



Palouse Prairie Foundation

Promoting preservation and restoration of the Palouse Prairie ecosystem

PO Box 8952
Moscow, ID 83843



[Facebook](#)



[Email](#)



[Website](#)

Actions

Step toe Butte

Comments on funding for maintenance accepted prior to meeting on January 26. See [page 4](#).

Upcoming Events

Step toe Butte Tower Fee Exemption Comments and Decision

January 26, 2021

1:30 p.m.

Registration is required.

See [page 4](#).

Monthly PPF Board Meeting

January 28, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Palouse Prairie Flyer

Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation

Winter 2020–2021



Whelan Cemetery looking quite bare. See page 3.

Photo by Joan Folwell

2021 Off to a Great Start

Images of gravestones on the cover of a newsletter might seem unusual, but there has been a lot of activity at Whelan Cemetery. See page 3 for details. In addition to Whelan, we also made progress at the John Crock Native Pollinator Garden last year. There is much more to do at both locations in 2021. We would love your involvement in weeding, planting, and planning. Let us know if you want to be part of work crews that will be forming soon. This hands-on experience is a great way to help sustain a fantastic prairie site, replant another, and learn more about the ecosystem. If you are interested or have questions, write to secretary@palouseprairie.org.

Any group activities will follow the most current guidelines on COVID-19 safety so we can all stay healthy.

Here's what's included in this edition of the newsletter:

- [Join Palouse Prairie Foundation](#)
- [2021 Board Election Results](#)
- [Whelan Cemetery 8,000 Pounds Lighter](#)
- [AGMP Donations to PPF](#)
- [Update on Steptoe Butte Preserve Purchase](#)
- [2020 Research](#)
- [Mini-Grant Highlight: Appaloosa Museum and Heritage Center](#)

Join Palouse Prairie Foundation!

By Shelley Chambers-Fox

What a year we have ahead of us! In 2021, we will have the opportunity to work with a renewed commitment to environmental causes. Be part of it! Join the Palouse Prairie Foundation (PPF). Invite your friends and neighbors to join.

What We Do

- Bring environmental stewards together: Are you passionate about the importance of healthy ecosystems, clean water, and air? Join like-minded community members in a variety of projects to protect our natural world on the Palouse.
- Protect lands locally: Foundation members are working to set aside 437 acres of Palouse Prairie on Steptoe Butte, restore and maintain the prairie at Whelan Pioneer Cemetery, and establish the John Crock Native Plant and Pollinator Garden along the Latah Trail. In 2019, PPF worked with Whitman County to provide legal protection of Palouse Prairie in the Whitman County Critical Areas Ordinance; development will not be approved if Palouse Prairie is impacted.
- Get people outdoors: Join us in our efforts to restore and reintroduce prairie plants in the Palouse, learn about the roles of various native plants in Prairie ecology and enjoy the beauty of the lands in their original splendor.

How to Join

For information about how to join, see our [website](#) or use the form on the [last page](#) of this newsletter.

2021 Board Election Results

As 2020 came to a close, we said “goodbye” to Eric Anderson as a board member. He served for five years. On behalf of all our members, we thank him for his service on the board, in the field, and for the outreach he did for PPF.

The election results for the 2021 board of directors were announced at the annual meeting on December 1. The elected members are shown below. We welcome our newest board member Shelley Chambers-Fox.



David Hall
President



Elisabeth Brackney
Vice President



Joan Folwell
Treasurer



Kim Sarff
Secretary



Shelley Chambers-Fox
Member at Large

Whelan Cemetery 8,000 Pounds Lighter

By Joan Folwell

More progress has taken place at Whelan Cemetery! The project to remove the lilacs invading the Palouse Prairie was accomplished before the end of December. Lovell's Tree Service cut many of the bushes down to the ground using chain saws. The crew of three carried the debris on tarps from the top of the hill down to the county road where a trailer was waiting to be filled. Over 8,000 pounds were hauled away. No damage was done to the wintering native vegetation during the removal. It wasn't an easy job. The crew took four days to finish, and they suffered a toll on their equipment. Some bushes were left to decorate the gravestones and monuments just as the pioneers who planted them 132 years ago intended.

It will be a challenge to ensure that the \$3,700 cost of this task is not squandered by neglect or inactivity. Next spring, we will need volunteers to paint the lilac stubs with herbicide to prevent regrowth and encourage the restoration of native species in those areas. While the grant awarded by the Washington Native Plant Society paid \$700 of the bill, PPF will be forever grateful to the generous people who donated at the 2020 Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse to allow for such a large expenditure. Thank you, thank you!



Before and after pictures of the lilac removal near the Christopher Branham monument. Photos by Joan Folwell

AGMP Donations to PPF

by Kim Sarff

No one was sure how the 2020 Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse would succeed because of the pandemic. The market was unique because it was a drive-through and online event with no socializing. PPF relies on this fundraiser to support some of our efforts through the year.

I am pleased to say that in just four hours and additional online donations, PPF is the thankful recipient of \$2,333 from generous donors. We are extremely grateful for this financial support and growing interest in our local ecology.

