

ISSUE 51, SPRING 2014

PRAIRIE SMOKE

NACHUSA GRASSLANDS *Annual Stewardship Report for 2013*



Hello Friends,

The arc of 28 years of this project has persistently bent towards the hope-filled return of bison to the Prairie State. But the project has been, and will be, much more than these charismatic herbivores. Starting from scratch in 1986, the Conservancy has been creating habitat of a quality and size rarely seen with a unique blend of staff and empowered volunteers.

The Nachusa Grasslands project area was chosen for the prairies that remained here, along with

ample wetlands and oak woodlands. Could we reconstruct the natural diversity and richness of this landscape? There is toil in the creation; our charming winter weathers, the summer boilers, equipment breakdowns, insects feasting, briars, weeds to pursue, tons of seed to harvest and fires to do each year.

Nachusa is more than the American buffalo, but still, for this year we mark an epoch in hoof-prints.

Bill Kleiman, *Project Director*
Cody Considine, *Ecologist and Editor*

In this Issue . . .

Helping to Save an American Icon	3
Nachusa's Bison Herd	4
The Corral and Bison Handling Facility	5
Preparing for Bison	6-7
Visitor Expectations for Bison	8
NIU Ramping up Research at Nachusa	9
Planting and Harvest Report	10
Saturday Workdays	11
Stewards	12
Friends of Nachusa Grasslands	13
2013 Donors	14
Bison Donation	15

SEPTEMBER 20, 2014

25th Annual Autumn on the Prairie Celebration

Background photo: Pasque flower (*Anemone patens*) by Dee Hudson
Front and back cover photos: Chris Helzer / The Nature Conservancy
Page and layout design: Dee Hudson



HELPING TO SAVE AN AMERICAN ICON

By Jeffery W. Walk

After a nearly 200-year absence, bison will return to The Nature Conservancy's Nachusa Grasslands in a few short months. While volunteers and staff make final preparations and scientists collect data to understand how bison will affect Nachusa, there is another side of this story: how Nachusa and other TNC preserves are helping to save the American bison. Although there are tens of thousands of bison in public and private herds across North America, small population size, genetic introgression and artificial selection are historic and ongoing threats to the evolutionary potential of this iconic animal.

By some accounts, as few as 500 bison survived the great slaughter of the late 1800s. It is likely that several rare bison genes were lost as bison went through that severe population bottleneck. Even today, small herds that are kept in isolation slowly lose genetic diversity from generation to generation. The herd at Wind Cave National Park — the source for Nachusa's bison — numbers around 400 animals, near the park's carrying capacity. However, a population of at least 1,000 is needed

to ensure 90% genetic diversity will persist for the next 200 years. Thanks to a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy, the number of Wind Cave bison will quickly balloon to over 1,000 among Wind Cave National Park, Nachusa, and five other TNC preserves. Regular transfers of animals from one location to another will mimic dispersal and ensure the herds are effectively one genetic population.

Over the decades, producers have cross-bred bison with domestic cattle several times. Often these “beefalo” were then bred with other bison. As a result, the vast majority of bison carry that legacy with traces of cattle genetics in each of their cells. While bison carrying a small amount of cattle genes look and act like bison, research has shown adverse effects on their growth rates and water-use efficiency. The bison at Wind Cave National Park is one of only three public herds that have shown no cattle genetic introgression after extensive testing.

“... the return of bison to Nachusa is good for the prairie. Their return is even sweeter knowing Nachusa is helping to secure the future of bison.”

Perhaps the most insidious threat is artificial selection. Minimizing human influence in determining which bison survive and pass their genes to the next generation is difficult, but essential. In the wild, a lean and mean bull may have a mating advantage, but it's a fatal flaw in a production herd where the fat and happy bull — docile and better at meat production — will be given access to the cows. Even in conservation herds, there are limits to how much aggressive behavior can be tolerated. The Nature Conservancy is



Photos Courtesy of Chris Helzer / The Nature Conservancy

committed to keeping bison as wild as possible, within the constraints of available space and human safety, and with minimal veterinary care. Weather extremes, parasites, potential predators, and herd social dynamics will all be realities for bison at Nachusa.

With fire and drought, grazing by large herbivores is one of the ecological drivers of our tallgrass prairies; the return of bison to Nachusa is good for the prairie. Their return is even sweeter knowing Nachusa is helping to secure the future of bison.

“New blood” could be brought into the Wind Cave population, but that brings in the second concern: genetic introgression.

NACHUSA'S BISON HERD

By Cody Considine & Bill Kleiman

Founding Animals

Our founding herd will consist of approximately 30-50 animals of diverse age-groups and sexes. Initially our breeding bull to cow ratio will likely be close to 1:3 or 2:3; to ensure a robust and genetically healthy herd, we want as many bulls siring calves as possible in the first few years. We will take blood samples from all the calves and then send the data to Dr. Jim Derr, at Texas A&M University, for DNA and parental analysis to determine which bulls are breeding; bulls doing the bulk of the breeding will be rotated out and new bulls will be brought in. As our herd reaches carry capacity, we will reduce the breeding bull to cow ratio.

