FROM THE PRESIDENT

Let’s go birding –

As I go thorough the dog days of summer, birding is slow. The birds are done nesting; so they don’t sing very much. Many migratory birds are moving around and some, like purple Martins, are collecting in large pre-migration flocks. Juveniles of all nesting species are evident – like the little flock of grackles that like my back yard. They’re so drab and splotchy, I’m not sure which species they are (probably Common Grackle based on a few blue feathers on the head).

The highlight of our summer birding was our trip to the Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. There in three days of cool, high altitude birding and sightseeing we managed to get some lifers found in the interior west that had been eluding me. We saw the Gray Jay, Black-billed Magpie, Prairie Falcon, and Green-tailed Towhee, common birds, but previously problems for me. Seven lifers in all. The Red Crossbill, on the other hand, continues to be my nemesis.

But I’m looking forward to fall birding. Cooler September weather and early migration will call us out to the exciting PTAS field trips Karen has planned. Plus Audubon Dallas and FWAS have some great trips planned as well. There will be lots of opportunities to join other birders and see what’s around.

So please join us on one or more bird walks this season. No matter what your level of skill, you’ll find someone willing to help you find or identify birds. And finally, you should hone your skills because come December, the Christmas bird counts will be on us, and we’ll want you to join us and help set new records for numbers of species observed.

Get out there!

Gailon Brehm, President

Local Birding Activities

Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society (PTAS) is a local chapter of the National Audubon Society serving Collin County and surrounding areas. If you are a member of the National Audubon Society and you live in our area you are member of PTAS or you can join locally as well.

We mailed you this newsletter so you will be aware of our local birding activities and participate in the ones you find interesting. In you want to learn about birding see the articles on identification classes and bird walks. If you want to do active birding see our article on field trips. If you are interested in conservation and ecology see our articles on upcoming programs and support for local bird and environmental causes. If you want to have a good time with people who are passionate about birds come to any of our activities.

To learn more about us and keep updated with our activities go to our website at http://prairieandtimbers.org

Guided Bird Walks

Here is your chance to learn bird identification, get a little exercise, socialize with fellow birders, and enjoy the great outdoors in a green activity.

The Heard Museum and Prairie & Timbers Audubon Society offer guided bird walks on the Heard Museum and Sanctuary on the second Saturday of each month, September - May. Sign-in for these walks will be at the Heard store at 9:00, rain or shine!

The bird walks are targeted at beginning and intermediate birders and will last 1.5 hours with plenty of opportunity for questions and tips on birding techniques. Prairie, woodland, and wetland habitats are included. Attendees who have binoculars and field guides should bring them.

If you want to learn about birding before committing to one of the scheduled field trips, these bird walks are an excellent introduction. The bird walk is free although the Heard Museum charges an admission fee for non members.
The most satisfying experiences of the Audubon members the successful field trip. Field trips are typically scheduled on Saturdays, unless otherwise noted. Below are the dates for upcoming trips and advice on how to make them enjoyable. RSVP the week of the trip. Contact: Karen Carbeiner at 972-824-2878 or BurdNurd@tx.rr.com: Tom Heath at 972-867-8646 or heathwtom@netscape.net. Send an email to Tom to get on the email distribution list.

Saturday, September 15, 2007:
Heard Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary, McKinney
Gailon Brehm and Roger Sanderson: 1/2 day
Walk the new board walk traversing the wetlands in addition to surveying the prairies and woodlands.

Saturday, October 20:
Lake Texoma and Herman Baker Park/Pickens Lake
Gailon Brehm: 3/4 day

Saturday, November 17:
111 Ranch and Spring Creek Preserve
Jerri Kerr: 1/2 day
Wintering birds

Saturday, December 8:
Benbrook Lake
D. D. Currie

Saturday, December 15:
White Rock Fish Hatchery
Chris Runk: 3 hours

Saturday, January 19, 2008
Rowlett Greenbelt: Rowlett Trail and Springfield Park Woods
Carla Morey and Jerri Kerr

Saturday, January 26:
Heard Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary, McKinney
Gailon Brehm and Roger Sanderson: 1/2 day
Walk the new board walk traversing the wetlands in addition to surveying the prairies and woodlands.