If you missed this opportunity to donate, you can always send a donation to *Palouse Prairie Foundation, P.O. Box 8952, Moscow, Idaho 83843-1452.*



Update on Steptoe Butte Preserve Purchase

By Joan Folwell

Last summer, the Washington State Legislature approved funding to purchase the 437 acres on Steptoe Butte owned by Kent Bassett of Bellevue and Ray and Joan Folwell of Pullman. The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will be the buyer, and it intends to add the property to their current inventory of Natural Areas. This department recognizes its value for the quality and abundance of more than 300 Palouse Prairie species. There are three cell tower leases attached to the property that have enabled the owners to contract for professional weed control amounting to over \$16,000 per year since 2017. DNR is allowed to own such leases, but the fees received from them automatically go into the state's Common School Fund. The owners are requesting an exemption from the state Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Funding Board to have these receipts stay with the property and be earmarked for continued weed control. Three appraisal scenarios have been determined: (1) a sale of the land without the towers; (2) a sale with the towers and leases, with fees going to the school fund; and (3) a sale with an exemption from the board to dedicate tower lease receipts for weed control. The owners feel that the exemption would be logical and the most beneficial decision as one of the greatest threats to the Prairie would be mitigated; DNR would not have to seek grants to monitor and remove invasive weeds consistently and reliably; and the public would have access to a unique, disappearing, and well-tended ecosystem in the future.

The Funding Board will meet on Tuesday, January 26. The discussion on the exemption is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. The [meeting agenda](#) includes instructions for required registration and instructions for written comment prior to the meeting and request to comment during the meeting. Project details are located on [this page](#). One also can send any comments directly to the Board at DeAnna.Beck@rco.wa.gov.

2020 Research

By Kim Sarff

Below is a collection of a paper, a poster, and an oral presentation published in 2020. Although these authors are not members of PPF, their work may be of interest to our readers.

Morgan, P., Heyerdahl, E.K., Strand, E.K. *et al.* "Fire and land cover change in the Palouse Prairie-forest ecotone, Washington and Idaho, USA," *Fire Ecology* 16, 2 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42408-019-0061-9>

Pentico, Rachael SV, "A Review of Plant-Soil Feedbacks and Their Importance for Palouse Prairie Restoration and Management," 2020 Eastern Washington University Student Research and Creative Works Symposium, Posters, 23 (2020). https://dc.ewu.edu/srcw_2020_posters/23/

Peterson, Erik E., "Palouse Prairie Community Assessment to Inform Large-Scale Restoration at Eastern Washington University," 2020 Eastern Washington University Student Research and Creative Works Symposium, Oral Presentations, 26 (2020). https://dc.ewu.edu/srcw_2020_oral_presentations/26

The following website displays some work of budding researchers from Moscow's Palouse Prairie Charter School. These young people presented their research on soils at the University of Idaho in 2020. One of their questions was "What can make our soil healthy enough to grow native Palouse Prairie vegetation and our future school gardens?"

7th Grade Gallery 2020, Palouse Prairie Charter School. <https://palouseprairieschool.org/7th-grade-gallery-2020/>



Mini-Grant Highlight: Appaloosa Museum and Heritage Center

by David Hall

In 2019, the Appaloosa Museum and Heritage Center in Moscow received from PPF a mini-grant to help fund the creation of a garden that showcases native Palouse Prairie plants. The garden is now finished and provides an opportunity to gain appreciation and understanding for our native ecosystems, the conservation challenges they face, and the cultural aspects of some of the native plants.

The museum invites the public to enjoy the garden, which is shaped to mimic the Nez Perce Trail. The plants selected for the garden grow naturally in the Palouse. You might get some ideas for how to add native plants to your landscape. While you are there, don't forget to say "hello" to Dusty, their exhibit horse.



New native plant garden at the Appaloosa Museum and Heritage Center, Moscow, partially funded by a PPF mini-grant. Photo by David Hall

Did You Know?

Since 2008, PPF has awarded over \$7,000 in mini-grants.

The PPF mini-grant program exists to promote the conservation and restoration of Palouse Prairie and to raise public awareness of this endangered ecosystem. This program provides small grants (up to \$1,000) to those interested in the conservation and restoration of Palouse Prairie.

NOTE: You do not need to be a PPF member to receive a mini-grant.

The application form for PPF mini-grants is on our [website](#).



2021 Palouse Prairie Foundation Membership Letter

PRESERVE – PROTECT – PROMOTE

Why should you support the Palouse Prairie Foundation with your 2021 membership?

In 2020, the Palouse Prairie Foundation:

- Managed weeds at Whelan Cemetery near Pullman through volunteer efforts led by Eric Anderson, removed encroaching lilacs with funding from the Washington Native Plant Society, and supported the Palouse Conservation District.
Continued to develop the John Crock Native Plant and Pollinator Garden site on the Latah Trail near Moscow by controlling weeds through volunteer labor led by Elisabeth Brackney and a contracted mowing service; planted native trees and shrubs and monitored the development of native grasses through efforts of Elisabeth Brackney and Joan Folwell.
Provided a \$1,000 mini-grant to the Appaloosa Horse Museum for establishing a native plant garden.
Collaborated with Eastern Washington University to establish their 150-acre Palouse Prairie restoration project, which included the completion of a "Palouse Prairie Needs Assessment" and a study of Palouse Prairie soils.
Protected Palouse Prairie remnants related to applications for two cell tower sites and one home site through PPF-initiated regulations in the Whitman County Critical Areas Ordinances.

Your support of PPF is a direct benefit to YOU:

- Receive invitations to local-area field trips.
Get direct access to the expertise and experience of other restorers and protectors of the Prairie.
Add your effort at the level and in the activity of your choice to help preserve this important ecosystem.

The Palouse Prairie Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and donations are tax deductible. Email messages are the primary way that members are notified of all events and news. Please provide the membership information requested below and send it with your dues to:

Palouse Prairie Foundation, P.O. Box 8952, Moscow, Idaho 83843-1452

THANK YOU!

Membership Information

Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip
E-mail Address
I would like updates about these projects:
Dues: [] Student \$10
[] Regular \$20
[] Family \$35
[] Sustaining \$50
[] Patron \$100
[] Lifetime \$250
[] Donation
[] Other