



THE LONGSPUR PRAIRIE FUND

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

PARTNERSHIPS

LPF Sponsors First Fridays: Regenerative Grazing

LPF is excited to be sponsoring the next edition of **First Fridays** on Regenerative Grazing in partnership with **Food of the North**.

Three knowledgeable and passionate experts will engage in a virtual conversation on regenerative grazing: **Kevin Sedivec**, a professor of range science at **NDSU** and interim director of the **NDSU Central Grasslands Research Extension Center**; **Marshall Johnson**, Vice President and Executive Director for **Audubon Dakota**; and **Deanna and Cody Sands**, the owners and ranchers of **Sand Ranch-Prairie Soul Meats**.

Join the Zoom virtual event at 8:00 AM on 4 September, here: <https://minnstate.zoom.us/j/92731580487>

First Fridays is co-hosted by the **Cass Clay Food Partners**.

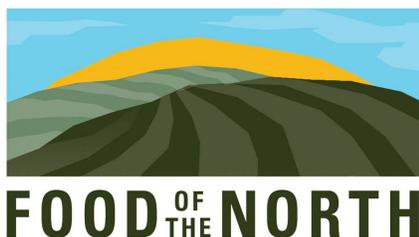


Photo: J. Whittaker

Area Families Celebrate Sixth Annual Bee Hunt!

Although most summer events were cancelled due to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the **Sixth Annual Bee Hunt** was ON and was the perfect opportunity for everyone to have a great time on the wide-open prairie in search of pollinators while still practicing social distancing. On **June 27th**, LPF welcomed a record number of families from the Red River Valley to **LPF Site 2** just west of Ulen, MN for our annual hunt! Event-goers heard from LPF resident scholar, **Dr. Joe Whittaker**, and LPF Executive Director, **Dr. Peter Schultz**, about the creatures who call the site home. Armed with digital cameras and smartphones, event-goers gathered images to add to the citizen-science database, iNaturalist, to aid *(cont. on page 2)*





Photo: S. Wai

Get Involved & Stay Tuned!

Longspur is on Facebook!

Can't wait for the next quarterly newsletter? Stay tuned to all the latest and greatest from Longspur on Facebook!

Follow us at:

[facebook.com/longspurprairie](https://www.facebook.com/longspurprairie)

Adopt-An-Acre

Together, we're building a network of restored prairies and wetlands in the Red River Valley. LPF offers five levels of annual prairie and wetland sponsorship. All proceeds directly support Longspur's programming and land acquisition initiatives.

Find out more at:

longspurprairie.org/adopt-an-acre

Regional News Archive

Keep up with the latest news of the ecology, agriculture, and sciences of the Red River Valley!

Read all about it:

longspurprairie.org/news

(cont. from page 1) in our understanding of our local pollinator ecologies. Studying our regional bee populations is vital to the health of our lands & our food systems. More than 100 U.S. grown crops rely on pollinators! By contributing to databases like iNaturalist, participants lend a hand to regional bee scholars and help shape their research for seasons to come. We hope to welcome you all to our Seventh Annual LPF Bee Hunt during **National Pollinator Week in June of 2021!**

The Sixth Annual Tent Fest Postponed to 2021

We have continued to closely monitor updates about the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and in careful consideration of the safety of its participants, The Sixth Annual LPF Tent Fest to be held in Ulen, MN will be postponed to 2021. We look forward to welcoming all our Tent Festers back to the prairie when we can safely gather and circle around the fireside, drink great beverages, listen to great music, trek the prairie, watch the sunset, and enjoy great company. Stay tuned next spring for a new date announcement!





Photo: S. Wai

On-Site | Tenth Avenue Micro-Prairie

Longspur's Site 8, the **Tenth Avenue Micro-Prairie**, is located in Moorhead and consists of one micro-plot located in the front yard of a residence. The site is privately-owned. Planting on Site 8 began in the fall of 2019. The site is now open -- for the entire community -- to enjoy all year long, sunrise to sunset.

The **Tenth Avenue Micro-Prairie** exists to connect our urban residential centers to habitat creation where it is most scarce by creating a home for hundreds of pollinators right in the heart of Moorhead. This site is one of a growing network of residential yards turning their marginally used spaces into blooming, buzzing, biodiverse habitats.

The seed mix utilized for the **Tenth Avenue Micro-Prairie** was gathered from **LPF Site 5 - the Elm Street Micro-Prairie** and **LPF Site 3 - The Rourke Micro-Prairie**. With each native wildflower producing a bounteous amount of seed for division, the potential for sustainable and exponential growth of residential prairies is significant.

Want to learn more about how YOUR yard could become habitat for native wildflowers and endangered pollinators? Reach out to schultz@longspurprairie.org to sponsor your very own micro-prairie!

Ashley Township Wetland Restoration Update

LPF's **Ashley Township Wetland Restoration Project** wrapped up on 21 August 2020.

This project was a collaborative initiative involving the **Minnesota Land Trust (MLT)**, the **MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)**, the **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** and -- most importantly -- a dairy farmer and two other private landowners.

The core of the 300+ acre complex is the first land ever enrolled in the **Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP)** within Stearns County.

We're proud of this achievement and its impact on our shared wilds.

Stay tuned for pics and more details in the Winter!



Photo: P. Schultz



Photo: M. Morken

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Prairie Spotlight | Moorhead Monarchs

In this season's prairie spotlight, we're proud to feature local superstar, **Mara Morken**, and her family's amazing summer project that started with a simple text from her father: "Any chance you want some monarch caterpillars?"

With only a day's notice before the milkweed and wigglers arrived, the Morken family was unable to obtain a butterfly habitat. However, they nabbed a \$6 mesh laundry basket from Target and transitioned the caterpillars to their new home. They immediately went to crunching on their milkweed leaves, putting away one to two leaves a day per caterpillar. The little ones grew and grew until the first caterpillar, named Tulip by the kids, was ready to shed into its chrysalis. It climbed to the top of the habitat and spun a tiny anchor to suspend from. Tulip folded into a J shape for roughly 24 hours before shedding one final time. There were lots of small shivers and contractions as the skin shed up and over the top of the chrysalis.

Around 10-14 days later, Tulip's chrysalis began to show blue veins (for about 12-18 hours) before turning black and orange. Hours after turning black and orange, they noticed slight ribbing on Tulip's chrysalis and all camped out around the habitat waiting for the butterfly to emerge. It didn't take long before the chrysalis began to shiver and open from the bottom! Out crawled a small butterfly with a massive abdomen and misshapen wings. They watched the abdomen contract to deliver fluid, which animates the wings. Just ten minutes later Tulip was a beautiful and completely normal looking butterfly!

They could tell Tulip's wings were dry when his flapping slowed down and he was willing to crawl onto an offered finger. After spending some time with him just hanging out on their fingers, they walked him to the neighbors' lush garden and released him. Amazing little Tulip fluttered off into the sunset.

Mara says, "The experience of watching a caterpillar shed into a chrysalis and then transform into a butterfly felt like witnessing magic. Scientific magic. We're lifers. We've got milkweed pods ready for spring and we're making a pollinator garden so next year we can hatch some magic again."

Thank you, Mara, for sharing your story with us! Stay tuned for more monarch magic soon!

Our Mission: The Longspur Prairie Fund is dedicated to fostering the experiences, insights, and pleasures found in the native landscapes of the Red River Valley by way of advocacy, education, and conservation. We respect farmers, hunters, business owners, their properties, and their communities. We protect native plants, animals, habitats, and their ecologies. We teach the wisdom of the prairie through the arts and sciences. We restore native landscapes and preserve them for all time.