



The Last Prairie: A Sandhills Journal

Stephen R. Jones

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The Nebraska Sandhills are the largest remaining relic of the majestic prairies that once extended from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains. This vast but fragile expanse comes to life in *The Last Prairie*, a collection of twenty essays by Stephen R. Jones ranging from fascinating descriptions of dancing prairie-chickens, courting fireflies, and the annual migratory flight of a half-million sandhill cranes to equally vivid accounts of trailblazing homesteaders, range wars, and devastating storms. *The Last Prairie* is both a paean and an elegy for a place where you can walk for miles through shoulder-high grass or sit on a hill for hours with only the cry of the curlew and the hiss of the wind for company—a place Jones sought for decades and for whose survival he now fears.

The author's vast historical canvas lends a rare perspective and urgency to the book's discussion of recent efforts to save the Niobrara River from dams and developers. Jones speaks eloquently to such timeless themes as humanity's search for community and the ties that bind us with nature. Infused with quiet pathos and vibrant imagery, *The Last Prairie* is a triumph of the essayist's art.

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