Saturday, February 2:
Southside Water treatment Plant
Bob Stone: 1/2 day

Saturday February 23:
Hagerman NWR
Thomas Riecke

Saturday March 22:
Connemara Meadow Preserve
Gailon Brehm and Roger Sanderson: 1/2 day

Saturday, April 5:
Fort Hood
Rick Kostecke: Black-capped Vireo

Saturday, April 19:
Cedar Ridge Preserve, Dallas
Dr. Marcy Brown Marsden: 1/2 day

Saturday May 10:
Prairie Creek Park and Arapaho Park
Carolyn and Dave Oldham: 1/2 Day
Spring migration warblers.

Upcoming PTAS Programs

Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society meets the fourth Tuesday of the month, September through November, and January through May at the Heard Natural Science Museum in McKinney. Scheduled programs are: (revised 9/5/2007)

September 25, 2007
Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. – Shorebirds
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. - Storm Watch, Recognizing the signs of potentially dangerous weather: Gary Woodall

October 23, 2007
Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. – Owls
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. - The How and Why of Bird Migration: Dr. Marcy Brown Marsden,

November 27, 2007
Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. – Ducks
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. - Prairie Management for Avian Species: Heather McWilliams

December 26, 2007
Christmas Bird Count - Heard Museum

January 2008
Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. – Sparrows
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. - Urbanization and the Wildlife Response: John M Davis

February 2008
Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. – Woodpeckers and Woodland Birds
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. - Purple Martins

March 2008
Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. – Hawks
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. – Hummingbirds

April 2008
Bird Identification Class – 7:00 p.m. – Warblers
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. – Dragonflies

May 2008
Monthly Meeting – 7:30 p.m. – National Wildlife Federation Back Yard Habitat Program
LEARN BIRDS FROM THE EXPERTS

Again this year your Prairie & Timbers Audubon Society is offering an outstanding opportunity to birders of all levels of experience and knowledge. “Learn the birds” is a birding class that meets at 7:00pm just prior to the chapter meetings which are at 7:30pm. Gailon Brehm will be offering these identification classes. Featured during each class are bird specimens provided by the Heard Museum and a few recordings of bird sounds. You can observe the specimens up close and observe the field marks on the real bird. The class format is an informal discussion tailored mostly for beginning birders, but a few rare species will be mixed in to pique the interest of more experienced folks. All you need to bring is your favorite field guide.

Send your email address to get PTAS benefits

We need your email address to keep you informed of the latest news, chapter meetings, educational programs, field trips, bird sightings, other local birding activities and conservation issues through our newsletter postings. To minimize expenses allowing more money to go directly to the birds, our bimonthly newsletter is only distributed once a year by US mail. (Yes this is the once for 2007) Otherwise the newsletter is posted on the internet and we send an email with the link to our members. We also send emails reminding you of our meetings. We average 1 to 2 emails a month so we will not overload your inbox.

Your email address will only be used by us to keep you informed of the PTAS newsletters and meetings. It will not be sold or given to anyone. Nor will we send you email messages about products, fundraising, advocacy issues or charity causes. We believe in keeping you informed of those items by our newsletter so you can read about them when and if you want.

If you want to be reminded of field trips as well see the request for email address under that topic as that is a separate list to minimize email to our members not interested in field trips.

If you were not informed via email when this newsletter was posted to our website, then you are not on our list. Please send your email address to PTAS at:
emaillist@prairieandtimbers.org.

If you do not have access to email send Merrick Darley a note at 3713 Wood Rail Dr., Plano, TX 75074 and he will get in touch with you about it.

Frogging?

If you’re interested in more than birds, then maybe all those night sounds interest you. In my neighborhood, I have tentatively identified by sight and/or sound 5 species of frogs and toads: Woodhouse’s Toad, Northern Cricket Frog, Southern Leopard Frog, Cope’s Gray Treefrog, and Spotted Chorus Frog. Now all this is a work in progress; so I’d appreciate help and inputs from anyone who can hear and sort these things out better than me.

Northern Cricket Frog

What I have done is go to enature.com and click on the sounds of frogs that are supposed to be in our area. Then those that sound the closest are the ones I pick. Anyone have a better idea?

