



# *the Bluestem Banner*

Spring 2008

Tallgrass Ontario

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*Red Oak Savanna, Wasaga Beach Prov. Park Photo: G. Buck*

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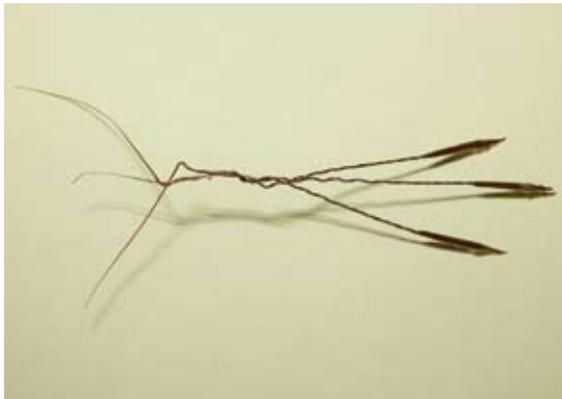
## Feature Plant

### Porcupine Grass - Allen Woodliffe

Porcupine grass is a medium-sized bunch grass, typically growing to 1.2 metres in height. It occurs in areas receiving full sun, thriving on mostly mesic to dry sites including sand barrens, dry black soil prairies, upland prairies, savannas and even rocky grasslands. Widespread and abundant farther west, it is not very common in Ontario. In fact, it is a relatively little-known species because it is neither widespread nor showy, at least compared with the big five species (big bluestem, Indian grass, switch grass, little bluestem and prairie cord grass) common in most prairies. It is a C3 or cool season species, growing vigorously in the early season. By mid July it is ready to drop its mature seed.

Porcupine grass is a native perennial, with a root system that may grow to a depth of 1.3 metres, although the majority of the root biomass is in the upper soil strata. The alternate stem leaves may be 40 cm in length, and the basal leaves sometimes up to 75 cm. The pale green and glabrous stems and leaves grow rapidly early in the season, when its foliage may be most palatable to herbivores.

At the terminus of each culm is a 15-25 cm long panicle of spikelets. Each spikelet has two glumes and a single awned lemma that encloses the floret, in which



Above: *Stipa spartea* with twisted awns.  
Below: Close up of seed



Porcupine Grass: *Stipa spartea*  
Photo: A. Woodliffe

the single grain develops. The lemma has a long (up to 20 cm) awn that is initially quite straight but eventually bends sharply. As the seed develops, the previously upright culm tends to lean over to one side with the added weight. After the seed drops, the culm and leaves take on a tan colour and, as the seeds release, the culm regains much of its upright appearance. An interesting aspect of porcupine grass is that the fallen seed retains the awn, which twists repeatedly partially in response to changing humidity. This twisting motion allows the seed to plant itself as the sharply pointed grain drills into the ground. If the sharply-tipped grain gets snagged in an animal's fur, it can potentially cause problems. As the sharply-tipped grain twists and turns, it can become further embedded in an animal's fur, eyes, nose or mouth, piercing the skin like the quill of a porcupine. This grass is thus aptly named!

Sheep, although not native to prairie, are especially susceptible to injury from porcupine grass. For example, in 1833, several sheep herders drove a flock of sheep from Kentucky all the way to southern Manitoba. In that era, driving livestock across the country was not uncommon. Records show that only 251 of the herd originally containing 1475 sheep survived that trek across the dry prairie. They cite porcupine grass as the primary culprit because it easily pierced the sheep's mouths as they grazed.

Ironically, had the flocks traversed the prairie later in the year, the sheep would have thrived off porcupine grass. Once the offending seeds drop by the end of July, the plant, rendered harmless, provides a bounty of nutritional forage. After the seed falls, the plant goes

dormant through the heat of the summer. This cool season grass will then begin greening up and growing again in the autumn. It is therefore a source of forage for grazers long after other foliage has turned brown.

