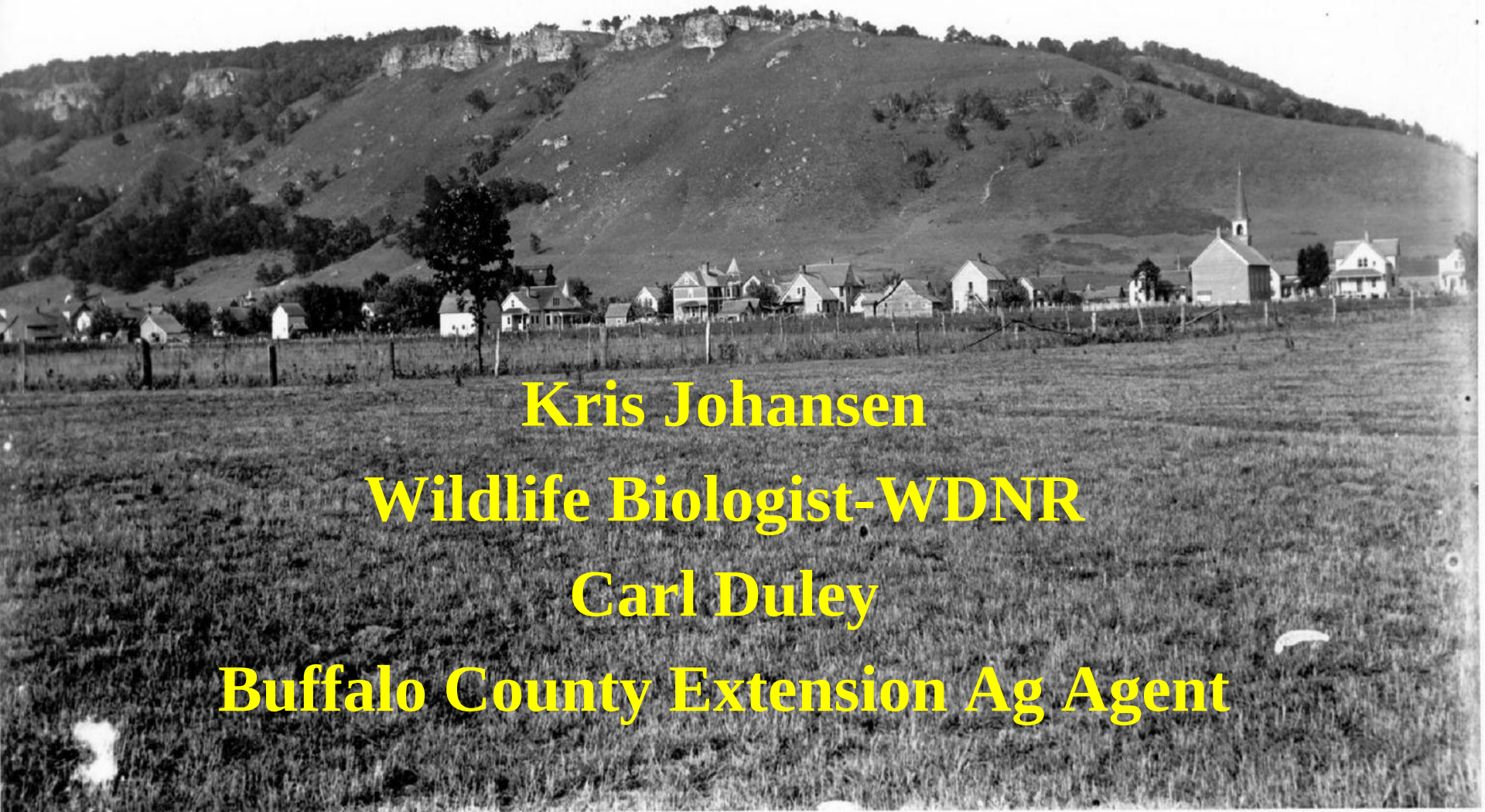
Buffalo County Bluff Prairie Restoration Project



