

Grainne Grainne

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Prairie/Plains Resource Institute is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to inventory, preservation, and restoration of native prairie and other unique native habitats, and to general education about the natural and cultural heritage of the prairie-plains region. The Institute is working on a local level to design and foster a concept of resource development that protects and sustains the productivity of people, soils, watersheds, and communities. Inventory, preservation, and restoration activities are focused on central and eastern Nebraska.

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## Preservation - Questions & Problems

by Jan Whitney

The very word preservation sparks controversy when used in association with such words as "wilderness." Some argue for the preservation of wilderness, meaning that all human activity should be banned from the earth's remaining wilderness areas. This leads one to question just what the human niche *is*. Do we fit in at all? William Tucker delves into this line of thought in "Is Nature Too Good For Us?" in the March issue of *Harper's*. Tucker claims to recognize the "legitimate doctrine of *stewardship* of the land," (emphasis his) and continues, "In order to take this responsibility, however, we must recognize the part we play in nature - that 'the land is ours.' It will not do simply to worship nature, to create a cult of wilderness in which humanity is an eternal intruder and where humanity can only destroy."

Tucker supports the philosophy of noted microbiologist and author, Rene Dubos - who expresses his faith "that it is possible for human beings to modify the surface of the earth in such a way as to create environments that are ecologically viable, esthetically pleasurable and economically profitable. . ."

Agreed. The effects of human activity have encompassed the planet, and preservation of wilderness as a total environment untouched by humans may be somewhat void of meaning. However, it must be understood that in order to achieve the "ecologically viable" quality of the best of all possible worlds described above, preservation of *something* is essential.

The most important part of that something may be natural diversity. The literature of biologists and conservationists is saturated with the subject, bearing titles like "Man's Efficient Rush Toward Deadly Dullness" (Watt, 1972). More recently, the entire January-February issue of *The Nature Conservancy News* is devoted to the topic.

The reasons for preserving diversity are many, but basically the problem is this: reducing natural diversity weakens the stability of entire ecosystems, and may be destroying species from which we could derive unpredictable benefits (see "The Promise of Jojoba" in this Journal.) Other reasons for protecting diversity are in the realm of human psychological needs and ethics. Aldo Leopold addresses this aspect in his classic essay, "The Land Ethic." It was also Leopold who said something to the effect that the key to intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces.

The reason for the *urgency* about preserving diversity is that we are losing it at an unprecedented rate. According to Norman Myers (1979), we

are losing one species per day now, and before the year 2000 the rate could rise to one per hour. And we literally don't know what we're losing: the great majority of the earth's species have never been discovered and recorded, let alone studied for their biological importance or economic utility.

We cannot however, consider the problem of worldwide loss of diversity apart from the socioeconomic realities that exist in the world. The fact is that some of the richest biological regions are occupied by the most destitute human societies. When one is suffering from malnutrition and lack of sanitation, existing on a day-to-day basis, one is not likely to be concerned about preserving biological diversity for the sake of a better world for one's grandchildren. Moreover, for countries at *any* income level, immediate economic gains hold greater political appeal than any long-term, unquantifiable values that might be sacrificed as a result of their pursuit. The urgency and complexity of these problems, as well as recommended approaches for solutions, are examined by Myers, and by Erik Eckholm (1978), who summarizes the situation:

All over the world, developers and conservationists have long been at loggerheads, but this will have to change. Economic progress and stability are threatened by the degradation of the earth's living resources. Yet keeping the biosphere in good order will not be possible unless people's basic needs are satisfied and population growth is quickly slowed. The eventual tripling in human numbers projected by many demographers would simply be incompatible with the preservation of needed natural diversity. Locally and internationally, economic orders must be created that are at once ecologically and socially sustainable. Developers and conservationists need each other if the ultimate goals of either are to be met, for biological impoverishment and human impoverishment are inextricably intertwined.

With the inevitable losses of diversity to come in the Third World, it seems all the more essential that we preserve what we have in the North American Prairie. Admittedly, prairie doesn't begin to match the diversity of the tropics and cannot make up for the losses there - but in the context of the world temperate grassland biome, there is much at stake, because the North American grassland formation is the largest, most agriculturally productive part of the biome. The obstacles to preservation here are - fortunately - of a different nature.

Preserving prairie is not a "wilderness issue." Prairie wilderness - that is, unfenced, self-perpetuating prairie, with naturally occurring fires and unconfined grazing animals - doesn't really exist. What we *do* have is prairie remnants, which *depend* on human intervention in the form of carefully planned management (stewardship). An isolated tallgrass prairie remnant

left alone without mowing, grazing, or burning quickly becomes invaded by weedy species and trees.

Last spring, while hiking with a group in the Loess Hills Wildlife Area of western Iowa, the question was asked, "Isn't it just *natural* for the trees to take over here?" - implying that management in the Wildlife Area was actually "working against nature." The question was thought-provoking, and could have been answered either way. Left alone, "letting nature take its course," the Loess Hills certainly do become forested. On the other hand, prior to human intervention, wildfires kept the Hills in grass, and *that* was nature's course. So we have a choice; we manage according to the desired end result. If one wants to graze cattle, one manages one way; if a forest is the goal, one takes a different approach. The Loess Hills Wildlife Area is managed for prairie, and fire is an essential management tool.

So, preservation of prairie means proper management of prairie. It is fortunate indeed when the economic uses of land - e.g. carefully controlled cattle grazing and mowing for hay - can be compatible with the preservation of species diversity - and even esthetic quality. Here we have an example of Dubos's best of all possible worlds!

Then why do we have to work so hard at preserving what's left? I stated earlier that the obstacles were of a different nature, not that they didn't exist. For the most part, what remains of the tallgrass prairie that is not already legally protected is in the hands of farmers and ranchers. Agriculture in general has nothing to gain (and a lot to lose) by plowing up more prairie. There just isn't enough of it left to make a significant difference in productivity. The *individual* farmer, however, may feel that he cannot afford to keep a piece of ground in prairie. And farmers these days already face a surplus of economic disadvantages.

At this point, I would like to share some excerpts of letters we have received from persons responding to our Nebraska Prairie Inventory:

Prairie/Plains:

I am interested in the study of native Nebraska prairies. My son now farms (and owns) the land my grandfather homesteaded in 1870. There is still a small parcel of prairie which has never been broken up. Since it doesn't bring in any cash value to speak of, he is tempted to plow it up. Please send information . . .

Dear Sir:

I read your article in the October 17th issue of the *Nebraska Farmer*. My husband and I have a small patch of about 15 acres of native prairie which he has been talking about plowing under. I am hoping that he won't . . .

Prairie/Plains Resource Inst.:

I own some virgin native prairie and so does some of my neighbors. Here in Pawnee County we grow the tall blue stem the tallest in the state. Come and see. We also have all the other species you mention. . .

Dear Sir:

. . . I have about 10 acres of mow land I use for hay mainly. I intend to keep it that way as long as I am here . . .

Mr. & Mrs. Whitney:

. . . My letter to you concerns an 80-acre tract owned by our family which has never been plowed, and if there is somewhere to "register" these prairie tracts, I would surely like to know how to go about it. Like you folks, I am very interested in seeing prairie preserved, and we feel that we want to preserve this land as it is, no matter what eventual sacrifices we might have to make. You can well imagine how often we have been told that it would be ideal for plowing and putting in a center pivot!

. . . I'm surely no expert on prairie, except that I think it's beautiful - and interesting. When I was a kid, my father used to dig Indian turnips for us occasionally, and there were many flowers there which one didn't see elsewhere . . .

. . . One can still faintly see the old wagon trails that crossed it. My grandfather homesteaded land near this prairie in 1876, so we are old-timers here. My father is 91 years old and still lives on the place (alone), and he was born there . . .

There you have it. I could ramble on about the value of these prairies as genetic banks, agricultural ecosystem models, and living laboratories, but the people who really have control of the destiny of these parcels have different values in mind. We are hoping that innovative techniques of preservation, such as Nebraska's new conservation easement law, will make things easier. Farmers, ranchers, "the land is yours." It's up to you.

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Jim Landon

## News & Activities

Part of what's new must already be obvious. We have had, since the printing of the last Journal, the good fortune of finding someone benevolent (or crazy) enough to offer the free services of his company's printing office. The change in the size of the Journal is due to the resulting change in equipment that is now producing it. We have introduced other variations as well; your comments are invited so that the evolutionary process may proceed in a positive manner.

### Prairie Appreciation Week

On October 13, 1981, Governor Charles Thone signed a document proclaiming October 18-25, 1981, as Prairie Appreciation Week in Nebraska, urging all citizens to "reflect on and appreciate the richness and beauty that the prairie has provided our state."

The idea of Prairie Appreciation Week (PAW) originated with and was sponsored by the Wachiska Audubon Society of Lincoln, with the Society's chapter president David Ruhter as chairman. Thirteen other Nebraska organizations, including Prairie/Plains Resource Institute, subsequently joined Wachiska as co-sponsors of the week.

Nebraska's first lady Ruth Thone served as Honorary Chairperson of PAW, even though she confessed to not generally liking the idea of taking such a position. However, she explained, "I really believe in this. Prairie preservation has something to do with the quality of life for all of us."

In conjunction with the first Prairie Appreciation Week, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission distributed over 1200 seed packets of native prairie grasses and forbs, and printed a special prairie pamphlet. The pamphlet, along with reprinted articles on prairie, a list of selected books and articles, and a list of suggested activities for PAW, were included in educational packets sent to schools, organizations, and interested individuals around the state.

Newspapers all over Nebraska included articles about prairie and PAW. In addition, Nebraska television networks ran a 30-second public service announcement about PAW and the need for prairie preservation. KOLN-TV's Friday evening program, "ETC.," featured an interview with Ernie Rousek out on Nine Mile Prairie.

Other activities celebrating PAW included field trips to local prairies, prairie transplanting parties, photography exhibits, poster contests, native plant exhibits, slide presentations, and a UNL "Communiversities" prairie heritage course. (A detailed report of the week's activities is available on request.)

Activities for PAW-'82 will again feature field trips, workshops, special exhibits and presentations, and distribution of educational packets to schools and organizations. In addition, this year the week will be highlighted by a banquet at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education on



Saturday, September 25, Dr. G. W. Tomanek, president of Fort Hayes State University, Hayes, Kansas, will be the keynote speaker. Dr. Tomanek was the last student of noted UNL grassland ecologist-professor-author J. E. Weaver, and his research included work on Nine Mile Prairie and other prairies around Lincoln.

Local PAW-'82 coordinators are being sought to organize local activities. Anyone interested in participating, or in receiving the PAW educational materials, should write to Prairie/Plains Resource Institute.



