



FROM THE TRAILS

OF THE PIONEERS PARK NATURE CENTER

NOVEMBER 2011

Greetings from the Nature Center! It has been a wonderful fall: the weather was perfect, the prairie was, as always, a miracle of texture, color, and sound, and the Nature Center has been a very busy place.

PRAIRIE IMMERSION

The prairie was at its best for the 1,419 4th graders who spent a day at the Nature Center experiencing its history, diversity and beauty. Along with many directed learning experiences, the students spent some time alone in the prairie reflecting.

Some journal entries:

Prairie looks like *a big green sea full of bugs, plants and flowers.*
Prairie feels like *cool breeze splashing your face like water.*
Prairie sounds like *crickets chirping and swishing wind.*

The prairie is a peaceful place to be. When you just want to be alone, come to the prairie. Explore new worlds that are amazing, enjoy yourself and come to the prairieeee. Here the bugs sing a lovely tune, and it's as soft as can be, SOOO just come to the prairieeee.



Teacher/naturalists led other hikes and will be doing so right up until Thanksgiving. These are important experiences for children as this thank-you note demonstrates:

What an incredible day! Never have kids begged to stay in nature and walk like they did today. One said "I miss being on the field trip" through tears on the bus back to school.

Thank you for a wonderful experience for Clinton students.

Dawn Ziegelmann, Second Grade

We enjoy the children's thank you notes a great deal. This fall a student asked if his hike leader had made the bison chip!

HOWLING HALLOWEEN



Along the trail, a raccoon and opossum asked for a vote on which was the best nocturnal animal. The evening ended with a roaring campfire program. Thanks to the volunteers and donors that made the event possible.

Earlier in the fall, folks enjoyed longer rack rides, meeting an exhibit animal up close and a campfire program.

Almost 500 people had a howling good time at the Nature Center's Halloween celebration. On the hayrack ride they encountered the prairie in the dark, and came across a settler chatting with a grasshopper and a bat and mouse comparing diets.



GIFT SHOP

New holiday ornaments, cards and calendars are in, along with old favorites such as animal puppets and nature books. Check out our new PPNC animal collector cards. All T-shirts are 40% off. Receive 20% off all regular-priced items from December 1st through 23rd.

PIONEERS PARK NATURE CENTER

Admission: Free

Location: 3201 S. Coddington (west end of
Pioneers Park) Lincoln, NE 68522

Hours: Monday - Saturday: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sunday: Noon - 5:00 p.m.

Phone: (402) 441-7895

E-mail: nfurman@lincoln.ne.gov

Website: parks.lincoln.ne.gov/naturecenter

Mailing Address: 2740 A Street, Lincoln, NE 68502

WINTER PROGRAMS

POETRY ON THE PRAIRIE

January 22, Sunday 2-3:30 p.m.
Prairie Building \$5 suggested donation

A warm drink looking out at a wintery prairie world. Sharing poetry, your own, or favorites from other authors. Join us for this quiet time. No registration necessary.

PRIMITIVE PINE NEEDLE BASKETS

January 28, Saturday 1-4 p.m.
Prairie Building \$10/person, register by 1/25

Learn how to make coil baskets. Each person will begin a pine needle basket to finish at home. Recommended for those 14 and older.

SAVE THE DATE

Volunteer/Staff Appreciation Potluck
January 20, Friday, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Auld

Friends of PPNC Annual Meeting
January 28, Saturday, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Prairie Building

Nature Explorers Camp
March 12-16, Monday-Friday

Nature's Market
April 21, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Reptiles Rock, Insect Investigations, Nature's Scavenger Hunt, Amazing Birds, Marvelous Mammals, Grow in the Garden. Have a wonderful birthday at Pioneers Park Nature Center! An hour nature program is followed by an hour for your birthday activities. We provide the space, the program, which will include a hike, and indoor animal time or special activity, a favor bag for each child, and a special gift for the guest of honor. You provide refreshments. Adult supervision required. Available facilities:

Birthday House, \$75 for 10 children and 3 adults
\$7/each additional child, maximum of 15 children
Auditorium, \$100 for 10 children and 5 adults
\$7/each additional child, \$3/each additional adult

HYDE MEMORIAL OBSERVATORY

Gaze at the sky with powerful telescopes, enjoy two programs about astronomy or space exploration that change monthly, and interact with knowledgeable volunteers. Free and open to the public Saturdays in Holmes Lake Park, March - September, 8-11 p.m., October - February, 7-10 p.m. More information at hydeobservatory.info.

PRAIRIE ASTRONOMY CLUB (PAC)

You are invited to the monthly meetings of this enthusiastic group of amateur astronomers on the last Tuesday of each month, 7:30 p.m. at Hyde Observatory. More information at prairieastronomyclub.org.

EDNA SHIELDS

A celebration of Edna's long and fruitful life was held at the Nature Center on October 15th. Edna was on the Nature Center staff from 1973 until 1987. Known as 'Lucky', Edna was a person who loved children and plants. A genius at capturing children's attention with her quiet ways, she had a wealth of creative ideas for activities that would help them understand and love the natural world. Edna was devoted to the herb garden, and to drying plant material for her lovely wreaths and arrangements. Her talents helped make the Nature Center what it is, and her legacy lives on.

