

Solar Eclipse Brings Hundreds to Spring Creek Prairie

Glynnis Collins, Center Director



Over 800 people visited Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center on Monday, August 21st to view the total solar eclipse. With two minutes and two seconds of totality, the prairie was a perfect viewing spot for people looking for a natural setting for this special event and wanting to avoid crowds at other nearby locations.

When staff arrived at 7:00am Monday morning to start setting up, there were already a few cars waiting. When we opened up the parking lot at 8:00am, the cars started streaming in and didn't stop until we were completely full just before noon. We directed overflow traffic to Bennet Road, our southern boundary. People could park along the gravel road and walk onto the prairie from there.

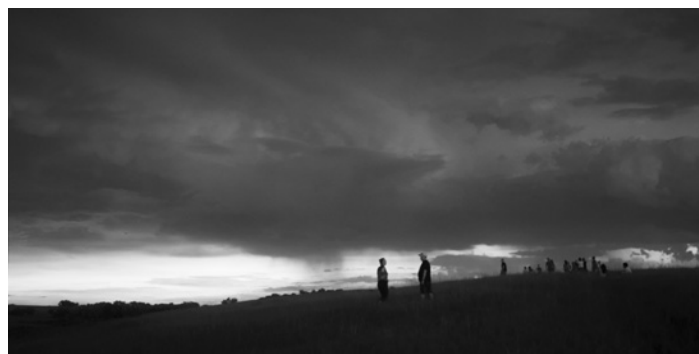


Guests settled in for the big show

Visitors set up for viewing on the mowed lawn all around the Visitors Center, on the hilltops to the south of the Center, and even in the lush tallgrass on the slope behind the Center. People had blankets, lawn chairs, even portable tables, and of course there were lots of cameras and scopes on tripods. There were also hula hoops, a kite, and someone making giant soap bubbles. It was comfortably

crowded near the Center and on the nearest elevated areas. But those seeking solitude had no trouble finding it further afield.

The weather was warm and partly cloudy all morning. The advancing shadow over the sun was visible with eclipse glasses throughout the entire eclipse. By the time we reached totality just after 1:00pm, there were just high, thin clouds overhead. And the view was spectacular! The sun's corona was very clearly visible, and fluffy low clouds on the horizon enhanced the "360-degree sunset" effect.



Spring Creek Prairie during totality

It was a joy to welcome so many people to Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, many of whom were visiting for the first time. Guests were from 25 different states and one Canadian province (Manitoba). Our thanks go out to Spring Creek Prairie supporters past and present – providing an amazing natural setting for this event has undoubtedly brought new friends into our community, friends who will work with us to make sure this gem continues to thrive until the next solar eclipse crosses our path, and beyond!

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From the Center Director and Board Chair

Glynnis Collins & Mari Lane Gewecke

In this issue we have much to celebrate in our shared work to connect people with nature so that the natural world we depend on continues to thrive. The eclipse brought hundreds of new visitors to the prairie (page 1). Several groups of young people had longer and multiple visits to the prairie through camp programs or as volunteers (pages 5 & 6). With longer and repeated visits, we make deeper and more-lasting connections with the next generation of conservationists. While we say farewell to a wonderful set of Stewardship Advisory Board members whose terms have finished, we welcome an exciting group of talented Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center supporters to the Board (page 7).

But this summer has also been difficult for the Spring Creek Prairie and Audubon Nebraska family. We lost, within a span of six weeks, both Audubon Nebraska Director (and former Spring Creek Prairie Center Director) Marian Langan and former Spring Creek Prairie Board member and Chair Lana Flagtwet, whose term on the board ended in June (see right). Marian and Lana were both central figures in Spring Creek Prairie's growth and development. Both were taken from us before their time. Our sense of loss is staggering, but as we mourn, we also find comfort in carrying forward the work they each cared about so passionately.

With warm regards,



Glynnis Collins
Center Director



Mari Lane Gewecke
Board Chair

Remembering Two Prairie Champions

This summer, Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center lost two dedicated and visionary leaders. We remember them both below.



Marian Langan, 1962 – 2017

Marian passed away from cancer on June 3, nearly a year after her initial diagnosis.

Marian was born in Omaha and raised in Cedar Rapids, Nebraska. She attended nursing school and worked at Tabitha for several years before attaining bachelor's and master's degrees in biology from the University of Nebraska. She served as the education coordinator at the University of Nebraska State Museum (Morrill Hall) before starting an 18-year career with the National Audubon Society, serving as Executive Director of Audubon Nebraska for the last 5 years.

Marian was instrumental in the creation of the Visitor Center at Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center and in facilitating inquiry-based nature education on a national level. She was an invited participant at the White House Summit on Environmental Education in 2012. Additionally, she helped to grow Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary near Gibbon into an internationally recognized birding site drawing visitors from around the world. Marian leaves behind a legacy of conservation in Nebraska that will endure far beyond the time she was here.