In conjunction with the first Nebraska Prairie Appreciation Week, the Chet Ager Nature Center in Lincoln and a group of UNL recreation students sponsored a poster contest for elementary school children. Pictured with their teacher, Mrs. Dorthy Bush, are the winners from Morley Elementary: Brannen Griepentrog, Amber Lisec, Rusty Novak, Lisa Carlson, Ben Duranske, Matt Sweney. (Photo by Karen Groenewold, *Northeast Lincoln Sun*)

### Nebraska Prairie Inventory

Thanks to one of our most active members, Ernie Rousek (see his "Spring at Nine Mile" in this Journal), an article requesting ownership and location information about Nebraska prairie remnants was printed in the October 17, 1981 *Nebraska Farmer*. Survey forms were also distributed to Ag Extension offices throughout the state during Prairie Appreciation Week. The results were encouraging, with - so far - 30 replies. Some of these landowners expressed their desire to preserve their prairies as long as possible, and Prairie/Plains Resource Institute is exploring the options open to them.

The survey has led to at least four conclusions: there are still a number of prairie remnants left in eastern-central Nebraska; many landowners recognize the uniqueness of their prairies and wish to preserve them; many of the landowners are older folks with a sentimental attachment to their land (as well as an appreciation of its other values); and the economic pressures to plow the remnant prairies are substantial. With this in mind, the next step is to find those areas and landowners that the survey did not reveal, determine the owners' feelings about conservation, and attempt to secure legal protection for as many areas as possible.

The 1981 Nebraska Legislature enacted into law a measure allowing certain rights in land to be donated or sold to governmental or nonprofit organizations (such as P/PRI). These land agreements are called conservation easements. An easement allows a landowner to retain possession of the land, but places specified restrictions on that land. For example, a landowner with a 20-acre hay meadow could donate or sell an easement to the Institute that would prevent him (or any succeeding landowner should he sell) from plowing it. The agreement could also specify management details such as mowing frequency or periodic burning, and such restrictions would be attached to the land perpetually. All conditions agreed upon are enforceable by the easement holder (e.g. P/PRI). Easements are filed at the county office of deeds, and taxes are assessed according to the limitations placed on the land, as stated in the easement agreement.

With the high cost of land, and the high cost of management, the Institute would have difficulty purchasing and/or managing much land. Therefore, the easement is the best tool available - and makes the landowner a partner in preservation. Other options such as leases, acquisition by purchase, management agreements, or acquisition by gift donation are still possible but will probably be the exception rather than the rule.

At this point the state looks very large and the Institute very small (it is!). Where or how do we begin? First, those who replied to the survey will be contacted again to determine conservation wishes. Next, the prairie owners of Hamilton County will be contacted with the hope of establishing a county-wide system of conservation easement preserves. This may include, in the case of the Platte River bluff rangeland, a comprehensive plan whereby landowners having a common goal of rangeland improvement, red cedar removal, and future land development prevention, could work together with the Institute - preserving native species *and* improving the economic productivity of their land.

With this local approach it should eventually become possible to carry the model into other counties. We're working on that, too.

### Bader Memorial Park Natural Area Interpretive Project

Last November, Prairie/Plains Resource Institute received a grant of \$5,200 for 1982 and \$1,200 for the following four years to develop an interpretive-management project for the Bader Park Natural Area. The area



includes approximately 35 acres of the 140-acre Bader Memorial Park, located south of Chapman, Nebraska. The funds have been provided by the Eriksen Memorial Fund-Hamilton Community Foundation, which originally set aside the Natural Area within the park in 1979. It includes: the Platte River, with both heavily revegetated islands and rapidly disappearing (due to vegetation encroachment) sand bars; subirrigated tallgrass prairie dominated by Indiangrass, big bluestem, and cordgrass and containing forbs such as false dragonhead (*Physostegia virginiana*), fringed loosestrife (*Lysimachia thysiflora*), nodding ladies tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*) and pale-spike lobelia (*Lobelia spicata*); back waters, sloughs, and cattail marshes; lowland cottonwood forest, willow-dogwood shrub areas, and three gravel pits (small lakes formed from gravel mining) surrounded by sand in the first stage of plant succession.



One of the ponds in Bader Natural Area

Photo by Bill Whitney

Because of this habitat diversity the area is rich in wildlife. Furthermore, it is at the east end of the Platte River Big Bend area so well known for its huge staging of migratory waterfowl and sandhill cranes. Throughout the year, from the spectacular spring migration to the subtle beauty of the ladies tresses, and on to the quiet of winter, Bader Natural Area is a gem.

The objectives for the Bader Park project are to 1) make the area accessible to the public in a way that best protects the site, yet permits

observation of all its unique features; 2) develop interpretive tools; and 3) develop an ecological management plan outlining management procedures that best protect and enhance the species present or living communities desired.

The initial emphasis will be on the access and interpretational facets. Access will require extensive trail planning and construction. Interpretation will be carried out through natural history tours (18 for 1982 - see schedule in calendar section of this Journal), and literature - including a map and trail guide, species checklists, and a comprehensive booklet describing the history, geology, and life forms of the natural area.

In this, the nationally proclaimed Year of the Eagle, the first wildlife sighted on the first tour of the Bader Natural Area on February 20 was a bald eagle gliding along the Platte. The tour participants were treated to several eagle sightings, along with red-tailed hawks, a beaver, flocks of ducks, and a host of other pleasing sights and sounds. The day just happened to be during the first break from a long spell of harsh winter weather, with sunshine and temperatures in the 60's - so the consensus was that it was a successful beginning for the tour program.

### Lincoln Creek

The Lincoln Creek watershed restoration project is still moving - slowly - forward. Figure 1 is a diagram of the proposed project, showing its aerial configuration, land parcels, present creek and hydrologic features, and surrounding land uses. Figure 2 shows the long-range plan for the area, i.e. vegetation plan, hydrologic modifications, community garden and orchard, and ornamental garden.

Mrs. Wilma Aalborg has donated her parcel (6-7 acres) to the Institute, so the base for the project is established. It is possible that the City of Aurora will grant a five-year lease (trial period for subsequent longer term) on the area to the south. The city land would provide non-highway public access to the project area and would be the location of the community and ornamental gardens. To the north of the Institute's property, across Highway 34, is the Nebraska Youth Leadership Development Center (NYLDC), operated by the Nebraska Vocational Agriculture Foundation and directed by Institute board member Cliff Jensen. Since NYLDC plans for the creek land are similar to those of the Institute, an agreement will be pursued allowing the Institute to restore and manage the area. The NYLDC and Prairie/Plains Resource Institute are both interested in education and community service, so cooperative efforts such as restoring Lincoln Creek will be mutually beneficial.

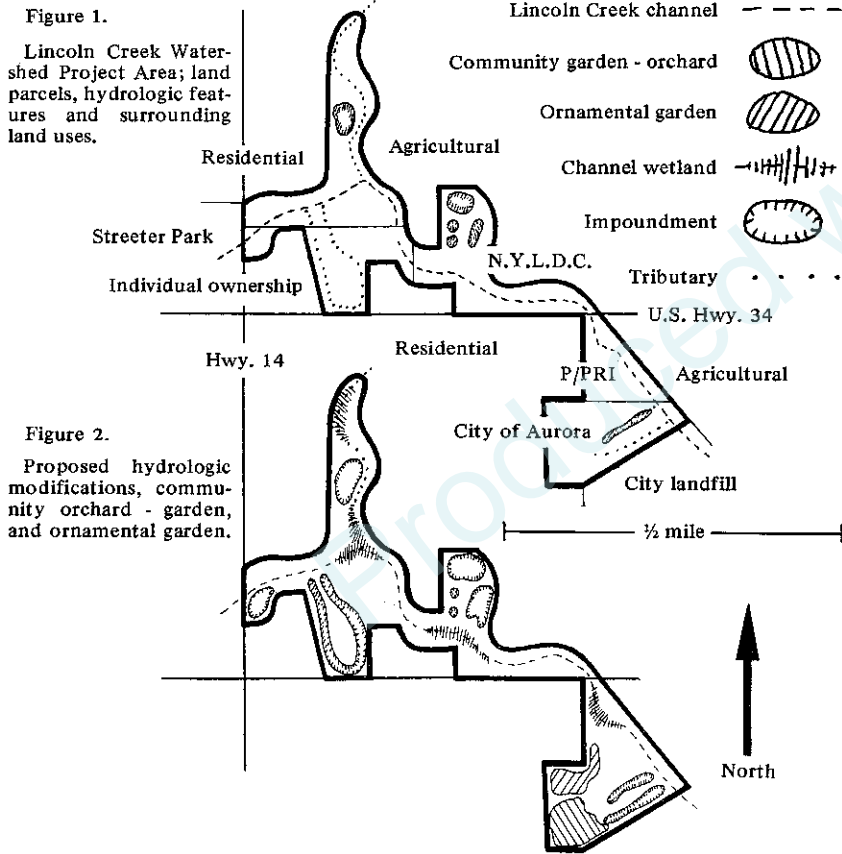
From NYLDC west, the proposed project area is less certain. We are discussing plans with the landowners, but so far no terms or commitments have been mentioned.



An approximate timetable for the project will be as follows: Year 1 - scour the creek channel to remove major obstructions, research and plan channel and wetland design, survey and collect data for above engineering work, plan the major earth-moving and revegetating work for the next 4-5 years, and plan interpretive and public relations directions; Year 2-6 - earth moving, vegetation establishment (including gardens, orchard, prairie, woodlands, wetlands, and shrub borders), and develop interpretive program; Years 7-10 - "fine tune" the project, attending to details, and plan long-term management as restored plant communities begin to mature.

Comments and suggestions for the Lincoln Creek project are welcome, as are visitors for viewing the area. The overall intent of the project is to show, by creating a model, that people in Nebraska - or anywhere - can reverse the historical trend of mindless destruction of nature into a conscious act of restoration.

All of project area except gardens will have native wetland, prairie and floodplain forest vegetation.



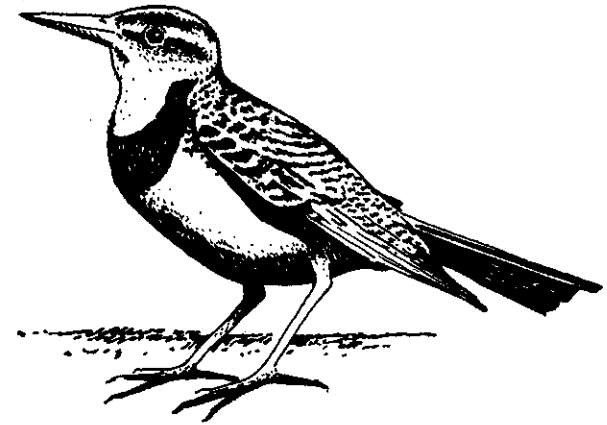
## Spring at Nine Mile

by Ernest Rousek

The wheezy "wolf whistle" of the upland plover mingles with the more melodious song of the western meadowlark, a sure sign that spring has returned to Nine Mile Prairie.

