

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

Supplement—August, 2011—Contents

- ***AUGUST FIELD TRIP to Ft. Custer Military Reservation***
Please Note: PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED
 - ***REGISTRATION OPENS AUG. 15 for Wild Ones/Kalamazoo Nature
Center/Notebaert Nature Museum***
Conference at KNC Sept. 17.
 - ***Wild Ones FALL PLANT EXCHANGE Sunday, Sept. 11, 1-5.***
 - ***Volunteers Needed for September Events***
 - ***D.C. Protests Against Tar Sands Development and Keystone XL Pipeline Aug.
20 to Sept. 2.***
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***Wild Ones Journey to Ft. Custer Aug. 20 to View
Diverse Natural Areas & Ecosystem Restorations***

***[PLEASE NOTE: So far, there are only five pre-registrations for this
outstanding opportunity to view important restorations and ecosystem remnants
on a limited-access military base. Many Wild Ones enjoyed our field trip to Ft.
Custer in 2003, and a great deal of interesting work has been done since then.
Don't miss this trip. Please sign up by August 15.]***

***Our August field trip will take us to the Ft. Custer Military Reservation, a
very rich natural area with many possibilities for viewing. Our co-leaders will be
Tyler Bassett, who has done plant inventories and restoration work at the training
center, and Michele Richards, the Natural Resources Specialist for Ft. Custer.***

***There are oak-barren remnants, quite rare in Michigan, and behind some of
the firing ranges there are lovely fens with associated hardwood wetlands
transitioning into upland forest. One area offers mesic prairie, prairie barrens,
and prairie fen "in one fell swoop," according to Michele. What we see will
depend partly on whether any firing ranges are being used on the day of the trip.***

The former tank range, a 240-acre clearcut, is being restored to prairie, and Michele can show us the processes involved, with both the setbacks and the successes.

This is the first Wild Ones visit to Ft. Custer since September of 2003, when Tyler was also co-leader for the field trip and just before Michele took over as the Natural Resources Specialist. Much has changed since that time, with extensive work on natural-area restoration. The trip is a follow-up to Michele's program for Wild Ones this past March on "Ecosystem Restoration on Disturbed Land," and also allows us to compare the ecosystem remnants and restorations at Custer with the virgin and very diverse Biasecker Prairie in northern Indiana that Chad Hughson took us to in July.

Although regulations are more relaxed now than they were in 2003, you must pre-register for this trip. Send names to Tom at yard2prairy@gmail.com, or drop a card to Wild Ones, P.O. Box 20324, Kalamazoo 49019. We'd like to have a complete list to forward to Michele by Monday, August 15. (Michele does indicate that some late additions would be possible; but you can't just show up at the gate and expect to get in.)

We'll carpool from the lot at Oakland Drive and I-94, with departure at 9:30 a.m. Please don't drive independently; we need to arrive together, with as few cars as possible. Michele will meet us at the gate to escort us in.

Michele Richards has immersed herself in the ecological restoration of Ft. Custer Training Center as a Natural Resources Specialist for almost eight years. For this and many other efforts at the Fort, she and her coworkers have received top honors through the Department of Defense and the State of Michigan over the years. Currently Michele serves as the Chair of the Michigan Prescribed Fire Council, and works with and for a broad range of environmental organizations. She serves on the Environmental Concerns Committee for the City of Kalamazoo. Michele has a BS in Earth Science and Environmental Studies from WMU, as well as a deeply satisfying job raising two lovely daughters.

Tyler Bassett, a long-time member of Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones and a leader for us of many field trips, has worked professionally for several years in ecosystem restoration and in doing native-plant inventories on both public and private properties. He's currently studying for a Ph.D. in ecological restoration at Michigan State University.

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Saturday, September 17, 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m.

***“CONSERVATION TO EDUCATION:
MAKING THE LOCAL CONNECTIONS”***

An Important Conference at Kalamazoo Nature Center

Robert Michael Pyle will be the keynote speaker at an all-day conference Saturday, Sept. 17, at the Kalamazoo Nature Center. The special event, co-sponsored by Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones, the Nature Center’s Terry Todd Speaker Series, and the Chicago Academy of Science’s Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, will gather local and regional authorities on butterfly and habitat conservation and on involvement of youth in the experience and conservation of nature. Many of the afternoon sessions will be of special interest to teachers and parents.

[ON-LINE REGISTRATION FOR THIS CONFERENCE WILL OPEN AUGUST 15 at www.naturecenter.org. The conference is free, but pre-registration is required. Space is limited, so register early.]

