

Most of the June 20 Bader Park walking tour was captured on video by member Larry Molczyk. You can see the results on YouTube.com. It is posted in three segments: For part 1, enter "A Walk in the Park Bader;" for part 2, "A Walk in the Park Bader Wetlands;" and for part 3, "A Walk in the Park Bader Wetlands and Prairie." Also on YouTube: SOAR River Day (from Week Two - July 17). And while you're online, check us out - and become a fan - on Facebook! (Just google Prairie Plains Resource Institute Facebook.)



We finally satisfied a critical equipment need in June, the replacement pickup for our old work horse, "Big Red," which reached the 250,000 mile mark last year before transmission trouble. In a vehicle shopper tabloid, "Wheels for You," apprentice Cale Jones spotted a 2001 heavy ¾ ton Chevy diesel crew cab with a long box, which looked like a good buy. We now not only have a better vehicle for hauling our heavy gooseneck trailer (possibly with a combine on occasion), but can also carry five people in comfort. A bonus is that the truck gets about 25 mpg on the highway without a load. And she's still a Big Red!



June-July Thank-yous:

- to our rancher, Scott Schaefer - and Caitlin - for all their efforts to make the Ranch Trek '09 the wonderful event that it was;
- to Ted Thieman for - as always - trail maintenance at the Olson Nature Preserve;
- to Lynda Ochsner for assistance with the newsletter mailings; and
- to Rob Roberts of Mid Nebraska Land Developers for volunteer labor at the Education Center.

See the Supplement insert for SOAR acknowledgements.



Caitlin, Weston & Scott at the Ranch

Mid Nebraska Land Developers' donation of earth moving at the Center: The walkout space on the north side was excavated; the fill was used to build up the south entry side and to backfill around the west foundation.



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

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Photos by Prairie Plains staff members unless noted otherwise.

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APPROACHING EVENT:
Fall Hike at Griffith Prairie
Saturday, September 19
Details to be announced.

Prairie plains Link



Sioux County Ranch Trek '09

Breathtaking. That may be the best word to describe the land we explored on the weekend of June 13. It was a sharp contrast to the past several years when the ranch was suffering a severe drought. This year the rains came, and we witnessed the resiliency of the Great Plains. The Guadalcanal Memorial Prairie was green and



bursting with life. Fourteen ranch trekkers traveled to celebrate the land - and the number swelled to around a hundred as local residents joined us for the evening's festivities.

Top shot & down:

Ranch trekkers enjoying the Saturday afternoon ranch tour;

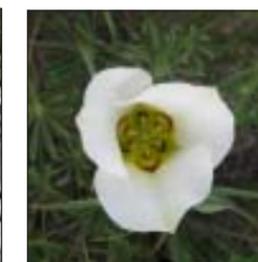
The Long-Billed Curlew - North America's largest shorebird - is always an anticipated delight, and is also a ranch trekker, migrating each year to its Great Plains breeding grounds for the summer;

The Niobrara River, winding through the hay meadow;

Every hillside was a rocky wildflower garden;

Among the wonderful variety blooming were (below, left-right) Lupine (*Lupinus* sp.), Scarlet Globe-mallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*), Gumbo-lily (*Oenothera caespitosa*) and Segó Lily (*Calochortus nuttallii*).

continued...



newsletter of



June-July, 2009

Ranch continued...



Left & right - The good times rolled on into the evening with a prime rib dinner served up by Charles Skavdahl from Harrison.

Below, Southern skies turned dark and threatening as we dined, and photographer Jeanne Dill took advantage of the amazing light and shadow effects. We all enjoyed the sky show while narrowly escaping the storm, which was punctuated by a beautiful rainbow (captured here by Jeanne).



J. Dill



'09 Seed Harvesting

Left - Who ya gonna call? ENPRT! Our bright new shirts, designed by restoration director Mike Bullerman, make us easy to spot in roadside ditches, and boldly (and a bit tongue-in-cheek) proclaim us to be the Elite Native Plant Rescue Team!



Another great sedge year: The long, wet spring yielded an abundance of sedges and other wetland species, enabling us to collect a record quantity and variety of seeds for next year's wetland restorations. Top right - Harvesting sedge seed by sawing off seedheads, then raking up into large buckets; Below, left to right - *Carex brachyglossa*, one of 24 species of sedges we have collected this year; Cale Jones, our 12-year-old apprentice, continuing to learn about plants and GPS technology; The whole staff (Amy being behind the camera) plus Amy's parents, Bill and Shirley Snyder, following our big sedge harvest in Richardson County near the Missouri River. And no, those aren't flying saucers. . . just an amazing show of lenticular clouds!



The first week in June is Wildflower Week in Nebraska, with statewide events coordinated by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (arboretum.unl.edu). Prairie Plains celebrated with three "Wildflower Walks" - at the Marie Ratzlaff Prairie Preserve, Griffith Prairie, and the Olson Nature Preserve. The ONP event, held on a cool and rather wet June 7, is showcased here, offering a glimpse of the preserve's amazing diversity of habitats.



Top left and clockwise:

Heading north on the trail just west and north of the bridge, expert ONP guide Mitzi Fox points out something of interest along the creek;

There was an abundance of water in the creek and oxbow wetland, with a corresponding abundance of wetland plants;

Blooming along the wetland were Indigobush (*Amorpha fruticosa*) and Meadow Anemone (*Anemone canadensis*);

Strolling through the high sandhills prairie, with the oak forest in the background;

Prairie bloomers included Spiderwort (*Tradescantia occidentalis*) and Hairy Puccoon (*Lithospermum carolinensis*);

A nest of Grasshopper Sparrow young was discovered in the prairie thatch;

From the top of the hill looking west - the Nebraska Sandhills, with blooming Yucca (*Yucca glauca*) in foreground;

Walking back down the hill - the oak forest.

