

# DRIFTLESS PRAIRIE VISIONS

5 ARTISTS, 10 ACRES, 20 YEARS, 1 PRAIRIE

# ABOUT DRIFTLESS PRAIRIE VISIONS

FIVE ARTISTS, TEN ACRES, TWENTY YEARS, ONE PRAIRIE

The Driftless Region <sup>1</sup>



★ Location of property that inspired *Prairie Visions*  
(Sauk Co, WI)

<sup>1</sup> Map: Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative, USDA

<sup>2</sup> **Phenology** [ fee-naa-luh-jee ] The timing of cyclical or seasonal biological events, such as migrations, egg laying, flowering, and hibernation. (Source: [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com))

<sup>3</sup> <https://mywisconsinwoods.org/2016/11/30/three-times-lucky-driftless-region/>

<sup>4</sup> [www.Mississippivalleyconservancy.org](http://www.Mississippivalleyconservancy.org)

**DRIFTLESS PRAIRIE VISIONS** explores the phenology<sup>2</sup> of plants in Driftless prairie habitats through the prism of a 10-acre Sauk County, WI prairie. The prairie, which grows on a bluff above the Wisconsin River, was lovingly reconstructed and documented by artist Jill Metcoff over the past 20 years.

Four artists joined Jill to analyze and interpret the data, which included detailed notes about the weekly bloom times, abundance, duration of plant species, and related data. The artists used this information to inspire their own unique works of art. The artists form the collaborative **Prairie Imaginarium**.

The importance of prairies in the Driftless cannot be overstated. So-named for having been spared the effects of glaciation (or drift) during past ice age events<sup>3</sup> the Driftless is now widely considered a “biodiversity hotspot”<sup>4</sup> that touches parts of southwest Wisconsin, southeast Minnesota, northeast Iowa, and northwest Illinois. While only a small amount of prairie habitat remains, increasing numbers of organizations and landowners are devoting time and resources to prairie reconstruction.

*Driftless Prairie Visions* grew out of deep personal connections to the land and evolved into a creative collaboration at the intersection of art and science that asks us to reflect on our personal relationships to fragile ecosystems.

## PRAIRIE IMAGINARIUM ARTISTS

- **Jill Metcoff**  
Spring Green, WI
- **Gigi La Budde**  
Spring Green, WI
- **Karen Ellzey Wright**  
Ridgeway, WI and Chicago, IL
- **Peggy Bradley Timmerman**  
Gotham, WI
- **Joni Graves**  
Spring Green, WI

