



Spirit Mound Trust News

P. O. Box 603 | Vermillion, SD 57069 | info@spiritmound.org | www.spiritmound.org | December 2024

A Landscape of Change

Meghann Jarchow

I am guessing that many of you who are reading this newsletter have stood at the top of Spirit Mound. If I am correct about that, please put yourself there again. Feel the wind – always the wind – and see the Nebraska border more than 10 miles to your south with the Missouri River running up against it, see the Loess Hills of Iowa more than a dozen miles to the east, and imagine the glaciers creating that flattened expanse to the north.

Captains Meriweather Lewis and William Clark were among the first people to write about this view, as many of the Native American people who lived in the region had oral traditions. Clark wrote:

Some time before we got to the hill we observed great numbers of Birds hovering about the top of this Mound... I discovered that they were Cetechig [catching] a kind of flying ant which were in great numbers about the top of this hill,... near the top of this hole I observed three holes which I supposed to be Prairie Wolves or Braroes,.. from the top I could not observe any woods except in the Missourie Points and a few Scattering trees on the three Rivers in view... we observed Several large gangus of Buffalow & Elk feeding upwards of 800 in number... we Set out for our boat, Cross the Creek three times wast deep, passing down an ellgent bottom of about a mile in width bordered by a ridge of about 50 feet from the top... here we got Great quantities of the best largest grapes I ever tasted, Some Blue Currents still on the bushes, and two kind of Plumbs, one the Common wild Plumb the other a large Yellow Plumb growing on a Small bush, this blumb is about double the Size of the Common and Deliscously flavoured— Those plains are leavel without much water and no timber all the timber on the Stone [Vermillion] River would not thickly timber 100 acres of land (Journals of the Lewis & Clark Expedition, Univ. of Nebraska Press).

One of the reasons why Spirit Mound was able to be purchased and turned into a state park was because of a change that had occurred on the landscape.¹ Lewis and Clark

did not hike more than 10 miles from the Missouri River to Spirit Mound: they traveled about 4 miles from where the Missouri River was in 1804. In the flood of 1881, an ice dam caused the Missouri River to flood, flooding much of the city of Vermillion, and the river settled into a new channel (see map on page 2).

Just as the Missouri River is not the same as it was in 1804, the viewscape around Spirit Mound is not the same. The landscape that Clark described has been replaced by mostly farm fields and treed farmsteads. A landscape dominated by prairie plants and animals whose abundance and distribution were determined by the climate and biogeography has been replaced by non-native plants and animals whose abundance and distribution are determined by our needs from the land. Over the next 10-20 years, I expect that the viewscape around Spirit Mound will continue to change—for example, as the production of solar and wind energy continue to increase.

Although Spirit Mound Historic Prairie is a 320-acre piece of land, Spirit Mound Trust is committed to advocating for careful consideration of the broader viewscape around the Mound. Members of Spirit Mound Trust heard that at least three companies had contacted stakeholders about developing large-scale solar energy farms (e.g., up to 2000 acres – more than 3 square miles) near Spirit Mound,² so we proactively reached out to the Clay County Commissioners in July 2023 asking them to “create a two-mile setback from the boundaries of Spirit Mound Historic Prairie from all above-ground commercial development, including, but not limited to, solar projects.”

We continued to be involved in the hearings as the Clay County Planning & Zoning Commission and the Clay County Commissioners developed a large-scale solar zoning ordinance for the county. In February 2024, Spirit Mound Trust revised our setback request to one mile to align our request with the minimum setback requested from the National Park Service and Clay County Historic Preservation Commission. The large-scale solar zoning ordinance that was passed

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¹ Please also read the article by Pat Gross about the late Senator Tim Johnson’s role in acquiring Spirit Mound.

² One aspect of the land around Spirit Mound that is attractive to large-scale solar developers is the Spirit Mound Station and transmission infrastructure associated with the electricity production plant, which is less than 2 miles northwest of Spirit Mound Historic Prairie.

in June 2024 has a 0.25 mile setback from Spirit Mound (Ordinance No. 2024-03), which was a disappointment to many of us on the Trust.

