

The Tallgrass Journal

Goose Lake Prairie Partners, 5010 N. Jugtown Road, Morris, IL 60450

Volume 8, Issue 2

Global Care Day at Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area

A network of more than 3,000 volunteers linking around the globe from Asia to Europe to the Americas worked tirelessly for their communities on Saturday, April 9, and Morris was one of the



those communities. As their corporate press release states, "For nearly 24 hours, somewhere a LyondellBasell volunteer worked to make a community a better place as part of LyondellBasell's 12th annual Global Care Day. The worldwide day of community service saw people helping people in 64 communities in 24 countries with a combined 12,000 hours of volunteer service. The numbers add up to a better world, one community at a time."

Saturday's chilly and wet weather did not dampen the local spirits of the over 70 LyondellBasell volunteers who came for Global Care Day at Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area. The volunteers powered up with donuts in the morning and were treated to pizza after all their hard work. Employees and retirees brought their families along, some of whom had never been to the park before.

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This is not the first time LyondellBasell has helped the park. In 2006, the area was chosen for Global Care Day and numerous

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GLPSNA Receives Grant from CFGC

Julia Buck, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Grundy County informed us that the Board has voted to grant the Goose Lake Prairie Partners a grant to purchase lumber to replace the ramp on the Visitor's Center at Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area. On April 9, Pat Neff, volunteer at large for GLPSNA, applied for the grant from CFGC after receiving a "Want List" from Superintendent Joe Giacone.

The work was performed by the volunteers from Lyondell/Bassell on the Global Care Day April 9.

Calendar of Events

- June 4–27th Annual Cabin Festival. 10–3.
- 2nd Wednesday of the Month—
Goose Lake Prairie Partner meetings at 1:30 in the work room at the Visitor's Center.
Members and Friends always welcome.

*Prairie Partners keep the visitor's center open
most Saturday and Sundays
from March to November*

Grundy County Pheasants Forever Partner With Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area.

Richard Stott, President of the Grundy County Pheasants Forever, Local 364, recently presented Superintendent Joe Giacone a donation to plant three Burr Oak Trees in the Picnic Grove at Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area. Pheasants Forever is a national organization for hunters that promotes habitat restoration as well as safe hunting practices. Promoting shooting courses for youth and women hunting events is a yearly activity. Richard Stott emphasized, "the main objective is to get the youth and adults active with outside events. Since habitat for pheasants is dwindling, a great portion of our efforts lie in the area of habitat restoration."

Members of this group in Grundy County is somewhere between 200-250 and are kept in touch through mailed announcements and updates. About 170 members attend the yearly banquets.

Since the Grundy County Local began 5 years ago they have had a yearly project at Goose Lake Prairie to help remove the invasive Autumn Olive in cooperation with the park staff. This year the group also made a monetary donation. They are proud to say that the funds they raise stay in Grundy County.

Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area is happy to work closely with the Pheasants Forever Local to help them meet their goals each year.

IN MEMORIAM

Shirley Casper

Former Prairie Partner,
and donor of a
collection of
nature books
that has become
the beginning
of the Park Library.



The Partners are replenishing the stock of rag rugs for sale in the gift shop. Please take a look the next time you are in the center. They are various lengths and therefore, various prices. Perhaps you will see something that fits your space. Those in the photo are denim.



Just to the left of the main entrance to the visitor center you will find our new Bird Corner.

Keep the **Prairie Partners Gift Shop** in mind
when you visit our center...

*Many Nature Books are available, some Jewelry items,
Handmade Leather Pouches, Clothing & Hats commemorating
the Prairie Park and Hand-woven Rag Rugs.*



\$4.00 each

Come Experience Life on the Prairie June 4th at the 27th Annual Cabin Festival

Demonstrating 1800s Life on the Prairie

Cabin Festival activities
we plan on sharing
with you this year

American Indian Crafts

Indian Dances and
Dreamcatchers

Bird Sounds and Tracks
Tanning Hides

Blacksmithing

Candle Making

Bobbin Lacing

Crocheting and Beading

Knitting and Tatting

Quilting

Spinners and Weavers

Fly Fishing Lures Tying

Wood Carving and Woodworking

Wagon Rides to the Cabin

As always, we will be assisted on
this Day by our Prairie Partner
Friends in Period Clothes.

*Some Enactors may
have sales tables.



**Park Amenities
open all day**

Visitors Center
Museum
Butterfly Barn
Hiking trails
Flower Walks
Picnic Areas



Join us for a
free day of family fun.
Located at the historic Cragg
cabin, 10 am to 3 pm, at the
Goose Lake Prairie State
Natural Area.

Visit our website for updates.
<http://gooselakeprairie.org>

Visit the food tent for lunch on the prairie.
Visit the Prairie Partner Gift Shop.