By the way, the Cricket Frog pictured is only an inch long with its long legs extended – a tiny creature to make such a big sound.
Field Trip Report

PRAIRIE CREEK &
ARAPAHO PARKS

First and most, props to the lovely Carolyn Oldham for her spotting + ID’ing expertise!

Not the ideal conditions for migrants due to the cloudy, sometimes misty weather conditions, but 15 of us made the best of it for what turned out to be a fun morning with not a bad number of migrants!

We were mainly on a warbler hunt since these 2 parks are usually dripping with warblers this time of year. I said usually. We reached up and wrung out a few branches to start off with 2 Magnolia Warblers. Then we moved on to a Wilson’s, all the while listening to many Great Crested Flycatchers.

As we walked up one side of the creek and down the other, it was quite apparent # 1: the sun was not going to come out, and # 2: the birds weren’t either. But between Prairie Creek and Arapaho Park, we managed to pick up 34 total species which wasn’t too bad – we had a LOT of fun doing it which is all that matters, right?!

We lost some of our group between the 2 parks, which was a shame because Arapaho seemed to have more species and better looks.

We had great looks at 2 beautiful Summer Tanagers which were apparently migrating together and were close pals as they stayed very near one another.

Also we saw 2 female Rose-breasted Grosbeaks – one was a first winter juvenile – fantastic birds!

Oh, yes, there was love in the air as we saw 2 Red-bellied Woodpeckers mating ♥

Here’s the list:

**Location:** Prairie Creek Park

**Observation date:** 5/5/07

Notes: The Great Crested Flycatchers were only heard. We had 1 un-ID'ed Hummer. The Grosbeaks were both female - 1 was a first winter/juvie. Also 2 Mute Swans - m,f w/ female on nest.

Number of species: 34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bird Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mallard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Egret</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowy Egret</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Heron</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-tailed Hawk</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotted Sandpiper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mourning Dove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chimney Swift</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-bellied Woodpecker</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downy Woodpecker</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least Flycatcher</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Phoebe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Crested Flycatcher</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Jay</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Crow</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple Martin</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina Chickadee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carolina Wren</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swainson's Thrush</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Mockingbird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown Thrasher</td>
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<td>European Starling</td>
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<td>Cedar Waxwing</td>
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<td>Nashville Warbler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow Warbler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnolia Warbler</td>
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<td>Wilson's Warbler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Tanager</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Cardinal</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigo Bunting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great-tailed Grackle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown-headed Cowbird</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Sparrow</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Help Needed

If you are interested in becoming more active in supporting PTAS activities to help the birds of North Central Texas, there are numerous opportunities available. Additional chairpersons are needed for birdathon, fundraising, newsletter, membership, and hospitality. Chairpersons attend and participate in board meetings. Please contact our President Gailon Brehm, 972-517-2542, gbrehm@msn.com

PTAS WEBSITE

http://prairieandtimbers.org

Check It Out!
Field Trip Report

CEDAR RIDGE PRESERVE

An enthusiastic group of 14 birders met at Cedar Ridge Preserve in south Dallas on a beautiful day (Sat., April 28, 2007) which yielded some great species.

The field trip leader was Dr. Marcy Brown-Marsden. Thanks to Marcy for her knowledge of hot spots in the Preserve as well as her wealth of knowledge of birds and plant life.

Location: Cedar Ridge Preserve (Dallas) (PPW-W 089)
Observation date: 4/28/07
Number of species: 23

Great Blue Heron 1
Little Blue Heron 1
Black Vulture 1
Turkey Vulture 2
Chimney Swift 4
Ruby-throated Hummingbird 1
Black-chinned Hummingbird 1
Red-bellied Woodpecker X
Downy Woodpecker 1
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 1
White-eyed Vireo 1
Blue Jay 1
American Crow 2
Purple Martin 1
Tufted Titmouse 2
Bewick's Wren 5
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 2
Chipping Sparrow 1
Northern Cardinal X
Rose-breasted Grosbeak 1
Indigo Bunting 2
Painted Bunting 10
Red-winged Blackbird X

SEE YOUR ADVERTISEMENT HERE!

Do you know someone that would like to advertise in the PTAS newsletter?