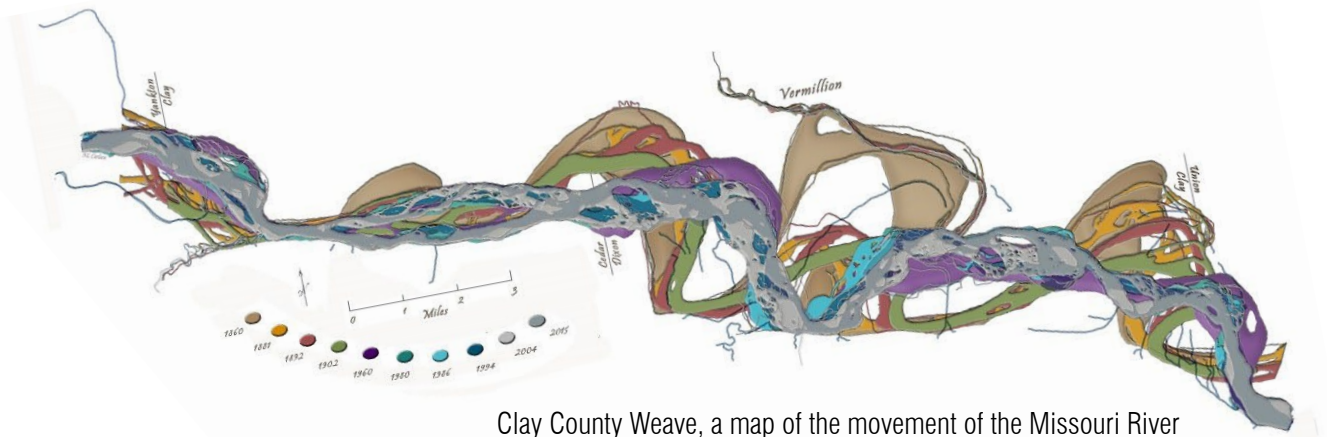
Any large-scale solar development project would need to obtain a conditional use permit from the Clay County Planning & Zoning Commission before beginning. If a large-scale solar farm is proposed around Spirit Mound, members of the Board of Directors of Spirit Mound Trust intend to be active in advocating for Spirit Mound's viewscape as those conditional use permits are developed. I am strongly supportive of solar and wind energy development. I think that surrounding Spirit Mound with solar farms would negatively impact the glimpse into the past—and deep connection to our place—that Spirit Mound provides, *and* I think that there would be ways to develop solar and wind energy production around Spirit Mound that would not detract from the viewscape.

One benefit that occurred from the development of the solar farm zoning ordinance is that we—Spirit Mound Trust; SD Game, Fish, and Parks; National Park Service; and Clay County Historic Preservation Commission—reviewed Spirit Mound's current designations and are discussing updat-

ing and expanding those designations. Spirit Mound is a state park, it is a spur route on the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, it is designated as part of the Missouri National Recreational River, it is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the trail is designated as a National Recreational Trail.

Clark said, "from the top of the Mound, we beheld a most butifull landscape," and many of us agree with Clark about this. Here are some reflections written by recent visitors of Spirit Mound.

- Beautiful. You see many animals on your way up. You see miles and miles away. The beauty of South Dakota lies here.
- I enjoy sitting and looking down at the tiny world. Coming here tonight was a good idea. The sunsets prettily. The lights of the houses sparkle brighter at night. I love the world around me.
- Looking out I think of all the wild places we have lost and I treasure these few places left to us.
- So quiet and peaceful, could stay up here all day. Can see for miles around. Love the beautiful prairie grass and wild flowers. Nothing like it.



Clay County Weave, a map of the movement of the Missouri River within Clay County from 1860 to 2015, was created by former Spirit Mound Trust Board of Directors member Nancy Carlsen.

