

**SEEDLINGS, the Newsletter
of Kalamazoo Area WILD ONES,
Native Plants, Natural Landscapes
August-September Supplement**

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REMINDERS, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, & NEWS

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- ↳ Fall Wild Ones **Plant Exchange** Comes Early This Year, Aug. 29
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**August Brings Visits to Rural Yards
of Long-Time Wild Ones Members**

On Saturday, August 21, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Kalamazoo Wild Ones will visit two rural native-plant restorations at the homes of Wild Ones **Ilse Gebhard** and **Russ Schipper** and **Becky and Kalman Csia**, both quite nearby in northwestern Kalamazoo County. As usual, rain showers don't deter us. Only if it pours down cattails and dogwoods, with thunder and lightning, do we cancel.

We'll begin at 10 a.m. at **Ilse and Russ's, 6450 N. 2nd St.**, where there are both a variety of plantings around the house and a large 55-acre prairie planting, the Sand Creek Preserve, which they established on an old field adjoining their home property and which is now a Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy preserve.

Ilse reports that every year they replace more and more of their former lawn with rather wild areas of native plants, including a tall-grass prairie planting and a short-grass one. There's a native-fern bed and several areas of shade-loving plants. Wetland plants are growing along the edge of Sand Creek and the pond, close by the house. This variety of native plants provides habitat for many insect species, which therefore attract more birds.

If there's time we might take a brief look across the creek at the Sand Creek Preserve prairie planting. For a longer look at the preserve, join the **Michigan Botanical Club** field trip on Saturday, August 28th.

Then, at about 11:30, we'll backtrack a bit to **Becky and Kalman's, 2831 N. 2nd St.** According to presettlement surveys, the 10-acre Csia property was once part of a sandy black-oak barrens, remnants of which still existed when Kalman and Becky moved there 13 years ago. Since then, they've been working to transform a former pasture with scattered oaks & pines into a wildflower meadow featuring wild lupine, goat's rue, leadplant, blazing star, butterfly weed and three kinds of coreopsis. We'll

see gardens near the house and then walk the meadow (on paths) as they describe their management objectives, techniques and challenges in their ongoing efforts to protect and restore plants associated with sandy oak-dominated communities. Becky promises water, lemonade, and cookies.

DIRECTIONS TO ILSE AND RUSS'S: Drive west on M-43 (West Main) past US-131 until you get to 2nd St. Turn right (north) and go about four miles. There's a slight jog in the road at G Ave., but keep going north on 2nd past FG Ave. on the right. The driveway is the last one **on the right** just before you get to EF Ave. (which goes off to the left). There are two driveways next to each other; take the second one (furthest north). The house is not visible from the road. Number (6450) is by the driveway.

DIRECTIONS TO BECKY AND KALMAN'S: From Russ and Ilse's, return south on 2nd St. About 0.3 of a mile south of H Ave., turn right into the driveway at 2831, marked by little orange flags. If you're joining the tour at 11:30, without first going to Russ and Ilse's, take M-43 west, go about 1.7 miles north on 2nd St., and turn **left** into the driveway shortly after you pass J Ave. There will be little orange flags by the driveway.

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SUNDAY, AUG. 29, 1 to 5 p.m.

Fall Wild Ones Native Plant & Seed Exchange

At the home of Tom Small, 2502 Waite Ave., Kalamazoo

Strictly an exchange, not a sale; but you need not bring plants in order to take plants home. Please bring **only plants native to Michigan**, carefully dug up, **potted**, and labeled. If in doubt about what's native, e-mail Tom at yard2prairy@aol.com, or call 269-381-4946.

It's a social as well as an environmental gathering. Come and stay for the afternoon, to celebrate the season of harvest and completions:

Where are the songs of spring? Aye, where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too—

—John Keats, "Ode to Autumn"

There will be refreshments, and should you be moved to bring some refreshment in addition to or instead of plants, we would be grateful. Whether you bring something or not, please bring yourself. You will be welcome.

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Wild Ones Visit the Bow in the Clouds

Preserve in September with Nate Fuller

Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones final field trip of the season, Saturday, Sept. 11, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., will take us to a nearby nature preserve that has long been under the care of the Sisters of St. Joseph at Nazareth on Gull Road, and is now under the care of the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy. Our leader will be **Nate Fuller**, Conservation and Stewardship Director for SWMLC.

Although located within the Kalamazoo city limits, the 60-acre Bow in the Clouds Preserve has many wild corners. There's an extensive boardwalk system - approximately 1000 feet - which traverses a pristine stream and wetland.

