

# The Docent News



**For Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Docents**

**June 2000**

## **Welcome Back, Eric!**

from Mary Coley

Last year's summer education/ outreach intern, Eric Huerter, has rejoined us! Eric started work on May 11<sup>th</sup>, with a Thursday through Monday work week. He just graduated from OSU with a Rangeland Management degree, and is taking a break prior to graduate school. Before attending OSU, Eric spent nearly eight years in the Army.

His job duties include: creating new displays; planning new signage; researching the extended trail loop and potential signage at the lower east end of the study trail; organizing a Prairie Education Day; giving slide presentations in nearby towns; and handling special bus and tour groups booked through the preserve office. As you can see, he will be very busy! In addition, he will be spending at least one of his five work days each week assisting with stewardship activities at the Preserve for Bob Hamilton.

Eric will be checking in with you during your shifts, and assisting with closing by manning the shop from 4-5 so that docents can balance the books and get away. He is available to help docents with any problems that arise, but not to replace you. You, as the docents of the day, are still responsible for handling visitors questions, unscheduled hikes, etc. With Eric there, we are able to expand our educational efforts in new ways. I hope you will all get to know Eric this summer.

## **Gift Shop News**

The Gift Shop sales:

6,393.27	April 2000
<u>4,713.00</u>	April 1999
1,630.27	Increase in Sales
8,472.70	2000 Year to Date
<u>8,380.05</u>	1999 Year to Date
92.65	Increase in Sales

## **John C. Sawhill**

John Sawhill, who helped The Nature Conservancy become the world's largest private land conservation group, died Thursday in Arlington, VA., of complications from diabetes. He was 63.

Sawhill was president and chief executive of the organization since 1990. During his tenure, The Nature Conservancy protected more than 7 million acres in the United States.

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions be made to The Nature Conservancy.

## **Calendar**

### **June**

- 10 Annual Meeting - Tahlequah
- 16 Prairie Road Crew
- 17 Heritage Day
- 22 Media Day
- 24 Butterfly Count

### **July**

- 8 Summer Docent Meeting and Social at Preserve

## Prairie Education Day Planned

from Mary Coley

Many of you expressed interest in helping us plan and carry out a Prairie Education Day this summer (July or August). Now is the time to identify yourself. This committee will be headed up by Eric. I see this event as being an all-day experience, with hikes led by our wonderful trail guides in the morning, then crafts and learning activities in the afternoon (in the shade). We will advertise in the area, and take reservations for groups or individuals. Depending on the number of people who volunteer to assist us, we will probably limit the number of attendees.

If you want to assist us in planning this event, or in working at the event itself, please call Mary at 585-1117, or Eric, by leaving a message at the Visitors Center/Gift Shop – 287-3623. The committee will begin meeting in early June and will announce a date for the event soon after. Eric and I hope to hear from you soon!

## Prairie Road Crew

from Dick Baker

We have had three very successful PRAIRIE ROAD CREW workdays so far. For at least a few days each month, the Prairie looks as if it has been visited by Mr./Mrs./MS. Clean... which it has. Using our Hi-Tech methods, we are now covering every mile of county road within the TGP? Our next scheduled work day is Friday, June 16. We have a good crew signed up for that day, but would welcome any more who would like to join us... docent guest, etc. For information, call Dick Baker (918) 747-2495. We have our Spring Cookie Eat-off Championship scheduled for that day. So, come see the winner be crowned (with something)!



## The Docent News

### Prairie News

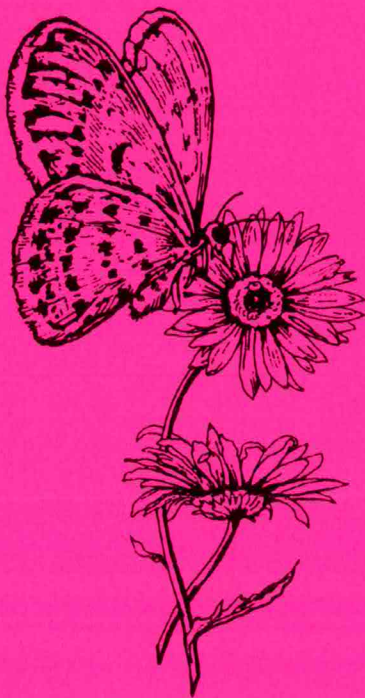
By Bob Hamilton

- Final spring burn was done on April 28<sup>th</sup>
- We have counted 113 calves on April 29<sup>th</sup>
- Bison are mainly found on lush burn patches in west ½ of bison unit.
- The bison are actively shedding their winter coats.
- Two new OSU grad. students projects started under Dr. Jim Shaw that focus on overall distribution/ impacts of the herd, and daily activities and energetics.
- The cowboys are finishing the bison pens at Kevin Choteau's, constructing pipe rail fences at HQ, removing old cattle fences, outfitting "new" ½ ton military truck as a fire truck.
- We need volunteer for paint the corral.
- The prairie has been very wet.
- The spring bloom period is under-way. Nice showy patches of Missouri evening primrose in last summer's burn patches.

