

The Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation

P.O. Box 8952. Moscow, ID 83843

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

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Winter 2011/2012

The regular meeting date for the Palouse Prairie Foundation is the second Thursday of each month. Check the PPF website for updates and locations.

Election:

If you are a 2011 member of PPF, please take the time to vote for the new Board of Directors. You should have received a ballot by e-mail if you have provided one, or else by regular mail. Votes must be received by noon January 12. Results of the vote will be announced at the annual meeting that evening. All five current board members' terms are up at the end of the year.

Annual meeting

The Palouse Prairie Foundation's 2011 annual meeting will be at 7:00 pm Thursday, January 12, 2012 in the Edith Hecht Reading Room at Neill Public Library in Pullman. Results from the elections will be announced following the presentation by Karen Ward (see Upcoming Events below).

New Publications:

Finding the Palouse Prairie: Images of a Vanishing Grassland (proceeds from the sale of this book benefit PPF).

Matt Dolkas, a Conservation Social Science graduate student at UI, as a part of his Masters program has created a book containing his photographs and writings about the Palouse Prairie – the past, now, and the future. Matt and PPF held a book release/silent auction (of prints of his photos, and other good stuff)/fundraiser with music provided by John Treasure and Friends on December 15, 2011. The event was held in the Great Room of the 1912 Center and well attended.

In "Finding the Palouse Prairie", Matthew Dolkas tells the story of the Palouse Prairie. He has devoted two years to this project, seeking to inspire us with images of this endangered ecoregion. His purpose in telling this story is to advocate for the restoration and protection of the remaining prairie. Because the soils of the Palouse are highly productive, the native habitat of the Palouse has been almost entirely converted to agriculture. Of the once continuous Palouse Prairie, less than 1% remains, making it one of the most critically endangered ecoregions in the country. The little that is remaining is fragmented into small, isolated pockets, which are still threatened by weed invasion, urbanization, and herbicide drift. But there is still time to make a difference. The decisions we make, both individually and as a community, are reflected in our landscapes. We should choose to make decisions that protect the land's diversity for both our benefit and the future's. We should do so without regrets or inhibitions because it is the right thing to do now, regardless of what happens in the future. This book would make a great gift for yourself or for others.

"Finding the Palouse Prairie: Images of a Vanishing Grassland" can be purchased online at www.dolkas.com or <http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/2768591>

A UI Argonaut article on the book can be found at

www.uiargonaut.com/stories/sections/news/stories/2011/december/9/seeing_through_a.html

PPF Membership:

We thank those of you who have already sent in your 2012 dues. The PPF is a non-profit organization that relies on membership dues and grants to carry out its mission.

We hope that you will continue to be a Palouse Prairie Foundation member in 2012 so that we can better

work on your behalf. Membership details can be found at

<http://www.palouseprairie.org/memberform.html> or at the end of this newsletter.

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, arthropods, birds and other critters. Every year the Palouse Prairie rejuvenates us with its rich annual displays of flowers, reminding us of what has been lost, but more importantly, reminding us of what can (and must) be conserved and/ or restored.

Mini-grants:

PPF has funded three mini-grants for 2011. The first grant is for the Moscow High School Environmental Club's work on the native plant walk at Virgil Phillips Farm park north of Moscow. This work is a continuation of earlier work funded thru the PPF mini-grant program. The second grant is for purchasing seed and plants for a native garden/outdoor classroom at J. Russell Elementary School in Moscow. The students and teachers will plan, plant, and maintain the site with technical assistance from PPF. The third grant is to support a portion of a UI graduate student's project seeking to determine what factors encourage or discourage conservation efforts by residents in Whitman County. For more information on the PPF mini-grant program refer to the PPF website or contact a member of the Board of Directors.

Summary of Insect Bibliography posted on PPF website

Submitted by Timothy D. Hatten¹, Ph.D.

¹ Board of Directors, PPF and CEO of Invertebrate Ecology Inc.

The prairie insect bibliography posted on the PPF website has been updated. The bibliography references manuscripts published between 1961 and 2011, and is based upon a title/key word/abstract search containing the words 'prairie' and 'Coleoptera', 'prairie' and 'Hymenoptera', etc., for all Taxonomic insect Orders. Additionally, the bibliography includes select Ph.D. dissertations and proceedings relevant to Palouse Prairie. The bibliography was downloaded from Endnote X5 in text file format, and as such, may need additional editing if used in manuscripts or reports.

In all, sixty six new referenced dating from mid-2009 to 2011 have been added to the bibliography, bringing the total number of references to over 460. Of these, approximately 330 (or 73%) contain the word 'prairie' in title or abstract, and 36 contain the word 'grasslands'. The number of references focusing all or in-part on the specific insect Order: ants/bees/wasps, i.e. Hymenoptera (47); bugs or true bugs, i.e. Hemiptera (27); flies, i.e. Diptera (43); butterflies or moths, i.e. Lepidoptera (23); and, beetles, i.e. Coleoptera (91). Other common foci include: landscape (59), forest (58), aquatic (33), lentic (5), lotic (3), wetland/s (27), endangered species (4), Red-listed (1), invasive species (2), pollinator/s (9), predator/s (42), prey (27), fire (46), habitat fragmentation (7), habitat connectivity (4), habitat loss (6), and Palouse (21). The bibliography may also be found at Invertebrate Ecology Inc.'s website at

www.invertebrateecology.com.

Upcoming Events:

PPF and the White Pine Chapter of INPS will sponsor the presentation **Invasive Species** on Jan 12, 2012, 7:00 pm at Neill Public Library in Pullman. Karen Ward will talk about invasive species. Karen is a plant pathologist working as the plant pest diagnostician at WSU in Pullman, including First Detector training which teaches people about the First Detector program, and how to recognize invasive species, be they insects, weeds, plant pathogens, mollusks, etc. Enter through the doors on the east side of the building.