Kris Johansen

Wildlife Biologist-WDNR

Carl Duley

Buffalo County Extension Ag Agent

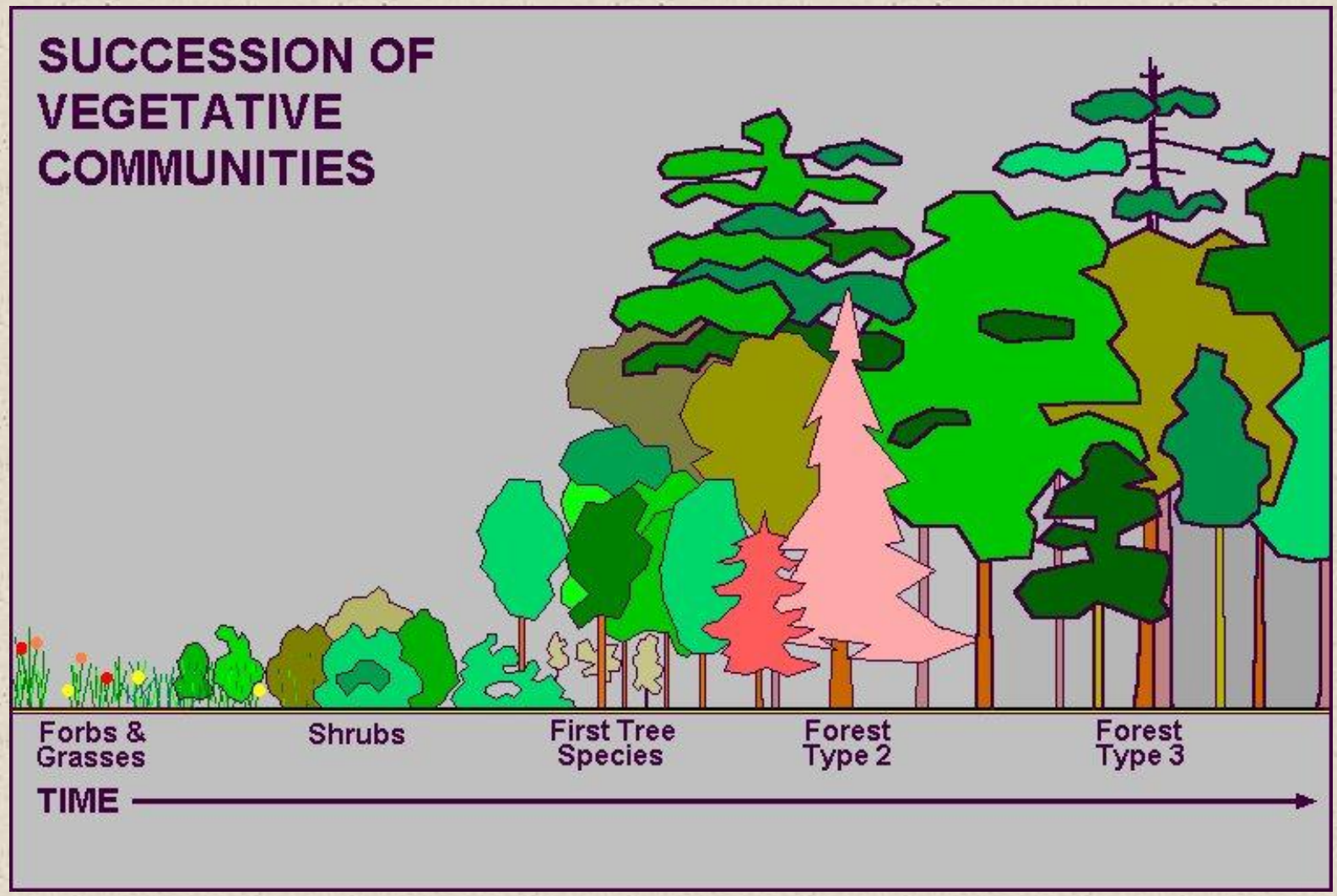
Pre-Settlement

- *“For miles nothing was to be seen but lesser mountains, which appeared at a distance like haycocks, they being free from trees…and only a few groves of hickory and stunted oaks covered some of the vallies.” Carver, 1781*

