

WILD ONES CHAPTER ANECDOTES ABOUT WHERE WE ARE WITH THE NATIVE LANDSCAPING MOVEMENT

Chapter	State	Author	Comments
Ann Arbor	MI	Andrea Matthies, President	<p>In January 2014 members of our board and other community leaders formed a group called Washtenaw Citizens for Ecological Balance. We promote deer management in Ann Arbor and the surrounding areas through our highly educational website: wc4eb.org and other educational efforts. Native plants and natural landscapes are the favored habitat of white tail deer. Our local natural areas and our personal efforts to create habitat for our native pollinators, birds, and mammals have been stripped of next generation seedlings of critical oak, hickory, and maple plus springtime and prairie forbes. The gaps are being filled with invasives. We have spent the past year and a half providing educational materials to the Ann Arbor Council, the County commissioners, and WCPARC's commissions. By a vote of 8-1 the City voted to fund a deer cull for the winter of 2016. This program of scientifically based deer management drew from the experiences of communities and parks across the country. //// Doug Tallamy inscribed his book with: "Garden as though life depends on it." At Wild Ones Ann Arbor we are doing our best to respond to the urgency of his words-to preserve and expand the biodiversity to which he and Wild Ones are dedicated.</p>
Arrowhead	MN	Carol Andrews, President	<p>The first five years or so of our chapter (2000 - 2005) conversations about Wild Ones usually started with a raised eyebrow when someone heard the organization's name followed by the need to explain what native plants are and why they matter. These last few years when I mention Wild Ones it's not uncommon to get a nod of recognition followed by a relevant question or the person excitedly sharing their own native plant story. It is so rewarding to be a driving force behind this movement! We could not do it without the help of the WO national office and the Journal, whose efforts free our time up to concentrate on programming and outreach.</p>
Blue Ridge	VA	Donna Williamson, Past President	<p>Our chapter has worked with a large local nursery to identify native plants for the work force and the customers - growing interest in natives is reflected in increased sale. It's a fun outing in spring and we have learned a lot in the process!</p>

Columbus OH Barb Velez Barbosa, President

Wild Ones Columbus (WOC) celebrated their 20th year anniversary last year. Members have come and gone but the chapter has remained dedicated to following the Wild Ones mission. It is true indeed that it “took a village” to reach 20 years.... a village of committed members. With “village” efforts we instituted bylaws, were recipients of a \$2500 grant from Wendy’s submitted by past president, Luanne Hendricks, and plant rescues. In 2015, we began a Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP) and a Citizen Science Project under the guidance of new member Sarah Dalton plus Show Me Help Me visits by another new member, Jennifer Kubicki. //// Our members attended several conferences and community events throughout the year, setting up exhibits to promote Wild Ones membership opportunities and the Wild for Monarch Campaign. Exhibits included an exhibit on the MLMP efforts in rearing and releasing Monarchs which has been a huge success in drawing people’s interest. The national office has been a great support in sending pre-printed educational materials to distribute to the public for these events. //// The current president, Barbara Velez Barbosa, is mentoring two seedling chapters (Dayton, OH and Cleveland OH) with a third (Athens, OH) to be added in the spring of 2016. This is a result of exhibits at conferences and spreading the Wild for Monarch Campaign for Wild Ones. People wanted a local resource to learn about native landscaping and creating a habitat for pollinators. //// In 2016, WOC will be working to build collaborative relationships in Columbus with businesses, professionals and educators who share a passion for promoting the use of native landscaping.

Fox Valley Area WI Loris Damerow, President

The Fox Valley (WI) Chapter celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2015, and is the largest Wild Ones chapter, with 262 members. Our most impactful activity is the "Toward Harmony in Nature" conference, now in its 20th year. The annual event brings two to three hundred people together from across the region to celebrate native plants and habitats, with keynote presentations, workshops, resources and vendors. For many years, the chapter has promoted native plants by providing them to the community through annual plant sales: forbs and grasses in the spring, trees and shrubs in the fall. Our monthly program schedule has always been robust with tours of stellar properties, and interesting, sometimes hands-on, programs for our membership. We have grown to have a regular presence at community events, though our traveling display board, whenever opportunities for environmental education occur. We offer "Natural Landscapes for Tomorrow" grants for native plantings to schools and nonprofit groups, with a focus on education and involvement of young people. Recently we have initiated a project encouraging our members to "Get on the Map!" by including their property on a GIS map that will illustrate native plant-rich habitat areas; the mapping project is one part of an effort to encourage the development of habitat corridors in our species-rich Great Lakes, prairie-woodland junction region. Our most recent accomplishments have included the implementation of a Speakers Bureau, an outreach effort carried out by members vetted to offer presentations to the general public, a Mentoring Program, which provides 1:1 assistance to members developing native plantings in their landscape, and the introduction of social and electronic media to our membership communications

