

The Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation

P.O. Box 8952. Moscow, ID 83843
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<http://www.palouseprairie.org/>
March 2010

The regular meeting date for the Palouse Prairie Foundation is the 1st Thursday of each month. We are planning to have a business meeting in April and a presentation in May. The presentation is still in the planning stages. Check the PPF website for updates and locations.

On May 4, 2010, Palouse Prairie Foundation will receive 10% of all sales at **HyperSpud Sports** (at Friendship Square in Moscow) that day. Support a local business and the Palouse Prairie Foundation by shopping at HyperSpud Sports the first Tuesday in May.

PPF memberships

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Palouse Prairie Foundation (PPF). It's time again to send in membership dues to keep the PPF working on your behalf. As you know, the Palouse Prairie once covered a vast area in eastern Washington and northwestern Idaho, but now it covers less than 1% of its original area and is considered an endangered ecosystem. Nevertheless, the remnant prairie still provides critical habitat for the Giant Palouse Earthworm, pollinators, birds and other critters, and every year it continues to rejuvenate us with its rich annual displays of flowers.

PPF is a non-profit organization that relies on membership dues to carry out its mission. This includes:

- Raising public awareness about issues threatening the Palouse Prairie and opportunities to conserve it
- Developing educational materials and curricula for prairie conservation
- Supporting and conducting research
- Restoring degraded prairie lands locally
- Increasing seed for use in local restoration

PPF services and programs that your membership dues support include:

- Hosting an internationally recognized website
- Developing field guides, informational brochures and bibliographies
- Sponsoring a speaker series, often co-hosted with the Idaho Native Plant Society
- Providing technical support for restoration efforts
- Writing grants to fund a variety of PPF activities
- Leading field trips to local and disjunct Palouse Prairie

PPF membership dues are the primary source of funding for our mini-grant program. See "**Update on recent projects**" below for more information on the mini-grant program.

We thank all who have paid their membership dues, and encourage those of you who have not yet done so to fill out the form at www.palouseprairie.org/memberform.html and slip it into the mail with your check! The PPF will make good use of it, and we look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings, presentations or field trips!

Update on recent projects

The effort to locate, map, inventory, and evaluate Palouse Prairie remnants in Latah County, Idaho, is proceeding. Known remnants were first located on aerial photographs of the county, then areas of similar appearance were located and land ownership determined. Landowners were then

contacted to gain permission to evaluate the areas. The ground-truthing and evaluations will continue in 2010.

The Palouse Prairie Foundation is co-operating with the Palouse Conservation District in a similar effort in Whitman County, Washington. Using the same procedure with aerial photos, remnants are being located by the Conservation District. Funding is being sought to start the inventory and evaluation process.

In 2008, the Palouse Prairie Foundation decided to provide small grants for projects which educate people about Palouse Prairie or for assistance in preservation and/or restoration of Palouse Prairie. In 2009, the Palouse Prairie Foundation mini-grant program helped fund three projects:

- Purchase forb plants to further the restoration efforts of Maynard Fosberg on his property on D Street in Moscow, ID. The Fosbergs had previously placed the land in a land trust and have been working on restoring Palouse Prairie on the property,
- Purchase materials for the restoration of ½ acre of Palouse Prairie along the Latah Trail east of Moscow,
- Purchase plants to enhance the native demonstration planting at Lena Whitmore School in Moscow.

In 2010, PPF agreed to provide funding and technical advice to assist five projects:

- Purchase seed to expand a private land restoration on land owned by Michael Haseltine and Tina Baldwin,
- Purchase seed or plants to restore degraded areas and reduce spread of invasive weeds on private land owned by Diane and Jerold Dickinson,
- Purchase materials to help restore degraded land adjacent to a Palouse Prairie remnant on private property owned by Kas Dumroese,
- Assist the Moscow High School Environmental Club in building an informational kiosk at Virgil Phillips County Park north of Moscow,
- Assist the Moscow High School Environmental Club in establishing a native plants informational trail at Virgil Phillips County Park.

