

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

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

--Aldo Leopold

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**WMU's Backyard and Yours**

***Old Friend and Mentor Steve Keto Returns for April's  
Program to Tell Us about Connectivity and Conductivity***

On Wednesday, April 23, for the last Wild Ones indoor program until this fall, Steve Keto, Natural Areas Manager for WMU, will give us an overview of our own backyards as they relate to and connect with local natural areas, preserves, and WMU's own "backyards."

Steve reports that he's in the early stages of understanding how WMU fits in to the habitat corridors and connections of Southwest Michigan.

"I am working," he reports, "with a wonderful student, Kevin Jacob Foust, who is doing interesting work with land use and maps. I'm trying to understand how the remaining open space on campus functions for plants and animals as connections to water, feeding, nesting, and winter habitat. How do we enhance these connections so as to insure *Conductivity*, which requires sufficient space, connectivity, and regeneration of natural process and function, so that species and ecological communities can self-adapt to changing climates and conditions? It's an art, and we must learn how to practice it.



"We have severely fragmented our natural ecosystem in the past, with no regard for the effect this has on dispersal and survival of native populations. Too often we dismiss small pockets of natural areas as unproductive, but if we can find ways to connect

these spaces and put together habitat to meet the needs of native plants and animals, we can maintain viable populations locally.

“I want to understand how the remaining areas can be reconnected. What can we protect, enhance or create to piece together some sort of functioning ecosystem? In my role as Natural Areas Manager, I want to make my properties as ecologically healthy and productive as possible (regardless of size). This is a tall order, and my goal is to start this discussion with Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones, not present some definitive solution. You can help me to gather ideas and insights. You will be my Beta test for this idea.

*“Let’s explore, together, how Wild Ones can be better partners with each other and with the University in enhancing habitat connectivity and conductivity.”*

Steve graduated from MSU with a M.S. degree in Poultry Science and B.S. degrees in Wildlife Management and Animal Science. As owner of Nesta Prairie Nursery, he was for 20 years a major propagator of native plants for the Kalamazoo area and for the entire state. He is now the Natural Areas Manager for WMU’s Landscape Services Department. In 2013 he was given one of WMU’s *Make a Difference* awards, for outstanding accomplishments and daily investment of energy and creativity.

Those of us who saw Steve Keto’s program at the Wildflower Association of Michigan’s conference early last month will testify that Steve is, in a word, *dynamic*! He packs so much energy, enthusiasm and expertise into an hour that time just can’t keep up with him. Steve has made a difference for native plants and for Wild Ones. His program on April 23 will make a difference for our work and for the landscape of our area.

**As usual, the program will be at First United Methodist, 212 So. Park, in downtown Kalamazoo. Refreshments & socializing at 6:30; program begins promptly at 7 p.m. Please consider bringing some snacks to help our Hospitality Committee.**

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## ***Other Programs and Events of Interest to Wild Ones***

**Monday, April 28, 7:30 p.m.**

**Lessons from the Passenger Pigeon, with naturalist and author Joel Greenberg**

A program of the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo  
People’s Church, 1758 N. 10<sup>th</sup> St., Kalamazoo

The passenger pigeon officially became extinct on September 1, 1914. On that day a lonely pigeon named Martha died at the Cincinnati Zoo, the last of her kind. She now stands mounted in the Smithsonian Natural History Museum in Washington, D.C., a symbol for humankind that it is possible for a species numbering in the billions to be wiped out in less than a century. People continue to marvel at how quickly the bird was exterminated when it was so prevalent as to darken the sky for hours



when flocks flew over and to topple large trees from the weight of so many roosting and nesting at one time.

Joel Greenberg will touch on the many reasons for the disaster, what the human race has learned from that extinction, and how best to prevent these types of species eradications. He is currently a research associate with both the Chicago Academy of Sciences Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum and the Chicago Field Museum. He's the author of four books, his latest published in late 2013, *A Feathered River Across the Sky: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction*.