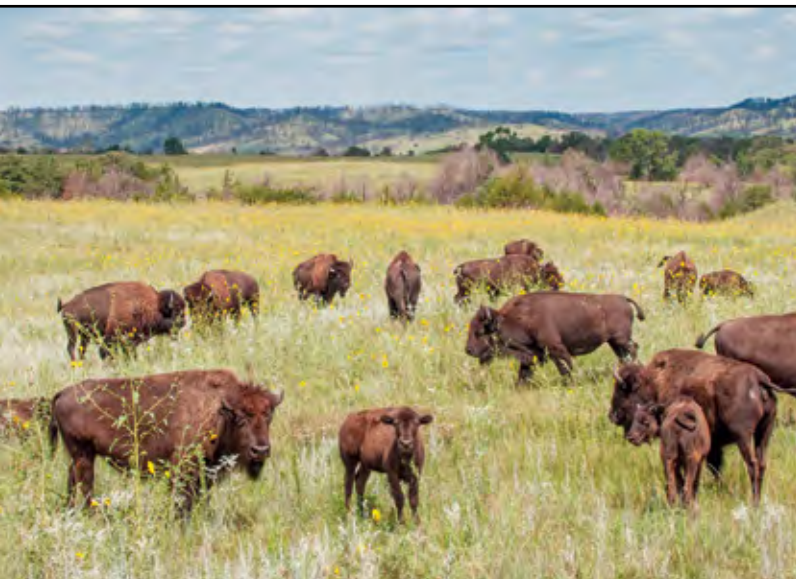


Photo: Chris Helzer / The Nature Conservancy

Herd Size

Stocking rates will be very conservative with an average 10 acres per animal. Nachusa's bison herd is a conservation herd that will be utilized to meet our ecological preserve goals. The herd will grow to approximately 110-150 animals. This herd size was calculated by measuring how much forage Nachusa produces per acre, per year divided by the average amount of forage an animal consumes daily. The amount of forage consumed varies across ages and sexes of bison. As the herd grows, we will be extensively monitoring and collecting data to confirm we are meeting our preserve objectives and not negatively affecting our natural communities. Monitoring and data collection is critical to help Nachusa make accurate and informed decisions; the scientific results will tell us how large of a herd we can support at Nachusa.

Soft Release

"Soft Release" is the term to describe how the bison will be introduced and acclimated to their new home at Nachusa.

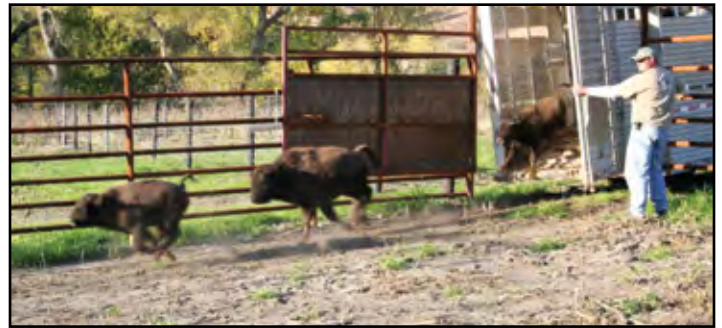


Photo: Elizabeth Niven / The Nature Conservancy

Animals will be unloaded from livestock trailers into our corral and bison handling facility. They will spend several weeks in the corral with ample food, fresh water and minerals. After several weeks the animals should be relaxed; then we will release them into our 10 acre secondary trap pasture. After a week or so in the secondary trap pasture, they will be released into the main 40 acre trap pasture. After a week in the main trap pasture, we will finally open the gates to the 500 acre North Bison Unit. This introduction process for the new herd is called a "soft release". The stress level of the bison increases due to the lengthy trip and their confinement inside the livestock trailers during transport from South Dakota. Gradually introducing the bison to their new home is the healthiest and safest way for the animals to calm down and get comfortable.

Veterinarian Care

Although Nachusa's bison are coming from certified Brucellosis-free states and herds, the veterinarian will vaccinate every calf for brucellosis. Bison are robust and hardy; yet our veterinarian will examine each animal every year to ensure the health of the herd. Each animal will have a micro-chip placed in their ear that will be scanned during each roundup. This micro-chip is part of a computer software program that records the animal's life history: date of birth, weight, vaccination history, and its DNA profile. When the herd is at carrying capacity, this software will allow us to scientifically cull the herd. Surplus animals will be sold to other conservation herds or private bison farms.

A veterinarian from the Broken Kettle Preserve prepares his vaccination tools for the large bull secured in the squeeze chute.

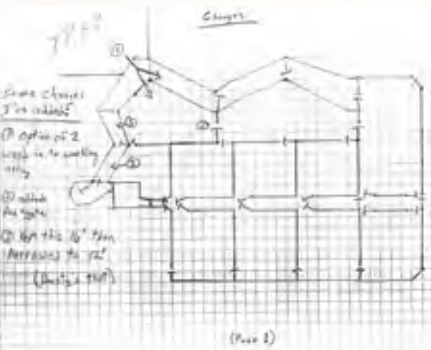


Photo: The Nature Conservancy

THE CORRAL AND BISON HANDLING FACILITY

By Cody Considine

During the past five years we have put many miles (hours!) on the road, visiting approximately a dozen bison preserves across the Great Plains in preparation for the arrival of bison at Nachusa. Our first trips were orientated towards getting comfortable and familiar with working the animals in the corral; during the long rides home we would review the design of each corral. As we gained experience, our trips became more focused. We sought out specific information regarding corral designs and equipment involved with the roundup process. These visits overall, were well worth the time and effort, including our most recent trip that took us through a snow-storm late at night across South Dakota. Thank goodness for four-wheel drive! Seeing these bison corrals first hand and helping with the roundups has been invaluable to us! Our travels have taken us to almost every Nature Conservancy bison preserve and to one of media mogul, Ted Turner's, bison ranches. Interacting with all of these bison managers has not only given us the knowledge to handle bison, but we have proven ourselves competent alongside veteran bison handlers; our experiences working at these roundups is like a rite of passage into the bison community. These bison managers are confident in us and are as excited as we are about the return of bison to Nachusa.



