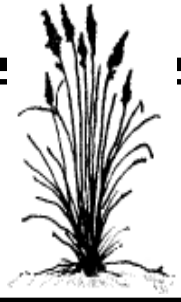


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# GHF NEWS

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Grassland Heritage Foundation Newsletter

September 2007

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## Coming Events.....

### Fall Prairie Walk Saturday, September 29, 9:30am

Join GHF members on a late season prairie walk! Member John Wright's Middle Creek Prairie is a wonderfully diverse, small prairie in Miami County, Kansas. This time of year is the best for identifying grasses. Asters and goldenrods will be plentiful. We hope to also see the downy gentian, a beautiful, small plant that's not always easy to find on your own. This private property is at 303<sup>rd</sup> Street and New Lancaster Road, just southwest of Louisburg, Kansas.

*From the east*, take Highway 69 to the Highway 68/Louisburg exit. Go west 2 miles to New Lancaster Rd. *From the west*, take Highway 169 to the Highway 68 exit. Go east 5 ½ miles to New Lancaster Rd. On New Lancaster, go south 3 miles to the dead end at 303<sup>rd</sup> St, turn left or east for 150 yards to the entrance into the small orchard on the left (north). Park on the mowed grass.

John has lots of nice mowed trails and the walk is comparatively easy, but be sure to wear sturdy shoes and we recommend long pants. **Remember, this is private property and can only be accessed with the group!** See John's photos at [ww.middlecreekprairie.com](http://ww.middlecreekprairie.com). Contact Sue Holcomb for further information: [sholc2003@yahoo.com](mailto:sholc2003@yahoo.com) or 913-449-3621.

## We're still looking for Groundhogs!

Help GHF maintain our prairie property! Each month Frank Norman leads volunteers on the third Saturday morning to help preserve and restore our Snyder Prairie, near Mayetta, Kansas. There are many jobs to do and nearly everyone can help in some way. Since we have taken over all the management in 1999, GHF has made a lot of progress in removing cedars and other woody growth that was encroaching on the prairie. But there's always more to do. This month we collected seeds that were ripe and spread them in areas we are restoring. This year we've cleared dogwoods from an area with Sullivant milkweed in abundance, sprayed sericea lespedeza to keep it in check, dug thistles, burned down trees and some prairie areas, cut sumac, and much more. Don't feel like you need to come every month, any help is appreciated. We'd like to see more Lawrence and Topeka area helpers that live a bit closer than our KC area members.



Frank sends out email reminders each month, so please contact him if you're interested.

[fjnorman@sunflower.com](mailto:fjnorman@sunflower.com), 785-887-6775 home or 785 691-9748 cell/work

Next dates: October 20 and November 17.

*An additional note:* Frank was featured in a September 6th Lawrence Journal-World article on our vanishing prairies. He has started a new venture, *Norman Ecological Consulting, Inc.*, providing ecological services—restoration, wetland permitting, and assessments—to clients needing assistance with federal, state and local

environmental regulations and associated requirements. See contact information above. We appreciate all the service he has given to GHF and wish him the best on his new endeavor!

## Art for the Sky

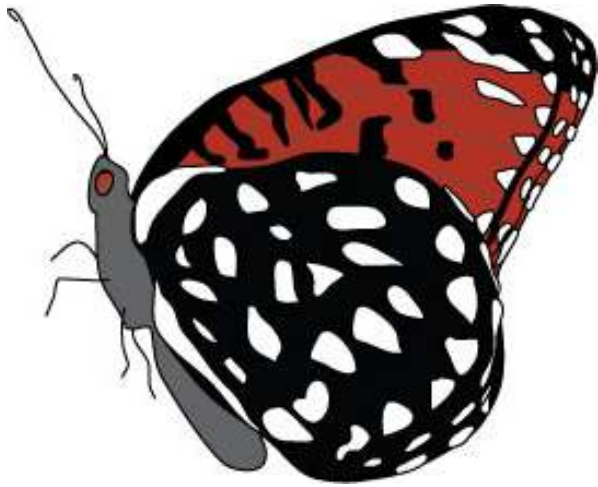
Angie Babbit has been working on a BIG art project. She is making arrangements with Daniel Dancer's "Art for the Sky" to produce a Regal fritillary butterfly at a Lawrence school. This is a large team-building activity to produce an image viewable only from the sky. It fosters the ideas of interconnectedness with each other and all living things, and seeing the BIG picture. (See [www.artforthesky.com](http://www.artforthesky.com) for a better idea.) As GHF's part of the project we will use money from the Taylor-Bryant grant that was earmarked for children's programs. We will also have the opportunity to share in educational activities at the school during the week of November 5-9. This is our opportunity to reach children with our prairie preservation message, particularly preserving habitat as needed by the butterfly. Details aren't finalized, but if you're interested in helping in any way with the project, want to share your expertise and knowledge of prairie, or just want to be there for the photo, please contact Angie Babbit at [angie.babbit@gmail.com](mailto:angie.babbit@gmail.com) or 785-840-9934.