National Historic Landmark Status

Bill Ranney

The recent zoning decisions affecting Spirit Mound have prompted discussions about how to protect the view shed around the historic prairie. The concept of view shed within the Historic Preservation community arose in part from a development proposed in 1955 that would have adversely affected the view from the front of Mount Vernon. That initial challenge was successfully countered, but there has been a continued fight to protect the view shed. The methods used have included acquisition of adjacent properties, scenic easements and land conservation easements. (A detailed timeline of the efforts to protect the Mount Vernon view shed can be found at <https://mtv-main-assets.mountvernon.org/files/pages/linkset/uploads/3-brief-history-mv-view-shed.pdf>)

A major action to protect the Spirit Mound view shed is to have the site designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL). Curt Dimmock, Superintendent of the MNRR, and advice from Liz Almlie, SD Historic Preservation Specialist for the Southern Region have suggested that the first step in the process is to update the National Register form for Spirit Mound. The original nomination was submitted in 1974 by General Lloyd Moses, and much has happened since then. A new form will need to be completed, and the recent history of acquiring the property and Spirit Mound becoming part of the South Dakota parks system, in association with the National Park Service, will be added.

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A second step will be to seek input from Native American tribes, those most closely associated with Spirit Mound. A possible result of this interaction may be to have the property considered a Traditional Cultural Landscape.

The final step will be to prepare a National Historic Landmark nomination for Spirit Mound Historic Prairie. There are currently sixteen National Landmarks in South Dakota, which include Bear Butte and the Mitchell Prehistoric Indian Village. One nearby NHL is the Sergeant Floyd Monument in Sioux City. The marble monument replaced a cedar post put in by Lewis and Clark in 1804 and is considered an original National Historic Landmark.

The process of making a National Historic Landmark nomination is a lengthy endeavor and will take two to five years to accomplish. The process has multiple levels of review, including national experts, the Landmarks Committee, the National Park System Advisory Board, and a final

determination by the Secretary of the Interior. The initial step in the process will be a letter of inquiry from the Spirit Mound Trust to the National Park Service. The NHL program staff will determine whether the property meets the criteria needed and will then provide guidance as the nomination is prepared.

The Clay County Historic Preservation Commission (CCHPC) voted to sponsor the project with the donated time needed to prepare a revised National Register form. The goal will be to have the revised form completed this winter and submitted in Spring, 2025. A letter of inquiry from the Spirit Mound Trust should also be prepared. As is all too apparent, the fight to protect our historic resources is often subject to the vagaries of political decision-making, and our timeline for the completion of a National Historic Landmark nomination will have to reflect those vagaries.

Early Map of Spirit Mound

Doris Peterson, Archivist, I.D. Weeks Library, USD

One of the earliest maps to show Spirit Mound is the 1856 map *Reconnoissances in the Dakota Country* by Lt. Warren. Governour K. Warren was a topographic engineer with the U.S. Army expeditions on the northern plains from 1855 to 1857. *Reconnoissances in the Dakota Country* is one of the maps that resulted from these trips.

Where did he hear or read about Spirit Mound? Before the excursions, he studied the maps of Fremont and Stansbury and talked to traders who had been in the area (Schubert p. 117). He also had a few opportunities to talk to Indigenous residents during his fact-gathering trips. Did he visit Spirit Mound himself as he travelled on the Missouri River between St. Louis and Ft. Pierre? The answer to these two questions could be in the Warren Papers in the New York State Library in Albany, New York.