Porcupine grass is a valuable part of a limited number tallgrass prairies and oak savannas in southern Ontario. Its ability to grow in nutrient-poor and well-drained sand makes it an important plant for stabilizing soil susceptible to erosion. The large seeds are a nutritious source of food for song and game birds. They are



Above: Bunch of *Stipa spartea*; bunch of long awned seeds of *Stipa spartea*; a hairbrush made from *Stipa spartea* (photo from Gilmore, R (1977) *Uses of plants by the Indians of the Missouri River Region*. University of Nebraska Press.

particularly important because they happen to ripen when many others are not available.

*Spartea*'s pointed awns have lent themselves to several cultural uses. Records show that Plains Indians bound them together into tight clusters for use as hairbrushes. Anthropologists indicate these brushes also had ceremonial uses as well. The seeds also provided a source of entertainment for aboriginal children who developed hand-eye coordination skills while playing darts with the sharp grains. Pioneers referred to it as the "devil's darning needle" though this was most likely a nickname rather than reference to its practical use as a sewing tool.

If you find yourself fascinated by the unusual features of porcupine grass, rest assured you are in good company. The interesting characteristics of this unique self-planting grass might well have been one of the reasons John Muir so appreciated *Stipa spartea*. Returning to his home in Wisconsin after spending several months in late 1866 through early 1867 in Grey County at Trout's Mills near Meaford, Ontario, the now famous naturalist took a detour to Illinois to visit some of his beloved prairie haunts. Letters to friends reveal his love and interest in prairie grasses and document his delight at collecting porcupine grass, among other species, to create subtly beautiful, leafy bouquets.

## Feature Article

### Burning prairies: the promise of prairies as a biofuel source – David N. Morris

Farming and the conservation of tallgrass prairie seem to be mutually exclusive goals. Indeed, in southern Ontario, as elsewhere in North America, the historic loss of prairies has been largely due to its conversion to farmland. While those of us who admire the unique beauty of prairies may justifiably bemoan their loss, the attraction of prairie lands to pioneering non-Native farmers is understandable; rich soils, typically flat terrain, and a dearth of trees to clear must have made these lands seem like the best places to establish farms. As has so often been the case, what is good for farming has been not been good for nature.

What can be done to resolve this apparent impasse? Certainly, the growth in the number of hobby farms and rural, non-farm (exurban) development has created opportunities for prairie restoration, but these opportunities are relatively few and the projects are typically fairly small. Furthermore, despite some

profound challenges over the past few decades, farming remains, and is likely to continue to be, a dominant feature of the southern Ontario rural landscape. Therefore, if we are to conserve more than the tiny fraction of native tallgrass prairie that remains in southern Ontario, it would seem that we need to reconcile the needs of agriculture with those of prairie species.

But, why should farmers give up productive land – and income – to restore prairie? As a group, they already bear a disproportionate burden for the conservation of natural areas and species. Furthermore, with some of the highest grain prices in decades, increased demand for biofuels and a looming global food crisis, it could be argued that it would be economically irresponsible and, perhaps even unethical, to take farmland out of production simply to restore prairie.

Fortunately, research at the University of Minnesota suggests that there may indeed be a solution to this conundrum. The research team, headed by David Tilman, also suggests that their solution will help to combat climate change. Better still, by using only degraded farmland, their solution will not reduce much needed food production. On the contrary, it will potentially increase food supplies by freeing up grains which are now being used to produce ethanol and biodiesel. The solution, Tilman and his team suggests, is to grow and harvest prairies to produce biofuels.

It is easy to be sceptical about such claims. For one thing, they seem just too good to be true. Simple solutions, however appealing, would seem to rarely work for complex problems. Furthermore, using prairie grasses, most notably switchgrass, to produce biofuels has been tried before. Although it has met with some success, its promise continues to be largely unrealized. Part of the problem lies in the challenges of economically turning cellulose into ethanol. For those hoping to preserve prairies, part of the problem is also that these monocultures of switchgrass bear little resemblance to the highly diverse plant communities that define prairie ecosystems. It is understandable, therefore, if we are cautious about the promises made by this research.

