

# ∞ Prairie plains Link ∞



Nebraska Christian School K-2nd graders exploring the Platte River bluffs of Griffith Prairie - and, below, the lowland prairie at Bader Park.

monthly newsletter  
of



May, 2009

## Spring Field Days

It's such a wonderful tradition, the groups of students in May - getting out to witness the prairie coming back to life - and, no doubt, celebrating the end of the school year! Giltner and Nebraska Christian School (Central City) students visited both the Griffith Prairie with its steep Platte River bluffs, and the Bader Park Natural Area, comprised of flat, lowland prairie, riparian woodland, backwater sloughs and the Platte.



Left - Giltner 4th graders studying a soil profile at Griffith Prairie, and (below, left) taking a break for a group shot.

Below, right - Sandy Creek 3rd-graders during their exploration of the Bader Park Natural Area. They enjoy the hike along the trail which goes through lowland prairie, along sandpits and through the cottonwood forest and wetlands on to the Platte. The Sandy Creek field trip to Bader Park and Aurora's Plainsman Museum and Edgerton Explorit Center is a long-standing annual tradition.





### PPRI Prairie Restoration Statistics

	Sites planted	Counties planted in	Acres planted
May, 2009	10	8	228
Year to date, 2009	17	12	677
Since 1980	103	34	5,964

Number of new counties added in 2009: 3  
 Minimum acres yet to plant in 2009: 135



Cy Bullerman, son of restoration director Mike Bullerman, with his harvest of Emory's sedge seed.

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Neighbors Jim and Liz Senn's cattle on Griffith Prairie near the Charles L. Whitney Education Center. This year's graze includes over 40 cow/calf pairs rotated around various sections of the prairie's 260 acres.

### Time to Graze

Griffith Prairie is managed for both educational and recreational use, and production of native plant seed for the prairie restoration program. Management practices include prescribed fire and cattle grazing, which keep the prairie vigorous and diverse. Our moderate stocking rates appear to keep brome suppressed in the south acreage, while boosting native grasses and increasing wildflowers in the hilly north bluffs prairie. The prairie's history of stewardship by the Griffith and Gjerloff families made possible the preservation of a healthy population of native plants through the years.

**Facebookers:**  
 Prairie Plains has a page, so be sure to become a fan!

### May's Thank-you:

To Mert Griffith for tree clearing work on the Griffith Farm

Mert has been clearing dead timber from an old shelter belt on the north edge of the farmstead. This location, overlooking the prairie and Center to the north, and situated right next to the farmyard and the newly planted 17-tree orchard and 3-vine vineyard, is a perfect spot for picnic tables. Future visitors will be able to enjoy hackberry, redbud and walnut tree shade as they dine and gaze over the hills. They may also be able to pick an apple, peach, pear or cherry from the orchard for dessert.



The May Bader Park birding hikes were well attended. Next hike: Saturday, June 20, with a focus on early summer wildflowers.

The next *Prairie Plains Link* will be a combined June-July issue highlighting the Sioux County Ranch Trek (June 12-13) and SOAR.