It is mid May, and closer to the wooded ravines several exuberant brown thrashers, our midwest mockingbird, are seemingly trying to outdo in song not only each other but the myriad other bird songs.

Wrens interrupt their arias with a scolding chattering over some real or imagined trespassers. The song of the rose-breasted grosbeak sounding like a robin in a hurry and the repeated "what cheer" of a cardinal almost drown out the more distant call of the bobwhite. Mourning doves with their plaintive distant coo wait until the hiker is within a few feet of their scraggly twig nests lodged in tree branches before fluttering away.



As we come closer to the large pond on the southeast boundary, we see four great blue herons take to the air from the marshy pond edge, their slow, ponderous wing beat lifting these graceful birds slowly over the water. Unalarmed by our approach are a pair of Canada geese standing at the water's edge. We move away and hope that they decide to set up housekeeping there.

Wild plums are in full bloom, giving their fragrance to the morning air, their thickets standing out like snow drifts along the sides of the ravines. More scattered and scarce, the chokecherries with their flower buds still closed but showing hints of white, seem to be waiting for the plum blossoms to wither and drop before making their own flowery display.

Walking across the prairie again, we note that it is slow to green up due to its consisting mostly of warm season grasses: the bluestems, switchgrass, and indiagrass. This gives the low-growing prairie flowers an opportunity to blossom and produce seed before they are shaded by the tall grasses.



## The Promise of Jojoba\*

by Naomi Brill

One of the earliest flowers to be seen here is the ground plum or buffalo pea. These flat mats, a foot or more across, bear pea-like lavender flowers which will rapidly change to purplish green fruits an inch or so in diameter.

The delicate blossoms of "blue-eyed grass" appear in large numbers. These half-inch wide blossoms are at the tips of what appear to be 6- to 10- inch long blades of grass, which in reality are the flattened stems of *Sisyrinchium*, a member of the iris family.

Prairie violets peer out from under the dry remains of last year's grass, their dissected leaves quite different from the heart-shaped ones of their more shade-loving cousins, the wood violets.

Standing about a foot in height, and perhaps the tallest of the spring-blooming prairie flowers, is the ragwort. With its clusters of brilliant yellow daisy-like blossoms at the tops of the stems, they are like bright exclamation marks punctuating the prairie.

The latter part of May finds masses of pale lemon-yellow pea-like blossoms of wild indigo dotting the prairie. These large flowers are favorites of bumble bees which with their brisk, no nonsense approach, push their way into blossom after blossom.

From its rolling upland to its spring-fed ravine ponds, Nine Mile Prairie's 230 acres offer many kinds of beauty.

Ernest Rousek is conservation chairman of Lincoln's Wachiska Audubon Society and has headed the Society's attempts to preserve Nine Mile Prairie.

He was recently the recipient of the 1982 Howard Wiegars Sunday Journal and Star Nebraska Outstanding Wildlife Conservation Award.

Nine Mile Prairie is, perhaps, the finest - and one of the last - examples of tall-grass prairie in eastern Nebraska. Its 230 acres are of special significance because J. E. Weaver, internationally recognized grassland ecologist, used the parcel for his teaching and research. Weaver named the prairie "Nine Mile" because it was nine miles northwest of his University of Nebraska campus office. He and his students used the prairie during the 1920's - 1950's, publishing studies before, during, and after the drought of the 1930's. The prairie is still used extensively by UNL students.

Nine Mile Prairie has survived intact somewhat by accident as a fenced buffer area around a bomb storage depot for the U.S. Air Force Base at Lincoln from 1940 to 1970. Since the base has been inactivated, the property has been assigned to the City of Lincoln Airport Authority. For the last three years, the Wachiska Audubon Society, concerned that Nine Mile be permanently protected and preserved, has repeatedly attempted to persuade the Airport Authority to sell Nine Mile at less than market value. The Authority has refused on the basis of a constitutional prohibition on government gifts to private groups or individuals; selling the prairie at less than market value could be considered a gift. The Authority currently leases the prairie to Wachiska Audubon for \$4200 a year and supports maintaining the land as virgin prairie, but its action is not binding on future boards.

In a new approach to overcome this roadblock to the purchase of Nine Mile, Wachiska Audubon has developed a plan to buy the prairie and transfer title to the University of Nebraska - moving the land from one government agency to another. This would cost the University nothing, and the prairie would still be maintained by the Audubon Society. If all parties involved agree to the plan, funds will be solicited from foundations and individuals as soon as a price is agreed upon. -ed.

Recently an old friend who had never before walked the native prairie took one look at it and commented, "There's nothing there. It's just an empty field." To which I replied tactfully, "It's not the prairie that's empty - it's your head!" And having thus established a basis for common understanding, we proceeded on a satisfactory expedition.

There are certain things in life - like calculus and opera and prairies, and probably anything else worthwhile - that can't be fully understood and appreciated without a well-furnished mind and a sound set of values relating to their use. We are not born with these, we learn them by the process of moving from our natural freedom through discipline to greater freedom. Initially we are free to use the abilities with which are endowed as they develop, but without the discipline of learning, we never achieve the greatest freedom of all - the ability to stretch ourselves to the maximum extent possible. From such stretching comes not only the greatest personal fulfillment but also the greatest good for all.

Nowhere is this more true than in our relationship with the complex natural world that surrounds us and from which we are derived. Each of the other life forms in this world is, like ourselves, a storage tank of knowledge that has been developed over centuries of evolution, of testing in the crucible of existence and of change. Because our joint welfare rests upon a balanced relationship between all living things, it is essential that we learn to read, study and understand the knowledge stored within them and within us.

It is for this reason that the phrase "endangered species" is so ominous, for destroying a species - plant, mammal, fish, bird, reptile - is like burning an unread book of which there is only one copy. It is not enough to study a species and then dismiss it because with each passing year it not only changes but we develop new tools for thinking that enable us to learn more than we did the first time around. The native Americans and early settlers who first peopled these prairies knew and used the plants for food and medicinal purposes but were totally unaware of what we have learned about them since through study and experiment or of what we may learn in the future. For our welfare - if for no other reason - it behooves us to keep the "total deck" intact.

The history of the jojoba bean which the *Wall Street Journal* has been pushing as the source of future millions illustrates this point. The *Journal* is one of my favorite publications, not because of its social philosophy which, as a friend is wont to say, is a little to the right of Louis XIV, but because it attempts to portray reality as it is. The jojoba, a small plant that has flourished for centuries in desert regions is a potential source of oil for commercial use. The Apaches of the Southwest on whose land it grows

\*Originally published in the *Lincoln Star*, October 1, 1981, in Naomi Brill's twice-monthly column, "The Amateur Naturalist."

wild have always known this, have used it and are looking for a bright future in its exploitation. The Johnny-come-lately WSJ took a look at it, at the 14 percent of the earth's surface that is desert with more acres moving into that classification yearly, at the continued demand for soaps, cosmetics and cooking oil, and decided there was something there. Currently, everybody is jumping to "get a piece of the action."

My friend and I talked of the jojoba bean as we wandered over the prairie trying to look at it with knowledgeable, inquiring minds as well as aesthetic appreciation. We wondered how many thousands of living things on this earth we have stupidly, unknowingly and indifferently destroyed without ever learning to know and understand them. Any one of them could have held or does hold answers to some of the major problems confronting us today and yet we continue to blunder along, bull-doing, covering with concrete, destroying with pollution or contaminating beyond saving what could be a source of life in the future.

Out on Nine Mile Prairie, this paradox of human existence is neatly displayed. We walked beside a seven-foot-high fence topped with barbed wire which surrounds bunkers left over from the old air base. They crouch there like great beasts designed to hold within death, destruction, torture, terror, pain. On the other side of that fence lives the native prairie with its multitude of living things, its potential for helping us achieve a truly good life. Is this the best we can do with it?

Naomi Brill is a writer, naturalist, traveler, former professor of social work at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and a perpetual student. She lives in Lincoln.



*Echinacea angustifolia* (Purple Coneflower or Blacksamson) may be the "jojoba of the prairie." It seems to have been used by Indians as a remedy for more ailments than any other plant, and has captured the attention of biomedical researchers internationally.



## Water Allocation: Why Are We Failing?

by John VanDerwalker

Mention the words Environmentalist, Preservationist and even Conservationist to most Nebraskans and you will make their hackles rise. Mention the words urban freeway, water diversion and even water management and the hackles of most of the remaining Nebraskans will rise. Why? What is it about these terms that elicit such strong, negative responses? There are probably as many answers to this question as there are people in Nebraska. One reason is our human desire to simplify and categorize every issue and every individual. It makes it much easier for us to deal with. If we can categorize one individual as friend, another as foe, then we need not spend much time thinking—thinking about the issue, understanding its relationship to other interests, to the present condition, to the future, etc. We can instead determine who is supporting the idea or concept and from that decide where we stand on the issue without ever having to examine the substance of it.

In our society, the majority of us tend to the center of the spectrum of choices on any issue. However, this large lump in the center is subject to being skewed toward one end of the spectrum or the other by those people on the fringe who take advantage of our inclination to succumb to the simple good/bad, friend/foe syndrome described above.

In Nebraska, agriculture is the dominant political and economic force. The principal members of this group are farmers and agri-businessmen. This "power cluster" is characterized by such statements as "they have no interest in preserving wildlife habitat, maintaining clean air or water when it threatens 'their special interest' nor providing open space for the general



population.” Some of the individuals in this power cluster, those furthest from the center, are threatened by anyone who promotes these interests, and studiously avoid discussing the issues of wildlife habitat maintenance, water quality maintenance, etc. Instead, they appeal to their “friends” in the power cluster by arguing that John Doe, the environmentalist, is against it so we must be for it (all of it) or he’s for it so we must be against it (all of it). It’s a neat trick, some people do little else besides propagandizing their power cluster in this way. If members of their power cluster ever force them to address the issues, they will be lost.

On the other side of this spectrum are the Environmentalists. They are characterized as being against everything and unwilling to compromise when it comes to allocating resources. Many environmentalists insist that developers have already used “their share” of the resources and the rest must be dedicated to “their special interest”. Environmentalists are characterized as being elitists, selfish and uncompromising. Some are. But the majority are, as those individuals in the agricultural power cluster, closer to the center than most think.

