

President: Jackie Duncan

Vice President: Tommy Hillman

Secretary: Malcolm Vidrine

Treasurer: Patricia Lewis

Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society

Publicity Chair: Margaret Frey
Web Master: Doug Miller
Newsletter Editor: Charles Allen
Past President: Ken Wilson
Education Coordinator:
Margaret Frey

"A PRAIRIE CHICKEN IN EVERY PLOT"

VOLUME 38, November 2010

From the President:

I am honored to be President of this organization and hope to carry on the good work for prairie restoration that has been going on over the past 22 years. Drs. Charles Allen and Malcolm Vidrine started this work and continue to be the hub of this Society.

The Cajun Prairie group is very hands on and as always there is much going on. Many thanks go to Margaret Frey for working with area teachers in designing lesson plans related to the Cajun prairie ecosystem. Marc Pastorek seems to be everywhere – mowing our trails at Eunice, giving advice for prairie plantings at the new St. Landry Parish Visitors' Center, developing plans for the NW corner site in Eunice, collecting seeds, etc. Malcolm Vidrine serves as the CPHPS representative on the board of the Coastal Prairie Partnership, a new coalition of prairie enthusiasts currently based in the Texas coastal prairie. Besides these special people there are many others that help with the ongoing work of seed collecting, herbiciding tallows, picking up trash, and organizing meetings. Many thanks go to all these hard workers that promote the restoration of our native prairie lands.

This winter the Eunice prairie will be prescribed burned by the State, as it has been for the last 22 years. Fire is the most important tool that can be used to maintain a prairie. Other commitments will continue during the year, including management of the Duralde Prairie and inspections to comply with our Conservation Servitudes.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to develop a prairie plot in your yard. If everyone did, just think of how much prairie would be restored; besides the fact that you would water less, mow less, weed less, etc. contributing to the sustainability of our natural resources. What better way to blend our urban homes with our natural environments. Try one.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting, April 23, 2010.

Your President,

Jackie Duncan

November 14, 2010

SO YOU WANT TO JOIN US OR RE-JOIN?

Dues are \$20 per person, \$25 per family, and \$10 for students.

Make checks payable to Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society and mail to:

CPHPS/CO Patricia Lewis

262 CR 3062

Newton, TX 75966

Minutes: The Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society, Inc.

August 28, 2010

Ken Wilson, President and Chair, opened the general meeting of the members of the Cajun Prairie Habitat Preservation Society at 11:45 am August 28, 2010 at Rocky's Restaurant in Eunice, Louisiana.

Domingo Jariel presented two presentations on soils of the Cajun Prairie that were presented at the North American Prairie Conference in Cedar Falls, Iowa, in early August. Malcolm Vidrine presented a presentation on the history of the society and his new book, which was also presented to the North American Prairie Conference.

The business meeting was called to order.

Malcolm Vidrine provided minutes in the newsletter from the previous meeting. Charles Allen moved for the acceptance of the minutes as amended (the donation of \$100 to sponsor the Coastal Prairie Partnership conference and to place our society in membership was changed to \$250) and Jackie Duncan seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted by a majority vote.

Charles Allen presented the treasurer's report as provided by Pat Lewis. The report summary is attached. Jim Foret motioned for acceptance of the report. Mac Meyers seconded the motion. The report was accepted by a majority vote.

Old business:

After a brief discussion of Tyrone Foreman's offer of donation, the committee appointed at the last meeting by Jackie Duncan was continued. More time to consider this donation was deemed necessary.

Charles Allen and Malcolm Vidrine have been in contact over the summer with the City Attorney (Jacques Pucheu) and the society's attorney (Kenneth Pitre) in an attempt to resolve the donation of Magnolia Street to the city. Marc Pastorek has been working with the city in order to fill in the ditch on the northern property. The status of the drainage needs to be confirmed and the issue of mineral rights needs to be discussed. Jim Foret motioned that the mineral rights for the land be retained by the society in the event that this is possible. Sara Simmonds seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Jackie Duncan provided a brief report on the mailing of postcards to remind members to pay their dues. No further action was taken.

Charles Allen reported that the small piece of prairie remnant north of Mamou that had been a potential purchase now has several trailer homes on it. No further action was taken.

Margaret Frey provided a report on the progress of the creation of lesson plans on the Cajun Prairie. She presented a lesson plan prepared by Amy Duplechain on butterfly life history in the Cajun Prairie.

