

Palouse Prairie Flyer

Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation

Photo by Matthew Dolkas

Winter Solstice 2017

Respect your roots

Contents

2017 Annual Meeting
Upcoming Event
Election results
Bald Butte Cell Tower proposal
Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse
PPF Mini-grants
Membership Form

Upcoming Event

David Bencotter will talk about Steptoe Butte Preserve heritage/heirloom apples March 15, 2018.

Election Results

All five incumbent board members ran for another term, and Elisabeth Brackney ran for the open position vacated mid-year by Jo Bohna. All were elected for one-year terms.

David Hall, president
Eric Anderson, vice-president
Joan Folwell, treasurer
Jim Sayre, secretary
James Riser II
Elisabeth Brackney

Welcome to the board, Elisabeth!



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

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

2017 Annual meeting

We held our annual party and meeting at a new venue, Hunga Dunga Brewery, this year. We had a nice time, and treasurer Joan Folwell gave those attending an update on PPF activities. She spoke of the Crock garden, the grass identification workshop, the weeding party at Whelan and field trip to Steptoe Butte Reserve, inclusion of Palouse prairie in the Whitman County Voluntary Stewardship Program, upcoming work at Crock and Whelan, a bio-blitz at Steptoe Butte, and protection of Palouse prairie on Bald Butte.

Several people bought PPF T-shirts, and a few watched videos of giant Palouse earthworms that Cass Davis has found.



December 2017

Bald Butte prairie & cell tower

A proposal by Inland Cellular (Weiss Towers) to erect a tower to increase cellular service on Bald Butte was submitted to Whitman County. Based on the application, Whitman County Planning issued a Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) (published Nov 2, 2017). Public comments on the DNS were accepted until November 16. Comments received noted that there is Palouse Prairie habitat on the butte. Besides the plant community, there are potential issues with native birds (clay-colored sparrow), worms, and insects on Bald Butte.

Whitman County Planner Alan Thomson said he considers the amount of public comment on the issue significant. The majority of comments were about the native land and light pollution. (Palouse Astronomical Society's observatory is nearby.)

Following public comment, a preliminary botanical survey of the area was commissioned, and it was determined that there is good prairie habitat at the site proposed for the tower. As is noted in that survey, "A large portion, approximately 33.8 acres, of the proposed activity site has numerous rocky outcroppings which have precluded farming of this area. The lack of significant soil disturbance due to agriculture and the high number of native plant species observed qualifies this area as an intact native Palouse prairie grassland (Eastside Steppe)."

As a result of work by the Palouse Prairie Foundation, Palouse prairie is specifically included in the Whitman County Critical Areas Ordinance as worthy of protection.

According to an article in the Daily Evergreen, given the time of year, a final botanical report is not possible until the warmer months, when native plants will be in full bloom. Thomson said that he would not be able to issue a permit allowing the tower to be built at the proposed location until summer.

Bald Butte, a 30 minute drive south of Pullman, is privately owned.

Stargazers, citizens defend dark skies, native Palouse prairie – The Daily Evergreen

<https://dailyevergreen.com/22199/news/stargazers-citizens-defend-dark-skies-native-palouse-prairie>

PPF Mini-grants

The Palouse Prairie Foundation's overarching mission is to promote the preservation and restoration of native Palouse Prairie ecosystems in Whitman County, Washington and Latah County, Idaho. To this end, the PPF supports efforts to:

- ▶ raise public awareness about plants and animals (and other biota) found in the prairie and the ecological functions that they carry out to sustain it;
- ▶ raise public awareness about issues threatening the prairie as well as opportunities to conserve it;
- ▶ develop educational materials and curricula for prairie conservation;
- ▶ conduct research;
- ▶ restore degraded prairie lands locally; and
- ▶ increase seed for use in local restoration.

In 2008, we initiated a mini-grant program to promote the conservation and restoration of Palouse Prairie and to raise public awareness of this endangered ecosystem. This program provides small grants to students, teachers, conservationists, landowners and others interested in the conservation and restoration of Palouse Prairie. Monetary awards range from \$50 to \$1,000 depending on need.

Mini-grants may be used by:

- ▶ students for research to report on environmental or social issues that affect prairie conservation/restoration efforts in the region
- ▶ educators developing teaching material about the Palouse Prairie
- ▶ land owners wishing cost-share on restoration efforts

If you want to apply, complete and submit an application (available online on the PPF website).

2018 Memberships due

Memberships are by calendar year.
Please renew your membership!

Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse

The Palouse Prairie Foundation was one of 32 local organizations at the ninth Alternative Giving Market of the Palouse in early December -- our third time. Joan and David set up and were each able to spend a short time there. Jim and James were at the PPF table the whole time and talked to many potential shoppers. The concept is to gather for an afternoon and evening a room-full of representatives of local non-profit organizations whom folks can visit and talk to, and the shoppers can choose organizations to support by purchasing gift cards. Each organization has a selection of five cards. The cards can then be given to others as non-traditional holiday gifts.

PPF had cards for

- o Protect and enhance the habitat of the Giant Palouse Earthworm (*Driloleirus americanus*) (\$5)

- o Protect and enhance Palouse prairie plants and native pollinators (\$5)
- o Support community conservation project mini-grants (\$10)
- o Maintain the Palouse Prairie habitat at Whelan Cemetery (\$20)
- o Provide resources for homeowners to design native plant gardens for beauty, pollinator support and water conservation (open)

The Market was well-attended, but participating organizations have not yet received their accountings.

Thanks to all who came out (or went on-line) and supported PPF and the other organizations through the AGMP! And if you did attend this year and last, let David know what you thought of the new, streamlined check-out system.)



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.

☒ Standard membership \$20

☒ Donation \$_____

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

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