Your business card, coupon, or graphic can be seen by fellow birders for a cost much lower than traditional advertising. Please contact Gailon Brehm at g-brehm@msn.com to place your ad in our next newsletter. Prices start at $65 for one year of advertising.

OUR PTAS DONATIONS AT WORK!

Did you know PTAS is a non-profit organization, making our donations tax-deductible? And did you know the funds we donate are being used to support local and state-wide birding habitats and projects? In fact, the Board and Officers encourage PTAS members to nominate places and causes dear to their hearts for chapter support.

Here are some of the bird-related causes we’ve been able to assist:

- Blackland Prairie Raptor Center, Mar 2007
- Heard Prairie Restoration project, Nov 2006
- Preservation Society for Spring Creek Forest, Jan 2006
- Heard Bird Banding Station, Nov 2005
- Heard land purchase, Jul 2005
- Heard Eagle Scout project, Oct 2003
- Houston Audubon, Horseshoe Marsh purchase, Jan 2003

Very worthy causes! And we know there are more causes that must be important to you. Please join us at future meetings and look for a nomination sheet I will set out. Feel free to nominate your favorite birding-related cause, habitat or project; it can be local or Texas-wide. We will ask for your name and phone number, in case the Board needs to contact you for more information on your nomination.

If you cannot join us for a meeting, you may contact any Board Member or Officer with your nomination; phone numbers and e-mail addresses can be found in this newsletter. Each nomination we receive will be given consideration at a future Board meeting. The list above proves that we truly believe in supporting local efforts.

PTAS exists because we share an interest in birds. We have the ability, with all of our dues and donations, to support the places and hard-working people who protect birds and their habitat. Our combined funds can go a long way in helping. So... donate, then nominate!

Jerri Kerr
Earth Share

September marks the start of workplace campaigns for Earth Share of Texas and other charitable organizations. If your workplace offers the Earth Share option, that's where we'd like to urge you to direct your contribution.

And specifically, we'd like to encourage you to contribute to the Audubon Foundation of Texas (AFT), one of Earth Share's member organizations. AFT's mission is to support the National Audubon Society's 20 Texas chapters.

Among other things, it provides funding for new chapters just getting off the ground. And it helps established chapters meet their operating expenses.

The AFT also provides grants to support chapters' special projects. Some recent grants include $1000 to Travis Audubon for work at Chaetura Canyon, the Chapter's newest sanctuary. Big Country Audubon Society used a grant to construct an observation blind in Abilene State Park. Other grants have supported conservation work in Latin America. Working with the Houston Audubon Society, AFT helped fund Ninos y Crias, an educational organization in the Yucatan which works to protect Caribbean Flamingos and to encourage sustainable development. And together with the Nature Conservancy, AFT helped supported a conference of Central American researchers studying the wintering grounds of the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler.

For a complete list of workplaces participating in the Earth Share campaign, visit <http://www.earthshare-texas.org/workplace.htm>.

What is the federal Duck Stamp? They are a wonderful way to help our feathered friends by protecting and conserving the land and habitat they need to exist.

For only $15 you can feel good about helping birds as well as knowing that 98 cents of every dollar goes to fund future purchase or lease of wetland habitat. More than $700 million from sales of the stamp has protected more than 5.2 million acres in the National Wildlife Refuge System. One third of America’s threatened species make their home in wetlands.

Not only will showing your Duck Stamp at National Wildlife Refuges gain you free admission from July 1 through June 30th, you will be helping birds as well as other wildlife (many of which are endangered) throughout the entire country by protecting their habitat!

You can find Duck Stamps at your local post office or purchase online at www.duckstamp.com. Get yours today!

When shopping at our advertiser’s stores please let them know you saw their ad in the PTAS newsletter.

WILD BIRD CENTER

1601 Brinker Rd., at Loop 288 (by Wal-Mart), Denton
940 / 484-BIRD [2473]

www.WildBird.com/Denton
First published this year, "Birds of Texas" by Keith A. Arnold and Gregory Kennedy is a field guide that focuses on 401 species either common or particularly notable in the Lone Star state. The book is 8.5 x 5.5 x 0.9 inch paperback weighing about 1.5 lbs. It is well illustrated in full color.