In addition, Dr. Richard Zack, Department of Entomology, Washington State University, will present a different program on **Invasive Species** for the **Palouse Audubon Society** on January 18, 2012 in the Fiske Room of the 1912 Building in Moscow beginning at 7:30 pm.

Featured Plant: serviceberry, *Amelanchier alnifolia*

Submitted by Dave Skinner (Photos used in this article are © Dave Skinner)

Serviceberry, (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) is a spreading to erect shrub or small tree growing 6-20ft tall. The



bark is reddish-brown aging to grey. The buds are alternate, reddish-brown, and conical. Serviceberry is native to mesic open woods, open hillsides, and moist places from Alaska to California east to Alberta and south to New Mexico. Other common names include Saskatoon serviceberry, shadbush, sarviceberry, and juneberry. Currently there are 4 varieties commonly recognized, two of which (var. *alnifolia* and var. *cusickii*) may occur on the Palouse. The varieties tend to intergrade. Wetland Indicator Status is FACU.

The flowers appear in the spring, are perfect, usually appearing coetaneously (with the leaves) but sometimes precociously (before the leaves). Serviceberry is usually the first of the native Palouse shrubs to flower.



The edible pomes are dark purple when mature (those in the photo on the left are immature). The pomes were a dietary staple of Native Americans. The stems were used by native peoples for stakes and arrows. In fact, the Nez Perce people considered this the best wood for arrows. Seed is often dispersed by animals which eat the fruit, while the bark is often eaten by beavers and marmots. Twigs and leaves are browsed by wildlife. *A. alnifolia* is a host for larva of the pale swallowtail butterfly, *Papilo eurymedon* (Pocewicz 2005), and Lorquin's admiral, *Limentis lorquini*.

Seed size varies from 36,300-113,800 seeds/lb with an average of 60,051.

Serviceberry usually survives even severe fires especially if soil is moist at time of fire. It resprouts from surviving root crowns. Coverage may decrease, but frequency increases following fire.

Fruit is generally collected by hand and should be refrigerated until cleaned. Birds will eat the ripe pomes, so timely collection is important. Seed is separated from the fleshy pome by macerating the fruit in water. Sound seed will sink to the bottom and the liquid and pulp can be poured off. Seed should be air dried before storage but excess drying of seeds may induce a deep secondary dormancy. Seed can be stored for up to 15 years in an unheated warehouse and retain some germination capability.

Untreated seed should be fall sown. Pretreated seed can be spring sown. Container stock can be outplanted in spring or fall. Bare root material should be planted in spring.

The seeds generally must be cold stratified for a period of 3-4 months although some ecotypes may germinate after as little as 3 weeks of cold, moist stratification. Germination can be erratic. Acid scarification or a hydrogen peroxide soak before stratification may improve germination. Benzyadenine and thiourea may aid laboratory germination. Plants can also be propagated from root cuttings or divisions.

There are 5 propagation protocols for containerized material in the Native Plant Network:

New Mexico State University

<http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/Network/ViewProtocols.aspx?ProtocolID=2348>

Bridger, MT Plant Materials Center

<http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/Network/ViewProtocols.aspx?ProtocolID=2759>

Glacier National Park

<http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/Network/ViewProtocols.aspx?ProtocolID=177>

University of Kentucky

<http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/Network/ViewProtocols.aspx?ProtocolID=1435>

Sound Native Plants, Olympia, WA

<http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/Network/ViewProtocols.aspx?ProtocolID=3448>

For more information on *Amelanchier alnifolia* see:

Specimen data and digital resources from The Consortium of Pacific Northwest Herbaria

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

Plant Profile from the USDA NRCS PLANTS Database

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=AMAL2>

Species page from the University of Washington Herbarium (WTU)

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

Species account from USDA Forest Service Fire Effects Information System (FEIS).

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

Species information from the Palouse Plant Database

<http://dev.palouseprairie.org/plants/plantdb/PPFplants.php?USDA=AMAL2>

There is some information on *A. alnifolia* in “Native Plants of Northern Idaho for Landscaping and Restoration” from the Idaho Native Plant Society at

<http://www.idahonativeplants.org/guides/NorthIdahoGuide.aspx>

Miscellanea:

We recently posted a beta version of the Palouse Plant Database on the PPF website at

<http://dev.palouseprairie.org/plants/plantdb/PPFplants.php> This is a temporary page and it will change in the future. You can always access the database from the main page of the Palouse Prairie Foundation website <http://www.palouseprairie.org/> Please take a look at it. If you have suggestions or corrections for the database, please notify us using the contact information on the database pages.

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/>

If you would like to give a presentation about some aspect of Palouse Prairie or know of someone whom you would like to hear talk about Palouse Prairie, or you have an idea for a field trip this spring and/or summer, please contact a board member.

Copies of past issues of the Newsletter of the Palouse Prairie Foundation 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 at roadrunner dot com (you will need to replace “at” and “dot” with the appropriate symbols) or call him at 208-874-3205. Look for the next newsletter in spring 2012.

It's easy to become a member of the Palouse Prairie Foundation. Membership dues for the calendar year are: (circle one)

Student membership — \$10.00

Regular membership — \$20.00

Family membership — \$35.00

Sustaining membership — \$50.00

Patron membership — \$100.00

Lifetime membership — \$250.00

Other, or additional donation — \$

Name _____

Street/P.O. Box _____

City, State, ZIP _____

E-mail _____

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

Please print this page, fill it in, and mail it with payment (payable to Palouse Prairie Foundation) to PO Box 8952, Moscow, ID. 83843. Please include an e-mail address if possible; that is our primary means of communicating about meetings, field trips, etc. Thank you.