

⌘ Prairie plains Link ⌘

Western Hamilton County: Spring migration has begun.

Gearing Up for Record Restoration Year

New projects covering many acres and sites, plus work carried over from 2008 ensures there will be little down time in the field this year. Fortunately, last year's seed harvest was excellent in quality, quantity and diversity of species. Prairie Plains restoration ecologist Mike Bullerman and director Bill Whitney, assisted by Amy Jones, Jan and Laura Whitney and Austin Bontrager, hand-harvested wetland seed, including lots of cordgrass and several sedges - species that are either unavailable or very limited commercially, or very expensive, or both. It was an opportune year for harvesting these species because of heavy rainfall. Consequently, we can tailor mixes with these and many other wetland species for a sizeable Missouri River bottomland planting near Decatur in Burt County, Nebraska.

Our upland (drier soil) plantings in the east will include a 160-acre site north of Wahoo, adjacent to Lake Wanahoo, a new NRD and Army Corps of Engineers dam and reservoir project now under construction. Also on the slate are three plantings totaling more than 165 acres in Gage County near Beatrice, and plantings in Thayer, Howard, Nance and Hall Counties. In addition, we have a wetland planting in Sarpy County (a new county for us), part of a private wetland mitigation banking project which may be a prototype for other such projects in Nebraska in the future. Mitigation banks can sell credits (i.e., credits based on protected wetland acres) to entities which destroy or disturb existing natural wetlands.

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Sandpits along the Platte River like this one at Bader Park are filling with ducks and geese. The February 28 early-bird outing started with a -2° temperature and light snow blanketing the park, but the sounds of spring were in the air: hikers heard and saw Canada, White-fronted and Snow Geese, Mallards, Pintails, Common Mergansers and Canvasback Ducks, a few hawks and an American Coot.



Mike Bullerman mixing and packing up seed destined for a 160-acre planting near Decatur in Burt County.



- High diversity prairie and wetland restoration sites planned so far this year.

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Link Editor & Layout
Jan Whitney

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Correction re. June-July *Prairie Plains Link* supplement ("A Personal History of Griffith Prairie & Farm"): It was written that the "Blue School" was moved to the (then) Gjerloff farm to become part of what is now Mert & Gwen Griffith's house, but we have since learned that the Blue School resides at Don & David Vetter's place (The Grain Place). We have not been able to determine which country schoolhouse was actually moved to the farm. If anyone knows, please give us a call!

February Thank-yous:

- (belatedly) to Mike Huebert for building and donating a bird feeder for auction at the annual meeting;
- to Jim Senn for snow removal at Griffith Farm; and
- to Gerry Steinauer for a donation of *Senna marilandica* seeds for two plantings in SE Nebraska.

1307 L Street
Aurora NE 68818-2126
402-694-5535 pprl@hamilton.net
prairieplains.org



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