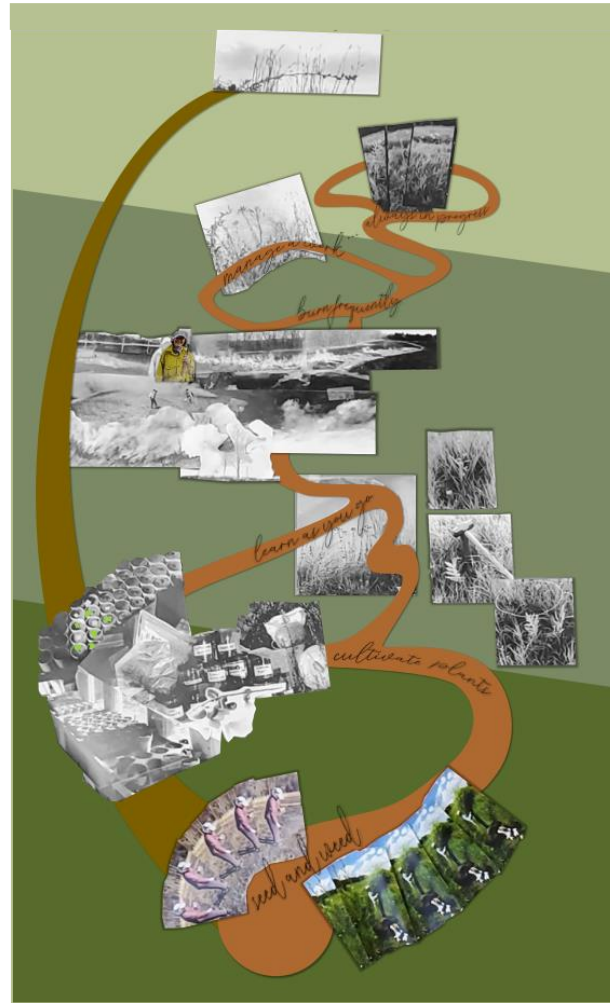
# The Prairie Path

INSTALLATION RENDERING SHOWS MOCKUP OF COMPLETED WORK

**The Pleasure  
of Lists:**  
Plants in the  
prairie



**The Prairie Path:**  
A Reconstruction Process



**Notes from the Field:**  
Journal and Eco Prints



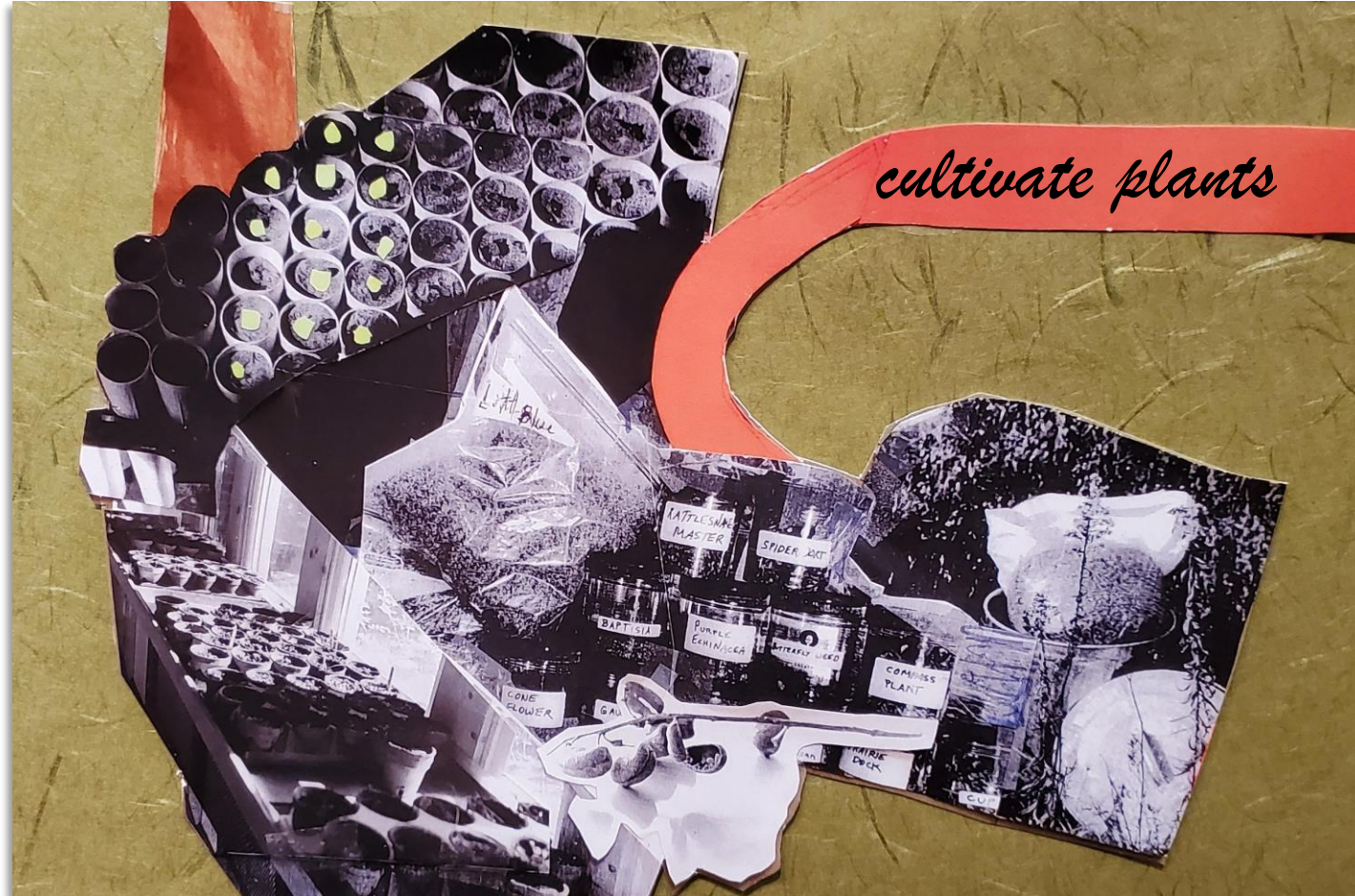
Appx size:  
12' W x 6' H