Sister Virginia "Ginny" Jones, of the Sisters of St. Joseph, has been the preserve's lead caretaker for most of 40 years, and she views the boardwalk as a rare concession to the forces of development. She'd much rather see Bow in the Clouds become an increasingly wild and even sacrosanct place. "Managing a preserve doesn't mean that you go around and whack everything with a machete," Sr. Ginny said. "That's not the kind of consciousness, or energy, that governs this place. We want to be part of nature, not masters of it."

The name Bow in the Clouds comes from the Bible (Genesis 9:13) where God set a "bow in the clouds" as a sign of the new covenant between Him and the earth. The preserve property was once part of the Nazareth College campus, a Catholic liberal arts school that closed in the early 1990s.

"When the Sisters of St. Joseph first acquired this land in the early 1900s, it was farm country," Sr. Ginny said. "This place got us through the Depression. The sisters didn't have much money, but the farm provided food and work for us and several local families."

As Nazareth College modernized after World War II and the agricultural operations faded away, the hillsides reverted to woods and the pastures to native wetland. From the beginnings of this reversion to wildness, Sr. Ginny would go on to help write a new chapter in the land's history. Arriving here in 1968, a 24-year-old, fresh from doctoral studies in botany at Michigan State University, she taught environmental science at Nazareth. It was a heady time to be a young nun and an environmentalist; the church's Second Vatican Council had ushered in a host of reforms for Catholic clergy and lay people alike. The Sisters of St. Joseph had broadened their ministry to include a host of new social concerns, including the environment.

"We began to make a clearer connection between faith and caring for creation," Sr. Ginny said. The Sisters dedicated Bow in the Clouds as an environmental preserve in 1973. As a teacher, Sr. Ginny used the preserve as a hands-on science classroom. Now, through the Transformations Spirituality Center at Nazareth, which she helped to establish, Sr. Ginny leads activities that draw on a wide range of faith traditions.

Eventually, Bow in the Clouds was donated to Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy in 2007, in order to insure its care and preservation in perpetuity. "We want the public to use it for what we call 're-creation,'" said Sr. Ginny. "We know many people today are separated from religious tradition, and we respect that. We also know that before formal religion existed, people encountered something of the

holy in the natural world. And that something - that peace, solitude and wisdom - is what we believe people can still find here."

Nate Fuller joined SWMLC as its first Stewardship Specialist in the summer of 2001. Nate received his B.S. in Biology from Northland College, an environmental liberal arts college in Ashland, Wisconsin. He worked for several years as a naturalist and volunteer coordinator for Sarett Nature Center in Benton Harbor. He has also worked in Chicago as an education program coordinator for The Nature Conservancy. He currently lives in Kalamazoo with his wife Erin and son Theo.

DIRECTIONS: Bow in the Clouds is at the northern end of the Nazareth Campus of the Sisters of St. Joseph, on Gull Road (M-43). Just before the stoplight at Nazareth Road, turn left into the entrance flanked by stone walls and pillars. Paul Olexia suggests that we gather behind (north of) the main building that you approach after entering. Turn left (west) to go around the main building and the Spirituality Center, then turn right (north), and go around behind the main building.

We're indebted for much of the preceding information to Tom Springer's article in the SWMLC Newsletter, Autumn, 2007. Tom's recent book, *Looking for Hickories: The Forgotten Wilderness of the Rural Midwest* (Univ. of Michigan Press, 2008), is a fine collection of essays, with illustrations by Lad Hanka.

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News of the Earth—Far Off and VERY NEAR

from **Earth Equity News**, compiled by the Climate Crisis Coalition (climatecrisiscoalition.org)

The Himalaya's Melting Glaciers

By David Breashears, YaleEnviro360, July 15, 2010.

For those who know the Himalaya well -- I have climbed to the summit of Mount Everest five times in the past three decades -- the warming of this great mountain chain is something that we have come to experience personally. The Sherpas who live atop 'the roof of the world' and the climbers who often return are acutely aware of how much temperatures have risen at high altitudes in recent years, and how extensively the snow and ice on the massive Himalayan glaciers has thinned and retreated. But it wasn't until I went back to Everest as part of a documentary for the PBS series, **Frontline**, that I fully grasped the magnitude of the melting in this region, often called 'The Third Pole' because of the massive volumes of ice in the Himalaya and the Tibetan Plateau.

Gazing at Italian photographer Vittorio Sella's 1899 picture of the Jannu Glacier in Nepal — a huge ice tongue filling a valley — and then comparing it to my 2009 photo, in which the glacier has disappeared, creates a profound sense of unease.