Nachusa's corral schematic

We are fortunate that one of our former seasonal crew members, Michelle Crites, is studying Animal Science at Colorado State University, where world-renowned animal behaviorist, Temple Grandin, teaches. Temple has looked over our design and has given us her blessing. Temple is planning to visit Nachusa in the fall of 2015.

Our corral will look similar to the Conservancy's Broken Kettle Corral in Iowa and be built by the same contractor. The smaller photo at the bottom left is the Berlinic Cube and Squeeze Chute. This squeeze chute has revolutionized the way bison are handled and is fundamental to the safety and welfare of the bison and handlers. The cost for our custom corral is \$225,000.



Mike Carr, volunteer, is standing in a trench with the new water and 200 amp electric lines that he and Dave Crites installed for the corral. Their work saved us considerable money. The corral will be an inviting place for bison, enticing them with water and minerals year round. This will increase the bison's level of comfort in the corral, making it easier to work them during the annual roundup.



(Above) We **INSTALLED** drainage tile (our usual practice reversed!) to ensure water drains quickly, keeping the corral dry. (Right) We kept our local contractor, Bill Nordman, busy last summer removing five dilapidated barns, improving the road access.



All photos on this page:
The Nature Conservancy



Here Bill is pictured grading the corral site to a 3% slope.

PREPARING FOR BISON

By Bill Kleiman

There will be about 1500 acres of land available to the herd. Fourteen miles of fence will be required for these two units. The North Unit (500 acres) will be fenced by fall 2014, the South Unit (1,000 acres) in 2015. The initial release of the herd will be in the North Unit, where they will become acclimated to the corral; in 2016 the bison will gain access to the South Unit as well. Bison fence is a taller and sometimes heavier version of cattle fence. Our fence will be six strand high tensile electric, six feet high; the added height is needed to prevent bison from jumping over. Oil well drilling pipe will be used for corner posts; these will be concreted four feet in the ground. Line posts will be spaced every nine feet; every fourth line post will also be oil well drilling pipe set in concrete.

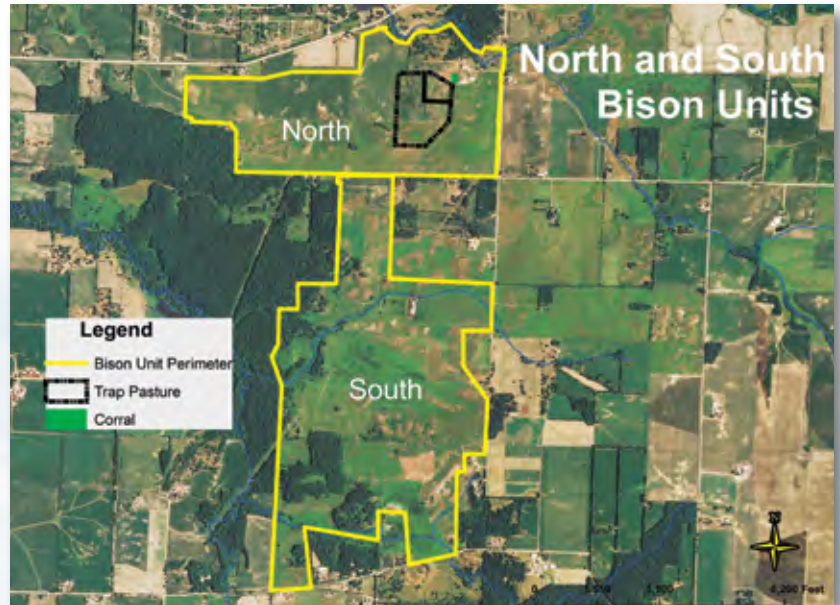


Photo: The Nature Conservancy



Photo: The Nature Conservancy

Each 30' joint is now sectioned into ten-foot lengths using a plasma cutter. Staff and volunteers don welding helmets for this task. Here Cody cuts while volunteer Clyde Seeley rotates the pipe and volunteer Hank Hartman stacks the cut sections. Each section is then welded shut with a cap to seal out rain and to prevent curious birds from being trapped.



Photo: The Nature Conservancy

Dave Crites cuts saddles with a cutting grinder, while, in the background, crew member Ben Adams sets cut pipe in a jig and welds them together to make a "double H"-shaped corner brace. We learned this technique from a Gulf Coast fabricator whom we hired to teach us the "tricks of the trade" in pipe fence construction.