Recent publications regarding Palouse Prairie:

- Hanson, T., Y. Sánchez-de-León, J. Johnson-Maynard, and S. Brunsfeld. 2008. The Influence of Soil and Site Characteristics on Palouse Prairie Plant Communities. **Western North American Naturalist** 68:231-240.
- Lesica, P., and E.E. Crone. 2007. Causes and Consequences of Prolonged Dormancy for the Iteroparous Geophyte, *Silene spaldingii*. **Journal of Ecology** 95:1360-1369.
- Looney, C., B.T. Caldwell, and S.D. Eigenbrode. 2009. When the Prairie Varies: the Importance of Site Characteristics for Strategising Insect Conservation. **Insect Conservation and Diversity** 2:243-250.
- Pocewicz, A., P. Morgan, and K. Kavanagh. 2007. The Effects of Adjacent Land Use on Nitrogen Dynamics at Forest Edges in Northern Idaho. **Ecosystems** 10:226-238
- Pocewicz, A., P. Morgan, and S.D. Eigenbrode. 2009. Local and Landscape Effects on Butterfly Density in Northern Idaho Grasslands and Forests. **Journal of Insect Conservation** 13(6):593-601.
- Pocewicz, A.L. 2006. Modeling Landscape Change and Evaluating Ecological Effects of Landscape Composition and Configuration in Northern Idaho. Ph.D. thesis, University of Idaho, 144 p.
- Sánchez-de-León, Y., and J. Johnson-Maynard. 2008. Dominance of an Invasive Earthworm in Native and Non-native Grassland Ecosystems. **Biological Invasions**. Available online at:

[www.cnr.uidaho.edu/crissp/CRISSP%20pdf/Sanchez-de%20Leon%20and%20J.%20Johson-Maynard%20earthworm%](http://www.cnr.uidaho.edu/crissp/CRISSP%20pdf/Sanchez-de%20Leon%20and%20J.%20Johson-Maynard%20earthworm%20)

Featured Plant

Symphoricarpos albus, common snowberry, is a widespread shrub native to riparian areas, mesic grasslands and open forests over much of North America. On the Palouse, it occurs in two forms, a dwarfed, usually single stemmed and sterile form scattered among the grasses and forbs of the prairie, and a more robust, fertile form which occurs in thickets also scattered about the prairie either alone or in association with *Crataegus douglasii* (black hawthorn) and other larger shrubs. The leaves are opposite and elliptic, but may be irregularly lobed on new shoots. The perfect pink to white flowers are borne in a short raceme in early to mid June and are pollinated by bees, wasps, and flies. In the absence of insect pollinators, herkogamy (spatial separation of the male and female reproductive parts) probably prevents self pollination. The fruit is a white, berry-like drupe which contains two seeds and often persists on the plants into the winter. *S. albus* reproduces both by seed and vegetatively by rhizomes.

Leaves and stems are browsed by large animals and the plants provide some cover for small mammals and birds. The fruits are reportedly eaten and the seeds dispersed by black bears and game birds. Rodents will often eat the seeds, leaving the fleshy drupes. Snowberry is a host for the larva of the Chalcidon checkerspot (*Euphydryas chalcedona*) butterfly. Native peoples used the plants medicinally, although large amounts of berries are said to be poisonous to humans.

Plants propagate readily from softwood or hardwood cuttings. Seed propagation is more difficult but seed-grown material should be used in large plantings to provide genetic diversity and assure the long term success of the planting. Seeds have immature embryos and hard seed coats and require 2-4 months of warm moist stratification followed by 4-6 months of cold moist stratification at 41°F.