Jim Foret and his horticulture group were commended for the clean-up duties at the restoration site in Eunice. Tom Hillman and the Boy Scouts are to continue this effort in September.

New business:

Malcolm Vidrine announced the 2nd Annual State of the Prairie Conference to be held November 4-5, 2010, in Houston, TX by the Coastal Prairie Partnership (visit their website for details of the meeting and for registration).

Charles Allen reported that Marc Pastorek had mowed the trails and was completing the drainage work on the northwest tract of the Cajun Prairie Restoration Project in Eunice. The society extended a hearty round of applause and commended Marc for his effort. Charles then presented a landscaping plan drawn up by Marc for the northwest tract. Paul Fontenot motioned that the society proceed with the landscaping plan by

exploring costs to create and maintain the landscape, including any costs of mowing of trails. Sara Simmonds seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. A follow-up report from Charles and Marc is expected.

Celeste Gomez (The St. Landry Parish Tourist Commission representative) reported on the changes in plantings at the new visitor center. She commended Marc Pastorek for his assistance in designing and obtaining native grasses and plants for the landscaping of the center.

Sara Simmonds motioned and Celeste Gomez seconded the slate of nominees for election for the next two years. The slate follows:

2010-2012

President: Jackie Duncan Vice President: Tom Hillman
Treasurer: Patricia Lewis Secretary: Malcolm Vidrine
Publicity Chair: Margaret Frey Web Master: Doug Miller
Newsletter Editor: Charles Allen Past President: Ken Wilson
Education Coordinator: Margaret Frey

The motion was supported by a majority.

The society extends its deepest sympathies for the loss of Cassandra Loos (wife of the former president of our society, Peter Loos). Sara Simmonds motioned that the society donate \$300 to her chosen charity. Charles Allen seconded the motion and suggested donating the money to the Native Plant Society Of Texas (NPSOT) for a planned scholarship. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ken Wilson addressed the society and suggested that a committee be created to solicit donations for the society. No further action was taken at this time.

Diane Bullard and Michael Heineman reported on a prairie project on Highway 93 near Grand Coteau. No action was taken at this time.

Charles Allen motioned that the next meeting be held on April 16, 2011 (but this date had to be changed to April 23) . Paul Fontenot seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ken Wilson handed the gavel to Jackie Duncan. Jackie requested a motion to adjourn. Charles Allen moved and Ken Wilson seconded.

Respectfully submitted

Malcolm F. Vidrine, Ph.D., Secretary



LOUISIANA WILDFLOWER GUIDE BY Charles Allen and Ken Wilson

This is an excerpt from the soon-to-be-published book:

Pencil flower* (*Stylosanthes biflora*) is a native herbaceous perennial in the Fabaceae . The leaves are alternate, stipulate, and three-foliolate pinnately compound with elliptic to lanceolate leaflets. The inflorescence consists of terminal and axillary short spikes. The flowers are perfect, irregular, and the typical legume type, with five green sepals (two fused and three free). The yellow to orange petals include the uppermost large standard, two free lateral wings, and a lowermost keel composed of two fused petals. The ten stamens are all fused together, and the flower is thus monadelphous. The ovary is superior, and the fruit is a pubescent legume. This is a common species of pine forests and prairies throughout the state, with reports from 36 parishes. This is a species that can be seen in flower from May to September

CAJUN PRAIRIE HABITAT PRESERVATION SOCIETY

TREASURER'S REPORT

JULY 31, 2009 JUNE 30, 2010

CHECKING ACCOUNT	
PRIOR BALANCE – DECEMBER 31, 2010	\$1,298.58
DEPOSITS	
DUES	\$1,205.00
INTEREST ON GCFW CERT. OF DEPOSIT	
\$249.31	
TRANSFER FROM SAVINGS	\$3,000.00
SUBTOTAL	\$5,752.89
WITHDRAWALS	
BURN PRAIRIE - EUNICE	\$(300.00)
PRINTING TRAIL HANDOUTS - EUNICE	
\$(514.43)	
CONCRETE BENCH REPAIRS - EUNICE	
\$(175.00)	
INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL - DURALDE	
\$(1,050.00)	
SOIL TESTING	\$(150.00)
NEWSLETTER EXP & SAMPLE HANDOUT MAILING	
\$(194.64)	
MEETING EXPENSE - MAY - NET LUNCH (74.55-60.00)	\$(14.55)
GRANT - CENTER FOR LA STUDIES-ULL (PUBLISH VIDRINE BOOK ON CP)	\$(2,500.00)
SUBTOTAL	\$(4,898.62)
BALANCE	\$854.27
SAVINGS ACCOUNT	
PRIOR BALANCE	\$10,260.19
DEPOSITS	
INTEREST	\$16.72
WITHDRAWALS	
TRANSFER TO CHECKING	\$(3,000.00)
BALANCE	\$7,276.91
ENDOWMENT CD –DAVID DAIGLE DBA GULF COAST FLATWOODS	
MATURING JUNE 1, 2011 @ 5%	\$10,000.00

