native plants for other uses, too. She holds a rock wall in place with little bluestem, and covers a pergola with Virginia creeper and wild grape. Ruth likes to experiment, and is still learning what she can and cannot reasonably do while surrounded by invasive plants.

Altogether, in her rain garden, prairie garden, and woodland garden, Ruth has more than 100 species of forbs, grasses, sedges, vines and shrubs. Her favorite plants are cardinal flower, butterfly weed, and bloodroot. Over the years, the wildlife has

settled back into her yard. She regularly sees deer grazing in her yard, and has tree swallows and bluebirds in her nesting boxes.

The Church's Mission of Caring for Creation

The Skyridge Church of the Brethren established its Wildlife Gardens in keeping with the mission of caring for creation cooperatively with mother nature. The Rain Garden reduces unsustainable lawn space and boosts biodiversity through native vegetation. Drought-tolerant plants reduce the need for irrigation in the upland areas. Native plants create a more porous soil structure through their deep rooting and filter run-off water, thus improving the watershed and downstream water quality. Skyridge Wildlife Garden demonstrates the beauty and ecology of native Michigan plants and wildlife by offering foraging and nesting sites for native pollinators and songbirds. Amidst our busy lives, it provides a quiet retreat for relaxation and contemplation for congregants and the neighborhood.

The Skyridge Wildlife Garden project was made possible by a generous grant from The Calhoun County Conservation District as well as other private donations. It was installed with advice and collaboration from the Kalamazoo chapter of Wild Ones, Monarch Watch, and Michigan State University's Master Gardener Volunteer Program. We sincerely thank our partners for their continued advice and support. Skyridge Wildlife Garden is a designated Monarch way-station and registered with the USDA People's Garden Network.

The field trip begins at 10 a.m. at the home of Diane and Rick Oakes; we'll be at the home of Ruth Caputo by around 11 a.m. and arrive at the Skyridge Church of the Brethren around noon. See above for addresses.

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Fall Plant Exchange Comes Early This Year, Sept. 6; Start Thinning Out Those Rambunctious Natives Now

The Wild Ones fall plant exchange, on **Sunday, September 6, from 1 to 5 p.m.**, will offer numerous plants from Tom and Ruth's gardens, as well as plants brought by other Wild Ones members and supporters. In keeping with the principles we've always emphasized, it's not necessary to bring a plant in order to take one; and no plants will be for sale.

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

There will be refreshments, and the house will be open for rest, conversation, and shelter in the event of rain. As always, we proceed, rain or shine.

Kathy McGoff and the Hospitality Committee will appreciate your bringing snacks to supplement what they provide. We'll all appreciate your help **and your snacks.**

Tom and Ruth and Eli Lowry, a student at Western, have been working diligently to make the yard and gardens more accessible and inviting for the public, and they've been adding new plantings and signage. They're excited by what they're achieving this summer and would love to show you around. As usual, there will be a Life-Cairn ceremony at about 3 p.m. Bring a special stone to add to the cairn.

The location is 2502 Waite Ave., one block west of Oakland Drive and one block south of Winchell. We'll block off some space near the driveway so that you can drive up to drop off or pick up plants; but you may have to park some distance from the house.

Several members of Wild Ones will be available throughout the afternoon to answer questions and to help people set out the plants they bring and to choose appropriate plants to take home.

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Join Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones for Good Company, Wine, Cheese, and Live Jazz at September Fundraiser at Treecology Nursery; Help Support Wild Ones Projects

KALAMAZOO WILD ONES PRESENTS A WINE AND CHEESE FUND RAISER. Join us for a summer afternoon of *good company, good wine and live jazz* at Mike and Cathy McMinn's beautiful forty-acre site. Enjoy sweeping meadow views from the deck of their restored barn, or take a stroll through the quiet woods on this pristine property located in southern Barry County. Your donation will help Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones continue bringing projects and programs that enrich our area.



- Saturday, September 19, from 4 to 6 p.m. Rain or Shine.
- Treecology Nursery, 9167 Guernsey Lake Rd., Delton, Michigan.
- Suggested donation \$25.
- **Carpooling** at the Meijer's on Gull Road near Sprinkle. (Meet in the parking lot outside the fenced-in garden center at the northeast corner of the lot. Departure at 3:30 p.m.)

Please R.S.V.P. to Cathy McMinn at **269-623-5715** or cmcminn@mei.net.

Directions from Kalamazoo: 1. Take M-43/Gull Road to Richland (8 miles) 2. Turn left at light onto M-43E/N 32nd Street (2.4 miles) 3. M-43 takes a sharp right at this point. Stay to the left and go straight onto Lockshore Rd./32nd Street. Continue onto Lockshore Rd. (2.5 miles) 4. Turn left onto Milo Road/S. Norris Road (4.5 miles) 5. Turn left at 4-way stop in Prairieville staying on S. Norris Rd (3 miles) 6. Turn left onto Guernsey Lake Rd. **Treecology Nursery** is 2nd drive on your left.