**Wildflower Training and Waterfall Hike – A Washout !!!**

from Mary Coley

Severe weather and too much rain forced the cancellation of docent activities scheduled for May 6. It was a disappointment. Growing grasses and hotter weather, combined with busy schedules, prevent us from rescheduling these two events. However, check the calendar for other new things that will be coming up!



**Full Steam Ahead!**

from Mary Coley

The Docent Program received a great jump-start with the addition of 52 new docents, bringing our number to 140 docents! There's room for all, as we try to schedule in three people for every shift, with one of them being a trained trail guide. Hopefully, we can eliminate our former problem of having days when there was no one to work at the prairie, and days when one person had to work alone.

The new docents will be completing their "intern" training on into June. Their photos have been added to the photo board, and their nametags are in the docent office. I hope that our expanding docent family will continue to be a positive and moving force for the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve!

**You've Got MAIL**

Do you have an email address? If you'd like it included on the Docent Roster, drop me an email at [mmcintyre@tnc.org](mailto:mmcintyre@tnc.org). This is my new email address and reaches me at the office. My old email address, [mmcint2415@aol.com](mailto:mmcint2415@aol.com), now reaches me only at home!

**NOTE for NO SHOWS:**

Unless a severe storm is happening or imminent, the visitors center is open! If you cannot fulfill your promise to work at the Preserve, please try to find your own substitute. You may contact Barbara Bates in emergency situations, but she is often out of town! Contact the preserve office, or Eric if you reach no one at the Gift Shop. Contact the docents you are to work with, and see if they can assist in finding a sub. Our visitors are depending on you to be there! -



# JUNE 2000

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b> Marci Hendricks Vanessa Drummond	<b>2</b> Cheryl Smith Alfred Smith	<b>3</b> Cheryl Smith Alfred Smith Dion Boedeker TG Jim Vester
<b>4</b> Carol Redford Mary Cumming Jay Ross	<b>5</b> Stu Marshall Clara Swan	<b>6</b> Marilyn Campbell Uki Roberts	<b>7</b> Marilyn Keefer Stu Marshall	<b>8</b> John Boxall Jim Thayer	<b>9</b> Phyllis Connally Susan Jackson Vivian Nemece	<b>10</b> Clara Swan Dion Boedeker Renel Johnson TG Don Bruner Annual Meeting
<b>11</b> Jo Brooks Marilyn Joplin Liz Chandler Jim Hadley TG Brent Johnson	<b>12</b> Liz Medley Al Medley Pat Jaynes	<b>13</b> * * TG Mark Mueeting	<b>14</b> Dave Dolcater Mark Mueeting	<b>15</b> Nyla Woody Randy Woody	<b>16</b> Sue Wheeler Sally Conrath Mark Conrath	<b>17</b> Betty Turner David Turner Jean Wagener TG John Fisher
<b>18</b> Bill Inglis Shirley Inglis *	<b>19</b> Barbara Bates Jean Cooper Mark Mueeting	<b>20</b> Jim Vester Irene Ward	<b>21</b> Doris Mayfield June Endies	<b>22</b> Bill Rinehart Linda Anderson	<b>23</b> Sandy Lanoue Rob Lanoue Gil Gilley	<b>24</b> * * TG Van Vives TG Kim Hagan TG Phil Hagan
<b>25</b> Lynn Dickason Monica Murray * TG John Boxall	<b>26</b> Loretta Vives Van Vives James Cupps	<b>27</b> Jay Ross *	<b>28</b> Marilyn Keefer Iris McPherson Phillip Winslow (1:00)	<b>29</b> Irene Ward * TG Phil Allan	<b>30</b> Cheryl Smith Alfred Smith	

RETURN THIS TO: Barbara Bates  
5642 E 113 St  
Tulsa OK 74137

Phone: 918 - 298-7019  
(Leave your name and phone number on the answering machine)  
E-Mail: [bbates@webzone.net](mailto:bbates@webzone.net)

Weekends call - Ann Whitehorn 918-287-4238  
Shift Hours: 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.  
(Stay until 5 if you can)

## **Bison on Nature Conservancy Preserves**

As of the year 2000, The Nature Conservancy has Plains bison (*Bos bison bison*) on eight native grassland preserves in North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Five of these herds are owned and managed by the Conservancy, two of these herds are owned by other private bison ranchers and run on Conservancy preserves under a lease arrangement, and one herd is owned by a university that manages the TNC-owned preserve. All except one are year-round resident herds.

