

## Platte River Prairies 2023 Field Day - July 8, 2023

### SCHEDULE

(Session Descriptions and Directions on Page 2)

This is a free event for all ages, but please RSVP to [sara.cahill@tnc.org](mailto:sara.cahill@tnc.org) if you plan to attend so we can make plans. Bring your own lunch, sunscreen, insect repellent, and anything else you need for a day in the sun.

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|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:00 am  | Early Morning Bonus Session                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Birding and avian ecology (Jojo Morelli/Sanketh Menon, The Nature Conservancy)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 8:15 am  | Welcome, introductions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 8:30 am  | First regular session                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small mammal ecology (Mike Schrad, Master Naturalist)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 9:45 am  | Break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 10:00 am | Second Session                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seed harvesting (Jojo Morelli, Sanketh Menon) The Nature Conservancy)</li> <li>- Plant identification/ecology (Sarah Bailey, Prairie Plains Resource Institute)</li> <li>- Prairie management and ecology (Chris Helzer, The Nature Conservancy)</li> </ul> |
| 11:15 am | Break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 11:30 am | Third Session                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prairie invertebrates (Julie Peterson, University of Nebraska Entomology)</li> <li>- Plant identification/ecology (Sarah Bailey, Prairie Plains Resource Institute)</li> <li>- Butterfly identification/ecology (Neil Dankert)</li> </ul>                   |
| 12:45 pm | Break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 1:00 pm  | Fourth Session                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prairie invertebrates (Julie Peterson, University of Nebraska Entomology)</li> <li>- Prairie restoration (Chris Helzer, The Nature Conservancy)</li> <li>- Butterfly identification/ecology (Neil Dankert)</li> </ul>                                       |
| 2:15 pm  | End                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

**Birding and avian ecology** – Walk the prairie with a scientist and learn to identify grassland birds by sight and song. Discuss the various strategies these birds use to nest, migrate, and thrive in prairies.

**Small mammal ecology** – Master Naturalist Mike Schrad will be live-trapping mice and other small mammals as part of a long-term research project. Accompany Mike as he checks traps set the previous evening and identifies, weighs, and releases what he catches. Mike will also teach participants about the lives of these amazing creatures.

**Plant identification/ecology** – Sarah Bailey will show you how to identify and appreciate many of the hundreds of plants found at the Platte River Prairies. She'll also describe the various strategies they use to compete for space and persist through drought, fire, grazing and other phenomena.

**Prairie invertebrates** – Capture and learn about the incredible diversity of invertebrates that live in prairies. Grab a sweep net and explore the world of prairies from the perspective of these tiny organisms. Every single one has a fascinating life story.

**Prairie management and ecology** – Learn why prairies need people as much as people need them. Why do people burn prairies? How do managers use cattle to create habitat for all the animals that live in grasslands? How do they work to suppress invasive plants and foster a diversity of native species?

**Butterfly identification/ecology** – Neil Dankert is one of Nebraska's premiere butterfly experts and has been conducting surveys and inventories for well over 30 years. In this session, you'll have the chance to capture butterflies and have Neil tell you what they are and why they're fascinating.

## LOCATION/DIRECTIONS

This event is located at The Nature Conservancy's Platte River Prairies, two miles south of Interstate 80 exit 300 (Wood River). On Google Maps, it is named 'Nature Conservancy Derr House Prairie'. From the exit, go two miles south on the highway and then as the highway curves sharply to the east, take a right onto South Platte River Drive (gravel) and you'll immediately see a wooden sign for The Nature Conservancy and a driveway that leads up the hill to the big brick Derr House. We will have designated parking areas mowed.