

PRAIRIE PLAINS LINK



Happy New Year!!! We started 2023 with a big group of members and friends at the Annual New Year's Day Hike at Gjerloff Prairie. The weather was great and the conversations were flowing during the hike and afterward as attendees enjoyed coffee and cookies in and around the Education Center. Special thanks to Marianne Meyer for the delicious assortment of holiday goodies!

2023 Annual Meeting of Members

The Annual Meeting of Members was held on January 21st at the Charles L. Whitney Education Center and was also available via Zoom. Virtual and in-person attendance combined to create a successful gathering of Prairie Plains enthusiasts. During the business meeting, Executive Director Amy Jones thanked outgoing Board President Brad Bangs for his 7 years of service and highlighted Brad's steadfast leadership during the past few years of staff transition, including the retirement of founders Bill and Jan Whitney in December 2019. (Brad and Amy are pictured bottom, left.)

Following the meeting, attendees enjoyed refreshments in the Center and a winter hike through Gjerloff Prairie led by Sarah Bailey. (Photo bottom, center).

The surprise of the day came when long-time Prairie Plains member and former board member Wayne Mollhoff presented a beautiful bison skull to be permanently displayed in the Education Center. (Bottom, right - Sarah Bailey, Amy Jones, Wayne Mollhoff and Bill Whitney with the gift.)

Wayne discovered the artifact in 1994 when canoeing Beaver Creek near Albion, Nebraska, south of Olson Nature Preserve. Wayne remembered, "I noticed one horn sticking out of the mud on the bank of the creek and decided to investigate. When I dug deeper, I soon realized the skull was perfectly preserved and intact."

After cleaning and drying the skull, Wayne contacted the State Historical Society and obtained the proper preservative to stabilize it for display. We look forward to building a case for the artifact before determining an appropriate location in the building for it to reside. THANK YOU, WAYNE!!!



NEWSLETTER
January/February 2023





Hearty hikers enjoyed the first Winter Explore Day of the year at Bader Park near Chapman, NE, on Feb. 4. Led by Prairie Plains Conservation and Education Director Sarah Bailey, the group enjoyed views of the Platte River, tracking wildlife prints in the snow and hot dogs and s'mores at the campfire. Join us for the next Winter Explore event March 11 at 10 a.m. at Gjerloff Prairie!

PRAIRIE PLAINS LINK
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Hamilton Community Foundation Grant Makes Purchase of Commercial Lawn Mower Possible

A generous grant from the Wilt and Eileen Forsman Memorial Fund administered by the Hamilton Community Foundation supported the purchase of this Skag Tiger Cat commercial lawn mower. The mower will be used to maintain the green space and prairie trails at the Lincoln Creek Prairie in Aurora as well as the area around the Charles L. Whitney Education Center at Gjerloff Prairie.



Hundreds of Hamilton County residents and guests from across the country utilize the walking trails that wind through Lincoln Creek, providing a wonderful connection to a beautiful natural area while exposing new people to the mission of Prairie Plains. In addition, the Education Center at Gjerloff Prairie hosts people of all ages, including our award-winning summer camps and prairie workshops and seminars which bring in visitors from around the world.

We appreciate our long-standing relationship with the Hamilton Community Foundation and extend a heart-felt thanks to the board of directors and the Forsman family for making this important equipment acquisition possible!

Party at the Creek! Land Steward Jeff Gustafson (pictured below with Amy and Sarah) took advantage of a recent snow to burn tree piles at Lincoln Creek Prairie in Aurora. Ever the supportive teammates, the ladies of Prairie Plains grabbed some hot dogs and Cokes and treated Jeff to a picnic lunch!



Coming soon: Plant Therapy
Spring is getting closer, which means the greenhouse is about to burst with local-ecotype prairie seedlings. Sarah Bailey spent time in Dec. and Jan. planting seeds in labeled flats (photo right). After some required cold stratification, lengthening days and warmer greenhouse temps, the seedlings are just starting to sprout. Stay tuned!