At present, the herd on these Conservancy preserves totals 3,160 head of bison (over-wintering count) on 79,300 acres of native grassland. Expansion plans at several preserves will increase the count to approximately 4,600 head on 113,000 acres by the year 2005.

### *Cross Ranch Preserve, ND*

The 6,000-acre Cross Ranch Preserve is located along the Missouri River in central North Dakota, near Hensler. The bison herd started with the introduction of 14 animals purchased from a private rancher in North Dakota in 1986. The starter herd's lineage was primarily from Custer State Park in South Dakota, with additions to the herd from Theodore Roosevelt National Park in the late 1980s. The herd of 138 head currently resides on 2,115 acres of northern mixed grass prairie, consisting of two separate units. Plans call for an ultimate herd of 119 over-wintering bison grazing on 2,900 acres by the year 2002.

### *Samuel H. Ordway Memorial Prairie, SD*

The 7,800-acre Ordway Prairie is located in the Prairie Pothole region of northcentral South Dakota, near Leola. Bison were first introduced at this preserve in 1978 under a year-round resident herd lease arrangement with a private bison rancher. In 1984, the Conservancy decided to acquire its own bison herd and the first 18 animals were purchased from a private bison rancher in South Dakota. The herd now contains 250 head on 3,000 acres of northern mixed-grass prairie.

### *Niobrara Valley Preserve, NE*

The 54,000-acre Niobrara Valley Preserve is located along the Niobrara River and north edge of the Sand Hills in northcentral Nebraska, near Johnstown. The first bison herd was initiated in the winter 1985-86 and the second during the summer of 1999 by purchase of bison from private and federal sources. The two herds totaling 380 head currently occupy 11,000 acres of sandhills prairie, northern mixed-grass prairie, and riparian woodland-grassland communities in the Niobrara Valley. Plans call for an ultimate herd of 500 head on 20,000 acres by the year 2005. Randomly selected growing and dormant season prescribed burns are used to improve seasonal forage quality and to provide a mosaic of landscape patches that maintains biotic diversity.

### *Medano Zapata Ranch, CO*

The 100,000-acre Medano Zapata Ranch is located in the San Luis Valley of south-central Colorado, near Alamosa. The Conservancy purchased the ranch in 1999, which included a resident herd of several thousand bison and elk. The starter bison herd originated from several private and state herds in Wyoming in 1985. The bison herd of 1,100 head occupies 47,000 acres of high mountain desert shrubland with interspersed meadows.

### *Smoky Valley Ranch, KS*

The 16,000-acre Smoky Valley Ranch is located in the High Plains of western Kansas, near Oakley. One hundred thirty-one (131) head of bison were introduced to 3,110 acres of the preserve in early 2000 under a year-round lease arrangement with a private bison rancher. Future plans call of eventual TNC ownership of 298 bison occupying 7,154 acres of short and mixed grass prairie.

### *Konza Prairie Biological Station, KS*

The 8,600-acre Konza Prairie is located in the Flint Hills of northeastern Kansas, just south of Manhattan. Owned jointly by TNC and Kansas State University Foundation, the larger TNC portion (7,700 acres) is leased to Kansas State University and the total unit operated as Konza Prairie Biological Station by the Division of Biology. The site is dedicated to a three-fold mission of longterm ecological research, education and prairie conservation. KSU introduced a starter herd of 44 bison in 1987-88 mainly from Ft. Riley Military Reservation, Kansas, as well as two other sources. The herd size varies from 180-200 animals on 2,480 acres with culling-sale to achieve a year-round stocking rate of approximately 14 acre/AU.

### *Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, OK*

The 38,700-acre Tallgrass Prairie Preserve is located in the Flint Hills region of northeast Oklahoma, near Pawhuska. A donated starter herd of 300 head was introduced in the fall of 1993, which shared origins with the Medano Zapata herd. The herd of 930 head currently occupies a 10,500-acre year-round unit of tallgrass prairie. Plans call for an ultimate herd of 2,100 over-wintering bison (3,200 with spring calves) on 30,400 acres by the year 2005. Randomly selected growing and dormant season prescribed burns are used to improve seasonal forage quality and to provide a mosaic of landscape patches that maintains biotic diversity.

### *Clymer Meadow Preserve, TX*

The 823-acre Clymer Meadow Preserve is located in the Blackland Prairie region of northern Texas, near Greenville. Bison have been used at Clymer since 1999 on an experimental basis during the growing season under a lease arrangement with a private bison rancher. The herd of 15-30 bison graze 114 acres of tallgrass prairie, in a program of high intensity, short duration grazing.