Polarization, old animosities, and an unwillingness to dedicate the time necessary to thoroughly understand the condition and capability of the natural resources and to understand the needs and desires of our “opponents” in the other power cluster, paralyzes the great lump in the middle. Thus, with the majority paralyzed by their ignorance about the issues, the special interests are left to tug and pull until the outcome serves one interest or the other, the project is built or not built, the stream is channelized or not channelized, the water is diverted or not diverted, the sewage plant is built or not built. What compromises are struck are not done in the interest of the majority but instead to gain enough leverage to bring the conflict to a conclusion.

Some will argue that there is no center of the spectrum and, in fact, there are two distinct groups. I disagree. My experiences on the Platte River where I have been working on behalf of The Platte River Whooping Crane Habitat Maintenance Trust tells me otherwise. The popular allegation of the self-appointed leaders of the agricultural power cluster is that because the Trust wants to keep some water in the river, we must be against diversion—thus we are the farmers’ foe. The farmers I talk to don’t necessarily see it that way. They recognize that there are common interests. They want water kept in the river to maintain groundwater levels and “their” wildlife, as well as diverting some for agricultural uses. They recognize that water conservation on the farm and management of flows in the river can be improved to the benefit of farming and wildlife and other users. Many are frustrated by the all or nothing proposals made by various interests. They are also concerned about the costs of some of these proposals and the fact that the federal government is involved in them. They see themselves as independent people and leaning on the feds doesn’t set well. They would, I believe, welcome new middle-of-the-road alternatives — alternatives which would allow them to have more direct parti-

cipation, more control, alternatives that would encompass more than one aspect of one special interest.

Most environmentalists, too, are frustrated. They recognize the real possibility of winning battles, like Mid-States, but losing the war. Their limited successes, however, have been born of conflict and they see no other course of action other than continuing the battle. This does not mean they do not recognize the broad spectrum of water needs. Environmentalists are not members of the idle rich or anti-social characters or little old ladies in tennis shoes as often depicted. They work at a job like most of us and have a stake in maintaining a strong economy. They do not fail to recognize that, in Nebraska, a strong economy means agriculture. They know Nebraska agriculture depends on irrigation and that means water development. They are looking for water management alternatives that balance the need for economic stability and the desire for using water to maintain the recreational, wildlife and aesthetic values of Nebraska.

A common belief of farmers and environmentalists is the state’s water resources, however they are allocated, should not be exploited at a rate faster than they are being replenished. They believe that their descendants many generations down the line should have as much water available to them as we do today. The idea of pumping out an aquifer in 50 years or so is unconscionable to most. They also believe that their descendants should be able to enjoy the multitude of benefits that water provides, not just corn or just cranes.

With so much common ground to stand on, why is there so little progress? Why are we failing to resolve our differences? Can we change our course?

John VanDerwalker is Executive Director of the Platte River Whooping Crane Habitat Maintenance Trust in Grand Island, Nebraska.

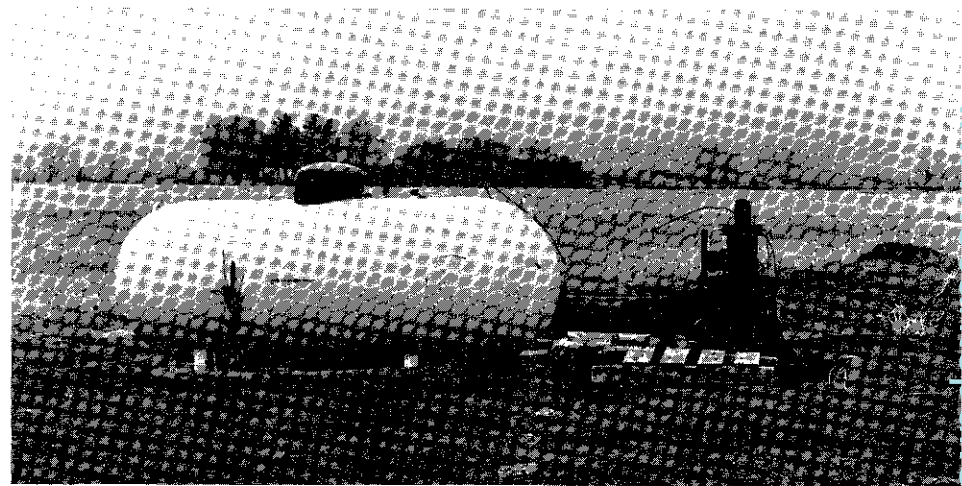


Photo by Bill Whitney

## Landscape Design Process in a Prairie Context

by Richard K. Sutton

Creating a landscape design for a particular plot of ground requires an understanding of the plot in various contexts: cultural, visual, and ecological. The design must therefore take into consideration the land's original physical and biological integrity, as well as the unique human needs and desires associated with it. Where only a rigid design "program" predominates, the resultant landscape shows no local identity or sense of place. On the other hand, designs that, for example, use the natural prairie landscape foster a regional identity, preserve a local gene pool, and put humans in touch with surrounding natural rhythms and processes.

Design as I have just used it has two meanings: a noun referring to a "finished" landscape product, and a verb referring to an integrating and synthesizing process. Following the second definition leads one ultimately to "ecosystem" thinking which integrates man and nature by producing a landscape that evolves and changes.

### Cultural Context

The first human inhabitants of the Great Plains were nomadic Indians who chose various landscape settings in which to live for only short periods of time. Their needs were ecological - food, shelter, water, and firewood. Indians *traveled* in the open prairie but chose to *live* along the wooded valleys and sheltered niches. This preference exemplifies the primeval desire for the closeness of mass - the shelter of trees - which Jay Appleton, in *An Experience of Landscape*, describes as an "arboreal refuge." This desire meshes with Desmond Morris's idea in *The Naked Ape*, that man evolved in close relationship to trees.

In a 1977 viewers' survey of the CUNA Mutual Insurance prairie landscape, Thomas Gallagher noted that "It is particularly appropriate that [the category] 'trees' is a predictor of preference. . . where substantial portions of the landscape consist of treeless prairie areas." Prairies, in a spatial sense, have a vastness which cannot be recaptured, only preserved, in areas such as the Nebraska Sandhills. Willa Cather, in *O Pioneers!* describes a prairie landscape which has now been "gardened" and managed from existence:

The shaggy coat of the prairie, which they had lifted to make him a bed, has vanished forever. From a Norwegian graveyard one looks out over a vast checker-board, marked off in squares of wheat and corn; light and dark, dark and light. Telephone wires hum along the white roads, which always run at right angles. From the grave-

yard gate one can count a dozen gayly painted farmhouses; the gilded weather vanes on the big red barns wink at each other across green and brown and yellow fields.

### Visual Context

A "pure prairie" landscape is one of space; an even ground plane lacking in trees, tight enclosures and strong vertical lines. Most of this aspect of prairie is gone, its space interrupted by windbreaks, silos, transmission lines, roads, rails, farmhouses, and cities. Although the "pure prairie" landscape has, as Cather noted, its own "peculiar, savage kind of beauty," it cannot be called *hospitable* because its space leaves one with no refuge - as Rolvaag portrays it, "nothing to hide behind." Even ranches in the Sandhills have windbreaks.

Local prairie materials not only add design continuity to a landscape, but suggest appropriate design forms as well. These include functional elements (e.g. rock retaining walls, drought-tolerant turfs, native plant accents, etc.) and visual elements. I have already mentioned the impact of space, but color, texture and form are also part of the visual context. A prairie landscape for a home can be considered an organized collection of these elements, but problems arise when designing such a landscape.

The ½- or ¼-acre or less lot size of most homes does not allow one to capture the feeling of prairie space. What's more, our culture sprawls into space with abandon. This is evident not only in urban sprawl, but in the quantity of our precious home surroundings given over to service, play areas, parking, storage, or uncompromising pavement and turf. Turfgrasses - usually in monoculture or 2-species mixes - require fertilization, a copious supply of water, frequent trimming, and pest control. Other plantings are a reflection of availability in local nurseries, which in turn is a reflection of ease of propagation and profitability. These plants are mostly exotic varieties which can require the same excessive care as the cool-season turfs. Many exotics have been selected for adaptability to the Great Plains environment, but few are visually compatible with the original landscape.

Landscape architect Jens Jensen used native plants and understood the local genius of a place, but that was in Illinois, in a prairie peninsula heavily dissected by trees. He was a sensitive sculptor of space in many large parks (Columbus Park in Chicago and Lincoln Memorial Park in Springfield) and on large estates. Jensen did not, however, design pure prairie landscapes. What he did design were human, arboreal refuges at the prairie/shrub and prairie/forest edge.

The CUNA Mutual Insurance Company mentioned earlier occupies 15



acres in Madison, Wisconsin, a larger site than most residences. In 1972, landscape architect Darrel Morrison (*Landscape Architecture*, October, 1975) prepared a plan containing four treatments: 1) a high density mid-succession planting of Wisconsin's southern deciduous forest, 2) a prairie border transition of native grasses and perennials, 3) lawn areas of cool season turfgrasses, and 4) a terrace area with a geometric layout in which horticultural varieties near the building change into prairie grasses, perennials and shrubs at the outer edge. Industrial sites at Round Lake, Wisconsin, and Charles City, Iowa, have also made extensive use of prairie plantings. These projects may be of a scale more compatible to the prairie than a home grounds.

Just because one plants a group of native, perennial, herbaceous prairie plants does not mean a prairie will result. It is, perhaps, more a question of spatial perception than "How small can a prairie restoration be and still be a prairie ecosystem?". Prairie plants can be planted on a suburban lot, but there the impact of the prairie scale can't be maintained. Its essence is lost. The visual essence, however, is measured on a different scale than the ecological.

#### Ecological Context

Even though design with plants indicates a certain anthropocentric attitude toward nature, it matters not, for a planted landscape is rarely static. Plants change in their environment and plants change their environment. Within a design it is not enough to provide plants that will just survive and reproduce, such as in a prairie restoration. In the artistic sense, plants are different from the materials used by a stone sculptor or a painter, because plants are living and dynamic. What needs to be seen, comprehended, and expressed is a new level of aesthetic consciousness, based on the visual qualities of seasonal and successional change in individual plants, their groupings, and the environment. This experience *is* available on the suburban lot.

