

Grassland Restoration Network- 2016 Workshop

September 13-14, 2016 - Aurora/Wood River, Nebraska

Co-Hosted by [The Nature Conservancy's Platte River Prairies](#)

and [Prairie Plains Resource Institute](#)

AGENDA

September 13

9am-11:30am – Optional walking tours of [prairie restorations](#) in Aurora, Nebraska by Bill Whitney of Prairie Plains Resource Institute. Bill planted these diverse prairies in the early 1980's through the 1990's along Lincoln Creek. He will discuss how the prairies established and changed over time and discuss the history of Prairie Plains Resource Institute as an educational land trust.

12:30pm – 5:30pm – Tours of Prairie Plains Resource Institute's [Gjerloff Prairie](#) north of Aurora, including various restored sites, remnant prairie on loess bluffs along the Platte River, fire and grazing management, and seed storage/processing facilities.

6pm – Catered supper at the Prairie Plains [Education Center](#)

7pm – 9pm – Social time at the Education Center.

Lodging on your own. Hotel options for Aurora and Grand Island are listed below.

September 14

8:30-11am – Field sessions on evaluation and research results at The Nature Conservancy's [Platte River Prairies](#) south of Wood River, Nebraska. Topics will include: long-term monitoring of mean floristic quality in restored prairie, impacts of soil texture/nutrient levels on prairie restoration establishment, response of grassland birds to patch-burn grazing of restored prairie, results of overseeding projects in degraded remnant prairie, and the response of small mammals, bees, grasshoppers, and ants to attempts to enlarge and reconnect prairie remnants through prairie restoration. (Researchers from University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska-Omaha, and The Nature Conservancy)

11am-Noon – Tour and group discussion of a restored wetland/stream (former sand and gravel mining ponds). The site was restored in stages between 2003 and 2013 and has established well, but is threatened by a number of invasive plants that are well-established upstream of the site.

12pm – 1pm – Catered lunch

1pm – 3:30pm – Tours of cropland restored to high-diversity prairie/wetland habitat in 2013 and 2016 and field sessions on research results from the Conservancy's Diversity Research Plots – a series of $\frac{1}{4}$ ac replicated plots planted with various levels of plant diversity. Ongoing and completed research has focused on the impact of plant diversity on invertebrate communities, resistance to invasion, soil properties, and drought response and other aspects of ecological resilience. Researchers from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Kansas State University will discuss their projects.

3:30pm – Depart

Additional Logistical Information

You will be responsible for getting yourself to the two field sites (Gjerloff Prairie and Platte River Prairies) and for all meals other than Tuesday supper and Wednesday lunch. Please bring appropriate field clothes, drinking water, sunscreen, insect repellent, and anything else you need. All sessions will be in the field unless we have inclement weather. Please make your own lodging arrangements at one of the hotels below (or whatever other arrangement works for you). Directions to the sites will be emailed to you after you register. If you have any questions, please contact Chris Helzer (chelzer@tnc.org) or Mardell Jasnowski (mjasnowski@tnc.org).

Area Hotels

Quality Inn

7838 S. US Hwy 281, Grand Island, NE 68803 (I-80 Exit 312)
(308) 384-7770

Days Inn (next to Quality Inn)

Exit 312 south of Interstate 80
(308) 384-5006

Best Western

2607 S. Locust Street, Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 381-8855

Holiday Inn—midtown

2503 S. Locust Street
Grand Island, NE 68801
308-384-1330

Ken's Motel

1515 11th Street
Aurora, NE 68818
402-694-3141 or 800-352-8392