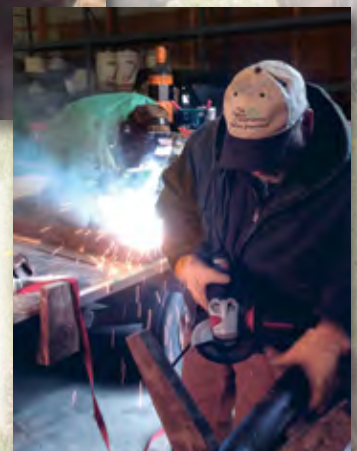


Photo: The Nature Conservancy



Photo: Becky Hartman

Cutting drilling pipe in mid-summer is not fun, but here is the product of an afternoon’s work, stacked and ready for the next step. The extra effort involved in using pipe instead of wood will pay future dividends. Pipe is stronger, lasts longer, and will save us time during prescribed burns because it is impervious to fire.

Photo: The Nature Conservancy

Seasonal crew member Jessica Richert learned to arc-weld short pieces of scrap iron “dead-men” to the bottom of hundreds of posts so they will not pull out of the concrete holding them in the earth. Now it has become a fence post!!



The Nature Conservancy



Ready to go! The track loader quickly drills two post holes. In the background the tractor holds the “double H” corner post. The corner post will be lowered into the holes, along with four 80-pound bags of concrete in each hole. To be efficient, the fence team needs to be coordinated, keeping the equipment running, making sure the concrete and other materials are in stock, and avoiding injury. Local fence contractor Don Pottinger, who owns Twin Oaks Fencing, has been hired to lead the bison fence installation.



Photo: The Nature Conservancy

Damian Considine led the bison fence-welding construction. Damian not only instructed other volunteers, but trouble-shot unforeseen installation problems in the field.



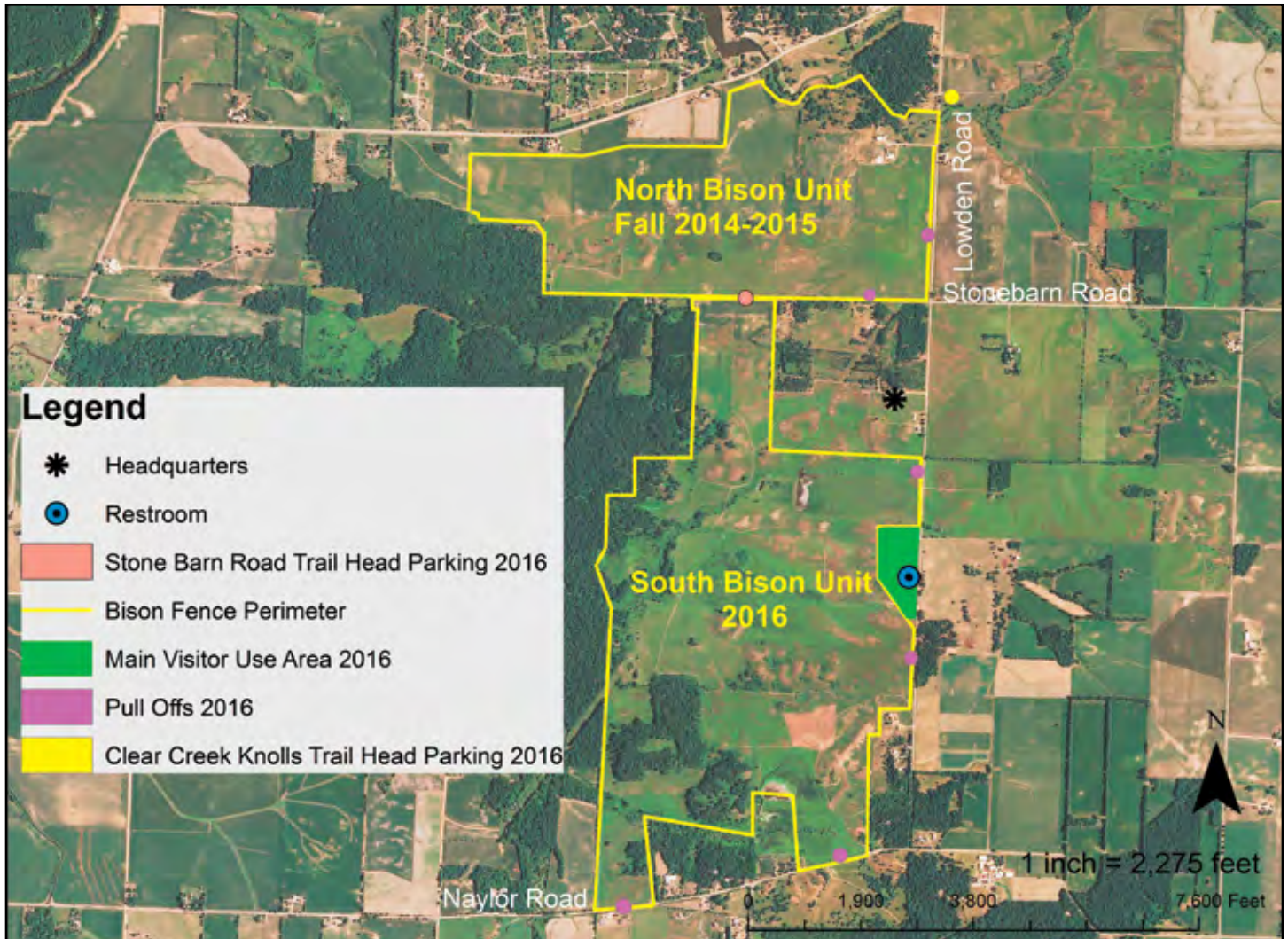
The background photo is courtesy of Chris Helzer / The Nature Conservancy

VISITOR EXPECTATIONS FOR BISON

By Cody Considine

The bison will be located on the North Unit until the end of 2015. In 2016, the South Unit will open to create a contiguous 1,500 acre area for the bison. Nachusa is currently planning a well-designed visitor use area that will accommodate the general public, including large groups of people of all

ages.; we expect the visitor use area will be open by 2016. In addition to the main visitor use area, we will be constructing pull-offs along Lowden Road, Stone Barn Road, and Naylor Road. We will also be providing a new parking area and trail entrance along Stone Barn Road. Please be patient!