Despite understandable scepticism, it is hard not to be impressed and excited by this research. The result of 10 years of research, this study found that a highly diverse mixture of perennial prairie grasses and other flowering plants, grown on degraded infertile farmland and converted into ethanol using existing technology, produced 51% more usable energy per hectare than ethanol produced from corn grown on fertile land. The researchers suggest a variety of reasons for these impressive results. One reason is that prairie plants, once established, need very little care or no agricultural inputs; energy does not have to be expended into cultivating, spraying, watering or fertilizing the crop. Compared to monocultures of corn, or even switchgrass, the high diversity of plant species in a prairie tend to compliment each other and maximize growing efficiencies. Some plants grow best the spring while others grow best

later in the year. Some plants fix nitrogen while others reap the benefits. Finally, compared to seed crops like corn, harvesting prairie plants exploits the energy in the entire aboveground biomass, not just the seeds of the plants.

According to the researchers, the efficiencies of biofuels derived from mixed prairie species will also help reduce the levels of climate changing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Then again, this was supposed to be the promise of all biofuels. It has not worked out as well as promised. Depending on the study, biofuels derived from corn and other grain or oilseed crops, have been found to consume almost as much, if not more, energy as they produce. The carbon benefits of such biofuels are, therefore, marginal at best. If nitrogen fertilizers must be used to grow the crops, the powerful greenhouse gas nitrous oxide is also produced, making the benefits of such biofuels even more questionable. If natural habitat is destroyed to create farmland on which to grow the biofuels sources, the whole exercise begins to look counterproductive. Since Tilman and his researchers suggest that prairie-derived biofuels overcome the drawbacks of other biofuels, this may truly be a “carbon-negative” future source of useable energy.

Given the promise of prairie biofuels, will there once again be vast tracts of prairie stretching across southern Ontario and the American mid-west? It is tantalizing to think so. Assuming that enough seed can be produced to create these new prairie lands and that this seed will reflect the genetic diversity within the species, this could be the greatest boon to prairie



*Above: Establishing a diverse mixture of prairie grasses and forbs can enhance biodiversity while serving as a biofuel crop  
Photo: A. Woodliffe*

conservation since the start of the warm, dry hypsithermal period 8,000 years ago.

However, there are still many reasons to remain wary of the results of this study. For example, the researchers suggest that if 500,000,000 hectares were converted in mixed prairie, it could produce enough biofuels to replace 13% of the global petroleum consumed for transportation and 19% of the global electricity consumption. They also suggest that it could sequester about 15% of the current carbon dioxide emissions. This is undoubtedly a lot of land for a relatively small proportion of current (not future) energy demands. A significant proportion of these marginal lands are also in more remote areas where the added costs of transportation would change the economic feasibility of prairie biofuels. With a

growing global population, it is also quite possible that even marginal farmlands will have to continue to produce food as long as possible. Finally, there are concerns that such a drive to establish prairies wherever possible will come at the cost of other types of restoration, particularly woodlands.

Still, this research offers hope of a powerful economic incentive for the restoration of prairie. Just as the potential of future Christmas tree sales often helps convince small rural landowners to plant a few pine and spruce trees, the promise of potential income from prairie-derived biofuels may be enough to garner interest in prairie restoration. For now, this may be the greatest benefit resulting from this research.

## Arbour Day Assists in the Demise of Prairie

- Allen Woodliffe

Arbour Day got its start on the prairie. Julius Sterling Morton spent most of his early life in Michigan, but in 1854 he and his new bride moved to Nebraska City where he became editor of the first newspaper in the state of Nebraska. However, during his life there he missed the trees of the east, and consequently planted many trees and shrubs around his property. Many of these were not native to the area.