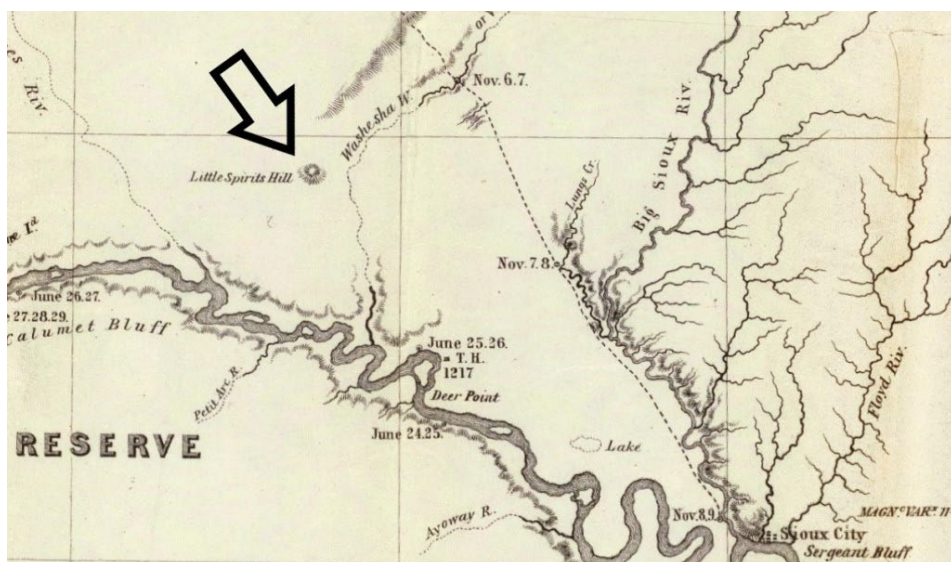
While I did not see Spirit Mound or Little Spirits Hill in the right location on maps older than Warren's map (excluding those from the Lewis and Clark expedition), I think I see something related to Turkey Ridge, which is another local landform. On Fremont's and Nicollet's 1842 map titled *Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River* is Old Sioux Turkey Hunting Ground. Spirit Mound is considered by many to be the southern end of Turkey Ridge.

The two maps can be viewed in the Archives and Special Collections on the USD campus or on the many online map collections. David Rumsey Map Collection is one example.

Sources

Schubert, Frank N. *Vanguard of Expansion: Army Engineers in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1819-1879*. Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, Office of Administrative Services, Office of the Chief of Engineers, 1980. Print. UG23 .S38

Warren, G. K. (Gouverneur Kemble), and Frank N. Schubert. *Explorer on the Northern Plains: Lieutenant Gouverneur K. Warren's Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska and Dakota, in the Years 1855-'56-'57*. Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, Office of Administrative Services, Office of the Chief of Engineers, 1981. Print. UG125.U580 W37x



Reconnoissances in the Dakota Country map
By Governour K. Warren

Our Tribute to Tim Johnson

Pat Gross

Vermillion native Tim Johnson passed away October 8th leaving a legacy of 36 years in public service, the longest of any public servant in South Dakota history. Johnson's contributions to South Dakota and the nation have since been heralded by local, state and national leaders. Johnson played a critical role in the purchase and preservation of Spirit Mound.

In reviewing a history of the purchase of Spirit Mound, written in part by Justin Elhoff in 2003 ("From Feedlot to Prairie: The Recent History of Spirit Mound and the Spirit Mound Trust") we learn that in the mid 1960's local citizens started to recognize and raise concerns over the potential destruction of the Mound site, one of the few remaining Missouri River landmarks directly associated with Lewis and Clark. By 1986 considerable efforts to organize and take on the challenges of protecting Spirit Mound had both low and high points. Organizers detailed and focused their work on three objectives; purchase, preserve and restore the historical acreage. The State of SD was asked in 1995 to be involved and contribute to the effort by using \$250,000 of Transportation Enhancement Grant cost-share monies. While there was state support and potential funding, the effort failed in 1996 over concerns that the local match of \$144k was unattainable. Co-incidentally, the National Park Service came forward with a \$2,500 grant to develop and print a presentation document which would be used to describe and demonstrate the historical significance of Spirit Mound. It was clear that outside larger sources of money would be needed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the Trust.

With the upcoming nationwide bicentennial celebration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 2003-2006 and a perceived lack of involvement at the time by South Dakota, the value of Spirit Mound being included in the celebration was raised with the state. Steven Ambrose's book *Undaunted Courage* had been published in 1996, and Ken Burns had produced his PBS documentary about the journey. River communities realized that recognition from the bicentennial had potentially great economic value. In 1998 the state was again asked for its involvement. While it supported efforts by the Trust, the lack of a local match continued to prevent it from being involved in the purchase of Spirit Mound.