1st year (2015)

Visitors will only be able to see the bison from Lowden and Stone Barn Roads. Hiking in the North Unit, among the bison, will not be permitted. During the first year the herd will be small and the area large, so there is no guarantee that bison will be visible from the road.

2nd year (2016)

The Visitor Use Area, the Stone Barn Road parking trail entrance, and the pull-offs will be completed and open for the general public to view bison. A volunteer cadre is forming to help staff the visitor use area and provide guided truck tours to see the bison and learn about the prairie.



NIU RAMPING UP RESEARCH AT NACHUSA

By Holly Jones and Nick Barber
ASSISTANT PROFESSORS, NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY



Photo: The Nature Conservancy

The early morning routine: Nick Barber, Holly Jones and graduate student, Heather Herakovich, make the rounds, checking 125 small mammal live traps for the previous night's catch. Their field season recorded nine species, including thirteen-lined ground squirrel, house mouse, prairie vole, meadow vole, white-footed mouse, deer mouse, meadow jumping mouse, masked shrew and short-tailed shrew.



Photo: Holly Jones

Here is a perplexed deer mouse, one of the small mammals collected by the scientists. The mouse was quickly returned back into the wild. The data gathered from animal, bird and insect collections, will help the scientists assess the effects of bison on the preserve.



Photo: The Nature Conservancy

John Heneghan, representing the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands; Cody Considine, Nachusa's Restoration Ecologist; Jeff Walk, science director for the Conservancy in Illinois; Holly Jones, scientist from NIU; Sara Baer, scientist from SIU; and John Taft, scientist from U of I.

We know a lot about plant responses to restoration at Nachusa, but what about the birds, bees, and other animals?

When we first arrived at NIU as new professors, we were both overwhelmed by the variety of potential opportunities for field research in the area. But with one visit to Nachusa, we knew we had found a gem of a study site. With so many plots restored, we could study prairie recovery, a process that takes years, in just a single field season! Past researchers and the Nachusa staff had assembled a wealth of information about how prairie plants respond to different management practices. We realized that we could add to this knowledge by measuring responses of species higher in the food chain — the many animal species that run, fly, and crawl across the prairie.

We have expertise in small mammals and insects ourselves, but we wanted to build a team of researchers with diverse knowledge to better understand the animal communities at Nachusa. Students in the lab of Dr. Rachael Winfree (Rutgers University), a pollination expert, are looking at the number and variety of bees in different plantings and remnants. Drs. Nick Barber and Ken McCravy (Western Illinois University)

and their graduate student are studying beetles and grasshoppers, Dr. Rich King (NIU) and students are researching reptiles, and Dr. Holly Jones' lab is studying small mammals and her graduate student, Heather Herakovich, is studying grassland bird responses to restoration.

Our study design allows us to ask questions about how different animal groups respond through time after plots of land are restored, how they respond to fire management, and importantly, how bison affect the number and variety of animals encountered. Our aim is for much of this work to be a long-term monitoring program to look at changes through time. Moreover, we are interested in expanding our research to look at how the evolutionary history of each species contributes to the success or failure of colonization and what that means for the important functions these species perform in their ecosystem. We are thrilled to help facilitate this incredible team of researchers to help build the scientific basis for how animals respond to all the hard work and effort Nachusa's employees and stewards put into restoring the land.

PLANTING AND HARVEST REPORT

By Cody Considine

Another 47 acres planted in the Holland tract (yellow section on map). Bernie Buchholz planted 6 new acres at Gobbler Ridge; Al & Mary Meier planted 6 new acres in the Doug & Dot unit. Staff added a 10 acre redo in the Main unit. Total new acres planted to prairie: 69. Total acres overseeded: 105. Total seed harvest, staff and volunteers: 6,000 pounds.

