



April 13: Tony Kusek, Tom Dickey, Mitch Osborn and Bill Whitney discussing whether or not to burn (they didn't) during the ONP cleanup day. This crew, along with Mike Bullerman, Ted & Mona Thieman and Judy Bovill cleared branches on the trail and around the shelter, and weeded out a few cedar trees in the oak forest.



One Big Beautiful Day

April 28, 2007

Gorgeous spring weather prevailed at Griffith Prairie for the Volkswalk (top 3 scenes), the Trail Ride (below, left) and the fencing project. Over 50 participants thoroughly enjoyed the walk; one comment overheard : "Now *that* was a beauty!" The 26 horseback riders entered the prairie just as the walkers were leaving. Trail ride organizers Bill Bolte from Central City and Mickey Dvorak from Marquette were quite pleased with the event. As for the fencing, keep an eye on our web site - prairieplains.org - for additional defencing and fencing events! We are preparing for 30+ cow-calf pairs to graze right after the May 25 Prairie Festival.



April 20: Bill recorded these scenes during a visit to Sioux County Ranch (Guadalcanal Memorial Prairie). Left, our resident rancher, Scott Schaefer, is checking the oil & gear box on the windmill. Right, one of the many interesting rock formations on the ranch. Once again, Golden Eagles were found nesting in the same site we've been watching for several years.



Aurora senior Kendal Wofford (left) and junior Molly Clark are the winners of this year's SOAR T-shirt design contest. Parts of both of the young artists' works will be incorporated into the design of the shirts and notebooks this summer.

Registration is currently underway for the camp. Forms are available on our website - prairieplains.org.



Born of Dreams

I awaken in early spring when robins sing and soft rains fall.
Released from winter's hold, and carving a trail through Nebraska plains, I
shimmer in the moonlight and sing quietly to life anew.
Animal tracks dot my shifting sand and fireflies light the way
as evening calls.

My whispers, carried on the wind, soothe the restless and guide the wanderer.
As days grow warmer, tall grasses frame my changing boundaries.

Grains of sand, shining and insignificant,
are gold dust in the morning sun.

Hidden treasures, carried downstream, wash against my outer banks.
Shiny pebbles become priceless jewels and towering trees...
protector of this wealth.

Dancing in harmony to my embrace, shadows of mid-day
linger momentarily and then are gone.

Clouds of white, mirrored from the heavens drift aimlessly
among imaginary fairies in transparent bubbles...
then vanish into thin air.

This kingdom, born of dreams, winds around valleys,
across the plains and along the meadow's edge.

Singing or whispering, flowing or resting,
a faithful river I have been.

Guarding secrets of the past, and charting new horizons
I console the lonely,
captivate the children,
and carry dreamers back toward home.

JUDY SIMMONS BOVILL

Approaching Events

Saturday, May 12
Bader Park Natural Area
Hike, 7:00 a.m.

Friday, May 25
Annual Prairie Festival
at
Griffith Prairie & Farm
Don't miss it!!!

Great food, music, guided
tours of the
Prairie & Barn,
Hay rack rides &
campfire!

6:00 pm - 10:00 pm
(Food served 6:00-7:30)
\$10 (kids 5 & under free)

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

Judy Bovill taught art in Aurora Schools for many years, then spent several more years in Colombia and Venezuela teaching English and art. While not visiting her four grown children and four grandsons, she may be found wandering throughout the Americas - dropping in at Prairie Plains now & then to chat, hike the prairie, or drop off a poem.

monthly newsletter of



April, 2007

Why do we burn?



April 4: Assisting Platte River Trust with burn at Wild Rose Ranch near Alda.

That has to be our most frequently asked question next to "Why do you cut trees (cedars)?" and "Now just what is it that you do?"

For the most part, prairie consists of perennial vegetation - that is, it comes up year after year, sprouting from underground shoots. Prairie is extremely productive, providing great quantities of forage and cover throughout the growing season. This vegetation dies back at the end of the season, leaving a thick layer of dry thatch. If this dead plant material were left year after year without removal by grazing, mowing, or burning, the prairie would choke itself out and become invaded by woody species.

Fire has a cleansing, rejuvenating effect. As it removes the built up thatch and woody growth and blackens the soil, it increases subsoil temperatures. This stimulates soil microbial activity that increases nutrient availability for prairie plants. Burning also lengthens the growing season for the natives while shortening it for Eurasian weeds. More native plants flower, produce seed and are more robust when prescribed fire is used in the management plan. Prairie did not just adapt to growing with fire through the centuries; it *evolved* with fire.



April 26: Bader Park Natural Area. Note the nest box along fenceline and the Tree Swallows that use it.



April 23: Successful burn at member Kelly Holthus's place near York. At right, spring bloomer *Anemone caroliniana*, found on the same property.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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