# The Prairie Path

## Exhibit Component Details



1. Detail from **The Pleasure of Lists:**  
Plants in the Prairie  
(Collage of silver-gelatin prints)



2. Detail from **The Prairie Path:**  
A Reconstruction Process  
(Collage of silver-gelatin prints on various papers)



3. Detail from **Notes from the Field:**  
Journal and Eco Prints  
(Notebook pages and eco prints)

# Recycling Report Card

INSTALLATION RENDERING SHOWS MOCKUP OF COMPLETED WORK

## RECYCLING REPORT CARD

Gigi La Budde

Artist Statement



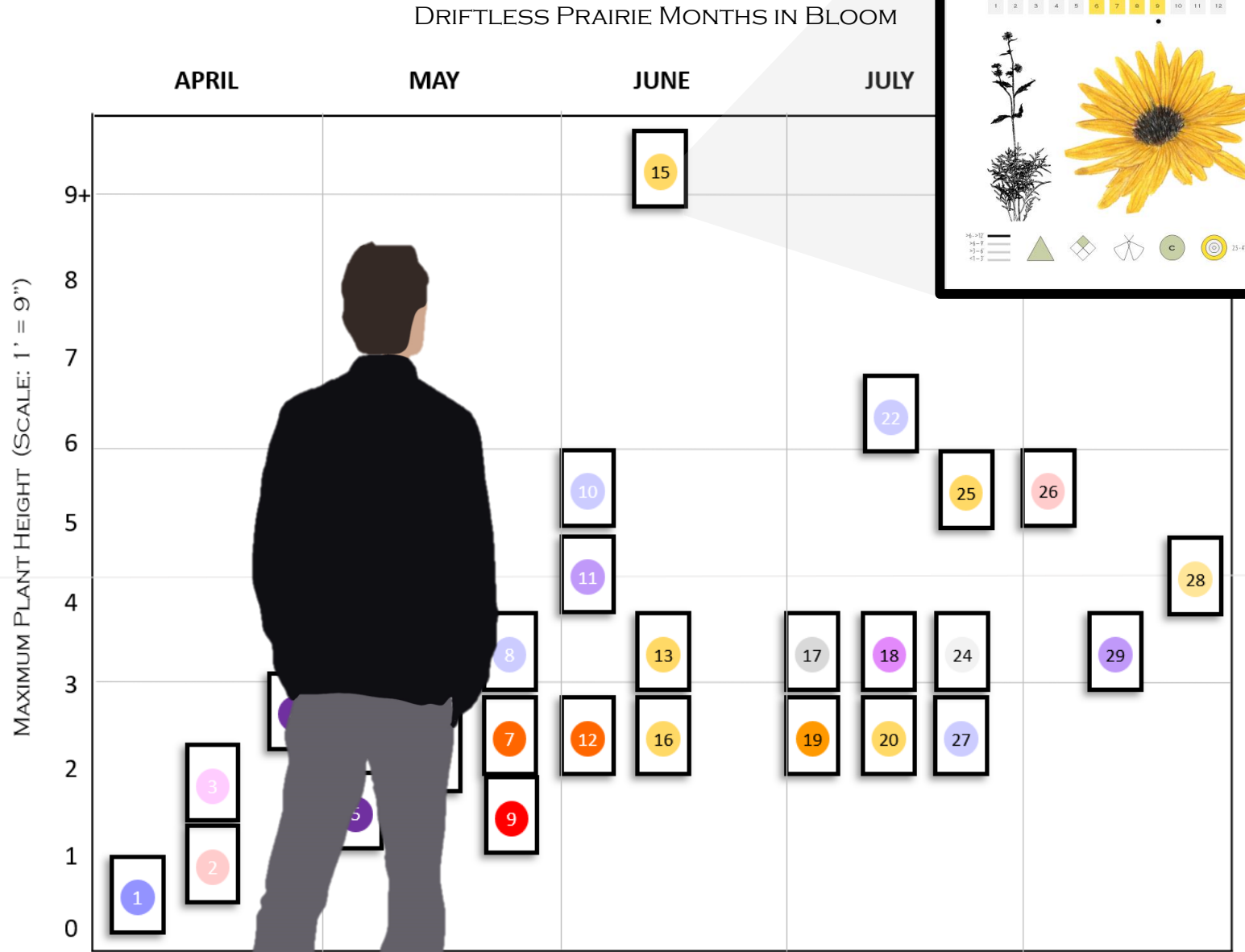
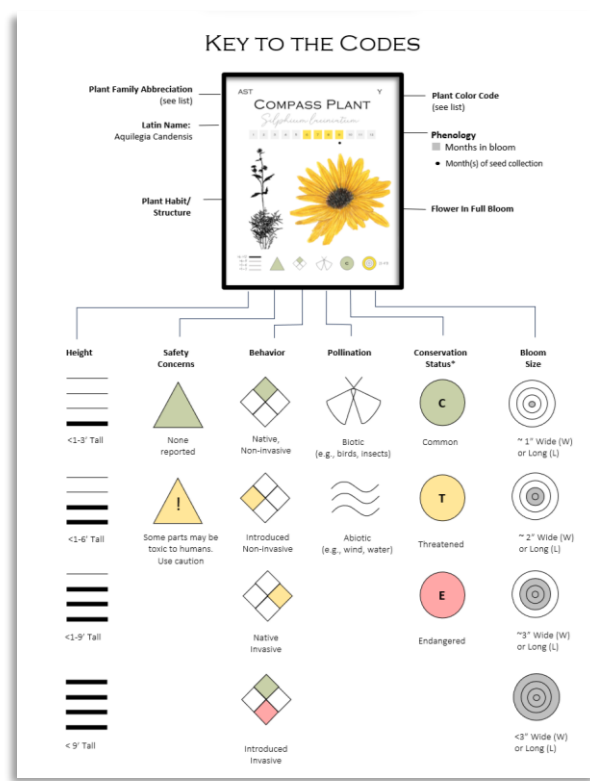
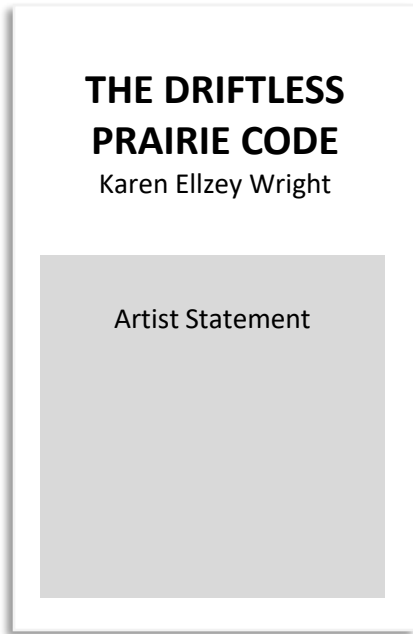
Appx size:  
6' W x 6' D x 6' H  
(includes circulation  
space)

