

Prairie Smoke

On-Line

**Regional
 Science
 Center**

Spring 2008

www.mnstate.edu/regsci

Facilities

- Interpretive Center
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- Paul P. Feder Observatory

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- Buffalo River Site Programs

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- MAPS

Prairie Smoke On-Line

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Director's Fire



George Davis

As I write this essay in late April, Fargo-Moorhead is recovering from about nine inches of snow, a rude interruption to the warm-up to spring that we had been enjoying for a week or two. However, spring will come, then summer!

Soon the prairie will be alive with the 2008 version of its tallgrasses, and its colorful forbes with the deep green riparian woods along the Buffalo River running through it. Make a point this summer to invite one or more of your favorite people to join you on a walk through the Regional Science Center's Buffalo River Site, Buffalo River State Park and Bluestem Prairie complex just 15 miles east of Moorhead off highway 10. The prairie has a story to tell.

While you are exploring the tallgrass prairie, give some thought, if you are a teacher, to how you might include in your curriculum some of the rich experiences your students might have during a program at our Buffalo River Site. Some knowledge, skills, and understandings can only be gained by your students through a direct total-immersion experience. We would be glad to work with you on developing such a field experience for your class.

If you are a teacher whose classes have come to the Buffalo River Site for years, a walk through the prairie would be a great time to review the field experiences we have provided your classes over the years. What can we do to improve the experience?

If you have an interest in the natural world of the tallgrass prairie or the wonders of the night sky and have some time to volunteer we have deal for you! All you have to do is explore the opportunities using our website. Please go to our website's Volunteer Opportunities tab and explore the volunteer experiences that are available to you.

One volunteer opportunity is with our MAPS Bird Monitoring station. Working with our volunteer banders on one or more banding sessions will be like taking a mini workshop on the study of birds. There is no cost for this experience, except your time. You provide your time and interest, we will supply the rest. Contact us to volunteer.

On our Science Center website is a page that lists the Public Programs for 2008. A number of them are during the summer season. Interpretive center open houses might be a great time to have your walk on the prairie and then come to the interpretive center to get all your questions answered. There is a star party of night sky viewing on August 8th that your family would enjoy. For resources on night sky viewing check the Links/ Astronomy tab on our website.

On May 20th we will close the MSUM Planetarium for about 14 weeks as we complete phase I of our remodeling and updating. We will install a new heating/cooling system, a new floor, all new seats, and a new handicapped-accessible entrance. We will be ready to re-open for shows by September 14th.

Finally, this year is the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Minnesota as a state. The Regional Science Center will be providing programs by one of our interpretive naturalists in Buffalo River State Park again this summer. See the program schedule on our website. Two dates to keep in mind for a visit to the Park is Sunday June 1, 2008 which is an open house in the Park with no fees to enter. There will be a picnic meal hosted by the Friends of Buffalo River State Park that evening. There will be a special set of programs on June 21st in celebration of Minnesota's 150 years as a state. A picnic meal will be hosted by the Friends of Buffalo River State Park that evening too. Naturalist lead programs will be available each weekend.

The summer of 2008, gas is \$3.50/gallon and probably going higher. Stay close to home this summer and explore the wonderful and educational natural places in our neck of the prairie!



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We are very pleased with the ongoing response to our Friends of the MSUM Regional Science Center program. Please consider a contribution to the Science Center. The Regional Science Center relies on the support of our Friends to provide us with the resources to provide quality programming to over 23,000 persons each year. Below is a list of Science Center Friends:

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