DIRECTIONS: From Morris take Route 47 south to Pine Bluff
Road; then east about 6 miles to Jugtown Road and watch for
the stone park entrance sign on your left. From I-55 take
Lorenzo Road west about 7 miles to Jugtown Road and
watch for the stone park entrance sign on your right.



GLPSNA Receives Collection...

A wonderful collection of butterflies, moths, and bugs properly mounted on several trays was donated to the Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area last October. The collection was donated by Mrs. Jane Welch of Geneseo, Illinois, in memory of her cousin, George Maly, who died in 1980.

Since history is important to the park, more history of Mr. Maly was needed. His brother, Robert, lives in Morris and was contacted to broaden and give depth to the story of the donation. Robert Maly was contacted during March 2011, and the following is the story of George Maly and his collection.

George Maly grew up in the Coal City area. During his grade school years he developed a desire to learn about nature. He liked butterflies and moths, in particular. He was often seen chasing them with a butterfly net that was longer than he was tall. Most of the collection was caught in the Coal City area and the rest purchased from dealers. His interest waned for a few years during high school as sports became more interesting for a while. Apparently he didn't lose his love of nature because he obtained his degree in Micro-Biology. George even became an amateur taxidermist by taking classes through the mail.



Although most of the collection was caught over half a century ago, it is in very nice condition. George mounted them in proper black boxes with packing supporting them for preservation and easy viewing.

This wonderful collection will be put on display soon.

-C Johnson



Fire on the Prairie

Fire is an essential component of the tallgrass prairie; it keeps invading trees and shrubs at bay, controls non-native species, makes nutrients more readily available to prairie plants, and promotes diversity in both the prairie plant community and wildlife habitat structure. Fire was a natural component of the pre-settlement landscape of Illinois, and Goose Lake Prairie is almost entirely dependent upon it. Without fire, Goose Lake Prairie would become an impenetrable woody thicket in a matter of a few decades.

Pulling off a controlled burn at Goose Lake Prairie is no small feat. This site is one of the trickiest in the state, due to its sheer size and fuel type (burn managers refer to a site's combustible vegetation as "fuel"). Tallgrass prairie fuels can easily produce flame heights of 40 feet and taller. An experienced crew of certified burn managers is required to safely conduct a prescribed fire at Goose Lake Prairie.

The fire boss assembles a burn crew from the region, usually comprised of 8-15 individuals (depending on the complexity of the burn), all equipped with fire-resistant Nomex suits and wildland fire-fighting equipment. There are a minimum of 4 all-terrain vehicles, each rigged with 50 gallons of water, 200 feet of hose, and a high-pressure pump. Hand tools such as drip torches, rakes, flappers, and 5-gallon backpack sprayers are also required on each fire. A back-up water supply of several hundreds of gallons is also on site.

Goose Lake Prairie is divided into multiple burn units easily



A drip torch is used to light the back-fire along the firebreak. Crews extinguish the main fire being pushed by the wind into the mowed trail and the back-fire gradually creeping into the burn unit.

Fire on the Prairie (continued from page 4)



After the crew splits into two teams to ignite the back-fire, each team knows exactly where the other is by watching the smoke. It's important for the teams to pace themselves according to the wind and the position of the other team.

denoted by the mown strips. Some units are only 40 acres, whereas other units may be over 600 acres in size. Most burn managers do not burn 100% of the natural area in one season; there should always be unburned vegetation to serve as a refuge for insects and other wildlife. It is also desirable to have diversity in the habitat structure of a large grassland to accommodate the variety of nesting grassland birds. Some birds, like the Henslow's Sparrow, prefer a thick accumulation of grasses, and other birds such as the Grasshopper Sparrow, are more abundant after a recent burn. The site's biologists rotate burn units, and usually try to burn a couple units each year at larger sites, as weather permits.

The burn unit is defined by its firebreaks, which can be natural features or man-made. At Goose Lake Prairie, the burn units are designed using mowed trails, roads, and bodies of water. The burn crew begins at the downwind side of the burn unit by lighting the fuel (dried prairie vegetation) at the edge of the unit

immediately adjacent to a mowed trail or road. The fire spreads in all directions, but at varying rates, depending on wind speed and direction. The rapidly spreading downwind side of the fire is extinguished by spraying water and snuffing it out with hand tools, or simply when the fire reaches a firebreak with no fuels, like a road or open water. The upwind side of the fire is allowed to slowly creep into the wind, towards the middle of the burn unit (known as a "back-fire"). The fire boss evaluates the behavior of the fire while it is still small and easy to extinguish. If the fire is behaving as expected under the weather conditions and fuel type, the crew splits into two teams, heading in opposite directions. Each team uses drip torches to light along the firebreak, working with the wind and extinguishing the downwind flames along the firebreak. The fire within the unit is allowed to continue creeping upwind so

the firebreak is widened by creating a "black line" of burned fuel. This is the most critical and time-consuming element of conducting a controlled burn.