Senator Tim Johnson stepped in. Johnson pledged to acquire the funding to purchase Spirit Mound, at that time, estimated to be \$600,000. He acquired funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, an account shared by federal agencies for the purchase of federal lands. It was a complex process that required both authorization and appropriations by Congress before final action could be taken. On August 24, 1998, Senator Johnson confirmed to the Spirit Mound Trust and fellow Vermillion residents the Congressional Authorization to purchase the Spirit Mound site. In October

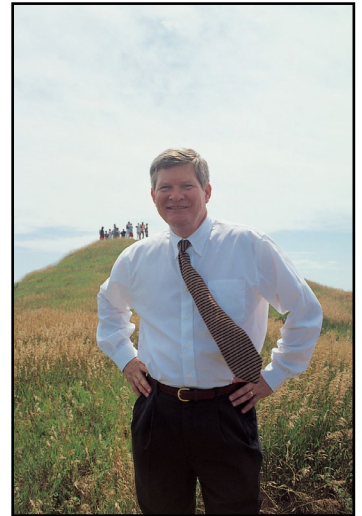
of that year \$600,000 was added to the 1999 National Park Service budget for the acquisition of the 320-acre site. The Senate passed HR 149 in late 1999; the House passed the same legislation in early 2000 and on March 10, 2000, President Clinton signed the bill into law.

What followed was complex teamwork by local, state and federal players to successfully complete the transition of ownership from private to public control. It included financial support from the state for restoration work, and \$83,345 of local match from the City of Vermillion, Clay County, Vermillion Chamber of Commerce and the Spirit Mound Trust. The Trust also successfully applied for and received a National Park Service Grant of \$80,000. Ultimately, the SD Game, Fish and Parks Department acquired and now manages the state-owned property for the benefit of the public with the help and guidance of the Spirit Mound Trust. On July 29, 2001, Tim Johnson came to Vermillion and presented a symbolic check for \$600,000 for the purchase of the Mound.

On a personal note, having had the benefit of his friendship and being his state director during his tenure in the U.S. House of Representatives, I know Spirit Mound was very close to Tim's heart. We interrupted many travel schedules to swing by the Mound over the years. Of the many South Dakota projects he involved himself in, Spirit Mound ranked at the top.

Longtime Trust member Mark Wetmore recalls coming down from the top of the Mound one day and meeting Tim, hiking by himself, on his way up. And in retirement, even as he faced serious and recent health challenges, he managed to visit the Mound with his wife Barbara. It was a very special place for Tim, as it is for so many others.

We remember his check presentation remarks as he stood on the site that day and said, "People are not remembered only for what they build, but for what they save as well." Tim's legacy includes the saving of Spirit Mound and for that contribution he will be long remembered.



Tim Johnson
Photo by Jerry Wilson

*"PEOPLE ARE NOT REMEMBERED FOR WHAT
THEY BUILD, BUT FOR WHAT THEY SAVE AS WELL."*

Senator Tim Johnson (1946-2024)

Motus at Spirit Mound

David Swanson, Department of Biology, University of South Dakota

Spirit Mound is soon to become a part of the Motus Network. Most people are probably not familiar with the Network, an international effort to track movements of small wildlife, such as birds, bats, and even larger insects like dragonflies and butterflies. The Motus Network (Motus is Latin for “movement”) is a collection of permanent tracking stations that are set to receive radio-signals at the frequency emitted by the Motus nanotags. The system was initially started by the conservation group Birds Canada, which still maintains the data repository of all detections from the entire network. The network has now expanded to include many collaborators, and Motus tracking stations now cover much of North America, large areas of South America and Europe, and a few locations in Asia, Africa, and Australia.

