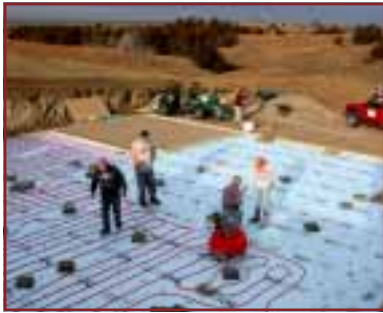


Several steps closer  
to our goal:  
Education Center construction  
continues without a hitch!



Dec. 5: Laying down tubing for the radiant heating system.



Dec. 11: 'Twas a misty moisty morning for pouring the concrete floor, but it was ideal weather for the job, completed in just two hours.



Dec. 27: Framing north wall.



# Prairie plains Link

monthly newsletter of

PRAIRIE PLAINS

RESOURCE INSTITUTE

December, 2006

Looking back over 2006, it is clear we have many blessings to count. Education center construction is progressing. There *might* even be photos of the barn move in the next *Link*! Other noteworthy accomplishments include:

- ❖ A record number of activities at Griffith Prairie, including the New Year's Day hike; the Spring Prairie Festival; six volunteer work evenings in May-June; a Doane College writing group visit and National Trails Day ride in June, SOAR for all Ages and SOAR in July; a tour group with the North American Prairie Conference in July; the FAMFest hike and "SOAR Day" for Nebraska home-schooled children in September, the State Range Judging Contest and visit from the History Channel in October and the September Center groundbreaking.
- ❖ A banner year for SOAR: Flight Fifteen based in Aurora and Flight Ten for Big Bend SOAR cosponsored by Rowe Sanctuary. That's a total of over 250 area youth learning about their natural and cultural heritage while having loads of outdoor fun.
- ❖ High diversity prairie restoration plantings totaling 653 acres on nine different sites, and over 150 species of native grass and forb seed harvested, sufficient to seed over 600 acres.
- ❖ Successful prescribed burns at Lincoln Creek, Griffith Prairie and Bader Park, and burning assistance on four additional sites.
- ❖ Ever-increasing programming at the Olson Nature Preserve, thanks to a dedicated group of teachers and ONP Stewards in the Boone County area - including ongoing Summer Research and Enrichment programs, Great Plains Chautauqua on July 8, and another successful Enchanted Evening in October.
- ❖ The 24th round of tours at Bader Park, now drawing increasing numbers of hikers.
- ❖ The continuation of established programs such as the summer high school internship program, Sandy Creek School field day at Bader Park, the Heartland Schools day at Ratzlaff Prairie and the Harvest Festival at Lincoln Creek.

**Below: It was a beautiful day for the annual winter bird hike at Bader Park on December 9. From left, a bird nest is discovered; enjoying a view of two bald eagles across the river; and the entire group along the Platte.**



We've spotted several eagles soaring over the Center construction site. A good omen, we hope!

○ ○ ○ Prairie plains Link ○ ○ ○



Tiny opportunist: Mike was just about to toss this discarded bottle found in the tall grass of Griffith Prairie into the truck when he noticed it was inhabited. Although we don't appreciate finding litter on our preserves, it seems this item was preserving a litter of mice.



Dec. 26: Getting a head start on the 2007 planting season. Mike planted 3+ acres for Mike Pekarek from Dayton, Ohio, who learned about PPRI in July while on the North American Prairie Conference bus tour to Griffith Prairie and Olson Nature Preserve. The new restoration is in southwest Saline County on land belonging to Pekarek's mother. Plans are to eventually restore the entire quarter section.

**Thank you**

to December's center construction volunteers Jim Willis, Scott Jones, Wayne Mollhoff, Bob Willis and Mert Griffith. Mert not only put in lots of time and effort; he also saved the day with his generator which powered the nail guns.

**Thanks also** to Ella Eckerson, veteran SOAR peer leader and intern, for assisting with seed processing.

**Approaching Events**

**JANUARY 6**

Volunteer Work Day -  
De-fencing at Griffith Prairie  
9:00 a.m. or meet at office at 8:30

**JANUARY 13**

Annual Meeting of Members  
at the Bremer Center (16th & L) in  
Aurora. Coffee/social at 8:30 a.m.;  
business meeting 9:00. Lunch  
catered by Creative Cuisine fol-  
lowed by field trip to the Center  
construction site. Please RSVP \* for  
lunch (\$10) by January 10.

\*RSVP to amyppri@hamilton.net or  
402-694-5535.

**FEBRUARY 10**

Annual Cedar Attack  
at Griffith Prairie  
9:30 or meet at office at 9:00



Left, Jim Willis from Willis General Contracting in Aurora donated many hours of service to PPRI working on the Center. Right, dedicated volunteer Ella Eckerson processing Leadplant.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-profit Org.  
U. S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 21  
Aurora, NE 68818-2126

**PRairie PLAINS**  
RESOURCE INSTITUTE

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