THANK YOU

In Memory of Edna Shields

Irene and George Alexander	Donald Manley
Lori Anderson	Edith Meints
Susan Bachelder	Karen and Charlie Messenger
Esther Bennett and Hazel Crain	Shelley and Rob Ness
Jan and John Blumer	Jennifer Norton
Judy and James Cook	Hope Robb and Bob Basine
Anabeth Cox	Marge and Dan Schlitt
Betty and Wilbur Dasenbrock	Bernadine and Robert Shields
Melinda and Sean Fitzgerald	Susan and Kim Vanderkolk
Barb and Terry Genrich	Sandy Wacker
Patty and Loren Graul	Teri and Mark Walters
Mary and Robert Jordan	Ruth and Robert Wollenberg
JoAnn and Arthur Kavan	Virginia Wright
Joanne and Leo Klameth	Sara and Michael Zimbelman
Shirley Maly	

With special thanks for the very generous donations of
Kathy Putensen and Leo Shields

Howling Halloween Donors

Wal-mart Supercenter, 8700 Andermatt, \$50 gift card
Wal-mart Supercenter, 4700 N. 27th, \$25 gift card
The Home Depot, 6800 S. 70th, \$25 gift card
Super Saver, 27th & Pine Lake, \$30 gift card
Russ's Market, Coddington & West A. 2 gift cards
Lost in Fun, 8 gift certificates plus coupons
Runza Corporation, 5 free combo meal coupons

Friends of Pioneers Park Nature Center -
Additional \$2638 for scholarships to Nature Center programs

Lincoln Garden Club - additional \$5,000 for the Children's Garden

Doole Family Charitable Foundation - \$600 for the Herb Garden

Dianna Lear - books for preschool

Kathie Putensen - books for preschool and library

Nebraska Soybean Board - crayons

Knights of Columbus Fitzgerald Council #833
\$269 for materials for Bryan Butler's Eagle Scout Project

Bryan Butler, Eagle Scout Project - Prairie Building outside turtle pen, shutters and window boxes for Birthday House



TRAILSIDE NEWS

CALL FOR ARTISTS

The Friends of the Pioneers Park Nature Center are seeking applicants for the second Artistic Birdhouse fund-raising project. The deadline for submitting designs is December 5, and 30 applicants will be chosen to create birdhouses for an auction at Nature's Market April 21, 2012. Proceeds will support the Nature Center's scholarship programs and animal care.

Applicants are asked to create a birdhouse that does not have to be functional, but can be whimsical, architectural and creative. The birdhouses can be built of any material but needs to be portable by one person. Photos of all 30 birdhouses will be displayed at lincoln.ne.gov and in all Nature's Market promotion. The birdhouses also will be displayed throughout the community in March and then brought together April 6 as part of the First Friday Art Walk.

Applications are available on the Parks and Recreation website, parks.lincoln.ne.gov; at the Parks and Recreation office, 2740 "A" St.; and at the Pioneers Park Nature Center, 3201 S. Coddington. More information is available on the website and by calling 402-441-8709.



NATURE CENTER PRESCHOOL

Our preschoolers have been dreaming of clouds lately. They've discussed the four types of clouds, did experiments that illustrated precipitation, condensation and evaporation, made 'magic' cloud pictures and talked about what they saw there, and made milkweed raindrops for their cloud tree.

Pre-K children have been studying H words: they visited our exhibit red-tailed Hawks, found their own special Hidey Holes and talked about small things they could hold in their Hand such as bundle flower seed pods, snake skin, snail shells and Kentucky coffee tree seeds.

IRENE AND GEORGE ALEXANDER

October 23rd was a very special day at the Nature Center when Irene and George celebrated their 90th birthdays here. Irene began volunteering at the Nature Center in 1978 and soon became a member of the staff. Her principal interests were birds and the prairie, but she devoted herself to the upkeep of the herb garden as well. After receiving her master permit in 1997, she and George introduced many to birds and bird banding. George's wonderful photos have been a beautiful addition to Nature Center exhibits and publications. Happy Birthday and thank you, Irene and George!



CHET AGER BUILDING UPDATE

It's a muddy mess right now, but the foundation has been stabilized and most of the holes have been filled in. New tile and carpet will be installed and some new exhibits put in place. We'll let you know when we're ready for you to see the new look!

CHILDREN'S GARDEN

The rabbit fence is up and the tipi is in place waiting for next spring's planting of beans and squash. Our preschool students picked the miniature pumpkins that Camp Discovery children planted (at least those the animals left!) as part of the ever-popular pumpkin unit. Both Preschool and Pre-K planted daffodil and crocus bulbs that will make their appearance early next spring. Volunteer Bob Pewthers is back to build the retaining wall as the south border of the garden. We can't wait until next spring to begin our first complete season with the garden!

