



Harvesting by combine and by hand was our chief occupation throughout September, continuing into October. From left, the addition of a new combine trailer is greatly improving the efficiency of the bulk harvest; compass plant, one day's target for collecting; Jeff & Mike showing off a truckload of compass plant seed heads harvested along Highway 79 northwest of Lincoln. To learn more about the value of road ditches as native seed sources, see "Consider the Ditch," the February, 2013 supplement to *Prairie Plains Link* (online at [prairieplains.org](http://prairieplains.org)). The October *Link* will include a more detailed report of the 2013 harvest.



Participants in the Bader Park walking tour September 7<sup>th</sup> enjoyed a new riparian woodland trail, created by Hamilton County Boy Scout Troop 28. There are now approximately eight miles of hiking trails in the park, which is open year-round.

Next hike:  
Saturday, Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m.

**Remembering Mitzi:** It was a beautiful day on September 21<sup>st</sup> for the gathering of friends and family of Mitzi Fox (see tribute in last month's *Link*) at one of her favorite places, the Olson Nature Preserve (ONP) near Albion, Nebraska, her home. Remembrances began with comments from Mitzi's youngest son,

Robert Fox (photo). Shared stories were followed by a guided hike and further memorializing in the picnic shelter. Thanks to Ted & Mona Thieman for mowing, flowers and photography; Lonnie Zrust and Mitch Osborn for Dutch oven-prepared cobbles (and to others who also contributed food) and Paul Hosford for background dulcimer music.



Save the date:  
January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
Prairie Plains Fundraiser

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

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September 28<sup>th</sup>: Thirteen volunteers, led by Sarah Bailey, worked all morning enriching two prairie & wetland restoration areas with greenhouse-grown seedlings. Not pictured - Bruce Ramsour and Britt Bailey (the photographer).



**Plug it in, Plug it in** - That was the theme of the morning on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, when a group of thirteen enthusiastic volunteers gathered to plant approximately 750 native prairie seedlings grown in the Prairie Plains greenhouse. They worked on the newly planted restoration south of Griffith Prairie, and on the Bush Island site originally planted in 2007-2008. Bush Island is a large island in the Platte directly northwest of Griffith Prairie.

Twenty different species, totaling around 350 seedlings, were planted in the Griffith restoration, including over 80 prairie violets. Violets are essential to the regal fritillary butterfly, being the sole food source for its larvae. Twelve species, including around 400 seedlings, were planted along a slough on Bush Island. The number of species will rise to 28 after the next volunteer planting day, October 12th (see upcoming events below).

Our thanks to Michael Huebert, Lola Dorsey, Bruce Ramsour, Daniel Deffenbaugh, Dave and Darren Carr, Dale Funk, Barbara and Britt Bailey, Eastlyn Wright, Rosanne Navas, Lauren Kreimer and Alex Briner for all that hard work on a very windy day - and to Cale Jones for mowing paths in the Griffith site.



Volunteers plugging in seedlings along a slough on Bush Island.



NEWSLETTER  
September, 2013

**Upcoming Events**

Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup>  
Bader Park Walking Tour  
9:00 a.m.

Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup>  
Volunteer Planting Day  
beginning 1:00 p.m. Meet at the greenhouse at Griffith

Farm. We will be transplanting seedlings on Bush Island, just north of Griffith Prairie. Wear long pants and bring a water bottle and work gloves. For more information and to let Sarah know you'll be there: [sarahppri@hamilton.net](mailto:sarahppri@hamilton.net) or 402-694-5535.





Aurora News-Register photo by Nick Benes

September 5<sup>th</sup> - Aurora's Edgerton Explorit Center (EEC) and Prairie Plains teamed up again for the second annual monarch butterfly education day for statewide home-schooled elementary students. The large gathering first met at EEC for a presentation by senior educator Dan Glomski about the life cycle and migration habits of monarch butterflies. The remainder of the program was spent at Prairie Plains's Lincoln Creek Prairie. Although no monarchs were found, Dan brought one that he captured on a butterfly bush at EEC, and demonstrated tagging (top photo). Monarchs are tagged in order to provide data on migration patterns, survival rates, etc. One of the monarchs tagged at Lincoln Creek last year was recovered on February 23, 2013, in El Rosario, Mexico - one of the primary roosting sites.



Jessica Brock - EEC



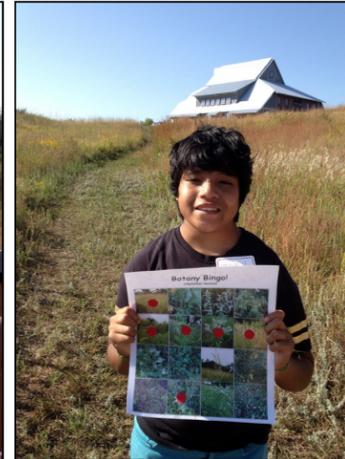
Jessica Brock - EEC

In addition to searching for monarch butterflies, the students netted and learned about other insects (second photo, with Dan Glomski) and enjoyed a session about plants and seed collecting taught by Sarah Bailey (left). Thanks to Nick Benes and Jessica Brock for these photos.

## September = Outdoor Learning!



September 6<sup>th</sup> - Annual Aurora 7<sup>th</sup> grade field day at Griffith Prairie. Above, Sarah Bailey taught the insect session; below, Bill Whitney led the plant activity, "Botany Bingo." Other session rotations were living history with Megan Sharp from the Plainsman Museum, old-fashioned baseball, a prairie hike and prairie literature, led by Aurora teachers Jeremy Dubas, Scott Phillips, Mike Stewart, Lana Dummer and Janelle Petersen.



September 13<sup>th</sup> - A group of area 7<sup>th</sup>-grade home-schoolers met at Griffith Prairie for a day of learning about plants of the prairie. The event, led by Sarah Bailey, was part of their study of the earth's different biomes.

September 17<sup>th</sup> - Annual Aurora 5<sup>th</sup>-grade day at Bader Park. In what was then a dry riverbed, this session, led by Jan Whitney, was about the Platte River. In an outline of the state of Nebraska, students were challenged to sketch in and restore water to the Platte. Other session rotations included a plant study with Sarah Bailey, insect netting with Chris Helzer; hydropower with Chad Johnson; art with Judy Bovill and GPS with Chad Carlson.



September 10<sup>th</sup> - It was an exceptional evening for the Lone Tree Corridor Planning Group to meet and explore Griffith Prairie and the Charles L. Whitney Education Center. The group is comprised of central Nebraska people that have been meeting regularly to consult about ways to protect the ecological, agricultural, historical, educational and recreational values of the 32-miles stretch of the Platte River corridor from Grand Island to Clarks. Below are scenes from the hike captured by Sarah Bailey - from left, downy gentian, two views looking south-southeast and blue grama at sunset.

