

Platte River Prairies 2025 Field Day - July 12, 2025

SCHEDULE

(Session Descriptions and Directions on Page 2)

This is a free event for all ages, but please RSVP to katelyn.glause@tnc.org if you plan to attend so we can make plans and contact you if we have to adjust because of weather or other issues. 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 | Pre-Session |
| | - Birds of the Platte River Prairies (Kojo Baidoo, The Nature Conservancy) |
| 8:15 am | Welcome, introductions |
| 8:30 am | First regular session |
| | - Small Mammal Ecology (Mike Schrad, Master Naturalist) |
| 9:45 am | Break |
| 10:00 am | Second Session (Pick One) |
| | - Prairie Management and Ecology (Chris Helzer, The Nature Conservancy) |
| | - Seed Harvest (Cody Miller and Rohit Balay, The Nature Conservancy) |
| 11:15 am | Break (Lunch) |
| 11:45 am | Third Session (Pick One) |
| | - Prairie Restoration (Chris Helzer, The Nature Conservancy) |
| | - Prairie Invertebrates (Sarah Bailey, Prairie Plains Resource Institute) |
| 1:00 pm | Break |
| 1:15 pm | Fourth Session (Pick One) |
| | - Prairie Invertebrates (Sarah Bailey, Prairie Plains Resource Institute) |
| | - Prairie Management and Ecology (Chris Helzer, The Nature Conservancy) |
| 2:30 pm | End |

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Birds of the Platte River Prairies – This session will help you build bird identification skills that will help distinguish species by sight and sound. You will also learn about the natural history and life strategies of birds that call Nebraska home.

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.

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?

Prairie invertebrates - Most prairie animals are tiny invertebrates, each with their own fascinating life strategy. Sarah Bailey will help you find, admire, and learn about some of these amazing creatures.

Seed harvest – Grab a bucket and harvest some prairie seeds to help The Nature Conservancy with a restoration project. We are adding plant species to a few degraded prairies that have lost some of their species diversity. Learn how to find and harvest prairie seeds while contributing to conservation!

Prairie Restoration – The Nature Conservancy converts crop land to high diversity prairie habitat using locally-harvested seed mixes of 150-200 plant species. Learn about the methods used for this kind of restoration as you walk through plantings between 3 and 25-years-old.

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.