Not all of North America has the same density of station coverage, however. A high density of stations exists east of the Mississippi River, so a migratory bird flying over that region is likely to be detected at several locations along its migratory route. Scattered Motus stations exist in western North America, with higher densities in southern California, western Oregon and Washington, southern British Columbia, and in the Salt Lake City, Utah area. There are fewer, but increasing numbers of Motus stations in central North America. For example, there are currently five Motus stations in South Dakota. All the South Dakota stations are in grasslands in the southwestern part of the state, and are concentrated on tracking grassland bird species, especially Long-billed Curlews, a grassland nesting shorebird. Another Motus station is located near Inwood, Iowa, near the Big Sioux River, with a range that extends into South Dakota. You can find a map of all current Motus stations at the Motus global website (<https://motus.org/>).

Motus receivers consist of a set of 3-5 antennae facing in different directions that are attached to a roof (like a TV antenna) or a tower. These receivers are constantly “listening” for the radio frequency emitted by the Motus nanotags, so any tagged organism moving by the station will be detected and identified. These Motus receivers have a range of detection of approximately 15 km (9 miles), although the range is somewhat dependent on topographic and landscape conditions surrounding the station; those on elevated locations and in open areas have the greatest range. Consequently, ideal placement of stations for a project is to have adjacent stations situated about every 15-18 miles, creating a “fence” of receivers that will detect any tagged organism moving through the region.

The nanotags used for tracking with the Motus system emit radio signals at a single frequency with a coded system for individual identification. They weigh as little as 0.15 g, which means 15 of them together would weigh about as much as a dime. Tracking guidelines for birds suggest that attached tags should weigh no more than 3% of the body



LeConte's Sparrow
Photo by Dave Swanson

mass, so as not to impede the normal activities of the bird. Thus, the nanotags can easily meet these recommendations and allow attachment to even tiny ruby-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets, which weigh about 6 grams.

I've been working with staff of the wildlife diversity program at the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks to develop some tracking projects, focused on bird species of conservation concern, that would help build out the Motus Network in South Dakota. The Spirit Mound Trust has been generous in pledging money to help purchase a Motus station that will be situated near Spirit Mound as a part of these projects. One of these projects deals with migration stopover biology of LeConte's sparrows. This study will attach Motus nanotags to these sparrows, which are uncommon throughout their breeding range in north-central North America but are common during migration from mid-September through mid-October at Spirit Mound. Tracking these sparrows will allow us to determine how long individual birds spend at restored prairie habitats, like Spirit Mound, compared to how long they spend at other grasslands, like CRP fields, in the region. Coupled with measurements of fattening rates from captured birds, these data will allow us to estimate the relative habitat quality for migrating sparrows at restored prairie vs. CRP grassland study sites. Such information can have important implications for the development of conservation plans for grassland birds and grassland habitats in the region.

We hope to initiate these studies within the next couple of years, but in the meantime, take a trip out to Spirit Mound in the fall to view these beautiful little sparrows.

OLLI's Spirit Mound State Historic Prairie Series

Holly Straub

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of South Dakota offered a Spirit Mound State Historic Prairie Series in April of 2024. It included three classroom sessions held at Vermillion Public Library and a visit to Spirit Mound, guided by some of the knowledgeable presenters. The six presenters were Meghann Jarchow, Grace Freeman, David Swanson, Mark Sweeney, William Ranney, and Molly Rozum. Topics included the prairie flora, medicinal plants, birds, geology, and the anthropology and history of Spirit Mound, including the visit by Lewis and Clark. OLLI offers classes such as this for people who want to learn for the love of learning. The highly informative sessions were well attended and appreciated by all!



Photo by Holly Straub

2024 Spirit Mound Management A Look Forward for Next Year

Jason Baumann, District Park Supervisor, SD Games, Fish & Parks

As in all years, in 2024 there was always plenty to do at Spirit Mound. The GFP management team picks one big project every year to work on, and this year it was to replace the walking bridge over the creek. The old bridge was showing its age as the wood was starting to deteriorate. It was getting a bit short for the creek, creating a trip hazard, and parts of it had been burnt in the wildfire we had a few years ago.