Front pages of the book contain colored pictures of all the species arranged by bird groupings. Each entry gives the bird name, bird size, reference page and typically are arranged in 7 rows with 4 species per row. If you have some idea of what you are looking for this gives you a quick way to get to relevant pages.

Next comes a short introduction including birding classification, techniques, and activities. I found the list of 100 top birding sites by region in Texas to be the most interesting part of the introduction. For the top 20 sites a description of the site and what to look for at each location is given.

Most of the book is the listing of each bird one species per page. The illustrations are large, in full color, and of high quality. Typically each species has only one or two illustrations without field marks identified. For different plumages and field marks an ID section fills in the details. For a guide book, extensive additional information is included in the text. For each bird a range map of Texas is also included. Besides the ID tips, there are sections on size, status, habitat, nesting, feeding, voice, similar species and best sites to see them. Furthermore, a paragraph is written on each species that gives some interesting facts that might expand on their habitat, feeding habitat, behaviors, or historical information. Thus the authors go beyond the ID and checklist mentality. Below is a photo of the Gull-Billed Tern entry so readers can judge for themselves. This entry was chosen because there would be minimum loss of color information as we publish our newsletter in black and white. In the book all entries are in full color.

The first author, Dr. Keith A. Arnold, graduated with a PhD in Zoology and Physiology from Louisiana State University in 1966. Dr. Arnold taught ornithology for 40 years and is now Professor Emeritus at Texas A&M University. Among his professional honors, he is a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, an Honorary Life Member of the Texas Ornithological Society and the Southwestern Association of Naturalists.

The second author, Gregory Kennedy, has been an active naturalist and adventurer since he was a young boy. He is the author of many books on natural history and has produced film and television work on environmental issues and indigenous concerns in remote areas around the world.

As a novice birder and Texan, I am pleased to have acquired this book and find it's real value in the additional information presented. I am delighted to now have for each Texas bird a list of the best sites to observe them.
Rustlin’s - 8

PRAIRIE & TIMBERS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Officers, Chairpersons and Board Members

President: Gailon Brehm*..................972-517-2542
Vice President: Merrick Darley*.........972-422-5355
Secretary: Paula Brehm* ................972-517-2542
Treasurer: Mike Mizell*..................940-382-8551
Birdathon: Open..........................

Conservation/Armchair Activist:
Roger Sanderson* ...................... 469-767-7242
Newsletter: Merrick Darley* ...........972-422-5355
Field Trips: Karen Carbiener* .........972-824-2878
Tom Heath*.............................. 972-867-8646
Education: Gailon Brehm*..............972-517-2542
Roger Sanderson* ...................... 972-333-5671
Hospitality: Carolyn Oldham* ..........972-517-8987
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Merrick Darley*..........................972-422-5355
CBC: Dan Smith .........................972-516-2979
Website/Electronic Communications:
Tom Heath*.............................. 972-867-8646
Merrick Darley*..........................972-422-5355
Programs: Joan Snider* .................903-583-5099
Publicity: Bobette Mauck*..............972-540-5646
Regional Delegate: Reba Collins, Merrick Darley*
* Board Members

Membership Application

___ I would like to be a member of Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society (PTAS), knowing that my annual membership dues will be used to support local bird-related projects and habitats. Enclosed is my check for $12 (includes all family members at a single address) made out to: PTAS. PTAS is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization; your membership fee and any donations made to PTAS are tax deductible.

___ I would also like to support the National Audubon Society, where my annual membership dues will be used nationally and globally. Enclosed is my check for the special new-member introductory price of $20, made out to: National Audubon Society

Name_________________________________________________
Address______________________________________________
City___________________________________________________
State___________________________________________________
Zip ____________________________________________________
Phone___________________________
Email___________________________

(E-mail addresses are used to notify members of updated website newsletters, upcoming field trips, and important local bird-related issues. E-mail addresses are NOT shared with, or forwarded to, any other source.)

How did you hear about Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society?
___ From a member of PTAS
___ From the PTAS website
___ Other (please specify)

Mail to: Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society
c/o Mike Mizell, 800 Edgewood, Denton, TX 76201

Note: If you would like to receive email notifications when the newsletters are available, or to update your email address, please contact Merrick Darley at hmdarley@prairieandtimbers.org.