## WORK-IN-PROGRESS



# The Driftless Prairie Code

INSTALLATION RENDERING SHOWS MOCKUP OF COMPLETED WORK



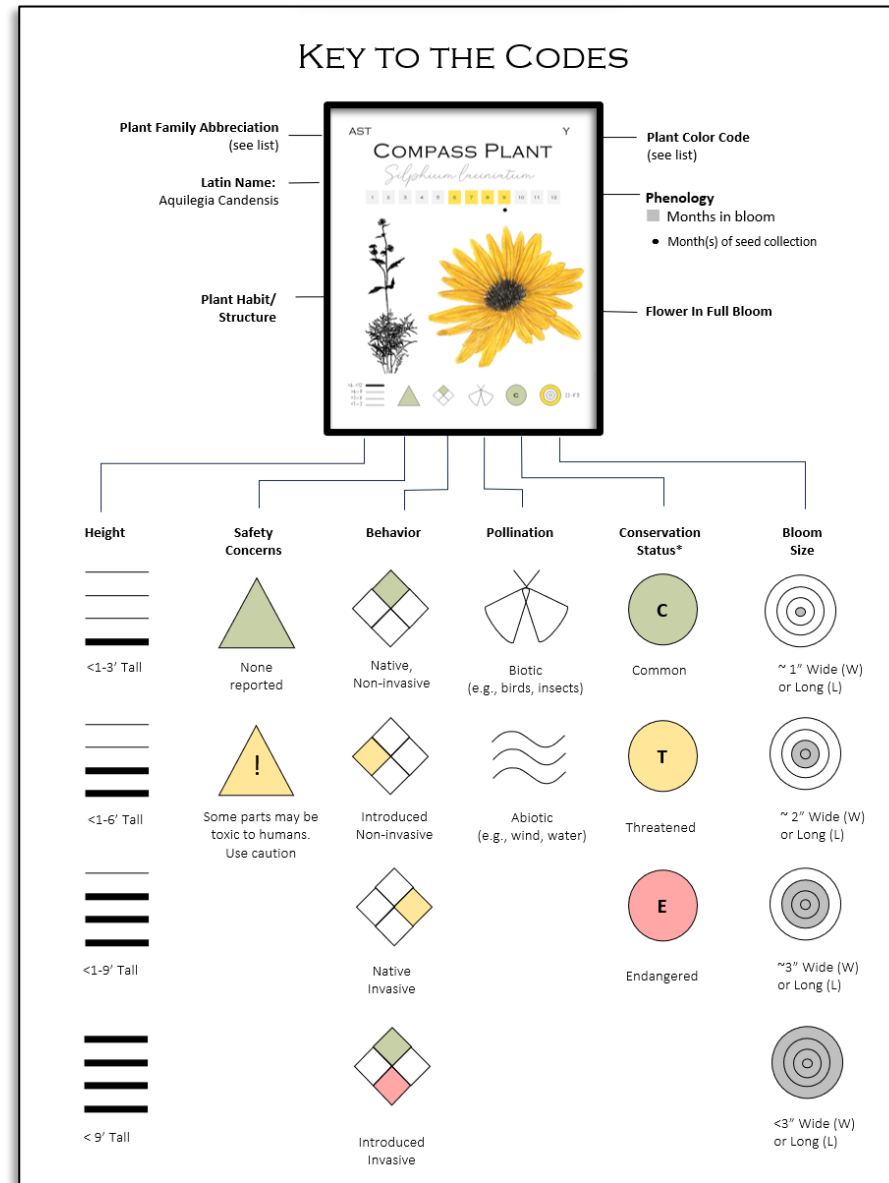
Appx size:  
20' W x 6.5' H

# The Driftless Prairie Code

## Exhibit Component Details



1. Photograph of an individual three-dimensional plant specimen box. Each box is 9" W x 11" H x 1.25" D. The exhibit will feature approximately 30 specimen boxes.



2. Key to the Codes provides a definition of symbols used for each plant specimen. This panel will be presented as part of the installation.



3. Photographs of additional plant specimens. Each specimen is three dimensional and framed in a specimen box as shown in Image 1 at left.