Fox Valley
Area

WI

Kristin
Kauth, Past
President

With the guidance of Donna VanBuecken, before she became Executive Director of Wild Ones, along with other dedicated members, our then newly formed Fox Valley Area Chapter of Wild Ones (Nov. 1, 1994) organized the Toward Harmony with Nature, a one day conference inviting one and all to come and learn from experts how to create and maintain a natural landscape that would bring their land into harmony with nature. This coming January we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of this conference that still draws people from throughout the state as well as surrounding ones. Not only do previous attendees come back year after year, but many new faces are seen. Though the conference started out attracting people with larger tracts of land with prairies, over the years we have seen the increase of people with urban and suburban properties who want a healthier and sustainable landscape. Our Chapter has grown and continues to maintain a yearly membership base around 265. By maintaining this base we have focused not only on keeping the Chapter strong but also on supporting WO national. We take great pride in having been able to assist national in purchasing the WILD Center as its headquarters and working to help establish and maintain native plant demonstration gardens for the public, for which our members put in 300-400 volunteer hours per year. We do this to help maintain a "home base" for all WO chapters to point to with pride. Along with this, our members willing host the national WO Annual Membership Meeting and Conference at the Center each year, supporting the camaraderie and educational opportunity this national event provides. Also, to support and highlight the fact that we are a chapter of WO, in 2012 our Board determined, since we are part of a national organization from which we draw our identity, Wild Ones should always be placed first in our name, thus we are officially called Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter (WOFVA). Through our monthly programs, yearly display events, our newly formed Speaker's Bureau and Mentoring Program, both of which are receiving many requests, we continue a strong outreach program. Along with Chapter materials, including our newsletter, the WO Journal is a key educational piece that shows people the depth and professionalism of the organization. Recently we initiated a Get on the Map project encouraging our members to include their property on a GIS map to illustrate where native plant-rich habitat areas have been established, perhaps encouraging the development of native habitat corridors. As we move forward, we will always continue to assess and develop programs that strengthen the mission of both WO national and our Chapter.

Greater
DuPage

IL

Pat
Armstrong,
Vice-
President

Pat Armstrong and Vicky Nowicki met at the Morton Arboretum in 1977, when Vicki became one of Pat's school group TEA Guides. Vicky left the Arboretum and moved on in her environmental education so they lost touch with each other. When they re-united in January 1992 at a Kane County Natural Landscaping Conference, that Pat and another of her TEA Guides had planned, they decided to start a chapter of the Wild Ones in Illinois. We were the fourth chapter of the Wild Ones to be chartered, and the first chapter outside of Wisconsin. In 1992 there was some resistance from Wisconsin members to go beyond their state borders: it was Pat and Vicki's persistent inspiration that turned the Milwaukee-based Wild Ones into the national Wild Ones, greatly enlarging the vision of the organization. Bret Rappaport was a member of our Northern Illinois Chapter and became the first national President of the new national Wild Ones. //// April 16, 1992 was the first meeting of the Northern Illinois Chapter, with 85 in attendance. We are now called the Greater DuPage Chapter, since several other chapters have split off from us. Our membership has remained fairly steady at about 200 member families, but Illinois boasted 7 chapters of the Wild Ones with about 500 member families in 2012 (on our 20th Anniversary). At that time we had 9 members who had served on our Board of Directors for 10 years or more and a couple who have served for 20 years. Members come and go, we keep sprouting new chapters, but most of our board members are extremely dedicated to our mission and keep on doing most of the work. //// We have 6 evening programs a year: Jan-Feb-Mar and Sep-Oct-Nov. In addition we have field trips to natural areas or member's yards Apr-May-June-July-Aug-Sep, A spring Potluck in April with a special speaker, A summer picnic at a local forest preserve or member's yard which includes a walk, and A huge seed exchange in Nov. with a silent auction, door prize and food. Every other year we usually have a Natural Landscaping Workshop of some kind in Feb. And occasionally we bring in a really special person (Like Doug Tallamy) for a huge audience including the Illinois Native Plant Society and DuPage (and other county Forest Preserve) volunteers and staff. This year was the 100th Anniversary of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and many of our members participated in the huge BioBlitz that they staged in June at four sort-of adjoining Forest Preserves. //// As to how things have changed, this year 2015, I received THREE WEED CITATIONS from Naperville on my totally native yard that has been here since 1983 (32 years). Some things never change! But we keep on trying!

Green Bay

WI

Justin
Kroening,
President

I believe using native plant material within the macro and micro landscape is not a trend, more a necessity. Our local Green Bay Wild Ones Chapter has helped to inform the people in our community on the need to restore natural environments. I myself was introduced to using native plants by the local wild ones group, when I installed natives in the planter bowls on Broadway Street in Green Bay. Our group has installed or funded the installation of many native gardens through out the city some in public attractions like the National Railroad Museum and some on private property. Other like minded organizations have jumped in the fight and are installing even more native gardens in town. We notice more patches of milkweed and a growing desire to remove invasive species as a direct result of our chapters work, through education. We hold a annual plant sale that we also have other organizations come to show their exhibits, such as the Brown County Bee Keepers. This event has grown every year, and we keep seeing new faces. //// Our city embraces the use of native plants, in 2012 an ordinance was revised to allow the use of native plants within the city limits. Now we are in the process of removing phragmites along the bay, and the potential is there to open Bay Beach back to swimmers. Using native plants in place of the phragmites. We are moving in the right direction.