OR: From US-131 North

1. Take exit 49A to merge onto M-89E/W Allegan St. toward Plainwell (1.1 miles) 2. Turn left onto N. Main St. (1.5 miles) 3. Turn right onto 106th Ave/Marsh Rd (5.5 miles) 4. Turn right onto Pine Rd (0.6 miles) 5. Turn left onto Pine Lake Rd (4.8 miles) 6. Turn left onto S. Norris Rd. (2.7 miles) 7. Turn left onto Guernsey Lake Rd. **Treecology Nursery** is 2nd drive on your left.

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***Kalamazoo Wild Ones and Nature Center Present
Conference on “Pollinators: Perils and Possibilities”
Saturday, October 10, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at KNC***

Kalamazoo Wild Ones and the Kalamazoo Nature Center will present an all-star lineup of experts on the vanishing and threatened pollinators of our native plants and food crops, and what we can all do to help.

The conference will be held at the Nature Center Saturday, October 10, beginning with registration and coffee at 8:30 a.m. and ending with a reception at 4 p.m.

The keynote speaker, Heather Holm, is the author of *Pollinators of Native Plants*. Other speakers in the morning’s program include Lisa Williams, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Jason Gibbs, MSU, on bee responses to pesticides and to habitat enhancement.

The afternoon’s programs will include field trips and workshops with Heather Holm and local experts on vegetable farming with pollinators, bee identification, gardening for pollinators, bee hotels and habitats, and the importance of tree species for bees.

Registration fee is \$15 for both KNC and Wild Ones members, \$20 for non-members. Lunch and morning refreshments are included. For more information and to register, go to <https://naturecenter.thankyou4caring.org/pollinators>.

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Our Vanishing Soil Communities

Wild Ones Adds Extra October Program by Mike Klug to Observe UN’s International Year of Soils

Because soil degradation has become such a serious problem internationally and locally and because Stewardship of the Land, our theme for this year’s

programs, must begin with care of the soil, Kalamazoo Wild Ones has added an extra program for October, "Our Vanishing Soil Communities," with microbial ecologist Dr. Mike Klug.

Billions of diverse organisms live and interact within communities beneath the surface of soil. They form complex food webs which provide sustained resources for above-ground plants and animals. Unfortunately, the old adage 'out of sight, out of mind' applies to these communities, and we have lost concern for their viability and functions.

This has raised serious concerns internationally and has led the United Nations to declare 2015 as the International Year of Soils. Its purpose is to raise awareness of the impact of soil degradation on the long term ability of soils to support food production.

Mike will focus on the nature of soil communities, the interactions within these communities, and how they contribute to the structure and function of soils.

He will also discuss how human activities in the past 100 years have impacted soil communities and how we can minimize these impacts in the future.



"Our Vanishing Soil Communities" will be on Wednesday, October 28, at 7 p.m. at the **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 2208 Winchell Ave.** This program will be in addition to the previously announced October 10 conference on Pollinators.

Mike Klug was born and educated in the mid-West. He joined the faculty in the Michigan State University Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics and the Kellogg Biological Station (KBS) in 1971. His home base was at KBS, where he served as a faculty member and later as its resident Director until 2004.

Mike's research focused on microbial and microbial-invertebrate interactions involved in organic-matter decomposition. He explored diverse habitats ranging from fresh water and marine systems to agricultural soils. He often was associated with large multidisciplinary teams during these explorations. A central goal of this research was to determine common roles shared by organisms within these varied systems.

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Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones Plant Sale a Great Success!

The conditions could not have been better on May 23rd for our native plant sale at the Peoples Food Co-op. We had a great turnout from people seeking Michigan native plants that are pollinator friendly and pesticide free. This year we made \$1,669 that will be used to continue our many projects and programs.

Wild Ones would like to thank our generous sponsors: Kalamazoo Nature Center, Geum Services, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, Kalamazoo Farmers Market, and Michigan Wildflower Farm. We also thank everyone who helped with the sale and all the many new and old friends who bought native plants. You all contributed greatly to our success.

Watch for our **third annual plant sale next year** on the Saturday of Memorial weekend. Get all your native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and trees in one convenient place. And shop the People's Food Co-op at the same time.

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A Call For Help with the Wild Ones Web Page

Wild Ones is looking for someone to help keep up our web page. Vicki Berglund, who has done this for several years, is not able to continue. If you can help or know of someone who can, please contact Dave Wendling. We'd like, of course, to have a volunteer, but Wild Ones would be willing to pay for help if necessary. Dave Wendling, 269-624-6946 or davewendling47@gmail.com.

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Quotation for Contemplation

To seek only a technical remedy to each environmental problem which comes up is to separate what is in reality interconnected and to mask the true and deepest problems of the global system . . . All of this shows the urgent need for us to move forward in a bold cultural revolution . . . Nobody is suggesting a return to the Stone Age, but we do need to slow down and look at reality in a different way, to appropriate the positive and sustainable progress which has been made, but also to recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur.

--Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* on Care for Our Common Home

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Events Cancellation Policy

If the weather is questionable and you're wondering whether a Wild Ones indoor program is canceled, please watch WWMT Channel 3 for a cancellation announcement of our program. If time permits, an e-mail cancellation notice will also be sent to you if you are a member. Field trips and plant exchanges are held rain or shine and canceled only in severe weather.

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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, 2015**, will come early in October. **Deadline for submission is Friday, Sept. 25, 2015.** 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