



Illinois Prairie Wild Ones  
Chartered: December 27, 2010

### **Genesis**

The driving force behind the formation of the Illinois Prairie chapter of *Wild Ones* was Sherrie Snyder. "To help us learn more about the plants that were once native to central Illinois and how to incorporate those plants into our personal landscaping efforts, I am considering starting a chapter of the *Wild Ones* here in central Illinois." With that, Sherrie launched an information campaign that included the Master Naturalists class (the first one for McLean County, Illinois), the June-July and October-November newsletters of the Parklands Foundation, and newsletters of WildBirds Unlimited, Sugar Grove Nature Center, and the JWP Audubon Chapter. Twenty-six individuals came to the kick-off meeting on October 25, 2010 at the Community Room of the Bloomington Public Library. *Wild Ones* Rock River Valley Chapter member Tim Lewis gave the presentation, "Why Plant Natives." Sherrie distributed a survey to those present, and received enough encouraging feedback to begin a new chapter of *Wild Ones*.

The first organizational meeting was held on November 15, 2010, and was attended by several volunteers willing to be a part of getting this new chapter off the ground. Elections of the first slate of officers were: Sherrie Snyder, President; Jack Pfaffman, VP; Barbara Gaffron, Secretary; and Bill Snyder, Treasurer. The first standing committees and their chairs were: Programs, Mary Jo Adams and Marcia Rossi; Newsletter, Janet Rasmussen and Meredith Schroeer; Website, Jennifer Sharkey; and Membership, Sharon Welch. The temporary name "Central Illinois Chapter" was superseded when the permanent name "Illinois Prairie" was adopted with the chapter's official recognition on December 27, 2010.

Regular meeting dates were scheduled for the second Monday of each month, most of which would be held at the U of I Extension Office on Hershey Road in Bloomington. The Illinois Prairie Chapter has not-for-profit status [501(c)(3)] as a formally recognized chapter of the national organization.

The first public meeting and program was January 10, 2011, at the Extension office. Mary Jo Adams gave a slide presentation of native plants, and several attendees joined the growing group. At the February 7, 2010 meeting, more people joined, and by the publication of the third edition of the newsletter (March 2010) there were 49 members, and Ellen Dietz had signed on as the chapter's Historian and interim photographer. On Sunday, February 20, 2010, *The Pantagraph* printed a story by Scott Richardson about the national organization and the new chapter, in particular. This garnered further interest in the chapter, and by the beginning of April, the chapter had grown to 67 members.

At the time of this writing, chapter members are busily preparing for hosting the April 2011 national board meeting, which will be at the Heartland Bank in Normal, Illinois, followed by a wildflower walk at the Sugar Grove Nature Center in McLean, Illinois.

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