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**Sunday, May 18, 1 to 5 p.m.**

**22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Wild Ones Spring Native-Plant Exchange**

Tom and Ruth's house and gardens, 2502 Waite Ave., Kalamazoo

BRING EXTRA PLANTS AND FIND NEW PLANTS, experts to learn from, and beginners to share your enthusiasm and knowledge with. Enjoy good company and excellent refreshments from our Hospitality Committee. If you have no plants to exchange, just bring yourself or bring some refreshment to share.

Even if you do bring plants, please consider bringing some snacks to share as well.

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**Saturday, May 24, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**First Annual Kalamazoo Wild Ones Native-Plant Sale**

People's Food Co-op, 507 Harrison, Kalamazoo

Locally grown, nursery quality native plants: individual plants, "garden samplers," shrubs, trees. See the chapter's web site for details: [www.kalamazoowildones.org](http://www.kalamazoowildones.org).

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***Join Contemplation & Action for Monarchs & Other Imperiled Pollinators April 14, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Rachel Carson's Death***

An interfaith organization, Make Way for Monarchs, has called for a day of contemplation and action on behalf of monarch butterflies and the many other imperiled pollinators. The observation, in whatever way individuals, organizations, and communities determine, will be from dusk on April 13 (Palm Sunday) to dusk on April 14, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rachel Carson's death.

Through her landmark book *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson was among the first to alert the American public to the risks which neglectful, untargeted or excessive uses of pesticides and herbicides may pose for pollinators such as monarch butterflies and bees. Other factors—from climate



Rachel Carson

change to habitat fragmentation to diseases and pests—are also affecting the health and abundance of butterflies and bees. Now is the time for Americans to show love for and commitment to the pollinators which are essential not only to our own food system but to the well-being and diversity of all creatures.

For more information and a good essay, “Metamorphosis,” by Gary Paul Nabham, ethnobotanist and co-author with Stephen Buchmann of *The Forgotten Pollinators*, go to <http://makewayformonarchs.org/i/archives/695>. For more detailed discussion of the monarch population status, please visit <http://monarchwatch.org/blog/>

### **Migratory Monarchs, the “Canary in the Cornfield”**

Staying in one place for many generations makes the butterflies more susceptible to the deadly *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* parasite. According to Lincoln Brower, a biologist at Sweet Briar College in Virginia, the “insidious disease” spreads when infected butterflies scatter spores on milkweed plants, which are then ingested by the next generation of caterpillars. If fewer butterflies migrate to Mexico, he says, the proportion of infected monarchs across North America may increase, imperiling the whole population.

Although the monarch lives all over the world and is not at risk of extinction, an end to the North American migration would likely endanger central Mexico’s pine and oyamel fir forests. The butterfly provides an economic incentive to protect the unique alpine ecosystem. If the migration stops, “people are not going to benefit from the tourism and the forest is not going to be protected.”

The monarch may also be the first sign that food webs in the U.S. Midwest are being irrevocably disrupted as a side effect of widespread planting of herbicide-tolerant crops, Brower says. Monarchs, he says, are “the canary in the cornfield.”

--from *Science Now*, 29 January 2014

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## ***Quotations for Contemplation***

“All worthy things that are in peril, as the world now stands, those are my care.”  
—Gandalf, in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*

Do what is good for life; trust it will be good for us.

—Janine Benyus, author of *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature*,  
and recipient of the Rachel Carson Environmental Ethics Award

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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 **May-June**, will come early in May. **Deadline for submission is Monday, April 28, 2014.** Please send submissions, comments, and suggestions to Tom at [yard2prairie@gmail.com](mailto:yard2prairie@gmail.com).

For more information and news, check us out at

[www.kalamazoowildones.org](http://www.kalamazoowildones.org) and [www.facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes](http://www.facebook.com/KalamazooAreaWildOnes)