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Ecological Health: The interdependent health of humans, animals and ecosystems.

Dear Friend,

December, 2007

Hello again from the land of sun, wind, grass and blue sky. At last, it seems a global consensus is emerging for ACTION NOW to protect and restore our stricken Earth while we still have time. And not a moment too soon.

Out here in “Flyover Country,” we’ve been hard at work – we love good hard work producing measurable, tangible progress, and Great Plains Restoration Council is growing rapidly. Our successes are exhilarating, and we need your financial support more than ever in order to maintain and continue this growth. We must significantly increase our budget. Please consider supporting GPRC’s work by making a donation today.

Check out our successes:

In the last year we’ve:

Succeeded in protecting and creating a 12,000 acre new reserve out in West Texas, through a first-ever rural-urban partnership with Foard County. This land has been officially named the **Cynthia Ann Parker Wilderness**. Our Plains Youth InterACTION kids are already helping **design hiking trails and restoration plans. In a year or two, rare buffalo** (bison) from the remnant Southern Herd will be **reintroduced**, and they will be allowed to live as native wildlife, completely **unmanaged, without tags in their ears**, without feed trucks, roundups or anything. Though this reserve needs some restoration work (primarily mesquite removal), these first 12,000 acres of old Rolling Plains/mesa country of West Texas **provide a brand new ecological reserve in the Southern Plains**, and will ultimately provide excellent leveraging opportunities for expansion We also plan to **study the feasibility of ocelot reintroduction!** Bringing these endangered animals back to appropriate habitat on the Southern Plains **would be a major historic event.**

Succeeded in getting the National Park Service in South Dakota to agree to take down their 6.5 mile fence between the North Unit of Badlands National Park and **our new 4,600 acre good grass Oglala Prairie Preserve**, so that the Park’s buffalo, prairie dogs, black-footed ferrets and other native wildlife may have more room to roam and thrive. The Oglala Prairie Preserve is

a joint project between GPRC and Wildlands Restoration Corporation, and was purchased to protect this prairie land from being bought by a prairie dog killing club as well as to prevent exposing the western flank of the North Unit of Badlands National Park to industrial intrusion.

Designed the GPRC Plains Youth InterACTION Wheel, built up our youth program to regular operations, and restructured GPRC so that youth work is part of the structural framework through which all of GPRC's prairie wildlands recovery/protection projects proceed. Youth must have a leadership role in every action; through this process they gain the life and technical skills they need to be Ecological Health leaders working for vitality of self, community and Earth, all inter-related.

Succeeded in getting the Texas General Land Office to agree to work with us toward a conservation alternative rather than bulldozing the endangered tallgrass Fort Worth Prairie Park. Tallgrass prairie is the most endangered large ecosystem in North America, and the Fort Worth Prairie subregion offers an opportunity to preserve a priceless living ecosystem, which is critical to grassland nesting birds, carbon sequestration, the North American Monarch Migration, and people's health.

Formed a partnership with Trust for Public Land to save the endangered Fort Worth Prairie Park, a campaign that is still in process.

In South Dakota, on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, formed a new partnership and MOA with Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation to bring the buffalo back, help people get healthy and create, from the ground up, perhaps the greenest community on the Great Plains. Our Oglala Lakota team, having led the South Dakota work for over 5 years, is now even stronger with this merger, and 30 youth will now be taking care of their own health through taking care of the Earth, all centered around bringing life back to the South Unit of Badlands National Park (inside reservation borders), including buffalo, antelope, prairie dogs through the Oglala Tribal Wilderness initiative.

Re-activated the Denver, Colorado Office, with Lisa Wagner at the helm. Youth program is slated for opening in Spring 2008.

Helped reach an initial agreement with the City of Fort Collins, CO to bring wild buffalo back to the 55,000 acre Soapstone/Red Mountain High Plains project. Previous plans were instead for this new open space and golden opportunity to be used as a cattle ranch! Now plans can be put into place to have this shortgrass prairie ecosystem almost entirely recovered and thriving, with most of the native animals who populated the area before settlement back in their homeland. This will be excellent for native wildlife and local Front Range people who will have a wild plains experience close by.

Succeeded in getting Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) to agree to free the remnant Southern Herd of buffalo out of their 330 acre cage and let them roam the whole 15,000

acre Caprock Canyons State Park. All we need to do is **come up with the fencing costs**, and these animals will have much more room to roam. Being again able move their bodies over the landscape, if still ultimately confined, this will buy time to prevent them from losing their ancestral herd culture and behavior. And it will greatly improve the quality of their lives, too.

GPRC became 8 years old last month. Since inception, we've produced over \$35 million worth of work, and done so on a comparatively tiny budget. We've founded and built the framework of the emerging Ecological Health movement, which is “the interdependent health of humans, animals and ecosystems.” We are developing a body of work that **holistically addresses the most critical issues of our time**: our **collapsing biosphere**; profound gaps in **youth education**; a need for a **new model of work and health** that is not based on the separation of self, community and the environment; and a **direct interventionist approach to apathy, hopelessness and worse in young people who can become leaders in their own lives as well as in the larger world around them**. GPRC's particular niche is our belief and proven work – increasingly supported by medical evidence – **that people can help heal violence, illness, depression, despair, and conflict through personal participation in the protection/recovery of Nature. Through healing the Earth, we heal ourselves.**

With the publication of *Last Child in the Woods*, by **Richard Louv**, there's been much talk internationally about the recent studies showing that children who interact with Nature develop better in all ways. They score higher on tests, they get sick less often, and their concentration, motor skills, self-discipline, coordination, balance and agility, reasoning and observational skills, social interaction, and ability to handle stress are all markedly greater. GPRC ensures that our youth not only interact with Nature, but help lead the recovery of our prairie wilderness areas.

Dr. Richard Mollica's *Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World* is also an excellent book. A Harvard Medical Professor of psychiatry, and director of the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma, he has spent over 30 years helping people overcome every form of trauma, some of it so gruesome it defies words. His thesis: **“People have an inherent ability to heal themselves.”** Part of the problem in modern treatment is that “healing professionals... spend little time with their patients and are detached from their [patients'] social realities... Few therapists interact with patients within the patient's own social world. ... The concrete realities of the traumatized life remain unseen. ... Within this frame of reference, knowledge of the patient's trauma and corresponding natural world has no value.” He goes on to say, “Ancient Greek and Roman medical practitioners... understood that **human beings are part of nature and that their illnesses and healing are part of the world around them.**”

Unlike the world of separatism, GPRC is community based and works to bring everybody together around a common goal: *“Serving our Youth, Protecting our Prairie Earth.”*

Please help us build a strong, vital future toward that time when the buffalo are freer, our kids are healthy and self-empowered, and the waters flow free and clear again.

We need to raise a million dollars in order to manage and continue our growth.

Please help us work toward that time of peace and renewal, when we don't use violence to communicate with each other and our sacred, shattered Earth.

Please give as much as you can. You know your tax-deductible gift goes straight to our important work. It isn't squandered on fancy offices, excess staff or costly fundraising. We at GPRC have committed our lives to doing this critical work, but we can't do it without your generous support.

Thank you very much – from all of us out here in the land of sun, wind, grass and blue sky. May you be blessed in all ways in 2008.

Sincerely,

Jarid Manos
CEO
Great Plains Restoration Council

P.S. Please don't put this letter down without picking up your pen and writing Great Plains Restoration Council as generous a check as you can. If it is easier for you, you may also give at our website:

www.gprc.org/memberformonline.html

You know your gift will be used wisely and effectively to help heal the Great Plains and build new Ecological Health leaders in our youth. Thank you very much for caring.