You can obtain more information about *Symphoricarpos albus* from:

Plant Profile from the USDA NRCS PLANTS Database

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=SYAL>

Plant Guide from USDA NRCS PLANTS Database

http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs_syal.pdf

Species page from the US Forest Service Fire Effects Information System

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/shrub/symalb/all.html>

Species page from the University of Washington Herbarium (WTU)

<http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/imagecollection.php?Genus=Symphoricarpos&Species=albus>

Species information from the Native American Ethnobotany database of the University of Michigan-Dearborn

<http://herb.umd.umich.edu/herb/search.pl?searchstring=Symphoricarpos+albus>

Palouse Prairie Foundation Display

If you would like to have the Palouse Prairie display at a gathering or meeting, please contact us. The display consists of a free standing 4 panel poster explaining Palouse Prairie, and a myriad of printed information regarding the prairie. A smaller version of the poster is also available for more limited spaces. You can view the poster on the PPF website at

<http://www.palouseprairie.org/display/>

Upcoming Events

The Paintbrushes (*Castilleja*) & Their Relatives in the *Orobanchaceae*. **March 25, 2010**, 7:00 p.m. in the College of Natural Resources Room 108, University of Idaho. Dave Tank (Assistant Professor of Forest Resources and Director of the UI Stillinger Herbarium) will talk about the paintbrushes and related species, their morphology, and identifying characteristics. Dave also will address plant systematics and the use of phylogenetics for classification and to understand patterns of evolution and diversity in native plants like paintbrushes. During his lecture, he will show plenty of photographs of paintbrushes in Idaho, the western United States, Mexico, and Andean South America. Co-sponsors: Palouse Prairie Foundation & the White Pine Chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society.

Sustainable Landscaping with Palouse Native Plants. **March 25, 2010**, 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Artisans at the Dahmen Barn, Uniontown. Jacie Jensen (Thorn Creek Native Seed Farm) will introduce attendees to Palouse Prairie native wildflowers and native grasses. Jensen will illustrate how to incorporate them in a home or natural landscape. The session includes a PowerPoint presentation accompanied by handouts plus seed and plant displays. The cost is \$5 at the door.

Native Grasses & Forbs in the Landscape. **April 15, 2010**, 7:00 p.m. in the 1912 Center Great Room, 412 East Third Street, Moscow, Idaho. Kathy Hutton (Plants of the Wild) will present a slide-show program about the native forbs, wildflowers, and grasses that are most readily available and easiest to grow successfully in home landscapes. She will focus on how these species behave in the landscape, bringing wildness and natural beauty to overly-tame environments, and will share some of her knowledge about nurturing native plants. Co-sponsors: Palouse Prairie Foundation & the White Pine Chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society.

Cricket's Garden native plant garden tour. **April 24, 2010**, 1:00 p.m. Christine Nauman (Cricket's Garden). For more information, see the Cricket's Garden website at cricketsgarden.com Co-sponsors: Palouse Prairie Foundation & the White Pine Chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society.

Shop at HyperSpud Sports. **May 4, 2010.** Ten percent of sales will be donated to PPF. Stock up with outdoor gear for the summer on the first Tuesday of May at HyperSpud!

We are in the planning stages of several field trips for this coming spring and summer. Potential field trips may include the Joan and Ray Folwell property restoration, Whelan Cemetery, Smoot Hill, and Kramer Prairie. Check the website for updated information. Current PPF members will receive advance notification of upcoming field trips.

To find out more about Palouse Prairie and the Palouse Prairie Foundation, visit our website at

<http://www.palouseprairie.org/>

To learn more about the White Pine Chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society, visit their website at

<http://www.whitepineinps.org/>

The Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation has returned after a hiatus. Copies of past issues of the Newsletter are available online on the PPF website at

<http://www.palouseprairie.org/pppubs.html>

If you have ideas, suggestions, or contributions for the newsletter, please send them to Dave Skinner at abbie48@roadrunner.com (you will need to replace "at" with the symbol "@" in the address line of your email program) or call him at 208-874-3205. Look for the next newsletter in June 2010.