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ROCK RIVER VALLEY WILD ONES ANNUAL MEETING, POTLUCK, & SEED SHARE

Thursday, November 19, 2026

6:00 - 8:00 PM (Doors open at 5:30 PM)

Paulson Agricultural Museum of Argyle
6950 Belvidere Road, Caledonia, IL 61011

(Please note time and location)



Photo of Jacob Grace.

Join us for our annual meeting featuring a potluck, seed share, and annual election of officers and directors. This year we will have a short demonstration on how to start native seeds in milk jugs and salad containers. To be as eco-friendly as possible, please bring your own table service (plate, silverware, cup, and napkin) and a dish to pass (salad, vegetable, or dessert). Lasagna (both meat and vegetarian) and drinks will be provided.

Jacob Grace of the Savanna Institute will speak about some of the promising agroforestry crops the institute is working with and give examples of some farm enterprises that utilize these crops. Jacob grew up on a farm in northwest Missouri where his parents raised native plants and harvested their seed. His graduate

research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison focused on whether targeted cattle grazing can be used on DNR grasslands to reduce invasive species and increase diversity in plant communities.

This program is for Wild Ones members only. Please note the time change.

For information on the seed share, see page 4.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT Jerry Paulson



Jerry Paulson

Congratulations to two of our Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter members who were recognized for their outstanding service, leadership, and dedication during the 2026 Illinois Master Gardener Conference, held recently in Rockford. Anita Johnson received the State Outstanding Master Gardener Award for her exceptional work with the Master Gardener program, and Barbara Flores received the Sustained Excellence Award for her continued service to the Illinois Extension education program.

Anita completed her Master Gardener training in 2009 and is also a Master Naturalist. In addition to being a docent at Anderson Japanese Gardens, she helps manage the Vi Bates Memorial Wildflower Garden at Klehm Arboretum and the prairie patch at Ledgewood School in Roscoe. Barbara also completed her training in 2009 and has been an active volunteer over the years, including working at the Rock River Valley Food Pantry Garden. The garden provides fresh produce to the community through the Master Gardener "Plant-a-Row" program, donating more than 2,000 pounds of fresh produce each year.

Anita and Barbara are just two of the many Wild Ones members who devote thousands of hours of volunteer effort to promote natural landscaping and educate people about the value of native plants in northern Illinois. At this time of the year, we recognize our members who volunteer their time to plan and run our plant sales, produce our newsletter and manage our website and social media platforms, plan our

programs and yard tours, coordinate volunteers, pay our bills, maintain our membership database, and serve on the chapter Board of Directors. Thank you to everyone who serves our chapter and the community with their dedication to our mission.

This is my last message as President of the chapter. Both Cathy Johnson, who has served as chapter secretary for 10 years, and I are retiring. It has been an honor to work in a leadership capacity for this great organization. We are leaving the leadership of the chapter in good hands. I will continue as Immediate Past President for one year to help the new President learn about the work of the chapter.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.



Top photo of Anita Johnson, Margaret Larson, and Barbara Flores courtesy of U of I Extension. Photo of Anita Johnson and Jerry Paulson by Jessie Crow Mermel.

Please note, the next newsletter will be in January, 2027.

OCTOBER MEETING RECAP

Paul Sikes

Identification and Management of Invasive Plants with Chris Evans



On Thursday, October 15, Chris Evans, U of I Extension Forester, joined the Rock River Valley Wild Ones group to discuss the identification and management of invasive plants in our yards, landscapes, and natural areas. Chris started his presentation with a clear definition of an “invasive” plant:

1. Not native to the area (exotic species)
2. Escaped and naturalized (growing uncontrolled in the environment)
3. Disrupting native plant communities and their ecological functions, causing damage to ecosystems (plants, insects, wildlife), to agriculture, or to humans

Chris then described many common invasive species and how they negatively impact the environment: garlic mustard displacing desirable forage plants, amur honeysuckle slowing the growth rate of hardwood trees, Tree of Heaven hosting the invasive spotted lantern fly, among others.

He also noted that our native landscapes include multiple invasive plant species in the same area which complicates the implementation of removal and control strategies that may vary by species (see link to “Management Guide” for species-specific instructions). Chris reminded everyone of some “best practices” regarding invasive species management, while recognizing that Wild Ones chapter members are already familiar with most of these:

1. Reduce the use of invasive species in landscaping (Chris cited that 82% of invasives started as horticultural plants!)
2. Promote the use of native (non-invasive) species in gardens and landscapes to restore ecological function
3. Manage the “interface areas” – forest edges, green spaces, and corridors between natural areas and developed land where invasives often thrive
4. Educate landowners and the public about the danger of invasive species, need for invasive control, and the value of native plantings

Chris finished with recommended plant control and removal strategies for some common invasive species. He also discussed the best timing and the pros and cons of each method.

1. Mechanical removal - hand-pulling, use of leveraging tools, and growth suppression & solarization materials

2. Chemical treatment - foliar (leaf), cut stump, and basal bark (oil-based) applications
- [WARNING: Always read and follow herbicide label instructions. Chris stated that “the label is the law” and that following label guidelines improves the success of chemical controls.]**



3. Integrated/cultural controls – combined cutting & chemical applications across time, like the “critical cut” method and stem injections, and the periodic use of fire

For more detailed invasive species control and removal instructions, download <https://go.illinois.edu/ManagementGuide>, a free 56-pg. booklet covering the management of invasive species (co-authored by Chris Evans).

Chris has also kindly shared his presentation with us. You can view it on our website at: <https://rrvcwildones.org/identification-and-management-of-northern-illinois-invasive-plants-with-chris-evans/>

A big THANK YOU to Chris Evans for sharing his passion for, deep knowledge of and experience with managing invasive plants!

