

## Field Note

August 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>



By Jeff Clarke



It's wheat and alfalfa harvest time! All crops should be cut and distributed within the next few weeks. The deer continue to pour into the fields despite the lack of standing vegetation.



Giant blazing stars, *Mentzelia laevicaulis*, bloom on the rocky, sandy soils near the gravel pit. They produce rough, hairy, foliage that protects them from intruders. The Salish used the mashed seeds to quench thirst and as an treatment for smallpox, measles, arthritis and ear aches (but it doesn't work).



We've harvested bitterbrush seeds. The plants they produce will be used for research and landscaping. Most seeds have now fallen from their husks, to the ground, where they will be consumed by rodents and birds.



Thousands of toad tadpoles recently metamorphosed. Areas in the Northern floodplain are crawling with the little guys. There are so many in concentrated areas that it looks like the earth is moving. We spooked a sluggish great blue heron from the area. It was undoubtedly stuffed with fresh toad meat.





Wild mint covers the sandy soils on the NW flood plain...The densest patches I've ever seen.



Common toadflax, also called butter-and-eggs, grows on the ranch floodplain. Its tiny seeds are dispersed by the wind and remain viable for eight years. This invasive also spreads via lateral roots. It's an aggressive invader that is harmful to grazing animals.

Several butterflies and moths probe the wet mud with their proboscises to glean important nutrients such as salts and amino acids.