And we should be uneasy. The loss of these frozen reservoirs of water will have a huge impact, as the glaciers provide seasonal flows to nearly every major river system in Asia. From the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra in South Asia, to the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers in China, hundreds of millions of people are partially dependent on this vast arc of high-altitude glaciers for water. As the glaciers recede and release stored water, flows will temporarily increase. But once these ice reservoirs are spent, the water supply for a sprawling, overpopulated continent will be threatened, and the impacts on water resources and food security could be dire.

Moscow Swelters. Reuters, July 26, 2010. On July 26, Moscow sweltered through its hottest day since records began 130 years ago, as temperatures hit 37.4 degrees Celsius (99.3 degrees Fahrenheit), sparking peat fires that blanketed the city in smog. A heatwave has engulfed central parts of European Russia, and Siberia since June, destroying crops covering an area the size of Portugal.

And the Heat Goes On, Assaulting Much of the Nation. From New York to Georgia, and through the Great Plains, the heat this spring and summer has been relentless. The stifling heat seems to be part of a global trend. So far, 2010 is on track to overtake 2005 as the warmest year ever recorded for the planet.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the planet has just come through the warmest decade, the warmest 12 months, the warmest six months, and the warmest April, May, and June on record.

Nine nations have so far set their all-time temperature records in 2010, including Russia (111 degrees), Niger (118), Sudan (121), Saudi Arabia and Iraq (126 apiece), and Pakistan, which also set the new all-time Asia record in May: a hair under 130 degrees.

Warmer seawater has reduced phytoplankton, the base of the marine food chain, by 40% since 1950, according to a new study from Canadian researchers.

Despite their tiny size, plant plankton found in the world's oceans are crucial to much of life on Earth. And they are declining sharply.

Worldwide phytoplankton levels are down 40 percent since the 1950s, according to a new study published in the journal **Nature**. The likely cause is global warming, which makes it hard for the plant plankton to get vital nutrients, researchers say. The decline also matches other global warming trends, with the biggest effects at the poles and around the equator.

The numbers are both staggering and disturbing, say the Canadian scientists who did the study and a top U.S. government scientist.

"It's concerning because phytoplankton is the basic currency for everything going on in the ocean," said Dalhousie University biology professor Boris Worm, a study co-author. "It's almost like a recession ... that has been going on for decades."

Plant plankton levels in nearly all of the world's oceans started to drop in the 1950s. The biggest changes are in the Arctic, southern and equatorial Atlantic, and equatorial Pacific oceans. Only the Indian Ocean is not showing a decline. The study's authors said it's too early to say that plant plankton is on the verge of vanishing.

According to Virginia Burkett, the chief climate-change scientist for U.S. Geological Survey, "These tiny species are indicating that large-scale changes in the ocean are affecting the primary productivity of the planet."

When plant plankton plummet, sea birds and marine mammals starve and die in huge numbers, experts said.

"Phytoplankton ultimately affects all of us in our daily lives," said lead author Daniel Boyce, also of Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. "Much of the oxygen in our atmosphere today was produced by phytoplankton or phytoplankton precursors over the past 2 billion years."

Plant plankton — some of them visible, some microscopic — help keep Earth cool. They take carbon dioxide — the key greenhouse gas — out of the air to keep the world from getting even warmer.

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EVENTS OF INTEREST, HERE AT HOME

SATURDAY, AUG. 14, noon to 10 p.m.

First Annual Water Festival

Arcadia Creek Festival Site

Sponsored by Kalamazoo River Watershed Council; co-sponsored by many organizations, including **Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones**.

Music all day, exhibitors, food, festivity, family activities. Celebrate water. Learn about local waterways and watersheds, local and global water problems and crises, **including the Kalamazoo River oil spill**, how these crises affect you and how you can help.

Free admission during the day; admission charge in the evening. Beer and wine available during the evening hours.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 19, 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Southwest Michigan Harvest Festival

Tillers International, Scotts, Michigan

Featured presenter this year is Richard Heinberg, speaking on Sustainability: How to Make the Transition. Heinberg is the author of nine influential books, including **The Party's Over** and **Peak Everything: Waking Up to the Century of Declines.**

Good music, programs, growers & vendors, food, family tent for youngsters, and activities for the whole family.

Exhibitors include farmers, artisans, eco-villagers, sustainability and natural wellness experts, and **Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones.**

More information & directions: www.tillersinternational.org

TUESDAY, SEPT. 21, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Michigan Prairies

A program by Dr. Doug Landis, Professor of Entomology, MSU
Kellogg Biological Station
Academic Center Auditorium, 3700 Gull Lake Drive
Hickory Corners, MI 49060

For directions: www.kbs.msu.edu

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SEEDLINGS is edited by Tom Small and appears five times a year. The next regular issue, for October/November, will come early in October; **deadline for submission is Thursday, September 30.**