As Mr. Morton's prominence increased, he eventually became the Secretary of Nebraska Territory. One of the challenges at the time was to attract homesteaders. Although the soil was known to be good for agriculture, the area was also referred to as 'The Great American Desert'. Without trees to keep tilled soil from blowing away and to supply resources for homebuilding, cooking and heating it was difficult to attract settlers. So in January of 1872, he convinced the State Board of Agriculture to proclaim a tree-planting holiday, called Arbor Day, with prizes available to those counties and individuals who properly planted the most trees. On April 10 1872, participants planted more than one million trees in celebration of this event.

The State celebrated the next Arbor Day in 1884. In 1885, the state governor officially proclaimed it a legal holiday to be held on April 22, the birth date of Sterling Morton. At one point, the Nebraska State legislature declared the state to be known as "The Treeplanter State". Eventually Arbor Day spread to all 50 states and is now celebrated in many countries outside the US, including Canada.

Sterling Morton became the Secretary of Agriculture under the presidency of Grover Cleveland from 1893-

1897. If you recall the "Grasslands" review in *Bluestem Banner*, Summer 2006, I stated how in the late 1800s the US Department of Agriculture was interested in introducing hardy plants from Asia to the western US. Frank Meyer, an employee of the USDA, went on several extensive trips to Asia between 1902 and 1918 and was responsible for bringing back over 2,500 species. It would not be surprising if the attempts to introduce exotics were heavily influenced by Sterling Morton's role in the Department of Agriculture.

One cannot deny the many benefits of trees in the appropriate place. However, one also cannot deny the huge impact of planting trees, especially exotics, turning over the sod for agriculture and interrupting the natural phenomenon of fire that spelled the demise of the tallgrass prairie.

There is another connection between the Morton family and tallgrass prairie, although this time not as detrimental. I first began working with Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve in 1976. Just down the street from Ontario's best known tallgrass prairie was the Morton Salt Company, today known as Windsor Salt. For decades, this company mined the layer of salt 300 metres under the Detroit River and adjacent Windsor. During my fieldwork at Ojibway it was a regular thing to feel a slight tremor and hear a muffled boom at about 4:00 p.m. as the salt miners blasted material for the next shift to haul out. It turns out that Sterling Morton's son was one of the founders of the Morton Salt Company.

## Ask the Gardening Gurus

Everything you've always wanted to know about tallgrass gardening . . . but didn't know who to ask! Our gardening gurus are tallgrass green thumbs here to help with this new feature of the *Banner*. They are devoted to responding to your burning questions (and any others you might have) about gardening with prairie and savanna species.

Graham Buck, owner of Nith River Native Plants answered this question.

### Q: What do I need to know to have a successful tallgrass prairie container garden?

A: This question is a good one. Although an owner of a native plant nursery (Nith River Native Plants), I live in the city on the third floor of an apartment building where I tend container gardens. There is certainly a lot to consider when container gardening with prairie species.

Container gardening is of the fastest growing segments of gardening because these gardens can be grown where traditional gardens are not possible including apartment balconies, small courtyards, decks and patios. They are an ideal solution for people in rental situations, with limited mobility, or with limited time to care for a large landscape.

#### Step 1: Design the tallgrass prairie container garden.

A variety of plant sizes, shapes, textures and flowering times will create an attractive prairie garden. Some sun loving and water thrifty plants, grouped by plant type, are:

- Prairie Grasses (Tall) - Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), and big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*).
- Prairie Grasses (Medium) - prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), side oats gramma (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) and purple love grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*)
- Low Plants –field pussytoes (*Antennaria neglecta*), wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia humifusa*), and prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*).
- Medium Plants - pearly everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*), harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), cylindrical blazing star (*Liatris cylindracea*) wild lupine (*Lupinus perennis*) and Venus's looking-glass (*Triodanis perfoliata*).

- Tall Plants - wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), hoary vervain (*Verbena stricta*), lance-leaved coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*), purple prairie-clover (*Dalea purpurea*), smooth and sky blue asters (*Symphotrichum laeae & oolentangiense*), black eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), hairy beardtongue (*Penstemon hirsutus*), butterfly and whorled milkweeds (*Asclepias tuberosa & verticillata*) and nodding wild onion (*Allium cernuum*).



