



Contact information:

Katie Abbott
 Project coordinator
 (608)935-2791 ext. 134
 katie.abbott@rcdnet.net
 138 S Iowa St Ste 3
 Dodgeville, WI 53533

SW Badger RC&D
 (608)348-7110
 swbadger@swbadger.org
 www.swbadger.org

Southwest Grassland (SWGSCA) project:
 Maureen Rowe, coordinator
 608-235-5997
 maureen.rowe@wisconsin.gov
 dnr.wi.gov/org/land/facilities/
 SWGrassland

Message from the Project Coordinator

I always find essays or quotes by famous Wisconsin professor and ecologist Aldo Leopold very thought-provoking. They only seem to become more poignant as time passes. Recently I was looking through some quotes and was struck by one in particular:

“Relegating conservation to government is like relegating virtue to the Sabbath. Turns over to professionals what should be the daily work of amateurs.” -Aldo Leopold

This reinforces for me the idea that it is up to every community and landowner to take soil, water, and wildlife conservation into their own hands. This is especially true in the MRPHA, where only 150 acres of the 95,200-acre project area is currently owned by government and only 2.8% (about 2,670 acres) is open to the public. I'm very impressed by landowners' dedication, hard work, and accomplishments over the years. The partnership of non-profits and agencies is here to help inform and provide assistance, but we'd be nowhere without landowner participation. See below for a summary of 2011 accomplishments in the MRPHA, page 2 for information on a land management workshop, and page 3 for current program enrollments that can help financially. I wish all of you a happy and healthy 2012, and look forward to another year of helping landowners make progress in soil, water, and wildlife conservation.

Sincerely, -*Katie Abbott, MRPHA Project Coordinator*

Inside this issue:

Land Management Workshop	2
Conservation Programs for Farmland and Wildlife Habitat	3
Upcoming Events	3

Highlights of 2011 in the MRPHA

Two new projects in 2011 have brought the total acres protected from development in the MRPHA to over 4,700 acres. Over 1,850 acres of that are farmland easements, which allow farming but limit development, and over 2,250 acres are owned by non-profit organizations, which are open to the public for hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, and hunting.

In June partners finished up a State Wildlife Grant from the DNR. Over two years, activities and match for this grant resulted in 111 acres of prairie plantings, 123 acres of brush removal, 570 acres of invasive species control, 470 acres of prescribed burning, 4.65 miles of treeline removal, and 1,497 hours of volunteer labor.

This year I missed much of the field season while on maternity leave, but was able to help 26 landowners with program enrollments, site visits, burn plans, and management advice. In spring the 4,000 acres allotted to the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program in southwest Wisconsin was used up. While that was a great success, there were still many people interested in the program. An additional 1,000 acres was requested and approved over the summer, keeping SAFE an option for landowners.

In April I helped the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Blue Mounds Area Project, and UW Extension-Iowa County hold a free screening of two movies, *Red Gold* and *Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time* at the Mineral Point Opera House that over 200 people attended. In October I helped UW Extension-Iowa County and Iowa County Recreation and Prairie Restoration hold a Conservation Field Day for 120 6th grade students at the Iowa County Farm, a 430-acre prairie restoration west of Dodgeville. Students rotated through seven stations about conservation topics. I gave students an introduction to prairie and sent them out to explore on a scavenger hunt. A recent grant from the James E. Dutton Foundation will help the partners and I take on more fun activities in 2012, including a fall Prairie Festival. Stay tuned!



Check out our website!

www.militaryridgeprairie.org

for more about the partners, natural resources, and ways to get involved.

LAND MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Come learn from the experts about several land management issues. Three concurrent sessions will run about one hour each. Plus receive a helpful binder of resources and have the opportunity to ask questions. Planned topics include:

Prescribed fire: Fire is a great land management tool, but requires planning and training to be safe and effective. Learn some tips for using prescribed fire on your property, basics of how a prescribed burn works, and key elements of a burn plan.

Intro to prairie and grassland birds: Find out why so many conservation groups are working in this area: the rare ecosystems and species that once flourished in Wisconsin are still here, but declining. Find out how landowners can help.

