

Palouse Prairie Flyer

Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation

Photo by Matthew Dolkas

Winter Solstice 2015

Respect your roots

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Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse results



The Palouse Prairie Foundation was a part of the Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse for the first time this year. Joan and David spoke to lots of people at the event, and 27 people donated a total of \$873 -- to "protect and enhance the habitat of the Giant Palouse Earthworm (*Driloleirus americanus*)" (\$135), "support community conservation project mini-grants" (\$80), "maintain the Palouse Prairie habitat at Whelan Cemetery" (\$200), and "support ongoing inventorying and botanical surveying of Palouse Prairie remnants in Latah and Whitman Counties" (\$458).

Thanks to all who gave non-commercial gifts through the Giving Market!

Palouse Prairie Foundation 2015 Annual Meeting and Party

About 25 people attended our Annual Meeting and Party December 5, 2015 throughout the evening. Joan gave a short presentation on PPF doings over the year, and David reported that all board nominees (Anderson, Bohna, Folwell, Hall, Riser, and Skinner) were re-elected. *Under the Wire* gave musical accompaniment.



The Palouse Prairie Foundation promotes preservation and restoration of the Palouse Prairie ecosystem.

Palouse Prairie Foundation
P.O. Box 8952
Moscow, ID 83843

December 2015

Board of Directors election

The following Palouse Prairie Foundation members were elected to the Board of Directors for 2016.

Eric Anderson – Eric is volunteering his time managing the weeds at Whelan Cemetery. Eric works at the UI Career Center and is a recent graduate of the UI Restoration Ecology certificate program, and is currently enrolled in the Env. Water Science certificate program.

Jo Bohna – Jo is interested in restoring native food plants and habitats in our western states. She believes the Palouse Prairie Foundation is an integral part of the process. Jo currently serves as treasurer for the Palouse Prairie Foundation.

Joan Folwell – Joan moved to the Palouse in 1968 from the prairies of Illinois. She is trained as a zoologist and is an enthusiastic, but undisciplined and naive, gardener. Joan currently serves as vice-president of the Palouse Prairie Foundation.

David Hall – David is a retired computer scientist. He has lived in Latah County at several locations just outside Moscow since first grade. David has been involved with the Palouse Prairie Foundation since its founding. He currently serves as president of the Palouse Prairie Foundation.

James Riser – James is a WSU post-graduate student with a Ph.D. in Botany. He is working as the botanist for Palouse Conservation District on the Whitman County Palouse Prairie inventory.

David Skinner – Dave Skinner is the fifth generation of his family to live on the Palouse. He has retired from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Plant Materials Center, where he worked with native grass seed since 1978. Dave would like to see the Palouse Prairie Foundation continue to encourage preservation of the little prairie that remains and work to restore more of the vanishing ecosystem. Dave currently serves on the board of the Palouse Prairie Foundation.

Thank you, Trish, for your service to the 2015 Board!

Survey of macromoths (Insecta: Lepidoptera) of a Palouse prairie remnant site in eastern Washington State

Thompson, JL; Zack, RS; Crabo, L; Landolt, PJ.
Pan-Pacific Entomologist, 2014, 90 (4), 191-204

Abstract: In its broadest sense, The Palouse or Palouse prairie is an ecoregion consisting primarily of native grasses, shrubs, and forbs that originally covered over 16,000 km² of central Idaho, southeastern Washington, and northeastern Oregon. It is estimated that only 1 - 6% of this habitat remains with much of it having been converted to agriculture. The Kramer Palouse Natural Area is a relatively undisturbed, 11.7-ha remnant of Palouse prairie situated in Whitman County, Washington. During 2004-05 we conducted a light-trapping and hand-netting survey of a set of families of moths, collectively referred to as macromoths, on the Kramer site.

The purpose of this study was to document the biological diversity of moths occurring on the site. This paper reports on just over 5,100 specimens and 150 species in 7 families: Cossidae (usually considered a micromoth - one species), Thyatiridae (one species) Lasiocampidae (one species), Notodontidae (three species), Sphingidae (five species), Erebidae (14 species), and Noctuidae (125 species). We collected no Nolidae or Euteliidae and, although Geometridae are considered macromoths, they are not discussed in this paper. Seasonal and subjective abundance information is presented for all species. Although no species of strict conservation concern were collected, our study indicates that remaining areas of Palouse prairie are able to support a significant species diversity of macromoths, which are otherwise uncommon in surrounding areas, and probably represent an ancestral fauna.