Lana Flagtwet, 1957 – 2017

Lana passed away on July 13, from injuries she sustained during a swimming pool accident.

Lana was born and raised in Mitchell, South Dakota. She graduated from Mitchell High School and Northern State University and received her MBA from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. At the time of her death, Lana was employed as senior vice president at UBS. Lana loved

working with people and her clients. Lana was very involved in community service, serving on the boards of Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, Lincoln Children's Zoo, Capital Humane Society, Lincoln Community Foundation, Nebraska Humanities Council, The Nature Conservancy, YMCA of Lincoln and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Lana's passion was philanthropy and she raised millions of dollars for the organizations she served. Lana was a mentor to many and a friend to even more. Lana has been described as quirky, wickedly smart, a moral compass, a motivator, loyal, civic-minded, large-family loving, inclusive, creative and advocate. So many were touched by Lana's energy, love, thoughtfulness, humor, intelligence, her contagious laugh, and beautiful smile.



Tastes in the Tallgrass Sunday, September 17, 2017, 4 – 7 pm

Our 10th annual fundraiser, **Tastes in the Tallgrass**, is coming up soon – register now at springcreekprairie.audubon.org!

Savor the sights, sounds, and flavors of a “prairie style” sunset dinner. Enjoy stunning prairie vistas, delicious food and

drink, and live music from the Lightning Bugs while protecting southeastern Nebraska’s tallgrass prairie.

You are funding hope for birds, wildlife, and future generations!

We’ve got loads of new and exciting items for the live and silent auctions. For a full list of artwork, dinner packages, trips, and more, go to: <http://springcreekprairie.audubon.org/get-involved/2017-auction-items>.

A Sampling of our Live Auction Items...

Montana Guest Ranch Vacation

5 day/4 night stay for 4 people at Canyon Creek Guest Ranch in Melrose, Montana. Available activities include fishing, hiking, river floats, and wildlife viewing tours. Trip to be taken between July 1, 2018 and September 30, 2018. (canyoncreekguest ranch.com)
Value: \$6,500 | Donated by Dave and Emilie Ellingson



Sandhills Vacation Tour Package

2-day /1-night trip. Join hydrogeologist Jim Goeke and Karen Amen of the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission for a design-it-yourself adventure through the Nebraska Sand Hills. Maximum of 6 people. Meals, snacks, guidebook, and one night’s lodging included.
Value: \$2,200 | Donated by Karen Amen & Jim Goeke



“Fuego” Necklace by Sydney Lynch

Oxidized silver, 18k & 22k gold, red sapphire, carnelian, and pearl.
Value: \$850
Created & donated by Sydney Lynch



Husker Football Skybox Suite Tickets

Two tickets to Skybox Suite for the Nebraska Homecoming football game vs. Rutgers, Saturday, September 23, 2017 at Memorial Stadium. Food & drink (non-alcoholic) provided in suite.
Value: \$1,000 | Donated by Johnson Controls, Inc



Ceramic Bird Cup by Eddie Dominguez

Original bird cup by one of the leaders of American contemporary ceramic art and mixed media. Ceramic and paint.
Value: \$600
Created & donated by Eddie Dominguez





FALL FEST!

Music 'cross the Meadow

Friday, October 6
5 – 8 pm

Music, outdoor activities, wagon rides, and more fun for all ages! Spend an evening with us on the prairie enjoying local bands, nature games, and twilight on the tallgrass.

Suggested donation of \$5/person for entry, kids 12 and under are free.

 SPRING CREEK PRAIRIE Audubon CENTER

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Springcreekprairie.Audubon.org

Endless Dawn

The celestial pirouette
Tween sun and moon
The dark and the light
We cannot deny

Their singular dance
Drew us as one
Into the shadows
Into the night

Then endless dawn
All ways led to sun
Out of the darkness
There is only the light

*Brad Anderson
Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center
August 21, 2017*

Sunshine and Fun — Lincoln Community Learning Center Camps

Jason "the Birdnerd" St. Sauver,
Community Education Director

This July we hosted young people for summer camp activities as part of our ongoing partnership with the Lincoln Community Learning Centers. Each student spent almost 20 hours exploring the prairie plants and animals, taking wagon rides, and helping with habitat projects around the property. This summer, we had 100 kids from the Elliott, Brownell/Norwood Park, Goodrich, and Clinton/Hartley Community Learning Centers. We also saw another nearly 400 youngsters for day trips as well from local day cares, centers, and the YMCA!