The Newton Hills and Adams Homestead staff picked August 15th as the day to start the work, anticipating that we would have it completed over the next week. As always staff did a great job, worked faster than expected, and completed the job in just a few days! One of the side projects we completed while working on the bridge was bringing a brush cutter mounted on a skid loader and using the equipment to remove all of the woody cover from the prairie. This was an important task to complete because trees have been slowly creeping in and threatening to take over parts of the prairie. This was also important for future management of the prairie as a natural resource.

As we wrap up the 2024 season we are starting to look ahead into next year and plan our work. We are going to target the trail to the top of the Mound with additional trail surfacing to replace what has been lost over the years. We will also take a close look at some of the trail retaining boards used to level the trail. Some that have been in place for years are getting soft, and some were affected by the wildfire.

We are also going to try haying part of the prairie to give it that disturbance native prairie needs to stay viable and healthy. The prairie has been divided into six management areas with the idea that each year we will focus on one section to create the necessary disturbance. There are several tools we can use, such as fire, grazing and haying. With all options potentially being available to us. The most difficult of those options to use is fire because fire is heavily regulated, and the easiest option is haying by a local farmer.

With each passing year there are unique challenges and opportunities on the Mound. We will remain flexible with planned work. Over the last several years, we have taken on some big projects at the Mound, and we look forward to a few more that will really make this historic site stand out.

See ya out there!



Photo by Jason Baumann

A Poem

by Lance Henson

*at spirit mountain
one takes small steps that
lead to the top
and beyond*

*the fields plowed
deep furrows that ask you
to see yourself
in the winds open sound*

*wind risen in an ocean
of cloud
that in the distance
to the south
falls to rain*

*wakan land
we lift our eyes to your
mirror
and see the smallness
of ourselves.*

[Editor's note: Southern Cheyenne poet, Lance Henson, visited Spirit Mound with me in 1978 and subsequently sent this poem to my husband and me.]



Flower background on Poem and Night Sky.

Photos by Geoffrey Gray-Lobe

Spirit Mound Trust Board of Directors

Meghann Jarchow, President; David Swanson, Vice President;
Molly Rozum, Treasurer; Norma Wilson, Newsletter Editor;
Patrick Gross, Brian Hazlett, Mark Wetmore, and Coral Huber

Spirit Mound Pins

Spirit Mound Trust collector pins available.
Start your collection today.

The Bird Series

The first pin in 2016 was the *Bobolink*. A limited number are still available.



The second pin was the *Northern Harrier* in 2017.



Followed the third and final bird pin in 2018 the *Upland Sandpiper*.



The Butterfly Series

This series of pins showcase the beauty of the butterfly that inhabit the area around the Mound.

The first pin in the series is the 2019 *Monarch*.



The second pin added in 2020 to the series is the *Black Swallowtail*.



Added in 2021 to complete the series is the *Regal Fritillary*.



Ron Backer 24.5" x 22" prints are still available

To order the pins or print, use the form on the back of this newsletter. Email: info@spiritmound.org to make arrangements for local pickup and avoid shipping costs.

Sharing Seed With a New Prairie

Geoffrey Gray-Lobe

On August 21st, a group of first-year USD students spent their morning gathering seed at Spirit Mound for an upcoming prairie restoration project at Clay County Park. The 13 students were participating in USD's "New Yote Community Engagement" program, which provides service-learning opportunities the week before classes start to help students make connections in their new home. Over the next several months, additional student groups and local residents engaged in eight more local seed gathering and processing events, generously donating more than a total of 300 volunteer hours to this project.

Thanks to their efforts, Clay County Park's upcoming 31.5-acre prairie restoration project will feature at least 35 species descended from locally hand-gathered seed. Many of these species will be local ecotype varieties sourced from prairie remnants less than 30 miles from the restoration site. "Local ecotype" refers to varieties which are not only species native to this area, but specific lineages known to have evolved over thousands of years, precisely here.