Settlement

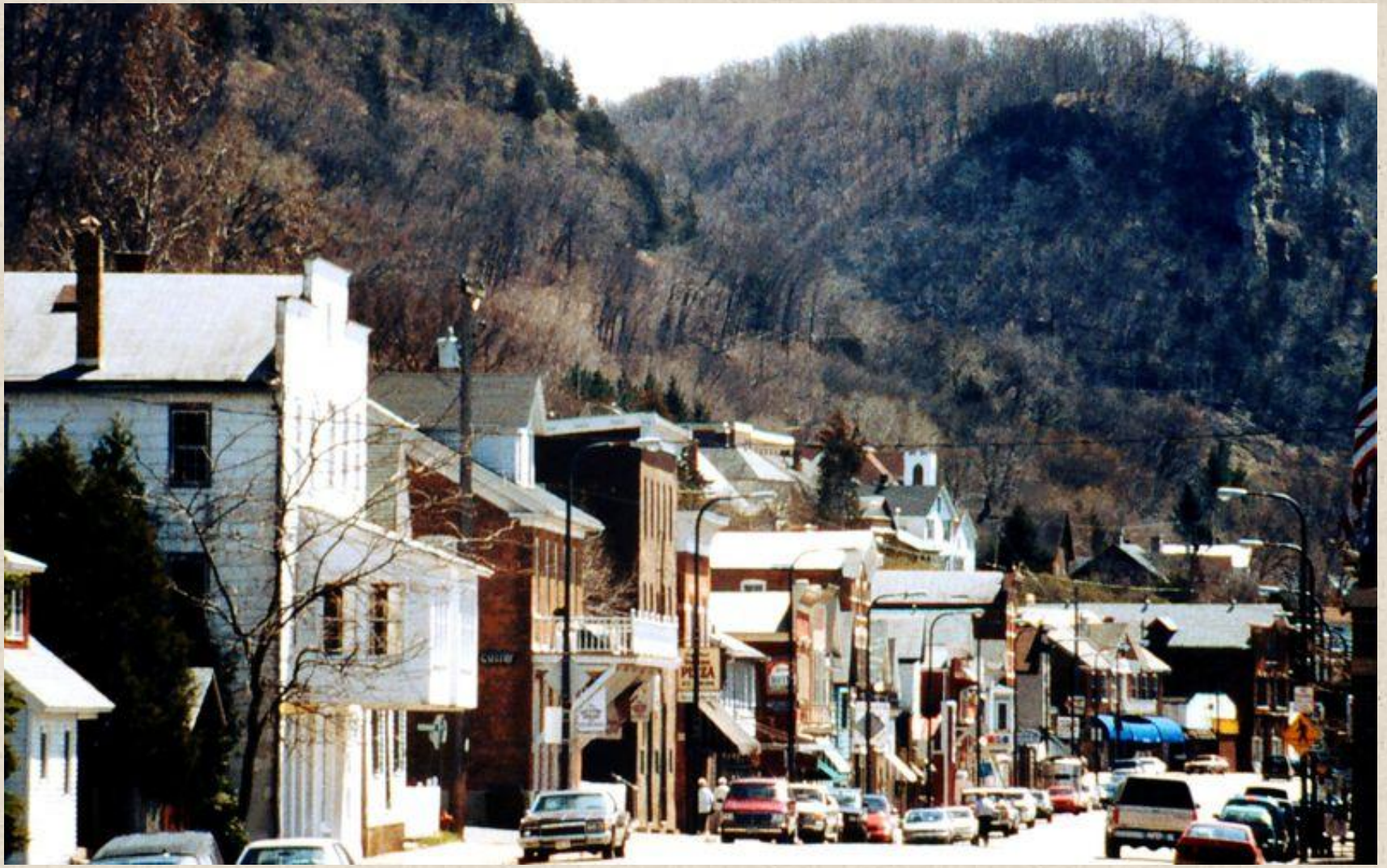
- *“When prairies are no longer swept over by fire, timber springs up, reconverting prairie into woodland. Grass, with fire as its ally, can beat timber. Timber can beat grass when it has no fire to fight.” State Geologist Wright, 1877*