Habitat
Gardening in
Central New
York

NY

Janet Allen,
President

Becoming a Wild Ones Chapter: I'm president of one of the few chapters that began not as a Wild Ones chapter but as a garden club – a “garden club with a difference” as we used to say. Unlike conventional garden clubs that focus on creating merely ornamental gardens, our purpose was different. //// I had been a National Wildlife Federation Habitat Steward for a few years but had come to believe that people needed more regular opportunities for landscaping information and inspiration than what I could provide as an individual. Then I happened to meet two other people who had learned about the importance of native plants from Sara Stein's book, Noah's Garden. Soon, Habitat Gardening in Central New York was born! We arranged monthly programs on how to create habitat with native plants. //// For a year or two, a handful of people attended our programs, which were free and open to the public. We relied on the generosity of a small group of experts willing to present programs at no cost. //// We plugged away and slowly began to attract more people to our programs. After a few years, though, we realized that our mission was the same as the Wild Ones mission. Should we become a chapter? //// It wasn't an easy decision! Even as a Wild Ones chapter, we would still be planning our own programs, finding our own venues, doing our own publicity. We would still write our own newsletter. //// So what would we gain? Some tangible benefits, but many intangible ones. //// First, our portion of Wild Ones membership dues would give us the ability to provide honoraria to our speakers and fund other items without having to do the tedious work of collecting dues. //// A significant benefit, of course, would be receiving the Wild Ones Journal. The Journal provides not only education about native plants but also inspirational stories of people creating natural landscapes. //// The most compelling reasons, though, were less tangible. Our group would have additional credibility in our community. We'd no longer be just a garden club – even with its “difference” -- but instead an integral part of a national education and advocacy organization. //// Even more important, we'd be supporting the Wild Ones mission to preserve biodiversity. To preserve biodiversity here in Central New York, we must preserve biodiversity in the world beyond. //// And so we decided to connect our group to other groups of people working toward the same goals. We became a Wild Ones chapter! //// We've learned from other chapters' experiences in hosting Show Me Help Me tours, in organizing workshops, and in many other ways. But knowing we're not alone in our efforts is most important. It's inspiring to see other chapters working to be vibrant sources of change in their own communities.

Habitat
Gardening in
Central New
York

continued

//// We've especially appreciated opportunities to participate in national projects such as “Wild for Monarchs.” How could we have done as much as a local garden club? //// Our chapter has been changing Central New York as we include native plants in our yards, but by being part of a larger organization of like-minded people, we magnify our efforts to reach our common Wild Ones goal of “changing the earth one yard at a time.”

Kettle
Moraine

WI

Mariette
Nowak,
President

I am a member of the Walworth County (Wisconsin) Park Committee and, as a member; I introduced and promoted the idea for a “native plants only” policy for our county parks. An ordinance to this effect was passed this September, 2015. It stated that only regionally native plants could be planted in our county-owned parks, with the exception of picnic areas, community gardens, demonstration plots or similar areas used to grow edible plants, and agricultural land leased by the county to a tenant for the purpose of growing crops. //// Many of our Kettle Moraine Chapter Wild Ones members helped by making statements before our park committee and sending letters and e-mails in support of the policy. ////This ordinance is not yet on the Walworth County website. It creates Section 42-11 of the Walworth County Code of Ordinances. //// Several members of the Kettle Moraine Chapter have worked on the Eagle Nature Trail. This trail in the town of Eagle has been the recipient of the 2014 Virginia Kline Award for Excellence in Community-Based Restoration. The award program is administered by the Friends of the Arboretum in collaboration with the Aldo Leopold Foundation. One of our members, Jean Weedman, has spearheaded the Eagle Nature Trail committee, which includes another of our members, Mary Jenks. Congratulations to Jean, Mary and entire committee! We will have the opportunity to tour the Eagle Nature Trail at next July's meeting. See the attached announcement. Note: The "Arboretum" refers to the University of Wisconsin Arboretum. See also <https://arboretum.wisc.edu/news/friends/2014-awards-ceremony-and-dinner/>

Lexington

KY

Linda
Porter,
Membershi
pi Chair &
Beate
Popke,
President

To me, as a member of the Lexington Chapter of Wild Ones, visibility and name recognition of Wild Ones as a native plant landscaping advocate organization is the biggest change I have seen over the past decade. When I became a member of the Lexington Chapter in 2007, there were under 25 members and our meetings did good to have 15 people in attendance. Now we have over 100 members and our average meeting attendance is around 40. More important than that, I believe, is the impact we have had on the gardening community. People seek us out for advice on natives and more and more NP gardens are being planted. Of the 300+ Waystations at least 1/3 were planted by Wild Ones members and many others were influenced by our work - one of the gardens is a wonderful public Monarch Waystation and Pollinator Garden that was planted and is maintained by our members. When I mention "Wild Ones" people no longer give me that puzzled look. They know who we are and they often ask questions about plants or their own NP garden. We are a force in the Lexington, Kentucky horticulture community and that is very good news indeed!