Photos of Chris Evans’ presentation by Jackie Rheume.

SEEDS SHARE INFORMATION

For the seed share: bring seeds that you have collected from natives in your yard or landscape project to share during the exchange. Please put them in envelopes or baggies labeled with common name, scientific name, and other pertinent information (height, color, amount of sun, etc.), and your name, in case anyone has questions. Seeds do not need to be cleaned. **For newer members: we always have plenty of seeds, and even if you don't have any seeds to share, you are still welcome to go home with some seeds!**

If you are not a member yet, this is a great time to join and participate in one of the fun member benefits (go to <https://wildones.org>).



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE Sallie Krebs, Membership Coordinator

219 memberships as of October 20, 2026

Welcome to our new member(s)!

Debra Burns, Rockford

Lynn Rivard, Rockford

Anniversaries:

15 Years:

Barbara Kober, Rockford

10 Years:

Peggy Werner, Rockford

5 Years:

Nancy Olson, Roscoe

Memberships are processed through National Wild Ones. Visit www.wildones.org to process your new or renewal membership using any major credit card through PayPal (no PayPal account is required).

New members: please indicate that you are seeking membership in the Rock River Valley Chapter.

Mail personal checks to the address below:

WILD ONES

ATTN: Membership

2285 Butte Des Morts Beach Rd

Neenah, WI 54912-1274

Support the Rock River Valley Chapter directly with a donation. Click the Donate button on the homepage at <https://www.rvcwildones.org>

Thank you for your support!



MONARCH WATCH

Kim Lowman Vollmer

MONARCH WATCH is offering free milkweed plants. Applications are now open until February, as long as the supplies last. Schools, educational non-profits, or large-scale restoration projects may qualify to receive free flats of native milkweeds for their project. If you have been looking for an opportunity to kick-start your habitat project, this is a great opportunity. <https://monarchwatch.org/bring-back-the-monarchs/milkweed/free-milkweeds>

Since 2015, Monarch Watch has awarded more than 1 million milkweed plugs to projects across the country, helping people establish beneficial habitat for monarchs and many other pollinators and wildlife. Milkweed is the monarch's sole host plant to lay their eggs on and for caterpillars to feed on during the breeding seasons.



MONARCH WATCH also needs milkweed seeds. Consider donating some seeds to Monarch Watch!

MONARCH WATCH is 34-years-old and is the top site to learn anything about monarchs and how to care for them. You will find information for children and adults, from tagging them to gardening, to rearing and more. Quench your curiosity by going to <https://www.monarchwatch.org/>.

NOTICE - ELECTION 2027 WORRVC BOARD TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2026

The annual election of the Board of the Rock River Valley Chapter of Wild Ones will be held at our Annual Meeting on November 19, 2026. The slate of officers, Membership Coordinator and three At-Large members is below. There is one vacancy for an At-Large member of the board, to which you may make a write-in nomination.

If you can't attend the meeting and want to vote, you can print out this page, clip out the ballot and mail it to Cathy Johnson, WORRVC Secretary, P.O. Box 209, Cherry Valley, IL 61016-9293 or scan and email to catjohn_22@yahoo.com. Please be sure to put your name on the mailing envelope. Mail the ballot no later than November 9, 2026, or email ballot by November 18, 2026. If you have a family membership, please cast only one vote per household.

2027 ROCK RIVER VALLEY WILD ONES BALLOT

Please put an X in the box next to your choice of candidates for 2027. You may vote for up to 3 At-Large candidates. You may write in a chapter member's name in the blank line below the third At-Large candidate space.

☐

PRESIDENT
Paul Sikes

☐

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR
Sallie Krebs

☐

VICE PRESIDENT
Linda Ricker

☐

AT-LARGE
Catie Vernon

☐

SECRETARY
Gloria Powell

☐

AT-LARGE
Brian Hale

☐

TREASURER
Janet Giesen

☐

AT-LARGE



ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Wild Ones Rock River Valley

P.O. Box 209

Cherry Valley, IL 61016-9293

Submissions for the January Newsletter
are due November 20, 2026. Email:
wildonesrockrivervalley@gmail.com

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

WILD ONES MISSION

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. Wild Ones is a not-for-profit environmental education and advocacy organization.

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER MEETINGS

Our regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month. Links to the meetings and programs are posted on our website and our Facebook page, and sent to members via email the week of the meeting.

ROCK RIVER VALLEY CHAPTER BOARD AND COORDINATORS

BOARD

President: Jerry Paulson

Vice President: Linda Tabb Ricker

Secretary: Cathy Johnson

Treasurer: Janet Giesen

Board members at large:

Gloria Powell

Catie Vernon

Brian Hale

Membership coordinator: Sallie Krebs

APPOINTED COORDINATORS

Booth coordinator: [open position]

Garden samplers bureau: Rebecca

Beneditz

Library coordinator: Ginnie Watson.

Merchandise coordinator: Cynthia
Chmell

Native plant sale coordinators:

Janet Giesen

Gloria Powell

Ginnie Watson

Newsletter editor and production:

Jessie Crow Mermel

Newsletter proofreader: Rebecca
Beneditz

Plant rescue/seeds coordinator:
[open position]

Program coordinators:

Mary Anne Mathewich

Gloria Powell

Linda Tabb Ricker

Publicity coordinator: Catie Vernon

Show Me/Help Me coordinator:

Linda Tabb Ricker

Social media coordinator:

Jessie Crow Mermel

Tree & shrub sale coordinator:

Brian Hale

Volunteer coordinator: Betsy Kelly

Website coordinator: Janet Giesen

Youth education & grants

coordinator: Kim Lowman Vollmer

If you need to email someone on this list, please contact us at wildonesrrvc@gmail.com and we will connect you.