

## **Sand Hills Discovery Experience 2008**

July 9-11, 2008

The theme for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was “The Sand Hills: Sea of Grass”.

Featured presenters were:

Dennis Ferraro, UN-L---Snakes and Lizards of the Nebraska Sand Hills

Jim Swinehart, UN-L---The Last 1000 Years of Sand Hill Geology

Charles Butterfield, Chadron State College---A Sea of Grass: Fact or Myth

Amy Koch, Nebraska State Historical Society---Rough Going But Hardly Dismal:  
Archeological Explorations of the Nebraska Sand Hills

John Carter, Nebraska Humanities Council---Bringing Beef to the Sand Hills

Smith Family Band--- Old-Time Country music

Tours included the following:

Wednesday and Friday Fossil Dig -led by Shane Tucker, UN-L

Niobrara River Geology-led by Jim Swinehart, UN-L

Nature Conservancy, Grasses-led by Chuck Butterfield, Chadron State College

Fossil Elephant Kit-led by Kathleen French, UN-L

Fort Hartsuff/Calamus Fish Hatchery-led by a local volunteer to the sites, presented by the Game & Park staff

Exhibitors were as follows: Shane Tucker-Fossil Display and Identification; Glenna Abbott, local rancher, Early Day Cattle Drives; Dennis Ferraro-Snakes and Lizards; Brown County Historical Society, Slide Hay Stacker Display; Ainsworth Middle School-Science Fair Projects; and Dennis Bauer, KBR Extension-Long Term Grazing Study at the UN-L Barta Brothers Ranch.

Dick Albrecht coordinated the continuing education credit with Wayne State College.

We always receive good constructive reports from people who attend. Several comments were made that stated this type of conference about the Sand Hills is certainly a great educational program for all Nebraskans. All who attend are grateful for the chance to see and hear lessons on the Sand Hills. The Sand Hills are so unique we've found that people want to learn more about their origin and history. Marcia Rastede, Allen, NE teacher wrote: “As a first time attendee of the SHD experience and not a native to the Sand Hills region, I had no idea what to expect of this workshop. It met my expectations in the content, excellent organization of the tours and presentations, and congeniality of the people.”