Madison WI Barb Glassel, President

Hunting for anecdotes about how Wild Ones has changed over the past 10 to 20 years, many elements popped up, It is so rewarding to note that Name recognition has definitely expanded for our chapter, and for the whole organization. So many more people "get us" now-- For those who still need to be introduced, our descriptions and dialogues have become easier, and even more fun! //// Our booth each February at Wisconsin public Television's Garden Expo has become a magnet for visitors' stories, leading to some great networking, speakers, and program ideas. Jeanette Tierney organized a Milkweeds for Monarchs program, which flourished with solid cooperation of local Wild Ones' business members, Frank Hassler / Good Oak Ecological Services. Germinating seeds from Frank's yard, we have grown, transplanted, parented, and given away thousands of milkweed plants to school and scout groups, and also to shoppers and kids at several large local farmers markets. //// A significant number of our members tend native plantings in public places, for example, Sue Reindollar on the SW commuter path; Rose Ann Scott et ther volunteers at Goodman Center, Warner Park and Atwood Prairie /Capital City commuter path; Jerry Gunderson and his Johnny-appleseed native planting strategies everywhere [schools, railroad corridors, highway right of ways]. //// A prairie drop-off circle at the Warner Park Community Center entrance, had been lovingly planted & weeded for about 5 years by Jerry Gunderson and others. A sudden threat of "lawn replacement therapy" by the parks department stirred up so many public defenders, we were amazed. Then a public hearing changed our worries to warm fuzzies. Instead of being bulldozed, the circle's gorgeous prairie plants were combined with some sculpture and low stone walls. Those experiences, even the compromise, strengthened us all. //// Our chapter hosts a wide variety of monthly programs and private garden/yard tours, and Laurie Yahr sends out an interesting monthly e-newsletter. Over all, we are characterized by always looking forward, planning for a better future. //// This year, we coordinated our members' attendance at 6 city committees' meetings, supporting the protection plan developed by Madison's Pollinator Task Force. After anticipated final approval this month, we will determine our best next stewardship roles. Public education on pollinator ecology, and demonstration yards will need our help. We predict this will lead to a re-examination of local yard ordinances, and are glad we have the excellent articles and philosophies of Wild Ones website for the negotiations and discussions ahead. ////

Madison continued

In 2004, our chapter hosted the 25th Anniversary get-together for Wild Ones, with a great nationally know keynote speaker, Robert Michael Pyle, and Lorrie Otto present. I remember thinking how great that people like Craig Tufts of the National Wildlife Federation would come to our event. Rae Sweet drove Lorrie over from Bayside. I don't know if anybody realizes how much planning and effort went into that conference, but our Madison chapter president, Sue Ellingson, did a terrific job as chair, organizing everything, it was a wonderful weekend, and we are all indebted to her for its success and happy memories. //// We have had so many good times together, and many good stories will occur to me after I send this off. Writing has emerged as a strong interest, for at least 6 of our members, plus some newcomers. So we hope to share more anecdotes with other Wild Ones - to savor when they happen, rather than letting them escape like a wisp of prairie smoke!

Mid-Mitten MI Jeanne Henderson, President

The Mid-Mitten Chapter of Wild Ones is comprised of members from the following counties: Midland, Bay, Saginaw, Isabella, and Tuscola. Since we started the chapter in march of 2006, we have been involved with weeding and maintaining two gardens at the Linwood Rest Area along Interstate 75 north in Bay County. The gardens had first been a Master Gardener project, then we took it over. We remove invasive non-native plants, remove invasive weedy plants, and add new plants when there is space. We have two Serviceberry shrubs, one in the center of each garden, and many herbs and grasses. We talk with the staff there so that they keep a regular water schedule, give us mulch when we ask, and keep from cutting the good native wildflowers (that they thought were weeds). Karol Walker, Lucy Chargot, and Jeanne Henderson are the members who have worked on this project the most. We have wonderful blooms in the summer and early fall. We registered it as a "butterfly Garden" this year. Our sign stands in the center, to tell people we care for this garden. We grow over 15 different species, including common milkweed.