If you have a site that receives sunshine for less than 1/2 of the day you should try growing oak savanna plants that require less sunlight. Some plants that thrive in part shade include Parlin's pussytoes (*Antennaria parlinii*), columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), wild strawberry, harebell and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium montanum*). Instead of sun loving grasses there are savanna grasses and sedges, such as bottle brush grass (*Elymus hystrix*), Rosy sedge (*Carex rosea*) and Graceful sedge (*Carex gracillima*).

#### Step 2: Choose the container

To help conserve water, consider using nonporous containers. Ceramic pots are excellent choices but require several drainage holes. Plastic pots deteriorate in sunlight and clay pots dry out rapidly. Large containers stay moist longer and are less subject to fluctuating temperatures. Since the plants will have to be overwintered in a sheltered location, such as sunk into the ground and/or covered over they will have to be moved and large containers are harder to move in the fall.

To determine the shape and/or size of the container you must also know the size and shape of the root system of the plant you will be placing in it. The different root systems (and examples) of prairie plants are:

- Taproot (wild lupine, butterfly milkweed)
- Fibrous (Prairie grasses)
- Rhizome (prairie smoke, pussy toes)
- Corms (cylindrical blazing star)
- Bulbs (nodding wild onion)

Since each plant requires different pot sizes you may wish to have several single plant containers arranged

side-by-side or clustered to provide architectural interest on your deck or patio. An advantage of this is it is easier to move several smaller pots in the fall for overwintering.

### Step 3: Care for the Plants

Container plants typically need more water than similar plants in-ground due to smaller root systems and higher exposure to heat and wind. However by using prairie plants, which are adapted to conserve water, you can reduce the amount of water that is required. In the heat of summer, depending on the size of the container you may have to water every day or two. You can collect rainwater to reduce the environmental footprint of your container garden.

Prairie plants generally require less fertilizer than traditional ornamental plants. However, some fertilizing is required, since the nutrients will be washed out of the pots and taken up by the plants. Container plants perform best with an annual application of compost tea: put a shovel-full of compost in a bucket, fill with water and let it steep for a day or two. Then use the tea

to water your plants. The best compost for container gardens comes from well-rotted greens – such as vegetable and fruit scraps. Compost tea contains all the beneficial nutrients and bacteria in compost and concentrates them in liquid form, making them readily absorbable by your plants' roots and leaves while adding beneficial bacteria to the soil.

### Environmental Benefits

In addition to their esthetic appeal, container gardens can provide food for insects and birds. There is a good chance that you will see insects visiting the containers, especially if there are natural areas close by. A study by bee expert Laurence Packer on the green roof of York University found a mix of native and non native pollinators were using the plants. In order to connect isolated prairie remnants together, creating new prairie habitats is critical. Part of this can be prairie gardening, including prairie container gardening.

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## Tallgrass Ontario Update

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### Land Stewardship Workshop for Essex Landowners a Success

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 twenty four rural landowners attended the *Caring for Nature Workshop for Rural Landowners in Essex*, held at Sanson Estate Winery in Amherstburg. Carolinian Canada hosted this unique workshop. Participants learned about habitat stewardship projects in their county, how to create natural habitat on their land, tap into financial resources such as the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund, the Canada-Ontario Agreement and the Habitat Stewardship Fund and receive expert advice. Representatives from the Essex Region Conservation Authority, Essex County Stewardship Network, Tallgrass Ontario and Carolinian Canada gave presentations.

Workshop participants were introduced to *The Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide*, developed by the University of Guelph's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development. Fashioned after the successful Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) for agricultural landowners, this guide is aimed at engaging rural non-farm residents in the protection of their natural environment through individual actions.