Leave a Conservation Legacy

Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center's programs and impact reach new heights year after year. Consider investing in a sustainable future for our work expanding habitat and connecting people with Nebraska's native prairie. You can help make a better future for birds, wildlife, and future generations by including Spring Creek Prairie in your estate plans.

Naming our programs in your estate plan can be as simple as adding this language:

I bequeath (dollar amount or % of estate) to the National Audubon Society, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, with its principal offices located at 225 Varick Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10014, for the permanent endowment of Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center programs. Tax ID # 13-1624102.

If you choose to include Spring Creek Prairie in your estate plan, please let us know so we can express our gratitude!

Best wishes, Carey!

Carey Collingham joined the Audubon Nebraska family in 2014 as Corporate and Foundation Coordinator. He left us this summer to pursue a Law degree at the University of Nebraska. Carey hopes to return to the nonprofit sector in a new capacity when he joins the legal profession — we can't wait to work with him again!



Summer Volunteers

Ed Hubbs, Habitat Manager

This summer a team of young volunteers joined us for weekly workdays, helping out with everything from organizing supplies for the fall Prairie Immersion program to repairing electric fencing. For us, it was great to have an energetic and experienced team to help with all kinds of jobs around the Center. Read about their experiences below!

Ahna, 7th grade — I love volunteering for Spring Creek Prairie because we get to drive around in the gator, pull fences out of the ground, chop things down, and being out in nature. We also get to organize things inside for the kids that come out to Spring Creek Prairie. This is my second year at Spring Creek Prairie, I hope I can come back next year.

Adam, 8th grade — I like to go to Spring Creek Prairie because it's really fun driving the gators around, getting so dusty your skin looks like mud!

Sometimes you sweat so much you feel like you just got out of the shower.

I get to learn about all of the birds and the entire ecosystem. This is my second year, I hope to come out again next year.

Danielle, 10th grade — Have you ever pictured yourself working outside in the sweltering Nebraska heat on a prairie? Before this summer, volunteering at a prairie never even crossed my mind. But when the opportunity arose, I took the chance. I volunteered out at Spring Creek Prairie once a week this summer. After the first couple of times I volunteered, I began to look forward to going to the prairie every week. The main reason I look forward to volunteering is that it was a change of pace. Compared to sitting at home for a good chunk of the time in the summer, working at Spring Creek Prairie was a chance to be outside. It was also a good opportunity to meet new people, discover and learn about the native ecosystem.



Isabella, Ahna, and Adam getting ready to tackle invasive shrubs.

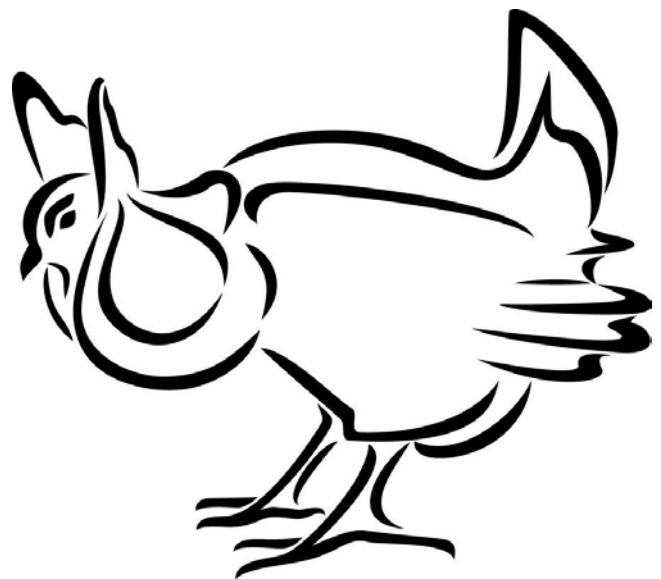
Isabella, UNL student — I'm a rising senior at UNL, double-majoring in Psychology and Environmental Studies. It's because of environmental studies that I decided to volunteer at Spring Creek Prairie — I've always liked the outdoors, but studying it more in-depth made me realize how much work goes into managing land, and I wanted to learn more about how that happens. Hands-on experience, as they say, is the best way to learn.

Despite having to take summer classes and so not being able to come down as often as I would have liked, I already feel like I've learned a lot—how to ID multiple kinds of plants on sight and the difference between native and non-native variants, the grazing patterns of cattle and how to repair an electric fence, and even how to drive a Gator (still working on this last one, though). There's also been a lot of really cool experiences, such as seeing a leopard frog relaxing on a pile of wood, or that one time we discovered a goldfinch nest—complete not only with male goldfinch feeding the female, but also with a cowbird egg inside.

All in all, my time at Spring Creek has so far been everything I'd hoped; a fun (if sometimes hot and sweaty), informative experience that I'll definitely never forget.



Danielle, Isabella, and Adam cutting sumac shrubs fragmenting the prairie habitat.



