

# Ⓛ Prairie plains Link Ⓛ



Annual New Year's Day Hike at Griffith Prairie. Both hiking photos courtesy Ernest Ochsner.

## Great Beginnings

High spirits prevailed during the first two 2009 annual events, setting the tone for the new year. The New Year's Day hiking opportunity inspired 16 members to get outside and get moving.



This year's Jan. 1 hike included some sledding-on-your-behind fun on the trail, aptly demonstrated by Jana Wasem Gibson (top) and Sarah Meyer.

Whitney Outstanding Service Award recipient.

Ethnobotanist Dr. Kelly Kindscher from the University of Kansas delivered a most appropriate keynote address about

Mitzi Fox from Albion was the recipient of the Charles L. Whitney Outstanding Service to PPRI Award at the Annual Meeting of Members on January 17 in Aurora. The award was presented by retiring board member Colleen Babcock, who spoke of Mitzi's tireless dedication to the Olson Nature Preserve and her enthusiastic support and advocacy of Prairie Plains during her 12 years of service on the board.

monthly newsletter  
of



January, 2009

The first New Year's hike was in 2003, originally just a few people seeking relief from cabin fever. We chose to stroll the hills of Griffith Prairie, not realizing at the time we were inaugurating an official Prairie Plains event to kick off every new year to come. We've hiked through spring-like days to moderate winter days to the you-can't-be-serious-you're-really-doing-this deep freeze event of 2007. Not many showed up for that one, but those of us who were brave enough took advantage of the photographic opportunity - recording the fantastic, sparkling and surreal landscape (see [prairieplains.org](http://prairieplains.org) - scrapbook - preserves - page 2).

The Annual Meeting of Members also had an atmosphere of celebration. Board member Cliff Dill gave a thoughtful presentation recognizing the many years of service - a combined 46 years - contributed by retiring board members Colleen Babcock, Mitzi Fox, David Meyer and Wayne Mollhoff. Later we had the pleasure of honoring Mitzi Fox as the 2009 Charles L.





Dr. Kelly Kindscher, Associate Scientist and Professor from the University of Kansas - Kansas Biological Survey, delivered the keynote address.



A post-meeting field trip was led by Prairie Plains Director Bill Whitney to view the construction progress at the Charles L. Whitney Education Center.

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“developing a culture of harvest and use of the planted wild.” Kelly was also elected to the Prairie Plains board of directors - as was Randy Ruppert, area manager for RailWorks, Inc.

A photo exhibit by Cliff and Jeanne Dill enhanced the festive mood of the meeting. The Institute has been a beneficiary of their work for a number of years; Jeanne has contributed photos for Prairie Plains publications and archives, and Cliff presented an outstanding slide show featuring wildlife in the Galapagos Islands for the '07 meeting. The Dills generously contributed a percentage of their sales at the '09 meeting to SOAR.

**More to celebrate: We have hundreds of acres of high diversity prairie restorations scheduled for 2009!**

### January Thank-yous:

- to Ernie Ochsner for the photos of the New Year's Day hike;
- to Kelly Kindscher for presenting the keynote address at the Annual Meeting of Members;
- to Cliff & Jeanne Dill for the outstanding exhibit of their photography at the Annual Meeting;
- to Espressions Coffee Shop for donating the coffee for the meeting; and
- to Mark Czaplewski and Tom Backer from the Central Platte NRD for planting assistance on a 15-acre area west of Grand Island.

**Coming up:**  
Valentine's Day  
CEDAR ATTACK!

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