The fire teams are in constant communication with each other while lighting the back-fire, and regularly monitor the weather. Temperature, humidity, wind speed, and wind direction can vary throughout the day and greatly influence fire behavior. The teams continue lighting along the edges of the fire unit, *almost* circling the unit, until it is time to make the turn where the wind will carry the head-fire. Both teams hold steady while the fire boss evaluates the width of the black line. As a general rule of thumb, the black line at the downwind side of the burn unit should be 3 times as wide as the tallest expected flame height. If there is plenty of black line, one or both of the (continued on page 6)



A large, hot fire will create its own wind. As the hot air rises, cool air rushes in to take its place. On the left you can see the bottom of the smoke plume being pushed in. We felt a stiff breeze as the head-fire met the back-fire in the middle of the unit.

Fire on the Prairie (continued from page 5)



The fire crew begins mop-up by extinguishing burning stumps and old fence poles near the edges of the burn unit. "Hot spots" in the middle of the unit are left alone to combust because there is little risk of the fire escaping.



The morning after view from the middle of the unit facing northeast. The thin sliver of water in the middle of this photo is the wetland that was used to control the escaped fire. You can see the original firebreak on the left side of this photo, immediately north of the open water in the foreground; it is a straight blacked line which follows a trail. The charred area in between the two wetlands is the location of the escaped fire, which is estimated to be about 5 acres.

teams are given the go-ahead to completely circle the unit and light the head-fire. As the two teams meet up again, flames roll over the prairie, consuming nearly everything in their path. The fire extinguishes itself when the head-fire is pushed by the wind into the back-fire, where there is no more fuel left to burn.

This past fall was an exceptional season for conducting prescribed fire at Goose Lake Prairie (among other sites within the region). The weather was unusually warm and dry, with favorable winds keeping smoke off Pine Bluff Road. Two burns were conducted; both immediately north of Pine Bluff Road, and on either side of Jugtown Road. The western unit went exactly as planned. The eastern unit however, kept the burn crew working into the night.

While back-burning and widening out the black line through a part of the east unit which is dominated by the non-native common reed (*Phragmites australis*), the fire had jumped the line. *Phragmites* is

one of the most invasive plant species in our wetlands, and it can grow up to 10 feet tall. When dense stands of it ignite, flame heights can easily get up to 50 feet. During the back-burning portion of this prescribed fire, the super-heated air column above the burning *Phragmites* pushed a lit ember up and outside the burn unit.

The burn crew quickly implemented the back-up plan which was discussed before the fire was even lit. They would allow any escaped fire to burn until it reached the open water of the wetlands located downwind. The wind was pushing the escaped head-fire straight for the wetlands, and fire crews had to contain only the flanking-fire, with flame heights of about 3-6 feet. When the controllable flanking-fire met up with the open water wetlands, the escaped fire would be extinguished. However, the fire boss decided additional resources were needed and contacted two local fire departments. Coal City and Morris Fire Departments were invaluable in providing

the IDNR fire crew with extra water used in controlling the escaped fire, staging additional wildfire equipment, and keeping travel on Pine Bluff Road safe (some drivers have a tendency to watch a fire instead of the road!).

After gaining control of the escaped fire, the burn crew needed to complete the prescribed fire within the rest of the original unit. The back-burning and widening the black line still needed to be completed. This slow process was made even slower due to cooling temperatures and rising humidity. The head-fire was eventually lit around 7 pm, and final mop-up wasn't completed until after midnight.

A fire at Goose Lake Prairie is always an impressive sight. Witnessing Goose Lake Prairie ablaze and glowing into the night was even more of an awe-inspiring spectacle.

This is not the first time Kim Roman has written for the Tallgrass Journal. We welcome her articles. Kim works at the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission.

Partner Raffle Buckskin Pouch

The basic item in our raffle this year is the buckskin pouch valued at \$35.00. Was it priced too low? A few of the Partners sure think so... The hide came from legally harvested North Illinois white tail deer, tanned locally. There were no nasty chemicals used, just brains, Neats-foot oil, sometimes soap or detergent, and a considerable amount of time and elbow grease. You will appreciate the quality of the leather more in your hands. The smoking process, which is necessary for wash ability, produces about as much air pollution as a modest pile of burning leaves. Washing is not recommended due to the stretchiness of the hide when wet. The item will never look like "new" but will develop "Character" and an old-time appearance. Do not dry clean; wash item if you must.

