



Paul Hosford

Enchanted Evening at ONP



October 2nd - Eighty-five people of all ages participated in this year's event, which included trail walks and a presentation around the campfire. The featured speaker was Nancy Gillis, professor of Native American history at Wayne State College, Nebraska Indian Community College and Northeast Community College - and Executive Director of the John G. Neihardt Center in Bancroft. A woman of Cherokee/Choctaw descent, Gillis presented "The Voice of Native American Women," which recounts what the women had to say from 1600 through today about family, spirituality, land, boarding schools and other topics. Her program was made possible by the Nebraska Humanities Council. *Special thanks to Paul & Lori Hosford for organizing the event, and providing information and photos for the Link (see also additional thank-yous listed below).*



Paul Hosford

Prairie Plains Link is a publication of



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.

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

Link Editor & Layout
Jan Whitney

Learn more and
BECOME A MEMBER at
www.prairieplains.org
and
Become a Fan on Facebook

Restoration Partners . . .

(Verona complex, Tim Horst) and Bader Park (The Platte PEER Group board). Past contributors include the Platte River Trust, the University of Nebraska (for 9-Mile Prairie) and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Rainwater Basin office. These various properties have enabled us to harvest adequate quantities of big bluestem, Indiangrass, switchgrass, prairie cordgrass, as well as a "granola" of as many as 25 additional species (mostly wildflowers), to sow hundreds of acres of new plantings. The partnership helps to expand high diversity prairie acres in eastern Nebraska, much of it presently going to Wetland Reserve Program lands (WRP), a program of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. **A big thanks to all of our high diversity, local ecotype prairie partners!**

Director Bill Whitney presents seminar: The Center for Grassland Studies event, held October 4th at UNL's East Campus Union, was a brief illustrated history of Prairie Plains Resource Institute. Including scenes dating back to the early 1980s, the presentation also featured extensive photos of Prairie Plains properties across the state, the SOAR program, the Charles L. Whitney Education Center project and scenes from the prairie and wetland restoration work. Thanks to Center Director Martin Massengale for the invitation to share our history with UNL students and faculty.

Additional THANK YOUs to:

- Nanette Whitten for seed harvesting assistance;
- Espressions for room and service for the recent Board meeting;
- Martha Hakenkamp for her presentation to the Board;
- Ernie Rousek for contributing a harvesting tool;
- ONP Enchanted Evening supporters Ted Thieman (mowing); Boone Central Schools (PA system and other equipment); Rosemary Seier (allowed parking on her land); the Scouts (assistance with trail walks and parking); and once again, the Hosfords for organizing the event.



Sarah Bailey

Exceptionally mild October weather allowed for an extended season of seed collecting. Griffith Prairie's stunning fall landscapes provided the perfect setting for both harvesting and camera work.



Sarah Bailey

Photographer-author Michael Forsberg and the NET film crew were filming for a documentary about Forsberg's *Great Plains: America's Lingerin Wild* (University of Chicago Press, 2009) the day we were harvesting at The Nature Conservancy's Dahms tract south of Wood River.



Sarah Bailey



October, 2010

A Sea of Seeds

The ancient prairie landscape has so often been described as a sea of grass, and aptly so. Throughout the growing season, peaking in fall, this colorful, billowing mass of biodiversity in turn yields a sea of seeds. →

Recognizing our restoration partners

Each year in late September we fire up the old Allis Chalmers K-Series combine (and this year also the newly acquired Allis L-3) to harvest tall grass, which will be sown on various sites the following winter and spring. We use a few of our own properties as seed sources, but also have a number of restoration partners who permit us to combine areas which have been planted with high diversity local ecotype seed mixes in the past. Occasionally we do this in exchange for shares of seed for other work, but more often it's done for no return but to keep the high diversity planting process rolling and to create more habitat elsewhere.

This year's partners include the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (Redhead WMA, Brad Seitz and Deep Well WMA, Richard Knox); The Nature Conservancy (Dahms and Derr properties, Chris Helzer); Ducks Unlimited

Seeds . . .

We are immersed in that sea throughout the year. Beyond our occupation with the essential business of restoration, we are also perpetually fascinated with these bundles of potential - tiny packages evolved over geologic time to hold the unique DNA blueprint for each grass, sedge, or forb. Working with over 200 species for 30+ years enables one to recognize most seeds by name, and to visualize the mature plants in bloom that, given all the right conditions, they are destined to become.

As the prairie is highly diverse, so are the seeds that it yields, as well as the fruits that house them. Each species varies in size, form, color, texture and arrangement within the fruit. A seed's form reveals instantly its means of dispersal: feathery appendages will carry seeds on the wind, those packed into fleshy, tasty fruits will be ingested, traveling with and through its consumer; sticky or sticky seeds will adhere to the fur of a mammal (or human seed collector's socks, sweatshirt and canine); others are designed to float downstream.

It isn't surprising that so many field biologists are also artists - photographing, illustrating and otherwise artfully documenting the objects of their studious affection. There is a SOAR activity that encourages students to recognize designs and patterns in the environment, from the veins in a leaf to cloud formations in the sky. From *By Nature's Design* (Chronicle Books, 1993) by Pat Murphy: "The recognition of natural patterns is at the heart of both scientific investigation and artistic exploration, and the first step to understanding the natural world is to see - and see clearly."

We offer here a tiny sampling of images depicting some of what *we* see in our world of seeds through the seasons. Photos by Prairie Plains staff - Sarah, Mike, Amy, Bill & Jan.



Art Harvest

artfarmnebraska.org



Jan Whitney

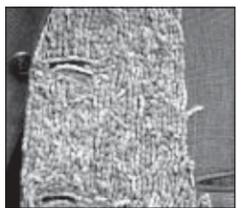
Seeds in Art -

Adele Phillips, recent Prairie Plains intern, spent the time between her internship and her departure for Japan experiencing the Art Farm south of Marquette. Her amazing project, entitled "Indigenous Opulence," involved collecting seed from over 1,000 milkweed pods on the property and drying the floss for use as batting for the quilt. The fabric is a shimmering organza; the title is stitched over cording and quilted into the piece.



Jeroen van de Ven

Some of our members may recall seeing this previously published 2004 Art Farm project using the seeds of Illinois tickclover.



Anyone who walks through the prairie in late summer to fall is likely to be familiar with the rather annoying adhering quality of these seeds. Dutch artist Jeroen van de Ven was inspired by this characteristic, however, and created this unbelievable "Seedy Suit."