Board of Directors Update

The end of our fiscal year on June 30th also marked the end of the terms of several members of our Stewardship Advisory Board. Leaving the board were: Steve Gage, Sam Seever, Dan Semrad, and Barb Wright-Chollet. We thank them for their service and the board!

Five new members were elected to the Board and began three-year terms on July 1st. See below for brief biographies of each of them:

Brianne Bayer, Lincoln
Director, Marketing Strategy at the Arbor Day Foundation



"I have always loved to spend time outdoors in nature – it brings me joy and peace. And I believe that each of us have a personal responsibility to do our part to preserve the natural places of our planet. I am so excited to be a member of the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center board and to spread the mission of this wonderful place with everyone!"

Judy Carter, Crete
Programmer Analyst, University of Nebraska – Lincoln

"I was a big city girl, who married a small town boy that loved wild things. I followed him from the salt marshes of Virginia to the atolls of the Belize Barrier Reef to the prairies of Nebraska. I have come to cherish the wild things "as a sacred heritage, for our children and our children's children" (Theodore Roosevelt). Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center is a place where wild things can flourish and where the prairie habitat is preserved for our future generations."



Sue Kirkpatrick, Walton
Community Volunteer

Sue has been a habitat volunteer at the prairie for several years, helping Ed with invasive weed control and prescribed burning. "I grew up on a farm. After years and years of living in town, I'm excited to re-connect with my roots and do what I can to promote biodiversity."



Liz Lange, Lincoln
National Recognition and Awards Coordinator, University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Liz has a background in non-profit management and fundraising. She enjoys helping organizations find and leverage their strengths. "I support Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center because when we connect with nature, we connect with ourselves. I love spending time outdoors with my husband and two young boys. It is important to us that our kids grow up viewing nature as part of everyday life."



Adrian Olivera, Lincoln
Photographer, Adrian Olivera Photography

As a professional photographer, Adrian has made Spring Creek Prairie, as well as many other Nebraska wonders, the subject of his work. He, his wife, and children have also been regular prairie visitors for years. "We come out for the little ones, to plant a seed in them and teach them about wildlife and the prairie and all the diversity that is here."



Upcoming Events at Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center

Sunday, September 17

Tuesday, September 19

Friday, October 7

Tuesday, October 17

Friday, November 10

Sunday, December 3

Tastes in the Tallgrass, 4 – 7 pm *

Third Tuesday Bird Walk, 8 – 10 am

Fall Fest: Music 'cross the Meadow, 5 – 8 pm

Third Tuesday Bird Walk, 8 – 10 am

Nocturnal November, 7 – 8:30 pm *

Holiday Open House, 1 – 4 pm

For additional information and events, visit springcreekprairie.audubon.org

** Program fee*

Trails *Open daily sunrise to sunset*

Visitor Center

Open Monday – Friday 9 – 5

Saturday – Sunday 1 – 5

All year (except major holidays)

Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center Staff

Glynnis Collins - Director

Jason "the Birdnerd" St. Sauver - Community Education Director

Kevin Poague - Operations Manager

Ed Hubbs - Habitat Program Manager

Amy Plettner - Caretaker

Stewardship Board

Brianne Bayer

Bruce Johnson

Cindy Morris

Judy Carter

Sue Kirkpatrick

Adrian Olivera

Deb Dahab

Mari Lane Gewecke

Scott Stuckey

Judy Dougherty

Liz Lange

Tom Tallman

Jeff Hagaman

Jenni Lesoing-Lucs

Larry Williams

Jeff Jewell

Marilyn Moore

Audubon Nebraska Staff

Bill Taddicken - Interim Director

Carey Collingham - Corporate and Foundation Coordinator

Cindy Houlden - Donor Relations Coordinator

Admission

SCPAC Supporters (\$50+)

FREE

Adults

\$4

Seniors (60+)

\$3

Students

\$3

Ages 6 – 17

\$3

Ages 5 & Under

FREE

Tuesdays

FREE

Members of National Audubon Society and Wachiska Audubon Society receive \$1 off admission.

Wish List

Nest/Feeder Camera

Hardhat with Hearing Protection for Chainsawing

Post Hole Digger

Hedge Clippers (2 or more)

Fencing Pliers (2 or more)

Head Lamp (2 or more preferred)

Culvert for a Low Water Crossing

Water Tank for Cattle

Boot Cleaner Station (please call for requested model)

New Roof for Caretaker House

CONTACT US:

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PHONE: (402) 797-2301

EMAIL: scp@audubon.org

WEBSITE: SpringCreekPrairie.audubon.org

FIND US ON:



Looking for a place to host an event? Remember Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center when planning business meetings, wedding and anniversary receptions, and other get-togethers.