Milwaukee-Southwest/Wehr WI Pat Brust, Past President

As part of Wild Ones and the Milwaukee Southwest/Wehr chapter for 27 years, I have seen the evolution of a significant change in attitude towards native plant landscaping. In the beginning, natural landscaping was promoted as an easy, "no maintenance" way to landscape as an alternative to costly and time-consuming intense management of lawns and gardens. Well, we have since learned that native landscapes take as much management as any system, although with more sensible use of water and chemicals. The change I see is the realization that native plant landscaping is not just a way of "gardening", focused on the plants alone, but a way of creating a healthy and productive environment for all species. Because of this, the movement has encompassed people of more varied interests than just gardeners, including butterfly lovers, birders, foodies (edible landscapes), educators and landscape architects and nurseries. //// My gateway to native plants all those years ago was the desire to attract more birds to my property. Birds were and still are my foremost focus but I have come to love the grace and beauty of the grasses, flowers, trees and shrubs that I have planted to attract them. Now as I look forward to seeing all my "old friends" return each spring, I am referring to both birds and plants. //// This change in the conception of native plant landscaping has expanded our influence into areas not normally concerned with "gardening", and that can only help us move Wild Ones into another era of growth and expansion.

Mountain Laurel CT Janis Solomon, President and national Board member

How has Mountain Laurel Chapter changed the Earth? The Coogan Farm project comes to mind and of course the ongoing relationship with the College Arboretum, including the resumption of the SALT conference and Glenn Dreyer's election to the position of Wild Ones Honorary Director. //// After I brought up the change to "lawn" instead of tall grasses on the hill in front of the LymanAllyn with my neighbor Barbara Zabel, who is on the museum's board, she took the matter up with the director, and after attending Charlie's talk on seed-saving and germination of native species, arranged a meeting with him and the board. It looks like there will be a small meadow installed in an area that is currently overrun with autumn olive and other bad actors. Hurrah! //// Coogan Farm is a great example of our group fulfilling our mission to make a tangible difference in the region in terms of outreach, education and action. //// We have also been instrumental in initiating a plan to eliminate invasives in one area of the property of our local art museum and install a native meadow.

North
Oakland

MI

Jim Brueck,
President

The genesis of our Chapter goes back to 2005 when a handful of community and environmental minded citizens convinced the City of the Village of Clarkston to permit them to install a Rain Garden in the downtown Depot Park. It was a huge success and we found out later that two of the grants had backing by Wild Ones thru the Wildflower Association of Michigan. We wanted to grow as an organization and increase our impact to the community. We considered teaming up with other non-profits and after a meeting with Maryann Whitman becoming a Wild Ones chapter in 2010 seemed to make the most sense. We have grown from an initial 10-12 members to about 40 now. We host regular seminars and speaker presentations available to the public at no cost. We have learned so much of the complex world around us and how the mission of Wild Ones is so important to maintaining the sustainability of our fragile earth, and bring a lot of satisfaction to individuals who have learned and grown accordingly. I am sure that I speak for many members in that what I have learned through the WO Journal, support of people like Doug Tallamy, and exposure to principles and concepts supported by Wild Ones has had significant impact on my behavior and actions. My yard just as an example, which a few years ago didn't know what a native plant was, now has over seven native gardens and is registered as a Monarch Way station. //// More to learn, more to do, and Wild Ones has a very important role in the education and setting examples of people to follow.

Northfield
Prairie
Partners

MN

Arlene Kjar,
President

Our chapter celebrated its fourth year in April of 2015. We started with ten members and have very slowly been growing to forty-six members. Seems like as soon as we get a new member we lose a member. It has been hard to get members to volunteer for leadership positions. I attended the Wild Ones Annual Conference this August and picked up a lot of ideas that might help. One, we have just started, is to do a drawing at each program for a free membership by an attending guest and this seems to be working for us. We sponsored a Wild Ones Board Meeting in 2014. It brought a lot of our members together to help with the work of accomplishing the task. //// We have excellent programs and have been successful in attracting outstanding speakers at a reasonable cost. It has been difficult to get members to attend, but we are gradually improving attendance at our programs. They are offered free to the public, so are a really good tool to spread our mission statement of using native plants. //// Wild Ones has been a good fit for our small group of individuals that were interested in prairies. We have been able to expand our interest to all native plants and native wildlife. Through Wild Ones we've made many friends and have had rich experiences together.

Oak
Openings

MI

Denise
Gehring, Pst
President

2012 was a challenging time for our chapter, with limited leadership and only about 20 members. Through the crucial support of the Wild Ones national board, and staff, especially the resources and guidance provided by Donna, we were able to successfully jump-start the chapter. Now there are over 120 chapter members, and a vibrant Wild Ones community of many talented and contributing individuals of all ages. //// Our members provide environmental leadership, education outreach and project assistance locally. We are involved nationally with Wild for Monarchs, The Journal, Seeds for Education, and board committees. Three years ago, we established an annual Native Landscape Award program and the Wild Ones Student Awards. //// Wild Ones Oak Openings Region has become one of the leading advisors on native plants for our region. We are a group that welcomes every level of expertise, and enthusiastically works together to foster good stewardship to grow and restore natural landscapes. Thanks Wild Ones for giving us the foundation on which to flourish.

