

IDNR Large Project Grant #03-L19W

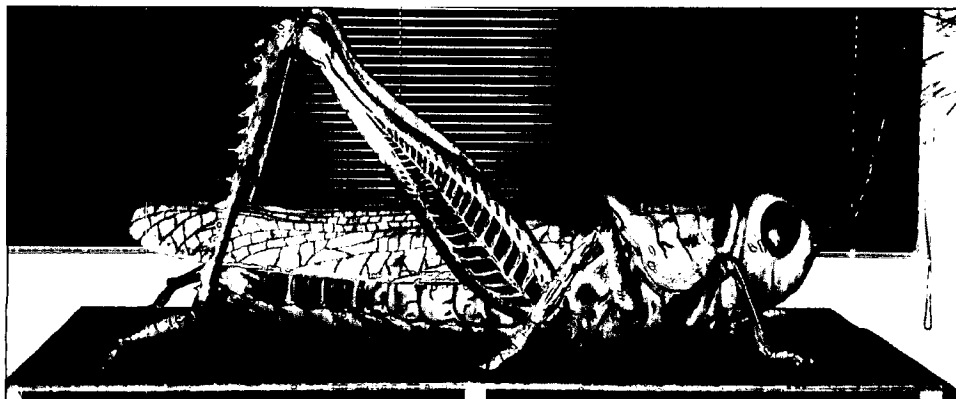
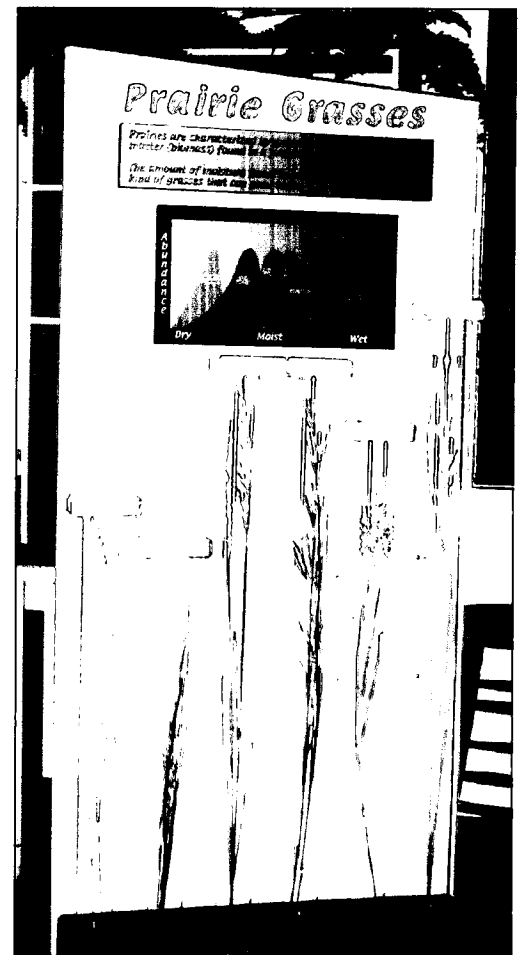
The Illinois Prairie Ecosystem: An Exhibit for the INHS Mobile Science Center

The construction of the exhibit on the Illinois Prairie Ecosystem is well underway and is scheduled to be premiered at the Illinois Prairie Conference at Parkland College on Sept. 20-21, 2003.

All the necessary materials have been purchased and all the exhibit panels have had their content completed, with assistance from a variety of INHS scientists. The contents of the exhibit panels are as follows: What is a Prairie?; Formation of Prairie; Prairie Mammals; Prairie Birds; Bison on the Prairie; Native Americans on the Prairie; Prairie Insects; Prairie Reptiles and Amphibians; Fire and Prairie Restoration; History of the Prairie in Illinois; The Prairie Chicken; The Prairie Rattlesnake, and A Prairie Quiz. Several school systems in Illinois have already scheduled visits from the Mobile Science Center with its new prairie exhibit for the fall of 2003.

To engage persons who visit the Mobile Science Center Exhibit, we will provide a clipboard that contains a series of questions/activities that can be completed while visited and interacting with the various panels. We have found this technique to be very effective with the current Arthropods Across Illinois exhibit. We have also found that the concept of the Mobile Science Center—the MSC visits a small city or rural school district for a day or two, trains students, who then bring their parents and show them what they have learned from the MSC—to be a very engaging tool for bringing natural resource science to the communities.

The two images on this report are examples of what exhibit panels and materials look like and their overall quality. The top right panel features actual samples of Illinois prairie



grasses, while the large prairie grasshopper, complete with internal organs, is a feature of the prairie insect panel.

Final report submitted by
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July 19, 2003