The Regal Fritillary, *Speyeria idalia* :

A Prairie Poster Child?

by Angie Babbitt



The Regal Fritillary is a prairie obligate that, according to the 2006 study by Alexis Powell, Bill Busby and Kelly Kindscher, appears to be doing well in northeast Kansas. However, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Wisconsin list the regal fritillary as endangered, and it is threatened in Illinois. In Iowa, Missouri, Oklahoma, Minnesota and Pennsylvania it is listed as a “species of concern.”

Like the monarch butterfly, which depends on diminishing habitat in Mexico, we should not be too hasty in celebrating the regal’s abundance in northeast Kansas. Populations could crash, and who would notice if nobody is paying attention? Once you understand the butterfly’s reproductive habits, you might wonder how they’ve survived at all. All *Speyeria* larvae are obligate consumers of violets. Violets are found in my back yard, and probably yours, too, but something about the violet species of the prairie has kept the butterfly in the prairie, and their decline has been attributed to habitat loss. The regal fritillary prefers birdfoot violet (*Viola pedata*) and prairie violet (*Viola pedatifida*), pictured below.

In September, the females lay a couple thousand eggs haphazardly while walking through the vegetation. Eggs are not usually oviposited on, but near the violet host plant. Most other butterflies will lay their eggs directly on their host plant so that the emerging larvae will have an immediate food source. One would think the newly hatched critter would immediately search out the violets and begin fattening up for winter, but the eggs hatch and the first-stage larvae hibernate without eating. I scratch my head, wondering how any of them make it at all.

The time between egg laying and emergence of adults is sometimes interrupted by spring burns, which kill the larvae. I am

certainly not denouncing prescribed burning, but what is good for the prairie is not always good for all prairie species. If the larvae haven’t perished in a fire or other environmental hazard, the adult males emerge in May and June before the females. The males are strong fliers and will patrol for females throughout the day. If a fritillary is flying freely about, it is most likely a male. Unusually, both male and female *Speyeria* use pheromones to communicate. Females will select the males and if they are unreceptive, they will flutter away. Jim Mason of the Great Plains Nature Center states that they will fly almost 100 ft straight up in the air to “shake off” an interested male.

With so little tallgrass prairie remaining, and such an urgent need to conserve the remnants, we need a banner of hope; a symbol that is striking and offers a tangible reward. We need something that the average person can actually see if they look for it. People are drawn to things that are beautiful and don’t play to their phobias. They’re drawn to giant pandas, butterflies and polar bears. When donating money to non-profits, I would guess that most people want to know that they are saving something aesthetically pleasing. The regal might be the perfect poster child of the prairie, as one of the state’s largest butterflies with showy white spots and deep red-orange and black wings. If the butterfly’s beauty finds its way into the hearts of potential prairie lovers, perhaps its unusual life history will cause them to realize the fragility and interconnectedness of the system we are trying to preserve.

**“Threatened? Endangered? What does it mean?”**

*With regards to threatened and endangered species, our organization needs to be cautious when talking to the public. The US Fish*



*and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has one list, and the states have another. “Threatened” means one thing, and “endangered” means another as far as the law goes, and it’s important not to give out false or inflated information. States can have their own lists, like Kansas’ Species in Need of Conservation, but they must honor the USFWS list. As for the regal fritillary, it isn’t listed federally or by Kansas Department of*

*Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) at all. Some sources even report the regal fritillary as a candidate for listing as threatened, but it is not actually on the USFWS candidate list. It is a "Species of Concern," which is an informal term meaning it is under consideration for listing, but there is "insufficient data to support listing." We, in Kansas, cannot say something is "endangered" when it is not listed in Kansas. We can say, "It is endangered in other states," if it is listed by those states.*

*\*Mead's milkweed and the western prairie fringed orchid are both listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as threatened. Because they are listed federally, they give us some power when it comes to pushing conservation of prairie remnants wherein they live. Tragically, I think the public greatly undervalues the threatened flora of the Great Plains. Or, maybe the system is at fault. For example, if you skim the "threatened and endangered species" list on the KDWP website, not a single plant is listed. And their search engine produces message: "No results were found when searching for 'western prairie fringed orchid'" (or "Mead's milkweed"). Both of these plants should be represented on the KDWP website alongside the American burying beetle and the Neosho madtom.*

Special thanks to Jim Mason of the Great Plains Nature Center ([www.gpnc.org](http://www.gpnc.org)) in Wichita, Kansas for his help with this article.

#### Sources:

Ely, C. A., Schwillig, M. D., and Rolfs, M. E. 1986. An Annotated List of the Butterflies of Kansas. Fort Hays Studies 3<sup>rd</sup> Series (Science) No. 7, Fort Hays State University, Fort Hays, Kansas

Powell, A., Busby, W. H. and Kindscher, K. 2006. Status of the regal fritillary (*Speyeria idalia*) and effects of fire management on its abundance in northeastern Kansas, USA. *J. Insect Conserv.*

Scott, J. A. 1986. *The Butterflies of North America*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

Drawings of Prairie violet *far left* and Birdfoot violet *left* USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada*. Vol. 2: 547.