Reading the Driftless Area: A handbook for landowners. Understanding the environmental and human history requires some sleuthing that bears results. The land contains clues for why some areas are problem areas and others are quality remnant habitat. Set goals and prioritize projects and/or habitat area restoration efforts as you learn to "read the landscape". Come willing and prepared to discuss issues you face on your own property.

Bring a map of
your property!

Invasive plants: Invasive plants are one of the biggest challenges landowners face. Learn about control techniques, prioritization, prevention, and CRP requirements for invasive species control.

Woody and grass biomass prospects for landowners: "Biomass" is a buzzword, but are there opportunities for landowners to get involved? Find out the latest information and what other groups in the area are doing.

Advanced land management: Do you already have a project underway or completed? Come with your questions and learn tips about adaptive management, long-term planning, monitoring, and seasonal management needs.

Saturday March 3, 2012,
8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

Iowa County Health &
Human Services building,
303 W Chapel Street,
Dodgeville, WI

Cost: \$10 per person by
February 17,
\$15 per person after Feb.
17 or at the door

Refreshments will be
provided

Questions?

Contact Katie Abbott at
(608) 935-2791 x134
katie.abbott@rcdnet.net

Brought to you by the partners of:



Land Management Workshop Registration Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone number or e-mail (will only be used for workshop purposes) _____

Number of participants: _____ x \$10 (by Feb. 17) = _____
_____ x \$15 (after Feb. 17)

Which topics are you most interested in? (Please
choose three; you will not be obligated to attend
these sessions)

- Prescribed fire
 Intro to prairie and grassland birds
 Reading the Driftless Area
 Invasive plants
 Woody and grass biomass prospects for
landowners
 Advanced land management

Make checks payable to **SW Badger RC&D**. Mail to: Katie Abbott, MRPHA, 138 S Iowa St Ste 3 Dodgeville WI 53533

Conservation Programs for Farmland and Wildlife Habitat

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance with over 85 soil, water, and wildlife conservation practices, such as nutrient management, grassed waterways, and prescribed grazing. Wildlife habitat practices are also eligible, such as brush management, prescribed burning, and prairie planting. All eligible applications will be ranked for funding. The deadline to apply is **Feb. 3, 2012**. For more information contact your local NRCS office: Iowa County, (608) 935-2791 x3; Dane County, (608) 224-3750; Green County, (608) 325-4195.

The Nature Conservancy has funding available to help a few landowners who want to establish prairie, including supplementing CRP, SAFE, or CREP plantings. The project must be 25 acres or more of a variety of flowers and grasses. Projects that are adjacent to existing grasslands/prairie are especially desired. Contact Steve Richter for more information: srichter@tnc.org or 608-577-3076.

Through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) program, the Fish and Wildlife Service will match your investment of time and/or money to help you to achieve your land management goals, including removing brush from pasture or enhancing grassland, savanna, wetland, or stream habitat. Contact Mike Engel at Mike_Engel@fws.gov or (608) 221-1206 ext. 21. More information can also be found at www.fws.gov/midwest/WisconsinPartners.

Both the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) are available for certain areas south of Highway 18. They provide cost-sharing, annual payments, and additional incentives to retire cropland and establish perennial grasses. Fields that were once in CRP are likely eligible. Sign-up is continuous. For more details contact Katie Abbott, (608) 935-2791 x134. To apply contact the Farm Services Agency: Iowa County-(608) 935-2791 x2, Dane County-(608) 224-3767, Green County,(608) 325-4195.