Jens Jensen, who spent his later years at his rural retreat appropriately named "The Clearing," said that it was useless for him to plant anything since it was hard to improve on nature. This statement shows that Jensen had crossed the line from seeing the landscape as raw artistic material or "vegetation" with plants as individual objects, into a higher consciousness level akin to Zen.

John Fowles, in *The Tree* has a similar thought when he says, "There is something in the nature of nature, in its presentness, its seeming transience, its creative ferment and hidden potential, that corresponds very closely with the wild or green-man, part of our own psyches; and it is something that disappears as soon as it is relegated to an automatic past-

ness, a status of merely classifiable thing . . . One of the deepest lessons we have to learn is that nature of its nature resists this. It waits to be seen otherwise, in its individual presentness."

One should not be overly involved with *seeking* what a prairie landscape has to communicate. John Janovy, Jr., in *Keith County Journal*, describes Mr. Chandler, a Sandhills rancher, and the sense of place which "seeped in" day-to-day from being in and receptive to the environment. Mr. Chandler had his places on his property . . . No one knows what kind of thoughts were in his head those times he must have been on a particular hillside, twenty miles from his house, maybe with two feet of snow on the ground, maybe 108° and no rain for months . . . *Mr. Chandler did not search out* those places at first. No, the places searched him out. He did his job day after day, and those places struck some kind of chord every time he passed them; and finally after all those attempts to communicate with Mr. Chandler, the Sandhills tried it one more time and it worked. Many attempts, none active, all passive, many failures, much happenstance and gamble, much fortuitous contact while doing other business . . . " (emphasis added).

Using a new, higher, wholistic level of aesthetic consciousness means the design process for a prairie landscape must include a subjective (intuitive, romantic, emotional) as well as an objective (analytical, physical, rational) thought. If one were to analyze the qualities of the arboreal refuge's edge as a human prairie ecotone, the spaces could be measured, the textures scaled, the colors charted, and the forms cataloged. In doing all of this rigorous analysis it is too easy to miss the character of a place by looking too hard. The subtle ambiance of a place is often lost in the plethora of numbers, indexes, matrices and scales. In other words, subtleties evaporate when labeled; the only reference can be our enlightened experience.

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### Nebraska Winter

Bleakness

succumbs to blackness,  
and the persistent cold  
is the only reality.

On the distant horizon  
lights of the city  
are almost reachable.

Raw wind, never quiet  
tortures the brittle trees,  
as snow, falling in icy stars  
rattles the dead leaves.

Norma L. Morrison

Hamilton County

photography by Ed Dadey



Dadey barns



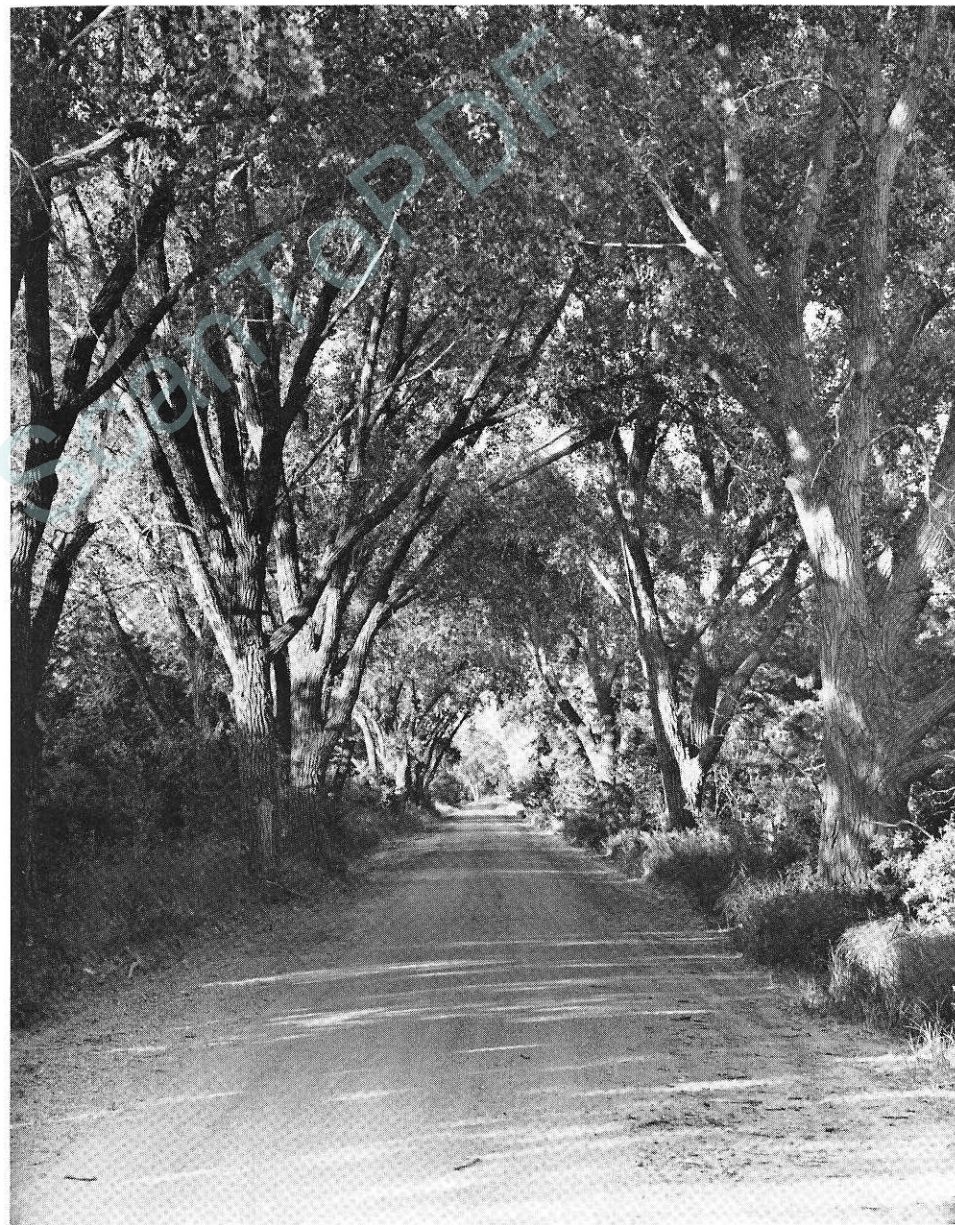




Platte channel at Covenant Cedars



Near Hordville



Lake Mary Lane



## Saddle Up The Desk!

by Norris Alfred

According to a news story we read last year, Prudential Insurance Co. owns more than 600,000 acres of land in the United States. We don't know if this is all farmland. The thrust of the story, which was on the purchase of 19,000 acres of sandhill land in northern Nebraska, left the impression it was.

Why are big outfits—corporate, non-corporate, or whatever—plowing their cash into farmland? This is the crucial question. If we can understand why farmland is considered an attractive, lucrative investment to persons seated at desks reading financial reports maybe we can get a pitchfork handle grasp on the reason or reasons.

Land is a finite resource. We detest the description of land as a "resource" and are one with American Indians who thought of land as something as impossible to own as the air we breathe. Life cannot live without land, air and water and it should be freely available to all life. That is not the attitude toward land. It is considered a resource, measured by the acre in large tracts and sometimes by the inch, as we once read the price of frontage on Fifth Avenue in New York City.



"I own a piece of 'The Sand'."

Bishop Lawrence McNamara of the Catholic Diocese of Grand Island told a Church-Land Conference held recently in Grand Island that land is intended to feed the 'whole human family' under man's stewardship, not to be treated as an investment. The report in the *Lincoln Journal*, added: "Those who treat land as another item to be bought and sold on speculation are 'as much a foreign investor as any Arab would be.'"

If a resource is finite and demand infinite the desk boys see a steadily increasing price. For Prudential Insurance Co. it seems an attractive investment for surplus cash picked from the pockets of policyholders.

Why farmland? There is land with a profit potential in urban sprawl. There is land with commercial possibilities—minerals, coal, recreation, etc. Maybe the company is into those, too. We don't know. In Nebraska the dominant land use is farming and ranching.

Farmland is an attractive investment to desk riders for two reasons: government price supports for crops and energy-intensive farming practices. The combination makes for a minimum loss situation, given all the other fiscal goodies available to corporations in the form of tax liability write-offs, plus the financial advantages insurance companies have lobbied through Congress over the years. The company can, figuratively, lose its shirt on the 19,000 acres of sandy soil in Nebraska and the bottom line will show a profit. Saddle up the desk and ride the sandhill range! Ride around the irrigation pivots and sand blow-outs. Watch out for Nebraska winds! We can only hope the winds topple that Prudential rock.



"Gentlemen, all those in favor of 'row cropping' the rock, say aye."

State Senator George "Bill" Burrows, Rural Route 1, Adams, NE 68301, in a press release of January 14, urges concerned Nebraskans to join with Nebraska Farmers Union and other organizations in a petition drive to ban the intrusion of non-family farm corporations from further take-over of agricultural land in Nebraska.

In the press release Senator Burrows states: Although Prudential announced that it has no immediate plans for further land acquisition, if farmland is a lucrative investment for Prudential Insurance Co. why would it not hold the same attraction for New York Life, Standard Oil, U. S. Steel, or DuPont Chemical?

For the last seven years Senator Burrows has worked on legislation that would prevent this potential takeover of farmland and food production by non-family farm corporations only to have the Legislature ignore the seriousness of the problem. Nebraska is the only state in this region which allows non-family farm corporations to own farmland.

Norris Alfred is editor and publisher of *The Polk Progress*, the "Slower is Better" weekly newspaper in Polk, Nebraska from which this editorial was reprinted. Norris's "Polking Around" column and editorials have won the hearts of many and raised the blood pressure of the rest.

## Willa Cather: Historian of the Prairie and the Pioneer

by Marvin D. Jensen and Otis Rhea Schmidt

Dorothy Ann Dondore, in *The Prairie and the Making of Middle America*, wrote that the first chroniclers of a new land are reporters — and are followed much later by the interpreters, prophets, and artists. By the 1920's, she was seeing a change in the writing about the plains — a shift from biographies, travelogues, and statistical monographs toward prose fiction, drama and poetry; and she welcomed in this new writing a maturing appreciation of prairie life.<sup>1</sup>

As a historian, Dondore concluded that truth is more than facts.

To understand the history of the American prairie, we cannot overlook facts, such as dates on official records — but we should also look at the dates on individual tombstones and at the personal epitaphs recorded there. We must look at a combination of facts about climate, topography, grasses, rattlesnakes, and homestead laws — but also at the way people have perceived all this, how much they have valued it, and the kinds of lives they made in the midst of it.