Without Fire…

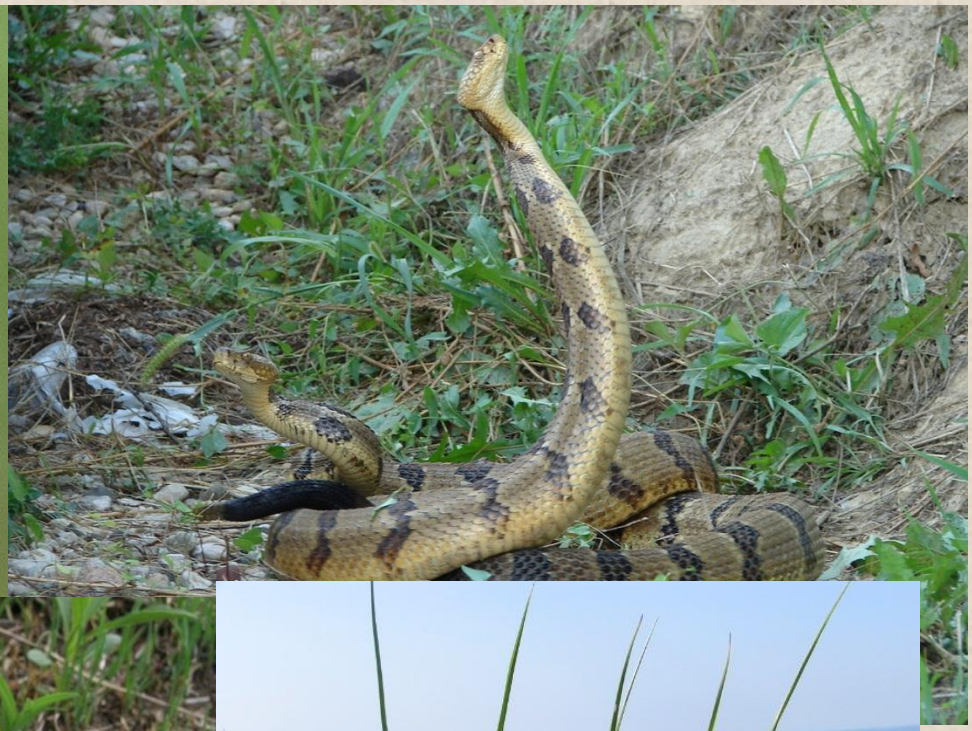


Without Fire…

The Forest Wins



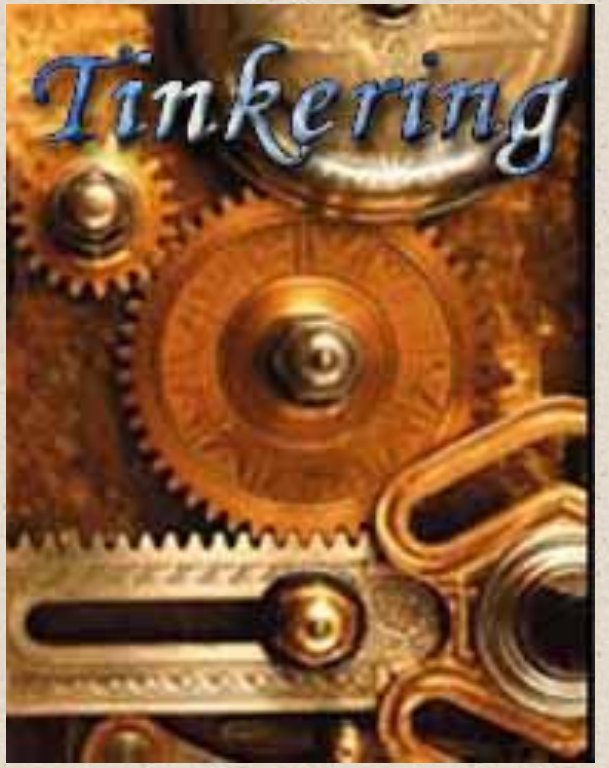
The Prairie Loses



“Saving All of the Pieces”

“To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.”

-Aldo Leopold



Buffalo County Dry Bluff Prairie Restoration Project

- Purpose: Create awareness and appreciation for dry bluff prairies through the restoration of two prairies in Buffalo County
- First started with a small WEEB grant
- Partners: DNR, UWEX, NRCS, Buffalo County LCD, CFC FFA and Alma FFA

Buri/Castleberg Site

Chainsaw Work

Ready for Fire

Prescribed Burn

After the Fire…

Comparison

Assembly Line

Strong Backs….

Regrowth

Early Results

Tours

- 2010 & 2012
- Both in cooperation with NRCS, DNR, and UWEX
- Also in cooperation with Crawford County Prairie group

Plans for the Future

- Continue to promote and educate about the unique characteristics of bluff prairies
- Secure funding to assist landowners
- Protect and preserve the 100+ native plants and 30+ animals that rely upon bluff prairies
- Continue tours

Parting Thoughts…

"The outstanding scientific discovery of the twentieth century is not television, or radio, but rather the complexity of the land organism. Only those who know the most about it can appreciate how little we know about it. The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: "What good is it?" If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of eons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering."

-Aldo Leopold, <u>Sand County Almanac</u>

Acknowledgements

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Funding provided by:

Wisconsin Environmental Education Board
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