Upcoming Events

- **The Nature Conservancy work days: Saturdays Jan 14, Feb 11, March 10 & Monday Jan 16, 9:00 am-noon**
Activities include cutting invasive brush and weedy trees. Meet at the Hwy K parking lot south of Langberry Road.
Directions: About 0.2 miles east of Barneveld, turn south on Cty Road K. Follow K for 2 miles and turn into TNC's parking lot on the right. If you pass Prairie Grove Road, you have gone too far. Contact: Jim Lesniak, 608-576-3310.
- **The Prairie Enthusiasts work days:** Wear appropriate clothing for the weather (dress in layers). Do not wear synthetic fabrics near burn piles. Sturdy footwear and work gloves are required. Bring drinking water. For brush cutting, chainsaw operators with their own equipment are welcome, but must have safety chaps and headgear. Bring pruners or loppers if you have them. Always contact the leader before the work party to confirm the schedule and work site!
 - **Saturday January 14, 1:00-4:00 pm**, tree/brush removal and brush pile burning at Schurch-Thomson Prairie. Contact Rich Henderson at 608-845-7065.
 - **Sunday Jan 15, noon-4:00 pm**, tree/brush removal at Erbe Grassland. Contact Eric Goplin at 608-437-4879.
 - **Sunday January 22, noon-4:00 pm**, tree/brush removal at Shea Prairie. Contact Eric Preston, 608-257-1513.
 - **Saturday January 28 and Sunday February 19, 1:00- 4:00 pm**, tree/brush removal and brush pile burning at Schurch-Thomson Prairie. Contact Rich Henderson at 608-845-7065.
 - **Sunday March 4, noon-4:00 pm**, tree/brush removal at Shea Prairie. Contact Eric Preston, 608-257-1513.
- For more information and directions, visit www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/chapter/empire/workdays.html.
- **A Geologic Romp through the Driftless Area, Thursday, January 26th, 7:00-9:00 pm**
Dr. Richard Slaughter, UW Geology Museum Director, will talk about the geology of southwestern WI and what makes it so special, including rock layers, caves, fossils, and mines. Free and open to the public. *Location:* WI Geological & Natural History's Research Collections & Education Center, 211 S. Blue Mounds St. in Mt. Horeb *Directions:* Head south on Blue Mounds St. from West Main Street; it's the first building past the bike trail heading down the hill.
- **From Weeds to Wildflowers on Gobbler Ridge, Thursday, February 23rd, 7:00-9:00 pm**
Tim Eisele, outdoor writer and free-lance photographer, will use unique color photographs to show how his 100 acres in Crawford County has changed with the process of prairie restoration, including close-up photos of plants, insects, and birds. Free and open to the public. *Location:* Mt. Horeb branch of the State Bank of Cross Plains, 1740 Business Hwy 18-151 E. (Main Street) in Mt. Horeb (next to Culvers Restaurant).
- **Land Management Workshop, Saturday March 3, 8:30 am-12:30 pm** See page 2 for more details.
- **Blue Mounds Area Project Annual Meeting, Thursday, March 8th, 7:00-9:00 pm**
Mingle with BMAP members, get an update, and hear Steve Swenson, Ecologist with the Aldo Leopold Foundation. talk about their current project to connect willing landowners with Woodland Advocates (other landowners with experience) and professionals (in this case, foresters). Free and open to the public. *Location:* Mt. Horeb branch of the State Bank of Cross Plains, 1740 Business Hwy 18-151 E. (Main Street) in Mt. Horeb (next to Culvers Restaurant).
- **Introduction to Prescribed Burning, Thursday & Friday, March 29th and 30th, 8:30 am-5:30 pm**
Location: Leopold Center, Baraboo, Cost: \$100. See www.aldoleopold.org/woodlandschool/courses.shtml for more info.



138 S Iowa St Suite 3
 Dodgeville WI 53533
 Phone:(608)935-2791x134
 E-mail: katie.abbott@rcdnet.net

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Newsletter for owners of land within the Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area

The Military Ridge Prairie Heritage Area is an area of statewide and regional importance for prairie and grassland conservation, and is a priority area for a coalition of non-profit organizations and government agencies. This partnership works together and with landowners to provide habitat for rare species and maintain an economically viable agricultural landscape.

Project Coordinator Katie Abbott helps landowners within the project area (see below) get help from these organizations to manage and protect their lands. She strives to educate and empower landowners to be stewards of the natural resources in their community. Absolutely all work involving landowners and the MRPHA partnership is completely voluntary.

Inside this issue:

<i>Message from the Project Coordinator</i>	
<i>Highlights of 2011 in the MRPHA</i>	
<i>Land Management Workshop</i>	2
<i>Conservation Programs for Farmland and Wildlife Habitat</i>	3
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	3