# The Prairie Palette

INSTALLATION RENDERING SHOWS MOCKUP OF COMPLETED WORK

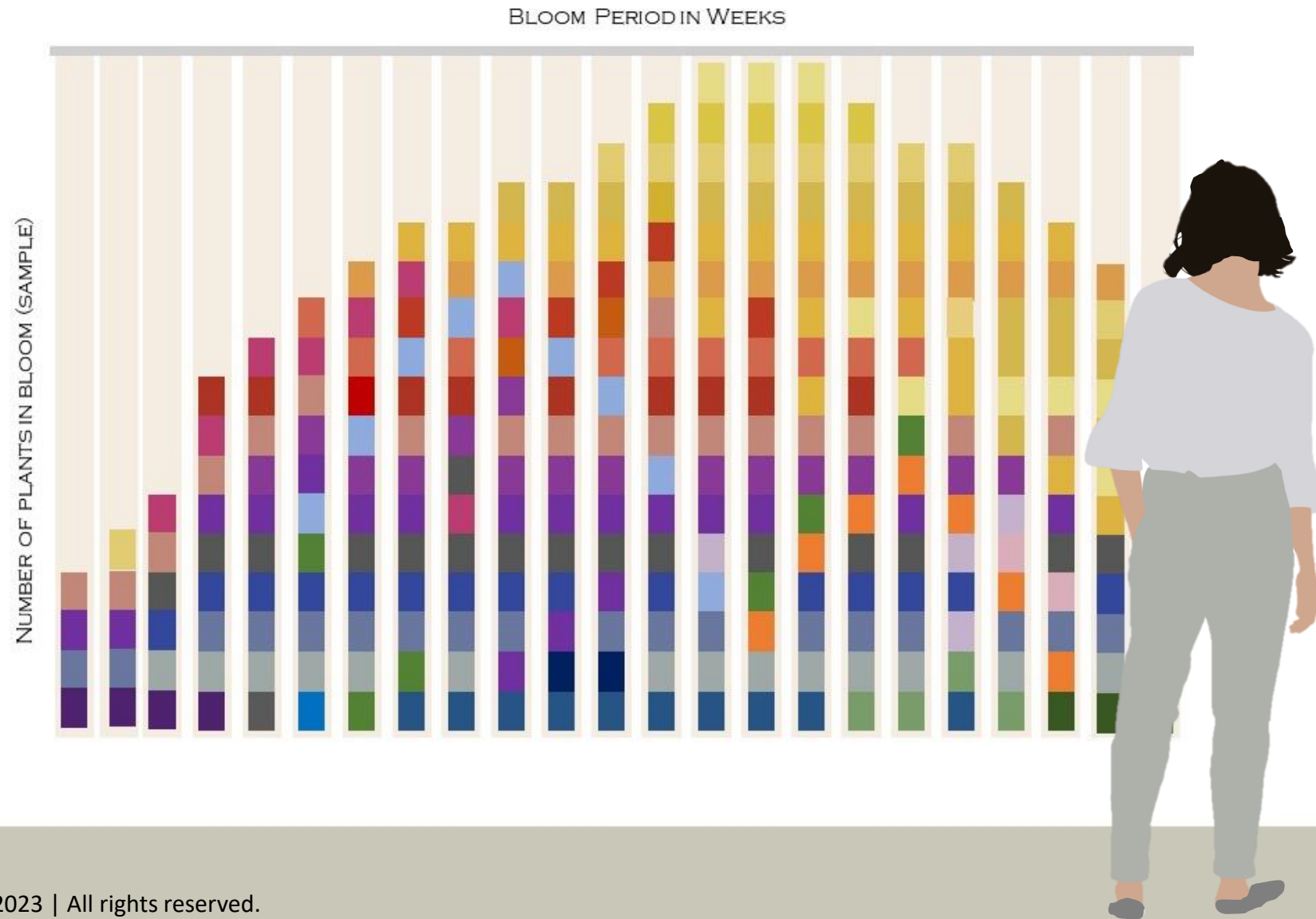
## THE PRAIRIE PALETTE

Peggy Bradley  
Timmerman

Artist Statement

Appx size:  
10' W x 6.5 H

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## ACTUAL DETAIL



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# The Prairie Muse – A Book of Questions

INSTALLATION RENDERING SHOWS MOCKUP OF COMPLETED WORK

## THE PRAIRIE MUSE: A Book of Questions

Joni Graves

Artist Statement

### THE PRARIE AS MUSE: A BOOK OF QUESTIONS

#### Table of Contents

- What is a prairie?
- Why do prairies matter?
- How to build a prairie?
- What is phenology?
- Ways to record phenology?
- Why is phenology data important?

