



Behind the Fence

A Newsletter of The Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance

Winter 2010

The Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance promotes conservation of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant lands and the greater Sauk Prairie landscape through ecological restoration, education, research and recreation.

We provide opportunities for individuals and partner organizations to pursue these activities guided by the values and goals of the Badger Reuse Plan.

We cordially invite you to the Alliance's Annual Meeting:

Wings on the Prairie

When: Thursday, 11th March
6:30-8:30pm

Where: River Arts Center Gallery
105 Ninth Street
Prairie du Sac

For more information, please contact:
heidi@saukprairievision.org

Alliance Commits to Restoration Efforts at Moely Prairie!

A little known but very nice dry, sandy prairie remnant exists right across the road from Mueller Sport Medicine on County Road PF in Prairie du Sac. It is owned by Barb Moely, who lives out of state but had the foresight to preserve it in hopes that it will be used for educational purposes. Moely Prairie has been managed by the Aldo Leopold Foundation (ALF), however the Alliance is in discussion with both the landowner and ALF to take on some of the restoration and education goals for the property!

At a recent meeting of the Alliance's restoration planning committee, several potential objectives were outlined for the property, pending approval of a long term management plan. Along with documenting the site's history, including the establishment of photo points that will serve to capture long term changes on film, mapping Moely Prairie will be a top priority in order to get a feel for what native and invasive plants currently call this prairie remnant home. Known desirables include Prickly Pear Cactus, Rough *...continued on page 2.*



SPHS students volunteer at Moely Prairie; text and photo contributions by Susan Kenney.

Restoration Efforts ...continued from pg 1.

Blazing Star, lots of Prairie Smoke and a wide assortment of prairie grasses.

The Alliance began working with volunteers at Moely Prairie this fall, knocking back exotic honey suckle and buckthorn. Throughout the winter months, volunteers will be working to remove large red cedars that commonly invade prairie remnants by cutting and reusing the larger cedar trunks for local Boy Scout projects. Volunteers from Sauk Prairie High School will also be active at the site come spring, as students in Teresa Kreutzmann's advanced biology class participate in service learning projects there!

As restoration season approaches, the Alliance will continue its work inside Badger, focusing 2010 efforts on the Hillside Prairie and in a large savanna area at the northeast end of the Plant. We hope, however, that by including Moely Prairie in our efforts, not only will it be restored to its former diversity, creating a space where students and volunteers can appreciate prairie at their doorstep, but that Moely Prairie will become part of an integrated program at Badger, tying together all the remnants of the greater Sauk Prairie! 🌻

Please join us for a Volunteer Work Day as we restore the prairie and savanna plant species native to the Badger Plant and the greater Sauk Prairie!

Mark your calendars, 9am 'til noon:

- Saturday, March 13th
- **Saturday, April 10th**
- Saturday, May 8th
- **Saturday, June 12th**
- Saturday, July 3rd
- **Saturday, August 7th**
- Saturday, September 4th
- **Saturday, October 9th**
- Saturday, November 13th

Please RSVP to workdays@saukprairievision.org for more details! A full calendar of events is also listed on our website at:
www.saukprairievision.org/newsroom.

Volunteer Spotlight

Community volunteers Sue Kenney and Gerry Clausen first heard about Moely Prairie, located to the south of Cty Rd PF in Prairie du Sac, from Teresa Kreutzmann, biology teacher at Sauk Prairie High School. Mrs. Kreutzmann's advanced biology students are participating in a service learning project there, working with loppers to remove invasive brush from this remnant prairie. Sue (*below left*) from Sauk City, and Gerry (*below right*) from West Bend, decided to approach Aldo Leopold Foundation (ALF) and the Alliance to see how they might lend a hand.

Inspired by the writings of August Derleth -- American writer and naturalist, praised for his ability to memorialize life in Wisconsin in such works as *Sac Prairie Saga* -- Sue and Gerry have taken on restoration of Moely Prairie with gusto! Toting chainsaws, weed wackers and other tools of the trade, they have cut, stacked, and recycled many invasives that have been encroaching upon this prairie. Thrilled to be a part of restoration efforts in their own backyard, they are eager to see Moely Prairie become a portrait of regional conservation, an educational tool that speaks of Sauk Prairie's heritage!

Soon there will be a third volunteer trolling the grounds of Moely Prairie; Mike Rogers, also from Sauk City, has volunteered to lend his expert logging skills with a chain saw. We thank these volunteers for the tremendous efforts they have put forth, and we look forward to updates on their progress at Moely Prairie! 🌻



Badger: Land in Transition

By Gail Lamberty

What is going on at Badger? I thought it was already done? Why is it taking so long?

