

Native Orchid Conservation Inc.
Stuartburn and Area Field Trip, August 29, 2015

From April's first growth to October's killing frost, the Tall Grass Prairie area is in constant metamorphosis - its colour, contour and fragrance changing from week to week. In August the prairie is aglow with expanses of golden Indian hemp grass, prairie cord grass, prairie dropseed and big bluestem; in amongst all the grasses are closed (bottle) and fringed gentians, meadow blazing star, various species of sunflower and the rare *Agalinis tenuifolia* (common slender false foxglove). Hidden among the grasses are native orchids: the remains of Hooded Ladies'-Tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*) while Great Plains Ladies'-Tresses (*Spiranthes magnicamporum*) are beginning to bloom, some right into September. At night the strongly scented flowers produce a vanilla-like fragrance. The plant can produce up to 40 white, cream-coloured or yellowish flowers which are arranged in a tight spiral.

Besides the Stuartburn region, we will visit remnants of the tall grass prairie near the village of Roseau and view the Roseau River (a 344 km. tributary of the Red River) atop its high cliffs, then onto the Senkiw suspension bridge. It was built in 1946 to enable students living on the south side of the river to attend Senkiw School on the north side. It replaced a hand-powered basket and pulley system that had been used nearby since 1916. The bridge, made of locally available materials such as cables wound around old threshing machine cylinders, was used daily by generations of local children. It required major repairs following a catastrophic flood in 1950. After the school closed in 1967, the bridge fell into disrepair. It was restored between 2004 and 2005 as a link in the Trans-Canada Trail, and was designated a municipal historic site in 2005.

Species list

Great Plains ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes magnicamporum*)
Hooded Ladies'-Tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*)
Pink-flowered onion (*Allium stellatum*) Kalm's Lobelia (*Lobelia kalmia*)
Prairie rose (*Rosa arkansana*) Closed Bottle gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*)
Small Fringed Gentian (*Gentiana procera*) Velvety goldenrod (*Solidago mollis*)
Upland White Goldenrod (*Solidago ptarmicoides*) Stiff goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*)
Gray/Showy Goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*) Sunflower (*Helianthus* spp.)
Purple prairie clover (*Petalostemon purpureum*) (finished)
Meadow blazing star (*Liatris ligulistylis*)
Big Blue Stem (*Andropogon gerardii*) Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*)
Hairy Golden-aster (*Chrysopsis villosa*) Purple-stemmed aster (*Aster puniceus*)
Carrionflower (*Smilax herbacea* L. var. *lasioneura*) - with berries
Virgin's Bower (*Clematis virginiana*) Wild grape vine (*Vitis riparia*)
Flax-leaved aster (*Ionactis linariifolius*)
Wolf willow/Silverberry (*Elaeagnus commutata*)
Northern Grass-of-Parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*)
Slender agalinis (*Agalinis tenuifolia*) (?) - check as there are two other species