



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Tallgrass Prairie
National Preserve

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Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve News Release

July 13, 2010
For Immediate Release
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Second Annual Butterfly Count Reveals Bounty of Species at Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

The second annual Marvin Schwilling Memorial Butterfly Count, which is part of a North American Butterfly Association official count, was conducted at Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve recently, revealing 44 butterfly species. Park staff conducted the count on June 26 supported by field researchers and participating visitors – many of whom returned after having experienced last year’s count. There was both high abundance and diversity of butterfly species,

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which included rare, prairie specialists like the regal fritillary and arogos skipper. These conservative species were found in good numbers, with over 330 regal fritillaries tallied.

Finding such a diversity of butterfly species may be an indication that changes in the prairie management to promote heterogeneity at the preserve is benefitting butterflies. Co- managed between the National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy, a change in prescription burn methods began in 2006, switching to a patch- burn operation. While too early to determine a cause and effect, the management practices may be having an influence on butterfly populations. Similarly, there have been noted changes in bird species diversity which also coincides with the change in burning practices since 2006.

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is located two miles north of Strong City, Kansas on state Highway 177 (the Flint Hills National Scenic Byway). For more information about the preserve or to make group reservations, visit the website at www.nps.gov/tapr, email tapr_interpretation@nps.gov, or call the preserve at (620) 273- 8494.

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