Full text available from DigiTop.

Whitman County Palouse Prairie Remnant Surveying: Summer 2015

Palouse Prairie Background

- o Poorly defined in general
 - has included other western grasslands
- o Daubenmire (1970) defined as western bunchgrass ecosystem with three climax vegetation zones:
 - *Pseudoregnaria spicatum* - *Festuca idahoensis*
 - *Festuca idahoensis* - *Symphoricarpos albus*
 - *Festuca idahoensis* - *Rosa nutkana*
- o Soils might be a better descriptor (i.e., Hanson et al., 2008)
- o Vegetation varies/varied by site
- o Generally found on loess-derived soils
- o Floristically speaking:
 - bunchgrass or meadow steppe with significant shrub and herbaceous components typically occurring on loessal soils
- o Originally ~16,000 km² (broad sense) to 6,000 km² (narrow sense)
- o Almost all converted to agricultural use by 20th century (94% to 99% converted)
- o Probably no more than 1% remain and maybe as little as 0.1% (Black et al., 2000; Tisdale, 1961)
- o Most recent studies focused on a few sites with public access (i.e., Hatton et al., 2013; Hanson et al., 2008; Thompson et al., 2014)
- o Most remnants small (< 5 acres) and privately owned



Source:

Riser, James. November 12, 2015. **Palouse Prairie Remnant Surveying: Summer 2015**. Palouse Conservation District. Presentation to Palouse Prairie Foundation and Idaho Native Plant Society, Whitepine Chapter.

Palouse Prairie Remnant Surveys

- o Previously & currently underway in Idaho in Latah and Nez Perce Counties
- o Whitman County, WA by Palouse Conservation District
- o Assess private land
- o Three phases
 - Phase 1: initial GIS-based inventory of potential remnants
 - completed 2012
 - 1,120 potential remnants
 - 9,646 acres
 - Phase 2: contacting landowners
 - mailings sent out to landowners asking for permission to survey remnants
 - completed 2013/2014
 - ~ 1,000 landowners contacted
 - 1,200 acres with permission to survey
 - Phase 3: surveying remnants
 - 115 potential remnants to survey
 - 61 landowners
 - surveys initiated summer 2015
 - visited remnants and assessed for condition and rare plants
 - 43 remnants surveyed
 - 189 acres surveyed
 - weeds are everywhere
 - most remnants are not in good shape
 - two rare plant species found
 - *Cirsium brevifolium* -- 2 new occurrences found
 - *Pyrocoma liatrifomis* -- 4 new occurrences found

Condition rank based on native species cover:

- A: 75 - 100%: 15.6 acres
- B: 50 - 75%: 17.8 acres
- C: 25 - 50%: 13.9 acres
- D: 10 - 25%: 9.4 acres
- CU: < 10%: 131.8 acres (converted upland)

Miscellanea

Notecards

PPF has created a series of note cards depicting flowers and landscapes of the Palouse. These would make great gifts, or get them for yourself! They are available in packets of 5 cards and 5 envelopes for \$5. All funds directly benefit the Palouse Prairie Foundation. If you are interested in purchasing cards, please contact us. We generally bring them to meetings and presentations.

Book

"**Finding the Palouse Prairie: Images of a Vanishing Grassland**" by Matthew Dolkas can be purchased online at www.dolkas.com or www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/2768591
All proceeds from the sale of this book benefit the Palouse Prairie Foundation.

Newsletters

Copies of past issues of the Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation are available online on the PPF website at palouseprairie.org/pppubs.html

Renew your PPF membership



Palouse Prairie Foundation memberships are for the calendar year.

Please make your check payable to *Palouse Prairie Foundation*.

* Our primary means of communication about meetings, field trips, etc., is by e-mail.

The Palouse Prairie Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Low-income \$10 Regular \$20 Family \$35 Sustaining \$50 Patron \$100 Donation \$ _____

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
E-mail * _____

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