

## AMERICAN PRAIRIE FOUNDATION RECRUITING EXPERT AND CITIZEN SCIENTISTS FOR BIOBLITZ IN NORTH CENTRAL MONTANA

For more information: Kayhan Ostovar, Rocky Mountain assistant professor, Environmental Science, 406) 657-1175 / [kayhan.ostovar@rocky.edu](mailto:kayhan.ostovar@rocky.edu)

Or: Please visit [bioblitz.americanprairie.org](http://bioblitz.americanprairie.org) or email [bioblitz@americanprairie.org](mailto:bioblitz@americanprairie.org).

PHOTO ATTACHED: Kayhan Ostovar, Rocky Mountain College assistant professor of environmental science, describes a Heliconia flower to students during an environmental field trip to La Selva Reserve in Costa Rica. Ostovar is helping organize a BioBlitz this summer on the American Prairie Reserve in Montana. (Courtesy RMC)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILLINGS -- American Prairie Foundation is currently accepting applications from scientific experts and citizen scientists to participate in a BioBlitz event, June 23 - 25, 2011, on American Prairie Reserve, 50 miles south of Malta.

American Prairie Foundation will be working with Kayhan Ostovar, Rocky Mountain assistant professor of environmental science, as a lead coordinator. Many other scientists from across Montana and the nation will be involved to conduct the biological inventory. This will be only the fourth BioBlitz in Montana.

American Prairie Foundation is currently accepting applications from scientists interested in leading or joining a taxonomic specialty team to survey for animals or plants. Accepted scientists will be provided with places to camp and meals.

“Citizen scientists with some field experience are also encouraged to apply for a limited number of assistant positions. We especially encourage science schoolteachers to apply for this rare opportunity to work alongside scientists from all across the country,” Ostovar said.

Applications for other volunteer positions will be accepted later this spring,” according to Ostovar.

A BioBlitz is a 24-hour event in which a team of scientists and volunteers conduct an intensive biological inventory of all species in a given area. The event is an important opportunity to capture baseline data as American Prairie Foundation works to assemble a large-scale grassland wildlife reserve.

On June 25, the event will be open to the public at the American Prairie Reserve campground from noon - 3:00 p.m. for children, families and others interested in the project. Members of the public are invited to learn more from scientists about the animals and plants that were discovered in the “Discovery Field Lab”. The afternoon will also include a community barbeque with a performance by the acclaimed WildCat Dancers from the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.

The most recent BioBlitz, organized by Ostovar, was in November 2009, in Yellowstone National Park. Scientists from around the country discovered 1,200 species of plants and animals in the 24-hour-research marathon.

A BioBlitz is an effort to find and identify as many species as possible in a day. Ostovar led Montana's first BioBlitz along the Yellowstone River in Billings in 2007. Yellowstone Park's BioBlitz focused on invertebrates, plants, birds and other mammals in the northern area around headquarters at Mammoth Hot Springs.

Preeminent biologist and Harvard professor E.O. Wilson, who serves on American Prairie Foundation's Scientific Advisory Council, co-sponsored the first BioBlitz event to catalog organisms around Walden Pond in the mid 1990s. Many states and other countries have now conducted similar events, with one of the most publicized taking place in New York's Central Park where more than 800 different species were documented.

American Prairie Foundation aims to create and manage a prairie-based wildlife reserve that, when combined with public lands already devoted to wildlife, will protect a unique natural habitat, provide lasting economic benefits, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the prairie landscape. This landscape is some of the most intact prairie lands left in North America and contains herds of elk and pronghorn, sharp tail and sage grouse, mountain plovers, prairie dogs and burrowing owls. Most recently bison have been reintroduced on some of the property.

For further information please visit [bioblitz.americanprairie.org](http://bioblitz.americanprairie.org) or email [bioblitz@americanprairie.org](mailto:bioblitz@americanprairie.org).