PATRICIA LEWIS, TREASURER

The Coastal Prairie Partnership Conference 2010
Malcolm F. Vidrine and Larry Allain

The Coastal Prairie Partnership Conference was held at the Houston Zoo in Houston, Texas, on November 4-5, 2010. We attended the one day conference, where Jaime Gonzales, Fred Smeins, Jim Willis and Daryl Smith led the speakers in the introduction to prairies, especially coastal prairies. Emphasis on recreating and restoring prairies was central. The following webpage will permit you to view some of the slide presentations.

<http://www.coastalprairiepartnership.org/page/2010-state-of-the-prairie-1>

One major event was our presentation of the Cajun Prairie Volunteer Service Award to Charles Allen. Other awards were presented to Texas volunteers.



The second day was field trip day. One group went to Armand Bayou east of Houston. We travelled with the second group to the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge west of Houston. Fred Smeins and Jim Willis led the tours of prairies built for prairie chickens and quail. This is the closest we got to prairie chickens—once abundant in the Cajun Prairie, too.



Cajun Horticulture 101: Some Garden-worthy Plants from the Cajun Prairie
by Bobby Grammar

Rudbeckia nitida var. *texana* Texas Brown Eyed Susan exhibits itself through the four seasons. In Spring, this rosette- forming plant flushes out new, shiny, course textured foliage of a deep shade of green. It ultimately grows into a clump about twelve inches high and wide. In about June, erect flower stalks rise from the center of the clump and each stalk ultimately produces one or a few typical Blackeyed Susie flowers, but with very pronounced, elongated discs(the central part of the flower). A natural stand of *R. texana* will generally bloom at a height of about four feet tall. The flowers last about month and act as a pollen source for bees and native wasps. If you cut the flower stalks back to the ground shortly after bloom-finish, it will reward you by producing another floral display. In the winter, the foliage stays green and acts as an effective ground cover when planted en masse. It can be propagated by seed and by dividing the roots of mature plants.



a



Monarda fistulosa Bergamot or Bee Balm is a spectacular member of the mints. It's a delightfully aromatic plant that has a place in most herb and ornamental gardens. *Monarda* is a running, stoloniferous mint, considered to be tame, since it expands by runners in only inches per year. The lavender flower clusters are produced at the terminals in June and last about a month. They are showy from a distance and are very detailed up close as well. Nectar seeking insects utilize this plant when it is in bloom.

Mon

Monarda lindheimeri Lindheimer's Bee Balm or White Flowered Bee Balm closely resembles and has many of the similar characteristics of *M. fistulosa* but with very short to no petioles on leaves and white flowers. In Louisiana, its distribution is limited to the Cajun Prairie.



from Charles Allen: *Monarda fistulosa* and *Monarda lindheimeri* are very similar. The following is an excerpt from a key that I am developing to Louisiana plants: glomerules refers to the cluster of flowers and pedicel is the stalk of an individual flower.

F(E). Glomerules lax and open so component branches are readily visible, pedicels 2-5 mm long; leaves mostly ovate, short petioled to sessile...
.....*M. lindheimeri*

F(E). Glomerules tight and compact, pedicels 1-2 mm long; leaves deltoid ovate to ovate lanceolate or lanceolate, petioled.....*M. fistulosa*

Eryngium yuccifolium Button Snakeroot aka rattlesnake master is an excellent garden plant, being one of the few Louisiana natives that have truly silver-toned foliage. The overall form of the plant is yucca-like, as the species name suggests. The plant forms a rosette, or clump of lanceolate, serrated foliage with vertical spikes that display clusters of white, prickly, button-like flower heads. It is an excellent nectar/activity plant: amusing to watch on a hot, sunny day since so many native insects utilize it. It works well as a container plant, able to withstand a dry spell now and then. The larger leaves of this plant were used to make moccasins by Native Americans.



