

Palouse Prairie Flyer

Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation

Photo by Matthew Dolkas

Winter Solstice 2016

Respect your roots

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Steptoe Butte Palouse Prairie Preserve

Upcoming Events & Notices

JCNPPP Garden – early spring planting?

Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse –

Lots of people stopped by to talk to Joan and David at our table on December 1 at the 1912 Center. We won't know how much was donated to PPF until later in December. Thanks to all who stopped by!

Annual meeting – Good socializing, good food, and good music. Thank you, *Under the Wire!* Joan and Ray Folwell were honored as Palouse Prairie Protectors. The current board was re-elected for 2017.

Joan Folwell, James Riser, Ray Folwell



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

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In October, two Washington couples purchased 437 acres of land on Steptoe Butte with the goal of preserving and protecting the largest piece of Palouse Prairie remnant in Whitman County.

Steptoe Butte State Park, which is located just at the top of the Butte, is about one third that size (at about 150 acres).

Whitman Gazette
Spokesman Review

"[This is] the largest piece of Palouse Prairie remnant in Whitman County, period. ... It's a magnitude bigger than anything else."

James Riser, botanist, Palouse Conservation District



December 2016

"The biggest piece of remaining Palouse Prairie has been preserved."

"There's some weedy spots and a lot of really nice community up there."

James Riser, botanist, Palouse Conservation District

New Palouse Prairie Ecological Preserve on Paradise Ridge

The Palouse Land Trust just bought some gorgeous Palouse Prairie on the southern flank of Paradise Ridge south of Moscow. Normally, the Land Trust works with conservation easements, but this piece of property was to be sold. They worked over the past few years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain a \$160,000 grant, and with the help of a private donor they were able to purchase 62 acres.

"The preservation of Palouse Prairie habitat has been one of the priorities of the land trust since the very beginning," says Amy Trujillo, executive director of the Palouse Land Trust.

The land is home to many rare and special plants and animals such as the broad-fruit mariposa lily, Palouse goldenweed, Spalding's catchfly, grasshopper sparrow.

The Fish and Wildlife Service identified this property as a key conservation area for the federally threatened Spalding's catchfly.

The trust's plan for the ecological preserve is to restore and expand this fragile ecosystem by controlling invasive weeds, preserve the high-quality remnants, and prepare the area for reintroduction of rare and threatened plant species.

Due to the fragile nature of the landscape, access to the preserve will be by guided tour.

Sources:

Cabeza, G. Dec 19, 2016. *Palouse Land Trust purchases 62 acres for preservation*. **Moscow-Pullman Daily News**. 1A,6A.

Trujillo, A. Dec 21, 2016. E-mail.

John Crock Latah Trail Native Palouse Prairie Pollinator Garden

John Crock, former owner of Hyperspod Sports outdoor sports store in downtown Moscow, in 2009 started work to convert a strip of land along the Latah Trail back to Palouse Prairie native plants. He toiled to rid the plot of sod grasses, and got some forbs started. He asked the Palouse Prairie Foundation to carry on his work. We agreed to do so, and the Palouse Prairie Foundation will work with the community to restore native Palouse Prairie shrubs and forbs to a half acre adjacent to the trail to create an interpretive area and pollinator garden. It is just East of Moscow, between Carmichael Road and Lenville Road. The Jeffrey Martin Memorial Shelter, a parking lot at Carmichael Road, and a restroom are nearby.

We anticipate planting native Palouse shrubs in the early spring of 2017. Later we will plant flowering plants with an eye toward pollinators.



Sy Montgomery and the Giant Palouse Earthworm

Author Sy Montgomery visited UI in October to speak about her experiences conducting research for her latest book, "The Soul of an Octopus" to a packed International Ballroom in the UI Bruce Pitman Center/ Student Union Building.

As a youngster, Sy wanted to reach out to wild animals and ask them, "Who are you? What's it like to be you?"

"I was devastated to learn that dinosaurs were extinct, when I learned that this could happen to eagles and whales and elephants — not just that it could happen, but that it was happening and was happening at our hands, that was when I think I first decided I wanted to be a writer," she said.

Montgomery has written more than 20 natural science books for children and adults.

Montgomery was excited to meet up with UI researchers to learn more about giant Palouse earthworms. Shortly after her visit here, she wrote an article about our native worm for The Boston Globe. From that article:

"Found only in a critically endangered ecosystem known as the Palouse prairie, a storied giant was long thought to be extinct. Only a handful of sightings have

been reported since the 1970s. Today, there are only 10 of these animals in captivity in the world. Seeing a rare species is one of the highlights of a naturalist's life — and earlier this month, in Moscow, Idaho, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to see one."

"Most of the specimens in captivity were brought in by one man, Cass Davis. He's a self-described 'liberal redneck,' an Earth First! environmentalist who feeds himself by hunting and fishing."

Cass found his first GPE in 2012 on a rut in a road.

Montgomery, Sy. Oct 17, 2016. *Meet the giant Palouse earthworm, a rare American original.* **The Boston Globe.** bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/2016/10/16/meet-giant-palouse-earthworm-rare-american-original/R1tkY8sjGjRmR6no88TZkl/story.html

Bond, Corrin. Oct. 6, 2016. **The Argonaut.** *Writing for the World.*

"The giant Palouse is considered by experts to be the 'Holy Grail' of North American earthworms."

"They have beautiful lips!" Cass told me.

"Of the 6,000 species of earthworms [in North America], very few are native." -- Chris Baugher

Miscellanea

Index to the Palouse Prairie Field Guide

[link to thorn creek website](#)

An index for this guidebook is available on the PPF web page. Read the printing and folding directions.

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 \$_____

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