These are questions I often hear when folks learn that I've been following the Badger Plant closure for many years. Fair and reasonable questions I think, questions I ask myself at times!

Land clean up, building demolition, prairie restoration, land use planning, and yes -- land transfers are occurring simultaneously. The Federal government is transferring over 7,000 acres to a variety of new owners; this mix of 6 governmental and tribal bodies creates complexity. It gets even more interesting with multiple divisions within each of those bodies, for example, State of Wisconsin interest in Badger includes both DNR and DOT at multiple levels.

In addition, most folks involved with the Badger Reuse Plan, the document that governs all future land use at Badger, have specific interests in the Badger process; few folks are aware of the entire history surrounding Badger, which creates complications as representatives of various groups change. The Alliance, involved with the process from the start, plays a critical role in keeping communication flowing between *all* these partners. Alliance members faithfully attend meetings, sharing a collective memory of the past. Many representatives of the Badger Oversight and Management Commission (BOMC) don't have this history of the community consensus building process as a resource to reflect upon. We remember and remind decision makers that the Reuse Plan created in 2001 is the skeleton framework for the future; together, stakeholders are putting the meat on the bones!

While Badger was built in an amazingly short time -- federal court condemned properties in January 1942; landowners were evicted on March 1; acid and oleum plants began producing powder in January 1943 -- putting the pieces back together again will take significantly longer. Land has already transferred to Dairy Forage, DOT, and

other private entities; cleanup is complete for a number of parcels scheduled to transfer in 2010. The Army hopes to have building demolition complete in 2012; landfills and scrap pile locations will be the last to transfer, by 2015. Well monitoring of ground water and maintenance of capped areas is required for at least 30 years.

This is an exciting, challenging process, treating the Badger property as one entity by sharing core values, concepts, and criteria to craft a shared future for the land. But visions require time to become reality: following the Wisconsin River from the Sauk Prairie, before you get to Spring Green you will come upon Tower Hill State Park. In the 1830's, Daniel Whitney drilled a shaft 200ft deep and 8ft in diameter to produce lead ammunition there. That property, too, went through various transitions: from a munitions producer, to a private resort, to a state park in 1922, almost one hundred years after it had produced lead shot. We have a model of transformation before us -- we won't have to wait one hundred years! Commitment and patience will bring community vision to the land, and the great Sauk Prairie will be back home on the Badger landscape! 🌻



Yes, I would like to support a sustainable future for the Badger lands and the greater Sauk Prairie landscape with my tax-deductible gift of

\$ _____.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please send me a poster.

Members joining or renewing at the \$50 level or higher are eligible to receive a poster of Victor Bakhtin's painting, *Sauk Prairie Remembered: A Vision for the Future*.

Please make checks payable to TSPCA. Thank You!

WORKING FOR A NEW FUTURE FOR THE SAUK PRAIRIE ON THE BADGER LANDS



THE SAUK PRAIRIE CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

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NON-PROFIT

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*To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,
One clover, and a bee,
And revery.
The revery alone will do,
If bees are few.*

~Emily Dickinson

Prairie Remnants...

As planning for the 2010 restoration season gets underway, the Alliance is pleased to announce receipt of a grant from the **Greater Sauk County Community Foundation** (GSCCF), to be used for the purchase of seed at the Hillside Prairie. Our thanks to GSCCF for supporting this community driven effort!

W.S. Badger, Inc., makers of Badger Balm and other USDA Certified Organic products, as well as the Madison based **REI** store, outfitter of outdoor clothing and gear, have signed on to help sponsor our Restoration Program at Badger! Please stay tuned as these partnerships develop!

Please visit **VolunteerMatch.org** to find out more about volunteering with the Alliance at Badger! Search for opportunities that meet your interests, skills, and schedule; we have both field and office based opportunities available. Connect with us today!

Winter prairie education and service learning outings continue at Badger, offering a unique opportunity for students to learn more about their local natural environment. Students from Reedsburg, Weston, Ithaca, and Wisconsin Dells will all be snowshoeing their way to remnant prairie sites, learning about winter ecology and removing invasive species along the way! Look for photos in our February ENewsletter...

The Alliance is now on Facebook! Sign up today to become fan, and help spread the word about restoration efforts at Badger to your friends!

A full schedule of volunteer opportunities, outings, and other events at Badger is listed on our website. Visit today and check out our calendar, sign up for ENewsletters, support our sponsors, and take advantage of our new online giving option: **www.saukprairievision.org**! 🌱