To wash it, use Dawn dish washing liquid, shampoo or Tide liquid, in cool water. A few drops of Neats-foot oil in the final rinse helps soften & preserve. Remove as much moisture as possible by rolling in towels and air dry, till nearly dry. Then occasionally rub until dry and soft.

You may wish to take a chance on winning this item. All proceeds help the Partners pay for educational programs at the park. One chance for \$1 or six for \$5. You need not be present at the drawing to win September 17th; Prairie Day.



Gifts To The Park Are Tax Deductible.

Goose Lake Prairie Partners are looking for a few new items to add to the visitors center as well as the park itself. If you or your organization is looking for a special project why not consider the following items:

1.) Choose a park trail and monitor it to keep it pristinely clean for our visitors.

2.) Volunteer to work the Visitor Center Desk during the weekend to help keep the center open. Normally the Center is only open on weekends if volunteers work the center.

3.) Consider purchasing an item for the park. At the current time our "Want List" includes:

- Caterpillars for the Butterfly barn.
- New Mounted bird or mammal species.
- Park Benches to strategically place around the park on various trails.
- New Folding Chairs for our events.

Tax deductible gifts are recognized with a "certificate of gift" for tax deductions.

Call 815-942-2899 for more information.

- Now that spring is on the way, we remind you that as you take your pets to the prairie, to carry bags to take care of their "litter".
- We also ask that our friends refrain from riding bikes of any kind on park trails.
- We have one handicapped accessible trail.
- Please do not remove anything from the park but photos.
- Check our website.

<http://gooselakeprairie.org>

Park Contacts:

Joe Giacone, Site Superintendent

Char McDade, Office Coordinator

Susie Johnson, Prairie Partner President

Bev Mansfield, Vice-President

Jackie Martin, Secretary and Treasurer

Norma Hedges, Gift Shop

Jo Fleming, Historian

Tom Kaluzny, Board Member

The Mission of the Goose Lake Prairie Partners

Visitor's Center Phone: 815-942-2899

The mission of the Prairie Partners is to help the Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area in the following ways.

- To understand, maintain and attract the public to the park by producing various festivals, educational events, and displays centered around early life on the prairie and on the natural environment of the park.
- To provide assistance and funds as needed by the park and its staff for equipment, supplies and other items for improvement and maintenance.

Monetary or Time Donations Are Always Welcome.

Text in this publication is the sole responsibility of the authors of the articles and not the responsibility of the Park or the Prairie Partners.

The Tallgrass Journal is published 4 times a year: Jan, April, July and Oct.

The Tallgrass Journal

Goose Lake Prairie Partners

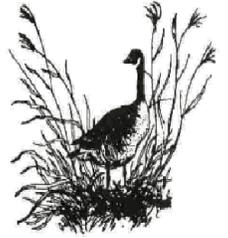
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We are on the Web.
<http://gooselakeprairie.org>

Take Only Memories. Leave Only Footprints. Thank You Very Kindly



Global Care Day cont.

(Continued from page 1)

projects were completed. This year, the park was chosen from several others in the area to be the official site of the local volunteer day. Two Burr Oak Trees and 100 bags of mulch were purchased by the company. The trees were planted in the picnic grove & mulch was spread around trees, flower gardens, and in the butterfly barn by volunteers. They also walked around the park and picked up litter. A new sign for the butterfly barn was also created and purchased. The sign provides technical and fun facts about butterflies. A major project was the work to the handrails on the 300 foot ramp that is attached to the observation deck above Visitor Center. The lumber was purchased through a grant from the Community Foundation of Grundy County. The old wood was removed and new cedar planks were installed by the LyondellBasell volunteers. The ramp has long been a favorite of young and old alike. Some race to the top so they can see out over the prairie for miles. Site Superintendent Joe Giacone was happily surprised that the ramp was completed



in a day. He said without LyondellBasell's help, the ramp was not a priority on the state's list and would not have been repaired due to the shortfalls in the state budget. Mr. Giacone saluted LyondellBasell for their stewardship in being a good neighbor to the community and their willingness to help a public natural area. LyondellBasell employees, David Giacomi and Denise Claggett headed up the company coordination and Patrica Neff was the liaison to the park. LyondellBasell is one of the world's largest plastics, chemical and refining companies and one of Grundy County's largest employers. The company manufactures products at 58 sites in 18 countries. LyondellBasell products and technologies are used to make items that improve the quality of life for people around the world including packaging, electronics, automotive parts, home furnishings, construction materials and biofuels. The plant is located East of Morris on Route 6.



It is donations like these that help us keep Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area a Beautiful Park to visit. Thank you LyondellBasell and Community Foundation of Grundy County, from all of us at Goose Lake Prairie.