Erythrina herbacea Mamou, as it is called in Acadiana, is the quintessential Cajun Prairie plant, although it is found occasionally in many sand-hill Parishes of Louisiana. It's a pea family member: a large, portly fellow, growing into a rounded, six-foot-round herbaceous shrub. The smooth ovate leaflets are borne in threes and are very unique in form. The long, slender flower stem is erect, bearing bright crimson flowers which eventually produce very ornamental pods that open, exposing their bright red-orange seeds. These persist for months through the dormant season. A hybrid of *Erythrina herbacea* and its south-of-the-border cousin *Erythrina cristagalli* has been produced. This plant, *Erythrina Bidwillii* produces no seed and so it continues to bloom until frost. Where frost is rare, as in New Orleans, it often flowers year round and grows to twenty feet or more in height. Growing *E. herbacea* from seed is easy. Simply collect the seed and with a sharp knife or pliers, cut off about 1/8 inch of one end of the seed. Then plant by covering with soil just enough to hide the seed.

Silphium laciniatum Compass Plant, an ADYC (Another Darn Yellow Composite), is a sunflower relative that occurs in most of the states east of the Rocky Mountains. It's a tall boy, reaching to six or more feet when in bloom. The majority of the foliage is less than two feet tall, though some leaves ascend up the singular flower stalk. The flat blade portion of the leaf is oriented with one flat surface facing west and the other east and thus the narrow portions are north and south. The plant can make maximum use of the sun by having its flat portion facing east and west and this also leads to its common name of compass plant. The stalk is unusually rigid and erect and produces several large yellow ray and disc flowers that bloom tightly to the stalk. When scarred with a knife, the stem exudes a resin that can be chewed like chewing gum. The taproot is very large and carrot-like. The seeds, highly prized by song birds, have a high oil content.





Pycnanthemum albescens White Leaf Mountain Mint is found throughout the region's grasslands. The plant grows taller than wide with the height being about four or five feet. The flowers are at the ends of the upright branches, are white with an attractive lavender speckled color and are wreathed with frosty white leaves near the flower cluster. In earlier days, the leaves were used as a spice to season sausage. This Mountain Mint blooms for an extended period of time starting about May. All of the above-ground parts are pleasantly aromatic. There are two varieties of White Leaf Mountain Mint from the Cajun Prairie. A selection called "Camphor" is a found, natural hybrid that has an unusually strong camphor

aroma. "Malcolm Mint" is another unique varietal form that has a distinctly spearmint scent and taste. It makes a delicious tea. Both of these were found and preserved by Malcolm Vidrine of Eunice.

Hibiscus moscheutos Rose Mallow, sometimes called Wild Cotton, is a robust perennial rising to six feet. It is distributed through every Parish in Louisiana along the edges of swamp forests and in alluvial meadows. The flowers are large and very showy, usually with white petals banded at the base of the petals with red. Although Rose Mallow usually grows in the wild in wetter conditions, it is well-adaptable to typical garden soils. It can be planted successfully with Louisiana Iris as a companion plant since both have opposite, complimenting dormant periods. Occasionally, a pink petalled form can be found in a large wild stand. Malcolm Vidrine has collected



and grown in his garden a particularly dark pink color form that has tentatively been called "Cajun Twilight".



Coreopsis tripteris Tall Tickseed is a coreopsis but looks nothing like one. Like many perennial plants, it is a bit slow to get established, but when it is well settled in, it will provide many years of enjoyment and will fill a purposeful niche in the garden. It lives up to its common name Tall Tickseed by reaching upward with six foot vertical stems. These are adorned with a multitude of golden-yellow daisy-like flowers with reddish centers.

The foliage is glossy and distinctive. The plant over several years will form a dense thicket of stems about three feet in diameter. It is pleasantly aggressive in that respect. This coreopsis species is commonly found in specialty nurseries in the U.S. It is native in most states east of the Mississippi River into northern Canada, except for a few unfortunate states in New England.

Manfreda virginica Native Agave or Rattlesnake Master is a very unusual and useful native lily. It occurs in grasslands across the southeastern U.S. Its lance-like medium green leaves are succulent and radiate from a rosette. The plant is only about four inches tall, having a mostly prostrate appearance. The leaves of the plants have a medium green to blue-green color with differing degrees of purple spotting. The singular flower stalk is a dark purple, fleshy spike rising from the center of the plant to five or more feet. It produces flowers without petals and very pronounced stamens that literally drip with nectar. It is fragrant and serves as an effective low-growing mass-plant.



MARK YOU CALENDARS

Spring Meeting April 23, 2011



SCENES FROM DURALDE, AUG MEETING