#### The Artists at Work



Appx size:  
4' W x 4' D x 5' H

## REPRESENTATIVE BOOK CONTENT

### Field Notes and Spreadsheets

Species	Weekly 2002-2003						
	W	T	M	T	F	S	S
Aster/Baccharis							
Achillea							
Apocynaceae							
Asteraceae							
Berberidaceae							
Borraginaceae							
Brassicaceae							
Caryophyllaceae							
Caryophyllus							
Cornaceae							
Cornus							
Dioscoreaceae							
Euphorbiaceae							
Fabaceae							
Gentianaceae							
Gentiana							
Hamamelidaceae							
Hamamelis							
Hamamelidaceae							
Lamiaceae							
Lithospermaceae							
Lithospermum							
Liliaceae							
Lupinus							
Malvaceae							
Malva							
Malvaceae							
Ranunculaceae							
Ranunculus							
Ranunculaceae							
Rubiacaceae							
Rubus							
Rubiacaceae							
Veronica							
Veronica							
Vicia							

Artists at Work



### Preliminary Sketches



Reference Lists

month	week	common name (alpha order)
FIELD	date	1 2002-2005
APRIL	18	Prairie Smoke
		Pussytoes
		Dandelion
		Pussytoes
MAY	18	Wintercress
		Daisy Fleabane
		Golden Ragwort
		Hoary Puccoon
		Prairie Smoke
		Pussytoes
		Smooth Yellow Violet
		Daisy Fleabane
		Hoary Puccoon
		Lupine
		Prairie Smoke
		Pussytoes
		Robins Plantain
		Unknown
		Wintercress
		Yellow Wood Sorrel
		Baptisia
		Lupine
		Prairie Smoke
		Robins Plantain
		Baptisia
		Brown Eyed Susan
JUNE	24	Cinquefoil
		Daisy Fleabane
		Early Buttercup
		Foxglove Beard Tongue
		Goats Beard
		Indian Paintbrush
		King Devil Hawkweed
		On Eye Daisy
		Prairie Smoke
		White Campion
		Wild Coffee

# SUPPORTING INFORMATION

# SPACE CONSIDERATIONS

INSTALLATION OF FIVE DISCRETE COMPONENTS IS FLEXIBLE / ADAPTABLE

Our core exhibit features an introductory panel and five installations. The dimensions are as follows:

- Exhibit Introduction – Wall Panel - 3' W x 4' H
- The Prairie Path – 12' W x 6' H
- Recycling Report Card – 6' W x 6' D x 6' H  
(includes three-dimensional sculpture and circulation space)
- The Driftless Prairie Code – 20' W x 6.5 H
- The Prairie Palette – 10' W x 6.5' H
- The Prairie Muse: A Book of Questions – TBD based on location of table and wall statement  
(est. 4'W x 4' D x 5' H including table height)

Optional wall-hung works are available to complement the exhibit. These include:

- Historic quotations
- Enlarged field notes
- Photographs, eco prints and paintings
- Video (showing drone footage over the subject prairie in two seasons)

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

## CONTACTS

- **Jill Metcoff** (Project Leader and Curator)  
Spring Green, WI  
[metcoff@jillmetcoff.com](mailto:metcoff@jillmetcoff.com)  
608-370-4954
- **Karen Ellzey Wright** (Participating Artist)  
Ridgeway, WI and Chicago, IL  
[ellzeywright@gmail.com](mailto:ellzeywright@gmail.com)  
617-869-6154