### Mapping Tallgrass in Ontario

Tallgrass Ontario is continuing to update maps of tallgrass habitats in southern Ontario using geographical information systems (GIS) (a digital mapping application). For the first phase of this project, we amalgamated our own digital data for tallgrass prairie, oak savanna and oak woodland habitats with information generated by agencies such as the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario Parks and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

We were able to make additional contributions to this project because our fieldwork in 2007 led to the discovery of a couple of new prairie remnants in Middlesex and Waterloo. We hope that continued funding will allow us to sustain our field work and mapping in 2008 and 2009.

### Information at your fingertips: new website updates at [www.tallgrassontario.org](http://www.tallgrassontario.org)

A prescribed burning video documentary and information about the recent discovery of a breeding pair of barn owls are now just a point and click away. We recently updated our website to include this information as well as a recent article about tallgrass prairie published in an issue of ON Nature (Ontario Nature's magazine). Currently, we are updating our section on indicator species and populating our photo

gallery with new pictures of flowers and grasses. Click on the link at the bottom of our homepage to discover more in-depth articles on tallgrass-affiliated plants and animals.

### Tallgrass Transitions

On March 20<sup>th</sup> we welcomed a new board of directors to Tallgrass Ontario. It was a big transition year with 5 people stepping down after serving for 6 or more years with Tallgrass Ontario. We appreciate all the time and effort put in over the years of the following people:

Peter Carson, Cathy Quinlan, Ken Nentwig, Paul Pratt and Lee McLean.

At the board of directors meeting that followed Todd Farrell, John Haggeman and David Morris were elected as the new President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer respectively.

## Wasaga Beach Tallgrass/Savanna Tour '07

- Scott A. Martin

In October, 2007, Tallgrass Ontario Executive Director, Graham Buck was the guest for a tour of Tallgrass Prairie and Savanna sites in the Wasaga Beach area. His hosts were David Featherstone, Manager of the Watershed Monitoring Program at the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) and Wasaga Beach-based ecologist and Tallgrass Ontario board member, Scott Martin. Wasaga Beach Provincial Park (WBPP) Superintendent John Fisher and Jessica Jackson, the Natural Heritage Education Leader also joined in the tour and provided their input.

"I have been trying for years to impress upon people just how much high quality tallgrass and savanna habitat we have in Wasaga Beach", stated Martin. "As a native plant grower, I collected most of my prairie and savanna seed right here in Wasaga Beach." Featherstone commented "It was nice to get these groups together to see first hand what is in Wasaga Beach and discuss how we might be able to manage it. I know that Graham was impressed with the amount and quality of what we have there." With the recent Detailed Life Science Inventory that was completed for WBPP and the Natural Heritage Studies that the NVCA completed for the Town of Wasaga Beach, most of these areas have now been documented locally. The hope now is that Tallgrass Ontario can work together with WBPP, the NVCA and the Town of

Wasaga Beach to develop more local awareness of these areas, protect them and work to increase habitat health and productivity.

*The Natural Heritage Studies completed for the Town of Wasaga Beach can be accessed at <http://www.wasagabeach.com/Planning.html>*



### Photo descriptions

- Little bluestem prairie (left)
- Red oak savanna (top right)
- Prairie opening within an oak-pine woodland (bottom right)

## Tallgrass Habitat Management Regional Updates

### CENTRAL TALLGRASS REGION

**Natural Connections Program Update – Graham Buck, Brant Resource Stewardship Network**

#### Prescribed Burn Worker Training

16 volunteers spent April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> training as low complexity prescribed burn workers. The two day course consists of one day in a classroom and one day outside. Each participant must pass an exam at the end of the first day and show competency in starting a water pump, working on a hose line, ignition, fire suppression and mop up. At the end they are certified to participate on low complexity prescribed burns. In southern Ontario there are these types of prescribed burns are becoming more common as part of tallgrass habitat restoration and the demand for workers is increasing. The course was held in partnership between the Grand River Conservation Authority and Waterloo Stewardship Network.