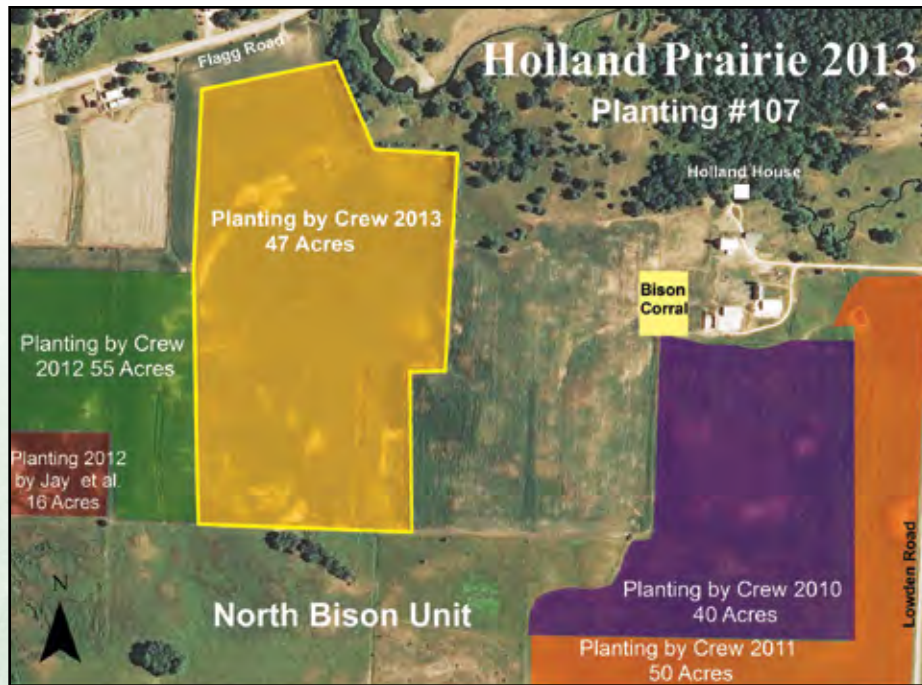


Photo: The Nature Conservancy

The moment of truth. Restoration technician, Ben Adams, loads the drop-seeder for another pass in the 47 acre Holland planting. After several days of ground preparation with the tractor harrow, this acreage was planted with 125 species at a rate of 60+ pounds per acre.



Photo: The Nature Conservancy

Larry Creekmur, Bernie Buchholz and our restoration crew are shown here planting our prairie violet (*Viola pedatifida*) production garden. We planted 1,500 plugs that will serve as a seed source. Endangered Regal Fritillary butterflies need violet species to complete their life cycles. We planted this garden to increase the number of violets in our prairie plantings. Within the first year alone we were able to increase our violet seed harvest 10-fold (went from 0.25 pounds to 2.5 pounds+) Left of the violets, notice the robust northern prairie drop seed clumps (*Sporobolus heterolepis*); we planted 4,000 plugs four years ago and are now collecting over 80 pounds of pure seed per year, an increase by sixteen times before the garden. This year we will be adding another rare species, prairie lily (*Lilium philadelphicum*), and next year prairie gentian (*Gentiana puberulenta*).

Al & Mary Meier and their volunteer friends are poised to mix a 600 pound mound of native processed prairie seed. This represents seven months of intense seed collection.



Photo: Dee Hudson

INTERESTING FACTS

1,000,000 violet seeds and
20,000,000 drop seeds collected!!!



Photo: The Nature Conservancy

Nachusa's prairie plantings are sometimes recognized as remnant prairie (original, never been plowed), which is the goal. Each mix contains a minimum of 125 species and is planted at high volumes of 50 pounds per acre or more.

One beautiful species blooming in a three-year-old planting, Gayfeather (*Liatris pycnostachya*).



Photo: Charles Larry

SATURDAY WORKDAYS

What can I expect when I volunteer on Saturdays?

- Expect to be working with an experienced land steward who has an intimate knowledge of a particular management unit. Tasks range from seed collection and weed management, to invasive tree and brush removal from oak woodlands.
- Expect to learn about many new species of flora and fauna, state-of-the-art techniques in conservation and restoration, and the effects of fire and grazing on the landscape.
- In the spring and fall, trained and certified volunteers can expect to assist with prescribed fire. For more information about training and certification, contact Nachusa at 815-456-2340.
- Expect lively camaraderie with folks who are intensely interested in the natural world and dedicated to its preservation.
- Expect a light mid-morning snack provided by the steward leading the workday.
- Expect beautiful scenery, fresh air, working outside with your hands and sleeping well the night after a workday.



Photo: Dee Hudson

Bruce Marlin, new steward for Prairie Potholes Unit.

Several thoughts concerning Nachusa occur to me on a regular basis. How could anyone not want to be here? Where else on Earth could you find a ready-made, free 3,000-acre garden, with mentors galore and scientific methods and practices close at hand? What could be more fulfilling and enlightening than to help the plants find new friends or extirpate their enemies?

When and where?

- Workdays meet at 9 am every Saturday except the three dates noted below.
 - o No workdays are scheduled for these three Saturdays: May 3 and September 20, 2014, and March 14, 2015.
 - o Workdays end at lunch time but you are welcome to continue if stewards return to the field.
- Volunteers meet at the Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Barn, 8772 S. Lowden Road, Franklin Grove, IL 61031.

Dee Hudson, new volunteer.

I am excited to restore prairies at Nachusa. As a photographer, Nachusa is a wonderful palette for my creativity, but as an avid conservationist I am eager to learn everything I can from the stewards and actively restore plant and animal habitats.



Photo: Ken Benjamin

What should I bring?

- Bring sturdy shoes, long pants, work gloves, and a bottle of drinking water year-round and a brimmed hat and sunscreen in summer.
- Bring a lunch if you want to eat with other volunteers after the workday; the noontime meals around the break table are very enjoyable, filled with interesting discussions on almost any topic.
- All necessary equipment and tools will be provided.



Cindy Crosby, new volunteer.

I began dragonfly monitoring for Nachusa in 2013, and one of my favorite things to do is to lose myself in the tallgrass and the wetlands of Nachusa, looking for dragonflies and damselflies. I'm learning a lot this year as the new kid on Nachusa's Outreach Committee.

