

∞ Prairie plains Link ∞

Newsletter of



December, 2007



All photos above are from the Bush Island planting. Seeding onto snow has proven to be an effective method. Seeds absorb the warmth of the sun and sink down into the snow, becoming incorporated into the soil and ready to grow with the spring thaw and rains.

The Year's Last Planting: Bush Island

Mike Bullerman and Amy Jones recently completed a 93-acre high diversity prairie planting on Bush Island, a large Platte River island directly northwest of Griffith Prairie. Last May Mike planted 115 acres, slightly over half the field. This planting was very successful, with many seedlings representing many species. Plentiful rainfall all summer gave it a great start. Sowing the remainder of the field was deferred until a large wetland slough was excavated in early December.

This work brings to fruition a major part of a Natural Resources Conservation Service Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) project. A large part of Bush Island is owned by a group of Hamilton County residents who formed a corporation years ago to use the land for recreational enjoyment. About four years ago the corporation president called the Prairie Plains office to inquire about any programs that might help them restore their cropland to wildlife habitat. We suggested the WRP program as an option since retiring irrigated cropland in the Platte's sandy river bottom soils was a good idea under current state water management plans.

Surprisingly, Bush Island did not initially rank high under WRP rules since it had never technically been a wetland. An island in the middle of a river didn't count. After about three years the project received high enough ranking to proceed to design and implementation. The final project was slated to use the Prairie Plains high diversity seed mix to restore the lowland prairie and wetlands. (*continued...*)

Check out the article on Prairie Plains in the January issue of *Prairie Fire*
prairiefirenewspaper.com

Last Planting continued . . .

Over the past four years Bill Whitney and Mike Bullerman from Prairie Plains, and John Heaston and Tim Tunnell from The Nature Conservancy and Platte Habitat Partnership facilitated planning meetings with the Bush Island group. This led to Prairie Plains collaborating on seeding in areas where cedars had been removed and ultimately the 200-acre cropland restoration. We will assist with prescribed burning of the new prairie in the future. In a few short years the Bush Island restoration will be a showy and beautiful lowland tallgrass prairie with over 100 species of plants - enjoyed by both wildlife and people.



The 2008 Prairie Plains calendar is still available for purchase (\$20 including postage). It features photos of our events and properties, and notes key Prairie Plains events throughout the year.

THANK YOU, Prairie Plains members, for your generous year-end contributions! Your dedication and generosity are greatly appreciated!

Approaching Events

2008 Annual Meeting of Members

Saturday, January 12

Bremer Community Center - 16th (Hwy 14) & L Street
Aurora, Nebraska

8:30 a.m. - Coffee/Social; Meeting convenes at 9:00 a.m.



Lunch catered by Creative Cuisine at 12:00

Please RSVP for lunch to

amyppri@hamilton.net by Jan. 10.

Be there to enjoy the year in review show, to learn what's new, to take part in discussions for the good of the Institute, and to enjoy some great food and fellowship.

**Cedar Attack
at Griffith Prairie**
Saturday, February 9
Details TBA

**Bader Park Tour
with Breakfast**
Saturday, February 23 at 7:00 a.m.
Details TBA

Prairie Plains Link
is a publication of



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

MISSION:

**Maintaining and restoring
Nebraska ecosystems -
Creating opportunities for
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community development.**

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*Photos by Prairie Plains staff
members unless noted otherwise.*

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