Willa Cather wrote of those individual lives — often drawing on facts about real people she knew, but beyond that, reflecting trust about the pioneer experience. She wrote in a 1923 essay:

When I stop at one of the graveyards in my own country, and see on the headstones the names of fine old men I used to know: "Eric Ericson, born Bergen Norway . . . died Nebraska," "Anton Pucelik, born Bohemia . . . died Nebraska," I have always the hope that something went into the ground with those pioneers that will one day come out again. Something that will come out not only in sturdy traits of character, but in elasticity of mind, in an honest attitude toward the realities of life, in certain qualities of feeling and imagination.<sup>2</sup>

Cather's novels and short stories allow these intangible qualities to "come out again." Among the truths contained in her artistry are: (1) a recognition of the mutual influence of the land and its people, (2) an understanding of the paradox of continuity and change in the pioneer experience, and (3) an insight into the responses of strong women to the realities of prairie life.

Her recognition of mutuality between land and people distinguishes her from two extremes of writers — those who describe the pioneers as heroic conquerors of the land, and those who see them as reckless exploiters of the natural environment. Among the former is Eric Hoffer, who positions himself in extreme contrast to environmentalists. He writes that "man had to separate himself from nature . . . [to] evolve a technology that liberated him from [the] animal imprisonment of nature . . ."<sup>3</sup> Hoffer criticizes writers who praise nature, for he finds in their writing a distaste for man and his works. He sees them portraying man as "a violator, a defiler and deformer."<sup>4</sup>

Willa Cather does not fit Hoffer's perception of naturalists, for she clearly believed men and women have a right to be here. But neither would she agree that human greatness comes from triumphs over nature.

In describing the prairie and the pioneers, Cather wrote of a mutual subduing, tempering, and enhancing. She saw the land and the people taming each other — in the sense that taming means "to invest in" — not "to make subservient." Her concept of mutuality is like synergy between two people, in which each is enlarged by the presence of the other.

By using personification in describing the land, she portrayed a comparable kind of synergy between the pioneer and the prairie. At times she wrote of this relationship euphorically as in *The Song of the Lark*: "It was, somehow, an honest country, and there was a new song in that blue air which had never been sung in the world before . . . She had the sense of a friendly soil, whose friendship was . . . going to strengthen her . . ."<sup>5</sup> Sometimes she wrote somberly of this linking, as she described the houses on the Divide in *O Pioneers!*: "Most of them were built of the sod itself, and were only the inescapable ground in another form."<sup>6</sup> And sometimes she described this joining of land and people with near reverence, as in *My Antonia*: "Trees were so rare in that country, and they had such a hard fight to grow, that we used to feel anxious about them, and visit them as if they were persons."<sup>7</sup>

This mutual influence even survived the end of the pioneer era — and its survival is represented in one of Willa Cather's last stories: *The Best Years*. Mrs. Fergusson, widowed and alone, had spent a miserable winter in California — and returns to end her life in the uncontrived farm country of Nebraska where she had invested her best years. In a sense, the land now cares for her. Though changed by plows and power lines, the permanence of the landscape gives her peace. They are survivors together.<sup>8</sup>

Willa Cather also understood the paradox of continuity and change in the pioneer experience. The immigrants who came to the midland were undergoing great changes — even as the prairie was being changed by them. Much was left behind, much was lost, and neither the people nor the land would ever be the same again.

Yet, in the midst of change, there was continuity. Willa Cather wrote of the dried mushrooms the Shimerda family had brought from Bohemia, the music box cherished by Marie Shabata, and the old country violin which sustained Antonia's father — if only for a time. It may require an artist's eye to perceive this seamless quality of history. Just as a realistic staging of a period play includes an accumulation of objects from previous years, so Willa Cather describes the homely remnants of earlier heritages which disclose something of the immigrants' values and reveal the paradox of reluctant pioneering.

Cather also knew that the pioneers carried with them not only objects — but talents, memories, and passions which survived the changes. In "A Wagner Matinee", a displaced music teacher from Boston listens to her nephew recite Latin declensions and practice scales on her organ — while



she irons at midnight on a primitive homestead.<sup>9</sup> In *A Lost Lady*, the struggle of Mrs. Forrester to bring a sense of graciousness to the prairie town is accorded a reality and importance equal to her husband's railroad building.<sup>10</sup>

The reality of Cather's perception of change and continuity can still be confirmed among surviving immigrants. Frances Urek Barta, aged 92 and living in Fremont, Nebraska, emigrated from Nalou Cary, Moravia, in 1910. She spoke no English and had only the twenty-five dollars necessary to satisfy immigration authorities in New York. Her greatest fear, based on a letter from her uncle who had preceded her, was that she might be abducted in New York. But she crossed the Atlantic and half a continent alone, and was finally met by her uncle in Prague, Nebraska. She left a sister behind in what is now Czechoslovakia, and has not seen her since 1910. But they have corresponded for seventy years, and in Frances Barta's home today the Czech language is still heard and her shelves are crowded with her sister's gifts. Thus is Willa Cather's perception of change and continuity still affirmed.<sup>11</sup>

Willa Cather's knowledge of this paradox extended to the land itself. She saw the cottonwoods linked with the pioneers who had pulled them from the river banks and planted them at the early homesteads. She was passionate in trying to save the towering cottonwoods in Red Cloud and Hastings for they symbolized to her the culmination of the pioneer experience. She did not ask that new cottonwoods be planted — only that the old ones be allowed to live out their time. She did not resist change — as long as the change did not break the continuity. In her own lines from *My Antonia*:

The windy springs and blazing summers, one after another, had enriched and mellowed that flat tableland; all human effort that had gone into it was coming back in long, sweeping lines of fertility. The changes seemed beautiful and harmonious to me; it was like watching the growth of a great man or a great idea.<sup>12</sup>

Willa Cather complemented her descriptions of the prairie with accounts of strong pioneers, often women, who changed — but survived — with the land. Three of her early novels center around women protagonists: Alexandra Bergson in *O Pioneers!*, Thea Kronborg in *The Song of the Lark*, and Antonia Shimerda in *My Antonia*.

In 1923, Frederick Jackson Turner, historian of the prairie, remarked that "American history and American literature cannot be understood apart from each other." He wrote that "a valuable study might be made of the pioneer woman and her place in history."<sup>13</sup> In novels heavily influenced by her direct observations, Willa Cather explored the pioneer woman — as builder, as artist, as life-giver. Her portrayals of individuals and their personal struggles vitalize the historical collection of facts about the American frontier experience.

The struggle of Alexandra Bergson is representative of early pioneers who settled the American prairie. Her physical strength is matched by her inner courage. She is meant to "break trail," unlike her brothers who, Cather wrote were "meant to follow in paths already marked out for them . . ."<sup>14</sup>

In developing her inherited frontier farm, Alexandra shows managerial talent, resourcesfulness, farsightedness, and a strong feeling for the land. This relationship between land and individual, noted earlier, was vividly described by Cather:

For the first time, perhaps since that land emerged from the waters of geological ages, a human face was set toward it with love and yearning. It seemed beautiful to her, rich and strong and glorious. Her eyes drank in the breadth of it, until her tears blinded her. Then the Genius of the Divide, the great, free spirit which breathes across it, must have bent lower than it ever bent to a human will before. The history of every country begins in the heart of a man or woman.<sup>15</sup>

Alexandra exalts the pioneer-builder, a figure well-defined in the history of a growing America but not so often defined in the person of a woman.

Thea Kronborg's frontier is that of the desert rather than the prairie, and ultimately her frontier is a state of mind. As Lionel Trilling has pointed out, "it is still only as an artist that one may be the eternal pioneer, concerned always with the 'idea of things'." Thea turns her energy toward music and needs all her pioneer strength to succeed. Nurtured in the land, she draws sustenance from it in her struggle to achieve in a world which confounds her with its pettiness and acceptance of mediocrity.

The paradox of continuity and change is demonstrated again as Thea rebels against the limits of pioneer life and leaves Moonstone for Chicago and then Europe and New York City. She leaves the land but, like the previous generation of immigrants, cannot deny her heritage. When she is reminded of an ancient people in Panther Canon, she reaches the insight that her voice is a vessel of life just as the Indian woman's pottery held life's sustenance. She thus comes to understand and reflect the contradictions of pioneer life: The intermingling of old and new, and simple — yet complex — people who represent both.

In *My Antonia*, Cather returned to the Nebraska prairie. Antonia's talent may appear mundane compared to Alexandra's prosperous prairie farm and Thea's operatic success, but she has a passion for life, for the process of living and prevailing. James Woodress, in *The Art of Willa Cather*, writes of Cather's "ability to get into the skin of Antonia and to breathe life into the inert facts of Nebraska in the 1880's."<sup>17</sup> It is this ability that made Cather more than a novelist — and causes A. L. Rowse, the British historian, to call her a historian of the land.<sup>18</sup>

Antonia may be Cather's most authentic character. An immigrant child raised in the harshness of the prairie, she becomes a woman who fulfills herself in the home, as child-bearer and nurturer. Antonia is "like the founders of early races."<sup>19</sup> Her passion for life, her physical and emotional strength, and her integrity enable her to overcome poverty, drudgery, and an unhappy love affair. She is the survivor, the earth mother, the giver.

Alexandra and Thea and Antonia are vital heroic people. They give to the land and draw from it. There is change yet continuity in their lives, just as there is in the land. In their stories, Willa Cather honored the history of the prairie itself — and recorded the subtleties and paradoxes which distinguish truth from facts.

#### NOTES

- 1 Dorothy Ann Dondore, *The Prairie and the Making of Middle America: Four Centuries of Description* (Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1926), pp. 426, 432.
- 2 Willa Sibert Cather, "Nebraska: The End of the First Cycle," *The Nation*, 117, No. 3035 (September 5, 1923), 237.
- 3 Eric Hoffer, *First Things, Last Things* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 35.
- 4 Eric Hoffer, *The Temper of Our Time* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 80.
- 5 Willa Cather, *The Song of the Lark* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), pp. 276-277.
- 6 Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), p. 19.
- 7 Willa Cather, *My Antonia* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), p. 29.
- 8 Willa Cather, "The Best Years," in *The Old Beauty and Others* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948).
- 9 Willa Cather, "A Wagner Matinee," in *Willa Cather's Collected Short Fiction 1892-1912*, ed. Virginia Faulkner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), pp. 235-42.
- 10 Willa Cather, *A Lost Lady* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923).
- 11 Personal interview with Frances Urek Barta, 15 August 1977.
- 12 Cather, *My Antonia*, p. 306.
- 13 Marcus Cunliffe, "The Two or More Worlds of Willa Cather," in *The Art of Willa Cather*, ed. Bernice Slote and Virginia Faulkner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974), p. 61.
- 14 Cather, *O Pioneers!*, pp. 47-48.
- 15 Cather, *O Pioneers!*, p. 65.
- 16 Lionel Trilling, "Willa Cather," *The New Republic* 90, No. 1158 (February 10, 1937), 11.
- 17 James Woodress, "Willa Cather: American Experience and European Tradition," in *The Art of Willa Cather*, ed. Bernice Slote and Virginia Faulkner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974), p. 61.
- 18 *The Dick Cavett Show* IPBN, Des Moines, 29 August 1979.
- 19 Cather, *My Antonia*, p. 353.