Photo: Pam Allnutt

Gwen & Ron Deters, new volunteers.

Here we are — welcomed into the volunteer pack by many wonderful, knowledgeable, generous, and devoted volunteers and staff. We believe in the land — what a precious treasure. We are honored and proud to be a part of Nachusa's family.



Photo: Kirk Hallowell

Check the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands website (<http://www.nachusagrasslands.org>), the Friends Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Nachusa-Grasslands/122691964432289>), or call 815-456-2340 to learn about specific stewardship units and activities proposed for each Saturday workday and/or to find out about workday changes and cancellations. You can also contact Bill Kleiman to request to be added to the weekly workday notification email list.

STEWARDS

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY STAFF

Michelle Carr, *State Director*
Bill Kleiman, *Project Director*
Cody Considine, *Restoration Ecologist*

VOLUNTEER UNIT STEWARDS

Big Woods *Hank and Becky Hartman*
Co-Stewards *NIU's Committee for the*
Preservation of Wildlife

Dot & Doug Wade Prairie *Al & Mary Meier*

Dropseed Hills *Mary & Jim Vieregg*

Eight Oaks Savanna *Jan Grainger*

Fen *Kevin Kaltenbach*

Fameflower Unit *Bernie & Cindy Buchholz*

Gobbler Ridge at CCK *Jay Stacy*
Keith Anderson

Gobbler Bottoms at CCK *Dave Crites*
John Heneghan

Hamill-Winter Prairie *Mike Adolph*
Bob Shone
Bob Brown

Edith and Anna Heinkel Savanna
East Unit *Mike Crowe*
West Unit *Jay Stacy*

Orland Prairie SE Unit *Mike Carr*

Rolling Thunder Prairie *Sally Baumgardner*
Co-Stewards *George Bouska*
Lorraine Gawlik
Max Baumgardner

Schafer Prairie *Jim Hodder*

Tellabs Savanna
East Unit *Mark Jordan*
West Unit *Keith Anderson*

Thelma Carpenter Prairie *Tom & Jenny Mitchell*

Holland Savanna *Kirk Hallowell*

Coneflower Unit *Emmylou Studier*

Prairie Potholes *Bruce Marlin*

Kitten Tail Unit *Steve Sentoff*
Co-Stewards *West Chicago Prairie Stewards*



Our new state director, Michelle Carr, collects bird's foot violet seeds on Tim's Half-Knob during one of her visits to the Grasslands in 2013.

Photo: Dee Hudson

OPEN UNITS

Sand Farm, HQ Barn Steward, Tellabs Middle Savanna, Bennett Savanna, Clear Creek, Harold Walkup, Hook Larson, Orland West Woodland, Orland Prairie and Crosby Prairie.

OTHER STEWARDS

Damian Considine, Ray Derksen, David Edelbach, Timothy Sherck, Dee Hudson, John and Cindy Schmadeke, Josh Price, Jeff Masters, Dave Lawson, Gwen & Ron Deters and Cindy Crosby.

AUTUMN ON THE PRAIRIE COMMITTEE

Mary Meier, Mike Adolph, Carol Brown, Lisa Lanz, Susan Kleiman and Bill Kleiman.

SCIENCE STEWARDS: *inquire for more details*

Grassland Bird Monitoring: **OPEN**
Savanna Bird Monitoring: Karen Lund
Insect Collector: **OPEN**
Prairie Monitor: **OPEN**

PHOTO MONITORS

Charles Larry & Emmylou Studier

EDUCATION COORDINATOR: **OPEN**

2013 SEASONAL RESTORATION TECHNICIANS

Michelle Crites, Kevin Helenthal, Austen Slone, Eilene Eck, Josh Kunde, Ben Cleavanger, Jessica Reichart and Ben Adams.

BISON FENCE BUILDERS

Dave Crites & Damian Considine

FRIENDS OF NACHUSA GRASSLANDS

Volunteerism and Support are Growing

Last year Friends took time to reflect on “What Nachusa Teaches Us.” Volunteers wrote poems, told stories and shared essays and artwork on what they are learning while they go about the work of restoring tall grass prairie and oak woodlands. If you missed these reflections, you can catch up with the Friends Annual Report on our website. While we learned, we also worked on our goals.

Volunteer Stewardship Increasing

Total annual volunteer hours at Nachusa are estimated to be approaching 15,000, primarily in the field, but also involving communication, celebration and development activities. We believe these are the most stewardship hours ever recorded for one year and reflect high quality efforts by all of our volunteers.



Photo: Lisa Lanz
Steward, Kirk Hallowell, gathers seeds.

Stewardship Endowment Growing

The Friends are committed to funding a \$3 million Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment for the project’s long-term protection. As of mid-February 2014, the balance stands at \$325,000. This is an amazing accomplishment for such a young organization. Gifts to the Endowment since September 2012 count toward the Friends’ goal of raising \$250,000 towards the Conservancy’s

fundraising efforts to reintroduce bison at Nachusa. We have raised \$215,000 so far. By supporting the Endowment, the Friends are creating a permanent funding source to reduce TNC’s annual expense, thereby sustaining Nachusa and these majestic animals well into the future.

Celebrating Success with Friends

Friends celebrated at the 5th Annual Prairie Potluck last June. About 100 folks enjoyed food, music and prairie tours in

what has become a favorite event of our family, friends and neighbors.