Red Cedar MI Elizabeth
Seagull,
President

The Red Cedar Chapter has almost doubled its membership in the past four years. More and more people seem to know about the value of planting native plants, especially milkweeds for monarchs, and pollinator gardens for bees. More people are learning they shouldn't use insecticides if they want butterflies. We participate every year with a booth at the Lansing Home and Garden Show, and every year we give out more literature and have more people stop by to ask, "how"? "Where do I get the plants?" "What will grow in this tough condition in my yard?" The past two years we have been invited to speak at the Home and Garden Show. We are thrilled that we are now also being asked to speak at local garden clubs, with powerpoint programs we develop for these presentations. //// We attribute our success to great programs and great publicity. In addition to notices in local papers, we have a presence on community college and university radio shows where we promote our programs and explain how planting natives helps the environment. We have a chapter website and a quarterly newsletter. We are doing a lot of community outreach, for example: planting and maintaining native gardens at a nature center; maintaining rain gardens in downtown Lansing; consulting with the Michigan Audubon Society about native plantings at a new bird sanctuary; and helping public schools create a native garden. We raise money through spring and fall plant sales and give discounts to members and volunteers, which encourages people to join. The funds enable us to give grants to worthy local projects, in addition to paying speakers. We have monthly programs with excellent speakers indoors during the school year, and guided walks outdoors in summer. We're friendly, we're focused and we're having fun!

River City -
Grand Rapids MI

Meribeth
Bolt, Vice-
President &
Nancy
Bedell,
Secretary

River City Wild Ones of Grand Rapids Michigan keeps growing with continuous activities and fundraising. //// Membership has grown from 90 members in 2014 to 114 with new members joining regularly and participating in our garden workdays. //// Our largest fundraiser and outreach event was our Second Annual Garden Tour and Plant Sale at our Native Plant and Pollinator and Education Garden (NPEG) at a site in the city we are repurposing to native plants. We offered 280 rare and hard-to-find native plants at the event and sold out in just over an hour! Over 275 visitors attended this event. For the second year, we partnered with Brewery Vivant a brewpub located across from our garden. On the day of our tour, the brewery donated \$1 for every beer sold during pub hours! //// In the last ten months, grants were awarded to RCWO from the Wildflower Association of Michigan, the West Michigan Butterfly Association and an unsolicited grant from the Dyer-Ives Foundation. The grants helped to fund the purchase of additional plants to complete the final phase of our ¼ acre Native Plant and Pollinator Education Garden, to create custom educational butterfly host plant tags and to fund our new garden sign. We have money left in the bank! //// After a year of dreaming and months of planning, in July we installed a professional sign for our garden (photo included). The sign was a collaborative effort between a local artist and our own Wild Ones writing team and graphic designer. The sign identifies the association of native plants to local pollinators. A poster was created from the sign and is a successful fundraiser. //// Our River City chapter continues to expand our school and community education programs. Each year we continue to award two grants to local non-profits for the purchase of native plants. //// To help keep our community education efforts current and inviting, we launched a Facebook page and welcomed close to 500 followers in 9 months. Next month, we will go live with our fresh and newly designed website – we’re now using the National Wild Ones format! //// We received a county park contract to install a native garden and a rain garden at a new community education park building. Planting will begin in spring 2016. //// Other fundraisers are ongoing book sales, always sold under retail price and signed by the author when possible. We sell cement stepping stones with the Wild Ones graphic. Each stone is hand crafted by a local artist. We have sold garden tools, chapter t-shirts and hats. We recommend switching up offerings so nothing sits on the shelves for long.

Rock River Valley	IL	Ginnie Watson, Co-President	<p>The Rock River Valley Chapter is on the move. Tim Lewis, National President, is a member of our chapter. During his tenure as National President he has helped bring the total Wild Ones membership from less than 3000 to over 4000. Struck by this amazing achievement, we were inspired to expand our numbers as well, to reach further into our community and increase our influence in the surrounding area. //// The timing was perfect. Our 20th Anniversary was coming up in July of 2014. To celebrate our rising star we decided to hold a lecture/landscape tour as a great way to celebrate our increasing longevity, draw attention to our mission and increase our name recognition all at the same time! We targeted our promotions on the general gardening community and called upon talents of Dr. Michael Jeffords, noted entomologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey, author, photographer and long time native plant advocate, to provide our morning lecture. This workshop, entitled Surrounding Yourself with Nature: Strategies for the Home Landscape, demonstrated what we are all about and what can be done with native plants. We titled the whole package Wild for Monarchs since everyone loves monarchs and it would attract a wide interest base. We hoped to attract many who were not familiar with Wild Ones and let them get to know us. We had no idea how wildly successful we would be! //// The landscape tour began in the afternoon after the lecture was finished and the audience had a chance to meet Dr. Jeffords. Because we had so many sites to offer we extended the tour over a two day period. The tour involved seven private and two public sites, all featuring native plants and showcasing prairie, savanna, and woodland landscapes. Each site had an activity to engage the family. One site even demonstrated the raising of monarch caterpillars. Bobbie Lambiotte raised well over 100 monarch caterpillars that year and was one of the most popular sites on the tour. Her yard was a butterfly's paradise with nectar and milkweed plants to satisfy every need. //// Over that two day period well over 400 participants discovered how beautiful native plants, grasses, trees, and shrubs can be used to make a striking landscape. We began 2014 with approximately 174 chapter members. Today we are on the move with well over 200!</p>
Root River	WI	Christina Russin, President	<p>We hold a plant sale (which I personally think is awesome) but that didn't seem like a large enough, important enough reason to include, especially since it's not particularly novel to hold a plant sale (and our sale was written up in the current issue). Our projects tend to be on the small side, like spending one day a year removing garlic mustard from a park. We accomplish a lot in that one day, but it's not like we have enough interest to sustain even a monthly workday. Our chapter membership is growing, and if we get a few more members that can volunteer some hours (instead of relying on the same stalwart few for everything) I think this will change. We have some new blood (like our new treasurer) which would go a long way toward accomplishing what we would like to see long-term. //// We are working with almost 50 faith and environmental groups in our area on a sustainability framework called Greening Greater Racine.</p>
Smoky Mountain	TN	Glenna Julian, Vice-President	<p>Hello from Kodak, It has been a hard busy month here. W.C. (Dub) Julian died on October 2, 2015. For his memorial we bought wild ageratum, wild asters, native mums and a hydranga. Our four children were then able to take the plants for their yards in memory of their dad. New gift memberships are on the way for daughter Ginger Clark and son Guane Julian. We are striving to do more with natives. We have tagged 19 monarchs and have 19 gulf fritillary and black swallowtails in our habitat.</p>

