Phenology Field Note
Late season colors and ripening seeds
Prairie Wolfe
August 5th, 2014

Phenology Locations

Boondocks

North Ridge

Baldy

Floodplain

Native

Restoration

Corral

North Center Pivot

Whaley

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Antelope bitterbrush seeds fall from the shrub when they reach maturity. Rodents covet this high-protein food source for winter caches (*Purshia tridentata*, Whaley).

Leafy spurge capsules dehisce upon ripening and fling seeds into the seed bank (*Euphorbia esula*, Whaley).

Knapweed seed head weevils feed on flowers before laying eggs (*Larinus minutus* on *Centaurea stoebe)*. Eggs hatch within three days, after which the larvae enter the seed head (Lang et al. 1996).

Kochia continues its determined march toward seed production, despite repeated mowing *(Kochia scoparia,* Center Pivot*)*.

Hazel hues sweep across wheat fields as the grain ripens *(Triticum aestivum,* Restoration*)*.

The fungal pathogen *Ustilago bullata* readily infects cheatgrass *(Bromus tectorum*, above*)*. I have also spotted similar looking infections in *Bromus carinatus* and *Bromus hordeaceus* (left to right, respectively). Infections occurred from the top of Baldy to the floodplain. *U. bullata* prevents host plants from producing viable seed.

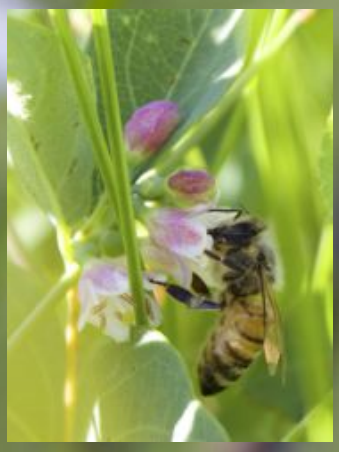
Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) is an important late-season pollen source (Mader et al. 2011). It blooms in the floodplain.

The wind-pollinated, reduced flowers of prairie sagewort offer little forage for pollinators (*Artemisia ludoviciana,* Baldy*)*.

From the vibrant orange of ripe wax currant berries (*Ribes cereum)* to the rusty red of senescing ninebark leaves (*Physocarpus malvaceus)*, warm colors mark the turning of the season as summer progress toward the equinox.

Brilliant violet blooms of aspen fleabane covered the forest floors throughout July (*Erigeron speciosus,* North Ridge).

Water once again became a scarce resource after the flood waters receded. This stark line in vegetative health occurs on an incline of less than 8 inches.



Snowberry flowers in earnest throughout the floodplain. Bees favor the delicate pink blossoms.

Works Cited:

Lang, R. F.; Story, J. M.; Piper , G.L. 1996. Establishment of *Larinus minutus* Gyllenhal (Coleoptera: Curculiondiae) for biological control of diffuse and spotted knapweed in the Western United States. Pan-Pacific Entomologist 72 (4):209-212

Mader, E; Shepard, M., Vaughn, M., Black, S. H., LeBuhn, G.; 2011. Attracting Native Pollinators 1st ed. Massachusetts: Storey Publishing