Music at the Prairie Potluck, with Austen Slone, Mike Crowe and Jim Kanas.

Photo: Ron Cress

Announcing 2014 Friends Science Grants

Encouraging education and science at Nachusa is a key mission. We especially support research that influences management practices for restoration effectiveness and species of concern. We congratulate this year’s Science Grant recipients:

TOM ANTON, ET AL

\$1,600

Survey for Illinois Mud Turtle, population estimate of Blanding’s Turtle, additional documentation of 2013 survey.

KIM SCHMIDT

\$800

Continuation/completion of Ornate Box Turtle study. Grants from Friends over four seasons total \$5,425.

HEATHER HERAKOVICH

\$2,000

Study of grassland bird density and survivorship relative to habitat quality pre- and post-bison.

KIMBERLY EISENBROEK

\$2,800

Microbial analysis in remnant, restored, and failed prairie restorations pre- and post-bison.

JASON WILLAND

\$2,800

Forage quality study in remnants and different age restorations pre- and post-bison.

Information on the next round of applications will be available on our website in the fall of 2014.



Photo: Dee Hudson

Kim Schmidt and Ed Cope locate turtles with the antenna & receiver.

Join the Friends!

We welcome new volunteers and supporters throughout the year. Let us share what we have learned. There is so much to do — inside and out. We have a place for you.

Save these 2014 Dates

Friends Prairie Potluck: June 21
Friends Annual Meeting: July 19

www.NachusaGrasslands.org
NachusaGrasslands@gmail.com
708-406-9894
Follow us on Facebook



FRIENDS OF
NACHUSA
GRASSLANDS

2013 DONORS

To Nature Conservancy's Nachusa Grasslands

\$100,000+

Anonymous
Estate of Patricia A. Caine
Friends of Nachusa Grasslands
Pam and David Waud

\$25,000 - \$99,999

The Bass Fund
Mr. and Mrs. Guy Crane
Full Circle Foundation
Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation
Marjorie Lundy and James Godshalk
Sally Mead Hands Foundation
Timothy C. Sherck
Jay Stacy

\$10,000 - \$24,999

Anonymous
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Frattinger
Connie and Dennis Keller
Toni M. and Charles G. Mueller

\$1,000 - \$9,999

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Adolph
Marilyn and James Anderson
Dr. and Mrs. David Boyce
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Buchholz
Mr. James E. Dahlberg
Mr. and Mrs. R. Peter Heinkel
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Ingraham
Ms. Lisa M. Lanz and Mr. John Ayres
M.R. Bauer Foundation
Lou Lipsey
John R. Santucci
Mary and Jim Vieregg
Carol and Paul Soderholm

\$100 - \$999

Anonymous
Mr. and Mrs. John A. Andersen, Jr.
Ms. Harriet Choice
Damian G. Considine
Angie and Cody Considine
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Dahlberg
Ms. Wynell Prince Eakle
Ms. Sue A. Engstrom
In Memory of John R. Engstrom
Donna and DeWayne Fellows
Mr. and Mrs. Larry Forest
Mr. Ralph G. Frank
Mr. and Mrs. Steven Godby
Goldman Sachs Matching Gifts Program
Mr. and Mrs. Chris Hauser
Mrs. Patricia Hayden and Ms. Cynthia Fraase
June and Steve Keibler

In Memory of John R. Engstrom
Ms. Joanne Kiley and Ken Modzelewski
Ms. Melinda Kleehamer
EmmyLou Studier and Charles Larry
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Lawson
Patrick Lessner
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Meier
Mr. Richard M. Phillips
Rochelle Garden Club
State Farm Companies Foundation
Julia and Michael Studier
Tawani Enterprises
Mr. and Mrs. Leon R. Zar

\$1 - \$99

Ms. Susan Corbin
Patricia and Randall Crady
Mr. Ronald J. Cress
Mr. and Mrs. George Dilling
Blake A. Lenoir
Estate of Robert Parenteau
Ms. Barbara Ricks
Ms. Mary L. Sass
Ms. Deb L. Schiller
Mr. and Mrs. John Schmadeke
Mr. Mel S. Stark
Mr. Daniel E. Thompson

Background photo: Dee Hudson



**COMING FALL 2014
 WITH YOUR HELP**

To learn more, visit nature.org/bisonreturn

Photo © Nick Hall

YES!
 I want to
 help bring
 bison to
 Nachusa

Mail your
 contribution to:
 The Nature Conservancy in Illinois
 Gift Processing Center
 PO Box 6015
 Albert Lea, MN 56007-6615

Please accept my gift of:

\$1,000 \$500 \$100 \$75 Other _____

AILDA201401600

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

E-MAIL _____

DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER _____

Please make checks payable to *The Nature Conservancy in Illinois*

CHARGE MY: VISA MASTERCARD AMERICAN EXPRESS

NUMBER _____

EXP DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Please contact me about how I can leave a legacy for conservation in Illinois through my estate.

The Nature
Conservancy



Protecting nature. Preserving life.®

The Nature Conservancy

Nachusa Grasslands Preserve

8772 S. Lowden Road

Franklin Grove, IL 61031

815.456.2340

www.nature.org/illinois

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage

PAID

PERMIT NO. 6632

Franklin Grove,

Illinois 61031

