

PRAIRIE PLAINS LINK



New fallen snow at Sherman Ranch, 12-24-17.

We end 2017 with sincere gratitude. Thanks to all of our supporters! Individual and corporate unrestricted financial contributions set a new record of just over \$97,000. A former board member, Dolores Johnson, once stated that support for general operations was “the highest form of giving” as it is a vote of confidence in the overall mission and work of the organization. It is also a key to sustainability, ensuring a future where we can afford to pay, for example, real estate taxes (\$53,000), insurance (\$30,000), equipment acquisition and maintenance and the professional staff necessary to carry out our mission effectively. It is imperative that we grow our following, especially among the younger generation, in order to incrementally increase the general fund each year, as well as the number of people who support and see benefits from our work.

Every so often a capital campaign such as that for Sherman Ranch or the Education Center is necessary in order to achieve a very specific goal. However, routine maintenance of established programs and the material foundation of Prairie Plains - our eight preserves - is perpetual. As we strive to create new programs, events and public access improvements on our properties, and keep the restoration and stewardship process going strong, the foundation of solid basic support is essential. Again, thanks to all who are helping keep that foundation solid!

The annual Winter Bird Hike at Bader Park is always a festive event offering a chance to get moving outside, and to celebrate the completion of another cycle of guided explorations through this Platte River gem. The December 9 hike was well attended and included some exciting discoveries, most notably a Trumpeter Swan on one of the sandpits, and a Northern Shrike in an open area near the river. Thanks to Rita Flohr for sharing her photos of these new additions to our December list!

The 2018 program of guided hikes begins on Saturday, February 17 at 7:00 a.m.





Education Center Fundraising Update:

Even *more* to be grateful for: At year's end we were pleased to receive \$50,000 from the Robert and Bethel Kolar Charitable Trust and \$5,000 from the Dr. James M. Woodard and Mabel Woodard Trust.

In addition, we received \$3,250 from three members, bringing the total to \$58,250. We hope to report more good news in the coming weeks, with twelve proposals still pending (submitted or in process).

The Prairie Plains stewardship and restoration directors were on task in December, continuing the ongoing tasks of tree clearing, seed mixing and planting, and kicking off the next cycle of seedling production in the greenhouse.



Left - More progress tree clearing at Sherman Ranch; Land Steward Jeff Gustafson is really appreciating the new heavy equipment purchased to facilitate such tasks! Right - In the seed barn, Restoration Director Mike Bullerman has been creating seed mixes for the 2018 planting slate.



Left - these *Astragalus plattensis* seeds are in good hands with Greenhouse Manager Sarah Bailey. Right - Thanks to Celia McConkey for volunteering in the greenhouse. She is a Nebraska Master Naturalist who has also volunteered as a kayaking instructor for our Youth Naturalist Program.



Prairie Plains appears in *The Atlantic* online: Director Bill Whitney responded to an invitation from James Fallows, national correspondent for *The Atlantic* (theatlantic.com), to submit commentary on local, statewide and regional conservation efforts in the United States. Bill's description of the work of Prairie Plains was accepted and published online; a link to the site can be found on Facebook (Prairie Plains Resource Institute page).

Please note these two approaching big events:

2018 Annual Meeting of Members

Saturday, January 20, 2018 at the Marquette Community Center
302 Marquis Avenue, Marquette, NE, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

2018 Prairie Plains Fundraiser-Celebration

Saturday, January 27, 5:00 ~9:00 p.m.
UNL East Campus Union - Great Plains Room
social time - buffet dinner - auction - ambient music

Tickets \$50 per person:

Contact amyppri@hamilton.net or call 402-694-5535 before January 22.

PRAIRIE PLAINS LINK
is a publication of



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.

Our mission is to educate all ages about the prairie lands and waters of the American Great Plains, emphasizing natural history, land stewardship, ecosystem restoration and place-based community development.

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Learn more and become a member:
www.prairieplains.org
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Prairie Plains on social media:
Follow us on Facebook,
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Looking forward to Summer 2018:



YNP Year Six: June 18-22



SOAR FLIGHT 27:
July 9-12 & July 16-19