

Carolina Piedmont Prairie Forbs

2008 Accomplishments

Restoring Piedmont Prairies



Buffalo roaming, Native Americans hunting, log cabins and sod houses, wide open fields whipped by the wind, girls running in calico dresses...these are all images of wild west prairies. Prairies weren't just a thing of the west though, they were also a large part of the woodland landscape in the piedmont of South Carolina.

From 1750 to 1860 many explorers and naturalists such as Hernando de Soto and William Bartram reported seeing many prairies, savannas and spacious openings in the Carolina Piedmont. Mark Catesby in 1720 saw "many spacious tracts of meadow-land...burdened with grass six feet high" and John Logan in 1859 reports "in the cane brakes...and on the extensive prairie ridges, the early pioneers and hunters found large herds of buffaloes and elks."

Native Americans annually burned the forest to improve hunting, travel and agriculture which created prairies. The USDA Forest Service with the SC Native Plant Society and Clemson University are restoring this disappearing land type. Plantings of grasses and forbs, periodic burnings and mowing won't bring back the buffalo, but they will provide forage and habitat for rabbits, deer, quail, sparrows and other songbirds.



Georgia aster



Sumter National Forest

In FY08, the four prairie interpretive sites on the Enoree and Long Cane Ranger Districts were maintained and enhanced and an interpretive sign (above) was developed. Carryover dollars were used to purchase herbicide and plant materials.

Year Awarded: 2007
Project Completed: Ongoing
Report number: 2
Expenditures:

- \$4,325 carryover

Partners: Clemson University & SC Native Plant Society
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