Theme for the conference will be “Conservation to Education—Making the Local Connections.” Topics will include pollinator habitat and conservation, the relation between pollinator and plant communities, the relations between classroom education and engagement with nature, the Leave No Child Inside Movement, and opportunities for citizen science.

*Robert Michael Pyle, an internationally recognized authority on butterflies and founder of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, is the author of 15 books, including *The Audubon Field Guide to North American Butterflies*; *The Thunder Tree: Lessons from an Urban Wildland*; and *Mariposa Road*, the narrative of his cross-country “Butterfly Big Year,” an attempt to see, in one year, every single one of the 800 butterfly species native to North America.*

*He’s also authored many hundreds of articles, poems, and stories in magazines and journals. His column, “The Tangled Bank,” featured in *Orion*, has expressed the wide range of his interests: *Nature Deficit Disorder* in both children and adults; the debilitating influence of electronic media and communication; the nature of true community; the moral dilemmas involved in conflict between the desire to conserve life and the need to take life in order to live; and the need for citizens to “re-invent” themselves, in the manner of Henry David Thoreau, as true amateurs, lovers of nature, and “overseers of butterflies.”*

The full day of events at the conference will begin with Pyle's keynote address, followed by a panel discussion, then a break for lunch, with six afternoon break-out sessions, in two parallel tracks of three sessions each, on "Education" and "Conservation." The Nature Center staff has chosen to organize the conference on the model that Nancy Small and Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones developed for the very successful Doug Tallamy conference at the Nature Center in 2008.

Special guest speakers will include Jennifer Hopwood, Midwest Coordinator of Pollinator Education and Conservation for the Xerces Society; Matthew Douglas, author of Butterflies of the Great Lakes Region; Douglas Taron and Vincent Olivares, authorities on butterflies and educational projects from Chicago's Notebaert Nature Museum. Local educators, research scientists, and activists will also be panelists and workshop leaders. Whether you're a teacher or an activist or both, there will be many speakers and events to engage you, with ample opportunity for interaction.

The conference will be free, except for the lunch, but pre-registration is required, beginning August 15. For more information and to register, go to naturecenter.org. Space will be limited, so get yourself registered August 15 or soon thereafter.

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Wild Ones Fall Plant Exchange Coming Up Sunday, Sept. 11, 1-5 p.m. Put It on Your Calendar Now

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's place, 2502 Waite Ave. in Kalamazoo.

There will be plants available from Nancy's gardens and from some Wild Ones plant rescues this summer. There will be refreshments, socializing, and opportunities to exchange news and information as well as native plants.

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Volunteers Needed for September Events

Here's an opportunity to volunteer that won't be hard on your back or get dirt under your fingernails. And you'll have time to participate in very interesting events.

Volunteers will be needed for the conference at Kalamazoo Nature Center, Saturday, September 17, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30, to staff our table. We're also looking for table staffing at Harvest Fest the following day, Sunday, September 18, 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. There will be our typical display table and, also, a craft table in the family tent for at least a couple of hours. Please contact Judy Packard at jpackard47@gmail.com or phone 270-7702 if you're able to help us out for a couple of hours.

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Massive Rallies Against Tar Sands Ecosystem Destruction and Keystone XL Pipeline Begin Aug. 20 in D. C.

The Center for Biological Diversity and many other environmental organizations will join together in massive protests in Washington, D.C., from Aug. 20 to Sept. 2. Thousands of citizens—including Bill McKibben, Danny Glover, and NASA's Dr. James Hansen—will participate in peaceful protests at the White House.

President Barack Obama will decide as early as September whether to light a fuse to the largest carbon bomb in North America. That bomb is the massive tar sands field in the Canadian province of Alberta. And the fuse is the 1,700-mile-long Keystone XL Pipeline, which would transport the dirtiest of petroleum fuels all the way to Texas refineries. If built, the Keystone XL Pipeline would lock America into a future of planet-warming energy dependency and subject rivers, wetlands, and other sensitive habitats (including human) to disruption and the risk of pipeline ruptures and leaks.

This event could be the biggest act of civil disobedience in the climate movement's history.

For more information about the Center for Biological Diversity and about the tar sands and pipeline campaign, go to www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/public_lands/energy/dirty_energy_development/oil_shale_and_tar_sands/index.html

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SEEDLINGS is edited by Tom Small and appears five times a year. The next regular issue, for Sept.-Dec., 2011, will come early in September; deadline for submission is Friday, Aug. 26. Please send submissions, comments, and suggestions to Tom at yard2prairy@gmail.com.