Planting the new prairie at Clay County Park will begin in the Winter of '24-'25 with a community hand-broadcasting event sometime after the first snow. A drill-seeding in the spring utilizing seed purchased with two, \$5,000 anonymous donations and a SD Dakota Skipper Grant from Pheasants Forever will ensure an extremely diverse mix of native species.

Once established, the new Clay County Park Prairie will itself become a source of local ecotype seed. The volunteer community which organized to collect the seed for this project looks forward to continuing their work in coming years to add more local varieties at Spirit Mound and the Clay County Park Prairie and support establishment of other new restoration projects in the area.

Hand-gathering seed is a joyful experience on many levels. There's no better way to familiarize oneself with individual species and the marvelous and diverse methods of propagation they employ. It offers a wonderfully intimate encounter with the sensory richness of the prairie. And perhaps best of all, it's deeply rewarding to know that one is furthering the hopes of the beautiful plants which offer up their seed so generously each year. Filling our buckets again and again with lead plant, bush clover, blazing star, and purple coneflower, I silently thanked the plants which had worked so hard to produce this bounty and assured them that we would carry their offspring to a place where they could begin the centuries-long project of recreating something like the ancient prairies we have lost.

If you are interested in learning more or participating in future prairie restoration, contact me: ggraylobe@gmail.com.



Photos by
Geoffrey Gray-Lobe



Vermillion High School Class of 1959 Visits the Mound

*Molly Rozum, Department of History,
University of South Dakota*

As a part of celebrating the 65th anniversary of their high school graduation, members of Vermillion's class of 1959 and their families met at Spirit Mound Historic Prairie on August 3rd. It was hot and sunny with the temperature well past 80°F by 10:30 a.m. Alumnus Dick Nelson contacted me while organizing the weekend's tours. That morning, I presented a short history of the Trust Board and its efforts to preserve the Mound and manage its grasslands. Nelson discussed Lewis and Clark's 1804 trek to the Mound, noting that it is one of the few, if not the only, site where we know the two men stood together on the grasslands (the two usually had different duties). He also showed an Osage Orange walking stick, explaining that Lewis and Clark sent a sample of the tree, famous for its large "hedge apples," back to President Jefferson as an example of some of the new plant life they had already encountered.

Members of the class of 1959 reminisced about the Mound. One woman had lived in a house on the property in the same place as the picnic shelter; she recalled going to the top of Spirit

Mound to shoot off fireworks during the summer. Another called the Mound an outdoor "playground." Several classmates remembered tobogganing down the Mound in winter. Sledding down the east side of the Mound marked one as mature because it was so steep. Another recounted that her teacher took students to Spirit Mound at least

once a year. Several recalled different ideas that circulated about the Mound, such as that it marking a burial ground (it didn't), but also remembered learning correctly that the site had special spiritual significance for Indigenous nations. All agreed that Spirit Mound served as one backdrop to their youth, always present as part of their sense of place.



Many from the group standing at the entrance to the pathway to the Mound peak.

Photo by Jim Naylor, Brandon University, Manitoba



Spirit Mound Creek and surrounding grasses and flowers were abundant this past summer.

Photos by Norma Wilson



Spirit Mound Trust

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Photo by Geoffrey Gray-Lobe

Spirit Mound Historic Prairie Membership Renewal and Order Form

Spirit Mound Trust membership is \$10 per year. Additional donations are welcome, and all are tax deductible. Your support helps to develop a better, more diverse historic prairie and fund other programs to make the Mound a more interesting place to visit. If you live in the Vermillion area and want to avoid shipping charges on the pins, send an email to: info@spiritmound.org to make arrangements. Please join us:*

Renew your membership online at the Trust's Spirit Mound Historic Prairie website: <https://www.spiritmound.org>. Click on the homepage's "JOIN AND DONATE" button to renew.

Please add my name to the 2024 membership roll of the Lewis and Clark Spirit Mound Trust. I enclosed my check for \$10 (tax deductible*). Members will receive our newsletter.

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*Tax exempt 501 (c) (3) organization (No 93-0921345)

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*Thank
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