Marvin Jensen is Assistant Professor of Speech, and Otis Rhea Schmidt is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls.





The Willa Cather Memorial Prairie, south of Red Cloud, Nebraska, is an appropriate dedication to this “historian of the prairie and the pioneer.”

Photo by Bill Whitney

## The Old House

It is not a place,  
just any place,  
after all this time,  
it has become  
a state of mind.  
Nights,  
when despairing  
of sleep,  
I go back  
miles and years  
to those carefree days  
of playing and dreaming.  
I fantasize autumn leaves,  
cascading down  
from centenarian cottonwoods  
that line the road  
and scrape the sky.  
Pity the man  
who has no such retreat,  
no shrine,  
no state of mind,  
that may be reached  
by the closing of his eyes.

Norma L. Morrison



Although Norma Morrison lives in Van Buren, Arkansas, her "heart and roots remain in Nebraska." She returns every year to visit her parents near Fremont, who remain in the "Old House" she has written about. Mrs. Morrison and her husband, Don Morrison, have co-authored a poetry book entitled *Life Cycles* (South & West, Inc., Ft. Smith, Arkansas, 1974).



## Reviews

Stubbendieck, James; Stephan L. Hatch and Kathie J. Kjar. 1981. *North American Range Plants: 200 descriptions as a guide to identification*. 468 pp.; line drawings; distribution maps; glossary of terms; list of selected references, Published by Natural Resources Enterprises, Inc., P.O. Box 4523, Lincoln, NE 68504. Price \$15.00 plus \$1.50 postage and handling; Nebraska residents also subject to state sales tax. (Reviewed by Curt Twedt)

A 20-page introduction contains the principles of plant names, from species to the broader taxonomic categories. The introduction also includes a summary of plant structure and explains terms most commonly used in plant descriptions, e.g. leaf arrangement, leaf shape, fruit or seed structure, etc. A large number of clear line drawings in this section enhance the usefulness of the book.

Full-page line drawings of structural characteristics (leaf, stem, fruit/seed, and root crowns) and a small distribution map for each species comprise the graphic portion of the book. The illustrations are complemented by plant names (scientific and common), identifying characteristics (shape, length, color, etc. of distinctive structures), habitat, season of growth, forage value, and incidental notes. Measurements are given in metric units, and there is a 25-centimeter scale on the back cover.

Of the 200 species described, 95 are grasses and the remaining 105 are divided among forbs, shrubs and trees. The contiguous 48 United States, southern Canada and northern Mexico provide the geographic coverage of the manual. Plant species with relatively small geographic ranges (e.g. greasewood chamise of California) as well as those with extensive ranges (e.g. sixweeks fescue) are included; introduced forage grasses (smooth brome, crested wheatgrass, orchardgrass) and weedy forbs (Kochia, Russian thistle) are among the plants described.

The book's introduction contains a statement that the 200 species were chosen from the Society for Range Management International Range Plant Identification Contest master list. Abundance, forage quality, and noxious properties are among the criteria for inclusion on the SRM master list.

The 8½" x 11" format publication is bound in plastic spiral which makes it possible to insert additions and corrections as they become available. Annual supplements will be published after April 15 of each year and may be ordered by means of a bound-in form.

Hoose, Phillip M. 1981. *Building an Ark: Tools for the Preservation of Natural Diversity through Land Protection*. 221 pp.: tables, figures, case histories, appendices, reference notes and selected bibliography by chapter, list of key contacts (names organizations, and addresses), and index. Published by Island Press, Star Route 1, Box 38, Covelo, California 95428. \$12.00 (Reviewed by Bill Whitney.)

*Building an Ark* is an indispensable, comprehensively and concisely written guide to land protection. Phillip Hoose, director of preserve selection and design for The Nature Conservancy, has succeeded in making a complex maze of organizational and legal questions look simple. Hoose only gives brief rationale for preserving natural diversity, by-passing what many scientists have already discussed to provide sorely needed insight into what many conservationists shy away from. Chapters Two and Three introduce the concept of working at a state level to locate significant natural areas, i.e. a State Natural Heritage Inventory, and describe how to put the inventory data into a statewide plan. Thus it is possible to set site priorities as well as strategies for their protection. The real how-to's of protection are supplied in the remainder of the book. Chapter Four, "Why we need more ways to protect land," explains the factors - private, economic, legal, etc., that limit acquiring all rights (i.e. fee title) to land. Hoose then presents the options in detailed but clear language. These range from the weakest measures, such as simply notifying or registering landowners that own unique natural landmarks, to more binding terms such as management agreements, leases, rights of first refusal, conservation easements, and outright acquisition of fee title. The conservation easement is particularly well discussed as it is one of the strongest legal measures short of fee acquisition, and may be more economical given market prices of land today.

There are also chapters devoted to designating public domain lands as natural areas, and to the strongest protection possible - dedication. The latter refers to making a preserve part of a legally established system of statewide preserves that are protected by strong statutory language against any type of conversion or condemnation.

In the last parts of *Building An Ark*, Hoose discusses lobbying state legislatures for passage of laws that would aid the statewide protection program, and a state review process that would be an aid to decision makers with regard to certain types of locations or environmental disturbances. The final chapter is a synthesis of the ends and the means, a model blueprint.

. . . notes . . . misc . . . odds & ends . . bits & pieces . . etc . . .

Nebraska Voters: "Check-off for Non-game Wildlife" is a statewide effort by numerous conservation, hunter, outdoor and other recreational groups to create a new special fund to help non-game wildlife. They wish to let Nebraskans who are interested in this goal and who have money coming back from their state income taxes, to voluntarily designate a portion of that refund for the preservation and enhancement of all non-game creatures. In order to authorize the state to allow tax check-offs, a special referendum is being sought for the November, 1982 ballot. This referendum, or question on the regular ballot, will ask all the voters of Nebraska whether they wish to have the opportunity to designate a part of all of their state income tax refunds to non-game wildlife use. If voters would like the option of such a tax deductible donation, and the referendum passes, they will be able to make a contribution when they file their 1984 tax return for 1983 refunds. But before such a program can come into being, a large number of certified voters must sign a petition calling for the referendum to be on the November ballot. Anyone interested in signing a petition or in helping with the petition drive should contact the Nebraska Wildlife Federation, 330 N. 48th, Lincoln, NE 68504. Or call (402) 464-1096 or (402) 291-6502.

\* \* \* \* \*

Notable quotables wanted - The Prairie Preservation Society of Ogle County, Illinois, is preparing a small publication of quotations on prairies, and requests that prairie enthusiasts send them their favorites. Include complete bibliographic reference, including date. Proper permission to use the quotations will be obtained where necessary, and credit will be given to persons submitting them. Potential sources are publications, letters, inscriptions on markers or tombstones, land survey notes, legalities (e.g. court decisions on landscaping) and cartoons with incipitions. Entries may cover a range of prairie aspects: pre-history (Indian legends and tales), historical, beauty, diversity, fire, use, breaking, fear, weather, poetry, ecology, research, anecdotes, humor, ethics, etc. Send quotes to: Douglas Wade, President, PPSOOC, R.D. 2, Oregon, IL 61061.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you haven't noticed it yet, check it out: *Nebraskaland's* senior editor, Jon Farrar has done it again. Enjoy his photography and message in "While the Prairie Slumbers," in *The Nature Conservancy News*, November/December, 1981 (theme: "Nature in Winter").

\* \* \* \* \*

BIOREGIONS is the theme of the latest (Winter, 1981) issue of *Co-Evolution Quarterly*, and it contains some very Relevant Reading. Examples are "Bibliography for the North American Prairies" by Kelly Kindscher, an active prairie supporter and permaculture researcher in Lawrence, Kansas, and "The Moral Dilemma of keeping the Plains Alive" by Wes Jackson, codirector of The Land Institute in Salina, Kansas and

author of *New Roots for Agriculture* (Friends of the Earth, 1980). *Co-Evolution Quarterly* is published by the Whole Earth Catalog, Box 428, Sausalito, California 94966.

\* \* \* \* \*

In case anyone is wondering - the Folk School scheduled for last October didn't happen. Not enough people registered to make it possible, apparently because of the length (it was scheduled for Wednesday evening through Sunday noon.) The idea of a Nebraska Folk School has not died, however, and plans are being made for a weekend event some time next year.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Federal Endangered Species Act, the only natural program to conserve rare plants, is due for reauthorization this spring. Predictably, efforts will be made to substantially weaken the existing law. The Natural Resources Defense Council is seeking people to lobby for reauthorization of the Act, particularly on behalf of rare and endangered plant species. Obtain information from the NRDC, 1725 I St., Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20006.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hats off to Canada - whose newest national park (the 29th) encompasses one of the largest and best formations of relatively unmodified short grass prairie on the continent. The Grasslands National Park will encompass a maximum of 350 square miles of southern Saskatchewan between Val Marie and Killdeer near the Canada - U.S.A. border. The provincial and national governments will be working together to identify national park values. (Reported in "The Ohio Prairie Gazette", Glen Helen Assn., 405 Corry St., Yellow Springs, OH 45387.)

\* \* \* \* \*

The *Prairie Coloring Book*, obtainable from The Nature Conservancy, gives a glimpse of the diverse plant and animal life and the interrelationships that contribute to the unique prairie ecosystem. The book acquaints youngsters with the prairie's history - from buffalo and Indian to railroad and farm - and with the many life forms the prairie harbors, including yellow-headed blackbird, ferruginous hawk, and pronghorned antelope. 1-9 copies are \$1.75 each; 10-49 copies, \$1.60 each, 50-99 copies, \$1.50 each, and 100 or more copies, \$1.25 each. Make checks payable to The Nature Conservancy and send your order to TNC, Midwest Regional Office, 328 East Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55414.