St Croix Oak
Savanna

MN

Kathy
Widin,
President

Our Wild Ones Chapter, St. Croix Oak Savanna, in eastern Minnesota was started in 2003, lost some momentum, but was re-organized with a new Board in 2005 and has been strong ever since. In Minnesota our number of chapters has now grown to seven. //// Membership: At a low of 14 members in 2004, in 2015 our chapter now has 70 members. Members have a range of experience, from professional plant people, including at least 5 native plant growers, a number of Master Gardeners, and the rest home-owners which includes both novices and experts in growing native plants. //// Promote Native Plants: Together with partners such as Wis. Prairie Enthusiasts, St. Paul Audubon, the Pollinator Friendly Initiative, watershed districts, and supporters of the Pollinator Resolution of the St. Croix River Watershed, we promote the use of native plants in landscaping, the preservation and/or restoration of remnant native plant communities, and education about not only native plants, but the habitat they provide for insects, birds and animals. Our chapter supports the Landscape Revival, a native plant sale featuring, in 2015, 12 native plant vendors and other exhibits by partner organizations promoting the use of native plants. //// Education: Our chapter contributes to the Wild Ones mission by educating people not only through indoor presentations by experts but also field trips to native plant communities, as well as native plant growers, in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. Along with other Minnesota Wild Ones chapters we plan and carry out a yearly "Design With Nature" conference that brings in over 200 attendees to hear local and national speakers on design, ecology, restoration, identification, and innovative uses for native plants such as permaculture and stormwater management. //// Outreach: We have assisted schools in receiving Seeds for Education grants, as well as supported the programs and events of partner organizations who also promote native plants, pollinators and wildlife. In 2016, we are planning a program for families to show them how to safely rear monarch caterpillars to maturity. //// Implementation: Most of our members grow native plants in their yards, from 4 ft.x 4 ft. plots to prairie restorations of several acres. Once people grow native plants in their yards, they become even stronger advocates for the benefits that these plants provide. //// The best part of all this is that we are enjoying what we are doing and firmly believe that Wild Ones is making a difference in Minnesota. //// We would like to thank the Wild Ones National office for the support, training, guidance and links to other chapters across the country, which help our chapter learn and grow.

