

Prairie technicians visit the prairie



Conservation Nursery Technician Samantha Morgan, Conservation Nursery Coordinator/Graduate Research Assistant Jeanne Dodds, and Wolf Haven International Conservation Specialist Anne Schuster identify native prairie plants. *Ricky Osborne.*

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Photos by Ricky Osborne

In May, Sustainability in Prisons Project (SPP) created a first-time educational experience for the prairie conservation nursery team at Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW). While Washington State Department of Corrections (WA Corrections) staff have had other chances to visit prairie sites, it was the first time that inmate technicians were able to see for themselves the rare landscape they help restore.

The WCCW team toured two partner sites, the Center for Natural Lands Management's Violet Prairie Seed Farm, and restored prairie at Wolf Haven International. Each of these sites receives plants produced at WCCW.

We toured the Wolf Haven restoration site with plant conservation specialists. We observed recovering populations of golden paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*), one of the endangered plants cultivated by the technicians at WCCW, and a species critical to Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly recovery. At Violet Prairie Seed Farm, the farm manager and work crew members presented some of the techniques and skills necessary to produce native seed on a large scale.

These site visits provided context and information to enhance the work of the technicians in the Conservation Nursery, and also adds education, training, and connections for their futures. 🐾



Samantha Morgan and Jeanne Dodds in the fields of *Plectritis congesta* at Violet Prairie Seed Farm. The site visits were the technicians' first opportunity to see the species they grow as mature plants. *Photo Ricky Osborne.*

At right: Ambrosia Riche looks closely at *Armeira maritima* in full bloom in the wild at Wolf Haven International. *Ricky Osborne.*



Ashley McElhenie uses a hand lens to examine a *Lomatium* species at Violet Prairie Seed Farm. *Photo by Ricky Osborne.*



Carl Elliott with rows of *Balsamorhiza deltoidea*, one of the primary plant species grown at WCCW. *Ricky Osborne.*



Anne Schuster, Conservation Nursery Technicians Ashley McElhenie, Ambrosia Riche, Samantha Morgan, and Conservation Nursery Manager Carl Elliott discuss Mima mound prairie topography. *Ricky Osborne.*



Samantha Morgan, Ambrosia Riche, and Ashley McElhenie identify prairie plant species with Carl Elliott at Wolf Haven International. *Ricky Osborne.*



Samantha Morgan, Ambrosia Riche, and Ashley McElhenie and WCCW Conservation Nursery Liaison Scott Skaggs with the massive branches of the Grandfather Tree at Wolf Haven International. *Ricky Osborne.*