\* \* \* \* \*

For anyone interested in the history of Nebraska Indians: The Nebraska Indian Commission has prepared pamphlets on the various tribes which include maps of the tribe's original territory and reservations, a synopsis of the tribe's history with photographs from the Nebraska State Historical Society, and a reference list. There are pamphlets on the Lakota (Sioux), Omaha, Iowa, Ponca, Pawnee, Winnebago, Oto-Missouri, Santee Sioux, and



Sac and Fox. Write to the Nebraska Indian Commission, 301 Centennial Mall South, 4th Fl., Box 94914, Lincoln, NE 68509.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of the local solutions to global problems is gardening. Gardens for All, The National Association for Gardening, is a nonprofit organization established in 1972 dedicated to bringing land and people together for a greener, happier, more beautiful world through gardening. The members of Gardens for All believe that gardening is a heritage that must be preserved as one of mankind's most enjoyable pursuits in good times - and most important skills in troubled times. The people at Gardens for All search for and develop ever more productive and enjoyable gardening methods, and share the best of this old and new knowledge through teaching programs, demonstrations, publications and broadcasts. Gardens for All has led the way in revitalizing community gardening in America and today is the national voice for home and community gardening. The goal is Gardens for All. For a free sample of the substantial monthly, *Gardens for All News*, write to Gardens for All, Dept. P99A, 180 Flynn Ave., Burlington VT 05401.

## CALENDAR

Now through April 10

Sandhill Crane Observation Tours - Mormon Island Crane Meadows. Guided tours to the observation facility at the Crane Meadows are offered any day of the week. Reservations are required (give at least 48 hours advance notice), and there must be at least five and not more than thirty persons scheduled per tour. There are two tours offered each day - early morning and early evening. All tours originate at the Stuhr Museum, Hwys. 34 & 281, Grand Island. A slide presentation is available upon request (shown at museum) following the morning tour or prior to the evening tour. No charge will be assessed, though donations are appreciated and help to defray maintenance expenses. Transportation is not provided; participants are encouraged to car-pool to the blind. Bring warm clothes, water repellent boots, and binoculars. For reservations and more information, contact Gary Lingle, Preserve Manager, Platte River Crane Habitat Trust, 2550 N. Diers Ave., Suite H., Grand Island, NE 68801.

April - May

Prairie photo exhibit at the Depot in Red Cloud: photography by Hal Nagel, calligraphy by Art Pierce (quotations from Willa Cather literature).

April 3 (Saturday)

The Center for Rural Affairs-Small Farm Energy Project has been holding workshops all winter in keeping with its theme, "toward a more resourceful agriculture," and will host an Innovators Technology Fair on April 3 at the Cedar County Fairgrounds in Hartington. Area farmers and innovators will be exhibiting do-it-yourself projects that reduce farm operating costs or farming methods. For more information, write to the Small Farm Energy Project, P.O. Box 736, Hartington, NE 68379, or call (402) 254-6893.

April 7 (Wednesday)

Nebraska Game & Parks Commission workshop, "Nebraska Prairies," presented at the Schramm Park State Recreation Area near Gretna at 7:30 p.m. The workshop will feature a slide-illustrated talk and a question-answer session. Reservations are required; call (402) 332-3901 no more than one week in advance. For more information about this or other outdoor education workshops, contact Carl Wolfe, Game & Parks Commission, P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503.

April 9 (Friday)

Third Annual Rangeland Resources Symposium, sponsored by the UNL Range Management Club. 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., UNL East Campus Union. For details: Jim Stubbendieck, 349 Keim Hall, UNL East Campus, Lincoln, NE 68583.

April 30, May 1 & May 2 (Friday - Sunday)

Kansas Area Watershed (KAW) spring gathering at Camp Hammond, between Lawrence and Topeka. KAW's purpose is to bring people in the Kansas Watershed and surrounding areas together to promote a viable, sustainable, and self-reliant bioregion. The purpose of the spring gathering is to "share skills and knowledge, facilitate the networking of information and ideas, construct an integrated eco-political platform, and express the spirit of community and the spirituality of life." For more information write to Kelly Kindscher, 716 Lake Street, Lawrence, KS 66044.

May 1 (Saturday)

The Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation will host its 27th annual Spring Conference in Red Cloud, Nebraska. The theme of this year's conference will be Willa Cather and the Orient. Madame Lo-Chi Chang of Shanghai, The Peoples' Republic of China will be the guest speaker.

The prairie photo exhibit described earlier will be on display during the conference.

For more information or reservation forms contact the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation, 326 N. Webster Street, Red Cloud, NE 68970. Telephone: (402) 746-2653.

May 14-16 (Friday-Sunday)

Sixth Annual Loess Hill Prairie Seminar, Loess Hills Wildlife Area, Onawa, Iowa. For more information: Western Hills Area Education Agency, 1520 Morningside Ave., Sioux City, IA 51106.

May 22 (Saturday)

Writing and Storytelling Festival for Older Nebraskans - UNL Center for Continuing Education, Lincoln. All ages are welcome. The festival is sponsored by the UNL Division of Continuing Studies and the Nebraska Commission on Aging with funding from the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities. For details, write to Writing and Storytelling Festival, 205 Nebraska Center, UNL, Lincoln, NE 68583-0900.

May 29-30 (Saturday-Sunday)

Fourth Annual Prairie Festival at The Land Institute, Salina, Kansas. "Resettling America" is the theme of the Prairie Festival this year. Special guests will be Wendell and Tanya Berry. Wendell, a poet, novelist and essayist is the author of the now classic book, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*. Additional guest speakers will include David Ehrenfeld, Professor of Biology at Rutgers University and author of *The Arrogance of Humanism*; Joan Ehrenfeld, plant ecologist at the Rutgers Center for Coastal and Environmental Studies; and Donald Worster, Professor of American Studies at the University of Hawaii and author of *Nature's Economy* and *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930's*.

The Festival also includes "nature hikes," music, and workshops and tours relating to The Land Institute's theme of sustainable alternatives in agriculture, energy, shelter, and waste management.

For more information: The Land Institute, Rt. 3, Salina, KS 67401.

June 5 (Saturday)

Third annual meeting of Prairie/Plains Resource Institute. Meet at 9:00

a.m. at 1219 16th Street, Aurora; move to Bader Memorial Park (3 miles south of Chapman) by 10:00 a.m. Bring potluck for a picnic in the park. Further details will appear in an announcement before the meeting.

July 13 (Tuesday)

Summer Range Tour, sponsored by the Kansas Chapter and Nebraska Section of the Society for Range Management; Mankato, Kansas. For details: Jim Stubbendieck, 349 Keim Hall, UNL East Campus, Lincoln, NE 68583.

August 1 - 4 (Sunday-Wednesday)

Eighth North American Prairie Conference, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan. The conference will feature a plenary symposium on the prairie-forest transition zone. The traditional conference banquet will be climaxed with a presentation of general interest by a nationally-known researcher. Several field trips will provide opportunities to observe Michigan's prairie remnants and fens. A prescribed burn workshop will be held on Sunday afternoon, August 1. Participants will be invited to present examples from personal experience of fire management problems. For further information write to the Division of Continuing Education, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

September 18-25

PRAIRIE APPRECIATION WEEK

Start planning to participate NOW!

September 25 (Saturday)

PRAIRIE APPRECIATION WEEK BANQUET

Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, Lincoln.

Speaker: Dr. G. W. Tomanek, President, Fort Hayes State University.



Bader Park Natural Area Tour Schedule

February 20 . . . . .	1:00 p.m.	Eagles, Winter Birds
March 6 . . . . .	8:00 a.m.	Winter and Migratory Birds
March 20 . . . . .	1:00 p.m.	Migratory Birds
April 3 . . . . .	8:00 a.m.	Migratory Birds
April 17 . . . . .	1:00 p.m.	Spring Flora & Fauna
May 8 . . . . .	6:00 a.m.	EARLYBIRD TOUR
May 22 . . . . .	6:00 a.m.	EARLYBIRD TOUR
June 5 . . . . .	10:00 a.m.	P/PRI Annual Meeting & Picnic
June 19 . . . . .	8:00 a.m.	Summer Flora & Fauna, Wetlands
July 17 . . . . .	8:00 a.m.	Summer Flora & Fauna, Wetlands
August 14 . . . . .	8:00 a.m.	Late Summer Flora & Fauna
August 21 . . . . .	1:00 p.m.	TALL Prairie Grasses
September 11 . . . . .	8:00 a.m.	TALL Prairie Grasses
September 25 . . . . .	1:00 p.m.	PRAIRIE APPRECIATION WEEK
October 9 . . . . .	8:00 a.m.	Autumn Colors
October 23 . . . . .	3:00 p.m.	Autumn Colors & Sunset
November 13 . . . . .	3:00 p.m.	Late Autumn Sights & Sounds
December 18 . . . . .	9:00 a.m.	CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Publications Available from Prairie/Plains Resource Institute

Back issues of *Prairie/Plains Journal* (Nos. 1 & 2) - \$2.00 each postpaid.

*The Prairie* by J. E. Weaver and T. J. Fitzpatrick. Originally published in 1934 in the Duke University Press Ecological Monograph Series. Reprinted, 1980, by Prairie/Plains Resource Institute. 295 pages. *The Prairie* discusses the climate, soil, plant species, and complexity of the prairie, and includes a brief discussion of secondary plant succession as related to disturbed areas. The book contains 120 figures of plants and 16 tables regarding the study procedure of the plant communities. The area surveyed in this classic study covered parts of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, South Dakota, and Minnesota. Single copies \$6.00; ten or more, \$4.50 each (prices include tax and postage).

*North American Prairie* by J. E. Weaver. 1954. Johnsén Publishing Company, Lincoln. 348 pages. "The first comprehensive book ever written about the American Prairie. . . from the pen of the one who, more than any other was qualified by training and experience to write it." In hardback - \$18.00, tax and postage included.

Reprinted articles:

"Prairie Preserves: Valuable Relicts?" by Theodore Van Bruggen. Reprinted from *Rangelands* 1(1), February, 1979. The author is associate dean and professor of biology, College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Dakota at Vermillion. This reprint is available free to members; otherwise, 50 cents postpaid.

"White Man Versus the Prairie" by Raymond J. Pool. Reprinted from *Science*, January 19, 1940, Vol. 91, No. 2351, pages 53-58. The author was a native Nebraskan, professional plant ecologist, and University of Nebraska professor for many years. This essay defines his perception of man's role on the American Prairie. This reprint is available free to members; otherwise, 50 cents postpaid.

"Selected Books and Articles About Prairie" compiled by Jan Whitney. Lists references on prairie and prairie preservation, planting prairie, floral guides, North American Prairie Conference Proceedings, and curriculum materials. Free to members; otherwise, 25 cents - or if this is the only item being ordered, simply include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.