

September 9: FAMFest Hike at Griffith Prairie

It was a great way to top off a weekend of FAMFest (Aurora's annual Fall Arts & Music Festival) activities. The morning brought some surprisingly cool weather . . . perfect for hiking on the prairie bluffs overlooking the Platte. And for working up an appetite for the scrumptious brunch served up by Fayne Petersen in Marquette following the outing.



Monarch butterflies in a patch of Maximilian sunflowers added to our enjoyment of the brisk morning hike.



We took a different route this time in order to see the restored acres to the south of the prairie. The Canada wildrye had a very good year at this site. Left, the Prairie Plains apprentice Cale Jones takes it all in while Bill checks out the viability of some rosinweed seed. Right, Shirley and Bill Snyder take a closer look at the wildrye seed head as Jerry Jacobs adds a few more shots to his photo gallery.

Custom Mapping Service

Prairie Plains is offering custom mapping services to hunters, fishermen, farmers and other landowners - anyone interested in a "bird's-eye view" of the land. We can download recent aerial photography and combine it with existing map information (including your GPS data) and add text and symbology to create a custom map of your land, favorite hunting spot, fishing hole or your next vacation destination. We can even produce 3D views of an area!

We can print maps up to 42" wide, on plain or glossy paper (suitable for framing) for any area in Nebraska as well as many other states.

For more information, call Mike Bullerman: 402-694-9847

Twenty-six Years of Bader Park Tours

And it's getting better all the time! We had a great turnout for the leisurely September hike. Most participants also visited the barn at Griffith Prairie afterwards.



September 22 Bader tour participants stopped for a moment at this beautiful spot, the site chosen for a new bench dedicated in memory of Blanche and Kermit Swanson. (A tribute to Blanche appeared in *Prairie Plains Journal* No. 15 , 2000.)



The group also paused to appreciate the beauty of the nodding ladies' tresses orchid (*Spiranthes cernua*).

Following the Bader tour: It is always a pleasure to bring people to the barn at Griffith Prairie to see and feel the tremendous potential of this amazing structure.



More Bader Park Natural Area activity: We enjoyed a bit of "SOAR in September" with fifth graders from Aurora (Sept. 13 - first two photos) and second graders from Trinity Lutheran in Grand Island (Sept. 26 - third photo). The students all seemed delighted to take their classroom outdoors!





Enchanted Evening at ONP

Over 100 people took part in the annual Enchanted Evening event at the Olson Nature Preserve in Boone County Saturday evening, September 22. Enchanted Trail hikers, led by Boy Scouts, enjoyed

viewing the full moon and planets through Dr. Tony Kusek's telescope set up along the trail. At the campfire, pastor Larry Sydow led a sing-along with guitar accompaniment, and the Parent-Teacher's Organization provided bags of treats.

Nebraska Humanities Council Speakers Bureau presenter Matthew "Sitting Bear" Jones told stories of Nebraska's Otoe-Missouria Indians, offering a glimpse of their lives and their vision of creation. According to event organizer Paul Hosford, Sitting Bear "talked from his heart about his people's beliefs about how everything is interconnected." Commenting further on the presentation, Paul said it was good to "see people of all ages. . . . sitting in a circle, under the bright moon listening intently to what could be characterized as the wisdom of those who lived here before us."



Ted Thieman

Matthew "Sitting Bear" Jones holds the crowd's attention around the campfire at ONP.

Approaching Events

Saturday, October 13, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm: Harvest Festival at Lincoln Creek Prairie & Trail, N Street & McCullough Lane in Aurora. Games, crafts, trail walks, campfire, s'mores, live music...fun!

Saturday, October 20, 9:00 am - Bader Park Natural Area tour followed by coffee & treats at the house on site.

Thank You: to Lynda Ochsner for newsletter mailings assistance; to this month's Wednesday evening barn tile workers Chad Carlson, Dale Carlson, Joe Ford, Mert Griffith, Ernie & Lynda Ochsner and Cale Jones; to all the milkweed party volunteers - John & Shelly Klindt, Gerry Steinauer, Eddie Ranson, Ernie & Lynda Ochsner, Keith Wasem, Ardean & Annebell Andersen, Dorine & Van Galusha, Virginia White, John Jasnowski, Pam Maynard, Nolan Forbes, Cale Jones, Linda Davis & Gerry Sader; and to Ted Thieman and Sandra Schenck for sharing photos for the *Link*.

Prairie Plains Link is a publication of



-An educational land trust incorporated in 1980 as a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt membership organization based in Aurora, NE.

MISSION:
Maintaining and restoring Nebraska ecosystems - creating opportunities for education, research, stewardship and community development.

Link Editor & Layout
Jan Whitney
Photos by Prairie Plains staff members unless noted otherwise.

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newsletter of



September, 2007

The Month of the Milkweed*
(*Asclepias sullivantii*, that is!)



Prairie Plains restoration ecologist Mike Bullerman has been harvesting Sullivant's milkweed like crazy this month. The milkweed is a declining species most often found in road ditches with uncertain futures. Mike has collected from over 150 locations in eight counties, totalling 90 gallons of pods. The seeds will be in all of our high diversity mixes slated for planting this fall and next spring - so far a total of 460 acres in the eastern third of Nebraska.

*There are over a dozen species of milkweeds in Nebraska - and only the common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) is, in some cases, a "weed."

WANTED: RESTORATION ACRES

Thanks to season-long plentiful rainfall, we're in the midst of a bountiful harvest from our many various native seed sources - our own prairie preserves and established restoration sites and road ditches. These seeds are, depending on the species, harvested throughout the season by hand, or by seed stripper or combine. This annual ritual - the preservation of local ecotypes of around 150 native prairie and wetland species - is a vital part of our mission. It is also part of the brick and mortar of our financial foundation.

We need more sites for planting these deluxe high diversity seed mixes, which develop into prairies that are showy with grasses and wildflowers, and habitat for many species of wildlife. These prairies exhibit dynamic changes through the seasons and are always fascinating to explore. They make excellent "outdoor classrooms" for schools or the general public.

Restoration size can range from around five acres to hundreds - and can be for private landowners, agencies, schools or businesses. Call for pricing and other details and help support our mission of restoring more of Nebraska's native ecosystem and history.

402-694-5535 or ppri@hamilton.net

Mike Bullerman and Amy Jones collecting stiff sunflower seed at Deep Well Wildlife Management Area.



The Griffith Prairie barn (Education Center) served us well as a work space and picnic shelter for the Sept. 18 Sullivant's Milkweed shelling party. Below, left to right, members Van Galusha, Pam Maynard, and Annebelle Andersen are looking forward to chow; Pam Maynard, Ardean Andersen and John Jasnowski at work as seed shellers; and the southeast sky as we were leaving the barn. There was a lightning show all the way home.



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prairieplains.org
402-694-5535 ppri@hamilton.net
Aurora NE 68818-2126



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