### Brant County Official Plan will recognize tallgrass and meadow

The Ministry of Natural Resources is providing grassland habitat mapping and text that will go into the Brant County official plan. There will be a section of the new plan paying special attention to preserving Brant County tallgrass and meadow habitats. At one time the small county of only 100,000 hectares contained 25,000 hectares of prairie and savanna, which was  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the Ontario historical total. Today less than 0.1% remains, but there are some important remnants remaining. The initiative to see grassland habitats protected is being led by planner Mark Pomponi, who has done a lot of work in the past increasing the recognition of cultural heritage features.

*Below: Course participants Larry Lamb and Peter Kyle practicing strip ignition. Photo: G. Buck*



**WESTERN TALLGRASS REGION**

**The Chatham-Kent Greening Strategy – Randall Van Wagner**

The Chatham-Kent Greening Strategy is a unique partnership between the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, Stewardship Kent, St. Clair Region Conservation Authority and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. Our goal is to promote tree planting and restoration activities in the heart of the Carolinian Zone.

Most recently we have partnered with the Maple Leaf Cemetery in Chatham and the Rondeau Bay Watershed Coalition to plant approximately 5 acres of Tall Grass Prairie of the cemetery property, in the first stage of a natural restoration project. The Lower Thames Conservation Authority has also agreed to plant 2 acres of tall grass prairie at it's McGregor Creek Diversion Channel property. Not only are agency partners getting involved but private individuals are as well, local businessman Pat Weaver has also planted approximately 1 acre in Tall Grass Prairie at his 6 acre restoration project.

*Contact:*

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Environmental Project Coordinator  
Greening Partnership  
Chatham, ON  
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**Rural Landowner Stewardship Network (RLSN)  
Annual Report 2007**

Transcribed from a conversation with Larry Cornelis,  
Director

A total of 67.7 acres of Tallgrass prairie was planted by the RLSN over 2007. The 5 year project called Prairie Passage has a goal of planting 440 acres along a 38 km stretch of Highway 40 between Sarnia and Wallaceberg. Over 180 acres of prairie has been planted, as well as 28,000 trees and shrubs. RLSN has an agreement with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority to plant 100 acres of tallgrass prairie next to Sinclair Bush near Bothwell as a tallgrass seed source. A small tallgrass prairie has also been planted at the McKellar Tract in south Lambton along with 19 wetland basins and other habitat. RLSN is funded in part by the Healthy Waters Initiative and the St. Clair River Recovery Program.



## Important notes about membership renewal

### IT'S TIME TO RENEW!

- Please send in your 2008 membership form if you have not already done so. We need to hear from you because we are currently updating our database.
- Upon confirming your membership, you will continue to receive *The Bluestem Banner* and other correspondence from Tallgrass Ontario.
- You can renew or sign up by completing the membership form below. For organizations we require a contact person.

### MEMBERSHIP IS FREE

- No fee is required, but charitable donations are really appreciated

### THE NEWSLETTER IS GOING DIGITAL

- Please note that in the future we intend to distribute this newsletter in colour electronically through e-mail in PDF format. We intend to keep publishing grayscale paper copies for those that wish to receive it.
- The electronic option allows us to reach a wider audience, publish enhanced quality images, cut costs and save paper
- To receive the digital newsletters, please supply us with a contact e-mail address.




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## Membership Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership is FREE and information will be kept confidential

We are grateful to those who choose to pay the suggested donation. Such contributions directly help Tallgrass Ontario projects across the province. Do you have questions for us? We'd like to hear from you! Drop us a line by e-mail ([info@tallgrassontario.org](mailto:info@tallgrassontario.org)). We will try to answer your questions. Letters or e-mails may be condensed for publication.

Suggested Membership Amounts: Individual (\$30)  Student (\$15)  Organization (\$50)

Donation: \$50  \$100  \$200  \$500

Please send a charitable receipt

Please e-mail me the Bluestem Banner and Tallgrass Ontario news and updates

I require a hard copy of the Bluestem Banner