St Louis	MO	Ed Schmidt, President	<p>The St. Louis chapter's Landscape Challenge, featuring a front yard makeover, held its 10th annual competition this year. The project was co-sponsored by St. Louis Wild Ones, Grow Native and Shaw Nature Reserve. Our chapter's role, March to June, included choosing the contest area, collecting and evaluating applications, and meeting with the prospective contest winner to make sure we have an appropriate match. //// During the summer WO member Jeanne Cablish, who has her own landscape design business, worked with the homeowners to create a design and lead them through the steps to prepare the site. //// Early Saturday morning, September 12, Jeanne was joined at the home by Scott Woodbury, Curator of Shaw Nature Reserve's Whitmire Wildflower Garden (and former WO national board member). Scott brought a load of mulch and some plants. When a Wild Ones crew of volunteers arrived at the home at 9 a.m. to plant and much the garden, Jeanne and Scott had already begun laying out the plants where they were to be planted. The installation was competed in under two hours this year, a record! //// Grow Native assisted with site selection and provided funds for purchasing plants. Some years the St Louis chapter helps with plant purchase, but our funds were not needed this year.</p>
Tennessee Valley	TN	Dennis Bishop, President	<p>I attended my first Wild Ones meeting in July, 2012. From the moment I walked in the auditorium door I knew the Wild Ones were a well organized, first class organization with a clear and timely mission. I joined immediately and I was not disappointed. On that evening Katherine Zimmerman was in town to speak about meadow gardening and the turnout was stupendous. I had no idea that our community had so many people with an interest in native plants. In a few short years the Tennessee Valley Wild Ones have gathered these local enthusiasts together and grown into one of the largest chapters in the country. Through partnerships with The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the Tennessee Aquarium, the Tennessee Native Plant Society, the Reflection Riding Arboretum and Nature Center we have become a moving force in the community. In 2014 we worked with our partners to bring the first Certificate in Native Plants program to Tennessee. And our annual symposium has brought some of the most influential advocates for native plants to Chattanooga. The "Plant Natives 2015" symposium brought a record 200 attendees to hear Doug Tallamy and other speakers advocate for the Living Landscape. As the southernmost chapter of Wild Ones we are on the frontier of a growing national organization that is moving boundaries and awakening the public to see that ecology and gardening can work together to build beautiful natural landscapes.</p>
Twin Cities	MN	Marty Rice, Past President and past national Board Member	<p>I think the work of Kris Martinka, one of our Twin Cities WO members exemplifies the impact Wild Ones has had on many of us: Kris and her husband who live in urban Minneapolis decided to remove the two large spruce trees in front of their house. In their place went liatris, butterflyweed, hyssop and many other natives last summer. One day this summer---a year later, a neighbor counted approx. 100 Monarchs nectaring on her liatris and hyssop in preparation for their migration south. People took notice: Her lovely native plants which attracted monarchs and other butterflies, insects and birds – resulted in her neighbors adding natives to their yards and gardens. She gave away over 200 native plants which she'd raised from seed this past summer (liatris, hyssop, hoary vervain, showy goldenrod). Other natives went to friends and patrons at a nearby coffee shop. Some also landed in the native garden she tends in front of that coffee shop that she and friends frequent. A great inspiration----thanks Kris</p>

West Cook IL Pam Todd, President

Even though we live in a very urban area just west of the city of Chicago, we are fortunate to have many residents who care deeply about environmental issues - including the importance of including native plants in landscaping to increase biodiversity and reduce pesticide use. The question is - how do we convince our neighbors to join us? Two years ago a handful of enthusiastic native gardeners started a Wild Ones chapter with the goal of creating a Wildlife Corridor that would cut across Oak Park and River Forest, connecting Thatcher Woods (a Cook County Forest Preserve site) to Columbus Park (a Jens Jensen park in Chicago). We found a garden center where we could hold an informational meeting about Monarchs, handed out information each week at our farmer's market, and within a few months we had enough people to start a chapter. Our first native plant sale that year was a resounding success and our monthly meetings had to be moved to a local college to accommodate the audience of 40 or so people we were attracting for each presentation. Our first native garden tour attracted over a hundred people and we tripled that number at our first native plant conference, featuring Doug Tallamy. //// There are now well over 200 homes on our Wildlife Corridor, along with many new school and park native gardens. We've been successful in attracting grant money for the past two years to fund these efforts, and the success of Wild Ones has energized other environmental organizations in our area and provided many opportunities for partnerships with groups that share common goals, such as water conservation, reducing pesticide use, and simply getting people outdoors. Our hard-working board is reaching out to draw in other communities. Now that our WildlifeCorridor is well underway, we hope to expand our efforts to create a regional corridor and work with researchers to determine not only the impact that native gardening has on biodiversity, but also what will motivate homeowners to participate. //// The movement continues to grow because we are seeing real results in terms of the number of species we are attracting to our gardens. Wild Ones model has been a recipe for success.

Wolf River WI Robert Dumke

The Wolf River Chapter has undertaken a project that has transformative potential for thousands of acres of abandoned landfills. Currently when a landfill is "retired" it is capped with clay, covered with a shallow amount of black dirt and then planted with grass seed normally used for highway shoulder stabilization. The purpose is to simply hold the dirt in place and protect the clay cap. Motivated by books like Attracting Native Pollinators (Xerces Society) and Bringing Nature Home (Doug Tallamy) which make such compelling cases for the need to replace lost pollinator habitat we have taken on the opportunity to convert a 9 1/2 acre retired landfill into a flowering pollinator habitat. Since it's capping in 1992 it has grown little else but grass, weeds, and an occasional volunteer forb. //// We are into our third year of conversion and to date have distributed over 4000 native flowering plants at various locations throughout the landfill. //// We expect this to be an ongoing "experiment" testing different planting techniques including some seeding mixes and spring and fall initiatives. //// Our vision is to discover techniques that are mostly universal so as to encourage others to start similar recovery efforts in their area. There are thousands of landfills nationwide so obviously the opportunity is great to turn these discarded acres into productive pollinator habitat. It is unrealistic politically to expect millions of dollars to be spent on large scale recovery of these sites but smaller grass roots efforts like the Wild Ones are capable of should be pursued.