

November sunset on the high plains - setting off Howard Juhl's wheel sculpture at the entrance to Guadalcanal Memorial Prairie in Sioux County.



NEWSLETTER  
November, 2011

## 2011: Picking up Momentum

As impossible as it seems, the sun is going down on 2011, so it's time to reflect back on the year's accomplishments. Beyond maintaining and strengthening essential core activities including restoration and land management, Bader Park tours, the Ranch Trek and other perennial educational programs, the most notable highlights include:

- Completion of the solar lean-to greenhouse that began in late 2010 at Griffith Farm, which closed in the south side of the Blue Barn and is enabling us to grow thousands of seedlings every year;
- The mid-year addition of two staff members: Sarah Bailey - who began in 2010 as an intern, stepping up to full time permanent greenhouse manager/restoration assistant; and Jeff Gustafson, full time permanent land steward/restoration assistant;
- High diversity prairie and wetland restoration on 480 acres including 16 sites in 12 counties (to date) - 6,928 acres since 1979;
- Replacement of 1.25 miles of fence at Griffith Prairie;
- The first Fun Run/Walk at Griffith Prairie, held on June 4th;
- Continued development and presentation of the "Ribbons of Prairie" initiative (details on website);
- Twentieth run of our nature day camp, SOAR, to the theme of "Celebration!" - with highest attendance on record;
- Two new acquisitions, a pickup truck (dubbed "Hoss") and another ATV - of benefit to all restoration, stewardship and educational programs;
- Substantial progress on the Charles L. Whitney Education Center (see back of this page);
- An option granted by Tom Sherman to purchase his 650-acre property along the Platte River (details in October *Link* and on website).

**Please help us celebrate these achievements and bring in 2012 on a high note at these approaching events:**

**Saturday, December 17th, 9:00 a.m.**

Winter Bird Hike at Bader Park - Warm up and enjoy holiday calories & coffee (or hot chocolate) in the Bader House at hike's end.

**Sunday, January 1st, 1:00 p.m.**

New Year's Day Hike at Griffith Prairie (If there's snow, bring your sled).

**Saturday, January 21st**

Annual Meeting of Members at the Bremer Community Center in Aurora. Social time begins at 8:30 a.m. with meeting beginning at 9:00; lunch at 11:30; post-meeting trip to tour the Education Center at Griffith Prairie.

**Saturday, January 28th, beginning at 5:00 p.m.**

Prairie Plains Fundraiser at the UNL East Campus Union in Lincoln. Fabulous dinner featuring local foods; entertainment & auction.



Bill Whitney

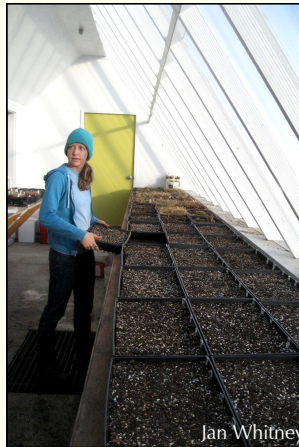


Bill Whitney

Above, Education Center progress on roof, windows and doors; left view is of the north and west sides, and on the right the west and south sides. Below, it's been a month of seed processing for Mike & Sarah, working with over 230 species of grasses, sedges & forbs in preparation for the 2012 slate of plantings. Sarah has over 70 species planted in flats in the greenhouse so far.



Sarah Bailey



Jan Whitney



Amy Jones



Amy Jones

One of our biggest land stewardship challenges is keeping woody vegetation in check on the prairies. Many November hours were devoted to cutting and piling selected areas of tree and shrub invaders on Marie Ratzlaff Prairie Preserve. Land steward Jeff Gustafson (above, right) has become quite adept with the chain saw.



Bill Whitney

PRAIRIE PLAINS LINK  
is a publication of

## Prairie Plains

RESOURCE INSTITUTE

Prairie Plains Resource Institute is an educational land trust incorporated in 1980 as a non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt membership organization based in Aurora, Nebraska.

### MISSION:

**Maintaining and restoring  
Nebraska ecosystems -  
Creating opportunities for  
education, research,  
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community development.**

Link Editor & Layout  
Jan Whitney

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### THANK YOU to:

- Kent Pfeiffer for evaluating the grazing system at Griffith Prairie;
- Michael DeCatur for tree cutting assistance at Griffith Prairie;
- Phoebe Sabet and Karen van den Boogaart for help with the last newsletter mailing; and
- Nicholas & Kristin Schnell for designating Prairie Plains as recipient of donations in lieu of wedding gifts.

Two USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation planning training courses were held at Pearl Harbor Survivors Prairie near Riverdale in 2011 - one in July and one in late October. All Prairie Plains land preserves are open to such education/training activities.