

PRAIRIE PLAINS LINK



MB

Winter months mean planting prairies - IF the ground stays frozen to allow ATVs and spreaders onto the site. February was a month of above-freezing temps, resulting in muddy conditions on ground prepped for planting. Restoration ecologist Mike Bullerman, and assistant Jared Sullivan, made the most of a very brief weather window to complete a 100-acre restoration in Cedar county on February 13. Arriving in Hartington, NE, the night before, the crew greeted the sunrise to ensure a timely completion of the project. So far in 2020 we've planted or provided seed for 199 acres on 7 sites. Now that's a great start!



NEWSLETTER
February, 2020

A New Leader - Mitchell Lyon

February brought epic changes to the story of Prairie Plains Resource Institute. Having benefitted from 40 years of growth and progress under the leadership of Bill and Jan Whitney, the organization welcomed Mitchell Lyon as its new executive director.

An Aurora High School graduate and a graduate of the Art Institute of Colorado, Mitchell spent 15 years creating and growing a successful online business providing graphics and videos to more than 5,000 member church congregations around the world. After selling the business in 2019, he was ready for a new challenge. Recognizing the strength and experience of the staff assembled by the Whitneys, Mitchell realized during the interview process that his experience in marketing and building online memberships could be of huge value to an organization to which he was already strongly attached. (Mitchell and his wife, Sarah, were married at Gjerloff Prairie in 2010).

And Mitchell has jumped in with both feet. At a recent staff/board retreat, he lead a discussion to refine a concise "story pitch" to be used by staff, board members and Prairie Plains members when sharing our mission. The goal is to draw in the listener and elicit a response (hopefully a membership donation or expression of interest). In addition, he has spent considerable time meeting with people familiar with the history of Prairie Plains, along with community leaders, to gather a sense of where the organization has been, and clarify a vision for the future.

All that in one month! And there's much more to come. So, welcome, Mitchell! We're glad you're here!



Executive director Mitchell Lyon hikes the trails at Gjerloff Prairie with son Walter, wife Sarah and Erin Whitney. Photo by Britt Bailey.



Greenhouse therapy - Greenhouse manager Sarah Bailey and her mom, Barb Bailey, spent time planting seeds in December and January (above) and were rewarded with a sea of green in February (right). C'mon spring!



Winter Explore Days at Bader Park

February 1 marked the first Winter Explore outing of the year hosted by Prairie Plains and Bader Park. The event was created to provide families with a fun, educational outing at a time when it can be difficult to get the kids outside. This session, held at Bader Park, offered a hike to the Platte River (photo left), a hands-on opportunity to create a shelter out of forest materials (photo right) and a hot dog and s'mores cookout around a campfire.



Meanwhile back at the (Sherman) Ranch...land steward Jeff Gustafson and assistant Jared Sullivan have been continuing the attack on invasive red cedar trees. Cedars not only reduce the land available for grazing and native plant growth, they also wreak havoc on fence lines (photo left). The clearing work has revealed some amazing topography at Sherman, and it's easy to see exactly where our lumberjacks have stopped cutting (photo right).

PRAIRIE PLAINS LINK

is a publication of

Prairie Plains

RESOURCE INSTITUTE

Preserving, restoring and maintaining Nebraska native prairies - Creating opportunities for education, research, stewardship and place-based community development.

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.

Board of Directors:

- Carol Bodeen (North Platte)
- Brad Bangs (Aurora)
- Kim Sosin (Omaha)
- Wayne Mollhoff (Ashland)

Staff:

- Mitchell Lyon, Executive Director
- Amy Jones, Admin. Director
- Mike Bullerman, Restoration Ecologist and GIS Specialist
- Sarah Bailey, Greenhouse Manager and Naturalist Educator
- Jeff Gustafson, Land Steward
- Jared Sullivan, Restoration and Stewardship Assistant

Learn more and become a member:

www.prairieplains.org

(and follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter!)

Contact:

402-694-5535

ppri@hamilton.net

1307 L St. Aurora NE 68818

Have thoughts or ideas that you'd like to share with Mitchell? Feel free to call the office at 402-694-5535 or email mitchell@prairieplains.org

APPROACHING EVENTS

March 7:

Winter Explore Days at Sherman Ranch - 10 am

April 25:

Spring Hike at Gjerloff Prairie 9 am