#### Web Resources:

[www.gpnc.org/regal.htm](http://www.gpnc.org/regal.htm)  
[www.fws.gov/endangered/wildlife.html](http://www.fws.gov/endangered/wildlife.html)  
[www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/other\\_services/threatened\\_and\\_endangered\\_species](http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/other_services/threatened_and_endangered_species)  
[http://library.fws.gov/Pubs9/esa\\_cand01.pdf](http://library.fws.gov/Pubs9/esa_cand01.pdf)  
[www.xerces.org/Pollinator\\_Red\\_List/Leps/Speyeria\\_idalia.pdf](http://www.xerces.org/Pollinator_Red_List/Leps/Speyeria_idalia.pdf)

## Don't Forget [www.MonarchWatch.org](http://www.MonarchWatch.org)!

This newsletter is going out too late for the fall Monarch Watch events, but don't forget to register your Monarch Way Station or to send your donation for further tagging and monitoring of these favorite butterflies. The web site is full of information on this easy to spot species.

### Grassland Heritage Foundation

The Grassland Heritage Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)3 membership organization dedicated to prairie preservation and education.

*GHF News* is published quarterly by Grassland Heritage Foundation. The GHF Office is located at 5460 Buena Vista, Roeland Park, KS.  
 (913) 262-3506

#### Send mail to:

P.O. Box 394  
 Shawnee Mission, KS 66201

#### Website

[www.grasslandheritage.org](http://www.grasslandheritage.org)

#### Email Address:

[email@grasslandheritage.org](mailto:email@grasslandheritage.org)

#### Officers

President: Andrea Repinsky  
 Vice-President: Rex Powell  
 Secretary: Sue Holcomb  
 Treasurer: Kevin Bachkora  
 Asst Treasurers: Steve Holcomb  
 Ann Simpson

## Living a Green Life

GHF members *Dick and Ellie Dawson* were featured in a June 26 article in the Kansas City Star for their "green" roof. They planted a living, sedum roof on their sunroom addition. This roof will not only keep the room cooler, it will reduce run-off. They planned to include some other small natives such as pussytoes in an as yet unplanted section. The roof is a rubber membrane with pre-grown green panels attached that were shipped in from Canada. Along with the 10,000 Rain Gardens initiative, this sounds like a great idea for Kansas City's run-off problems

## Kansas City Wildlands

Sue has been doubling up duties, as representative to KC Wildlands for GHF and we'd love to see some new involvement. They're working on a new meeting schedule, but currently meet the 1st Wednesday of most months at Lakeside Nature Center in Swope Park. See [www.kcwildlands.org](http://www.kcwildlands.org) for info on the group. This is a great group of enthusiastic volunteers. Call Sue if you're interested in becoming our representative at 913-856-4784.



**Community Work Days** coming up for all volunteers:

September 29 at Shawnee Mission Park

November 3 at Missouri locations

Contact Linda Lehrbaum coordinator at 816-561-1061 x 116

### GHF Activities



Frank Norman's June walk at Snyder Prairie *left*



Rolling Prairie Learning Lab at the Lawrence Public Library  
photo by A Babbit



A patch of Sullivant milkweed being overtaken by dogwood was the focus of Groundhogs in July



*Above* Melvin Depperschmidt and *right* Steve Holcomb cutting dogwood at Snyder



On June 19, Sue Holcomb gave a prairie mammal program for the Mound City, Missouri Public Library Summer Reading Program. Later, Cynthia Pederson, GHF member and program coordinator, took Sue up I-29 for a loess hills prairie walk. (The first time Sue was ever afraid of falling on a flower walk!)



We depend on your memberships!

If the date above your label is more than a year ago, or you've never given, please help us by sending your donation today. **Send to** Grassland Heritage Foundation, PO Box 394, Shawnee Mission, KS 66201.

Membership Categories:

\$20 Friend       \$100 Sustaining       \$1000 Benefactor  
 \$35 Family       \$250 Conservor       \$5000 Founder  
 \$50 Steward       \$500 Patron       \$15 Student/Retiree

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact me about volunteering**      Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Gift in honor or memory of** (mark which) \_\_\_\_\_

**Rachel Snyder Scholarship Fund**

**Designate my donation for the Prairie Preservation Fund**

#### **The Rolling Prairie Learning Lab**

Angie Babbit is continuing to organize GHF presence at area environmental and community events. If you know of an occasion to take our display and activities please let Angie know at [angie.babbit@gmail.com](mailto:angie.babbit@gmail.com) or 785-840-9934.

Next on the calendar--Missouri River Watershed Festival, Friday, October 5, 9 to 1, Kaw Point Park, Kansas City, Kansas for 6th to 8th grade students. If you can help, let her know.

#### **Welcome new members since the last newsletter:**

Julie Steinbach, Mary Kowalski, Clark Coan, Lisa Lips, Bruce Sergeant, Mary Rowlands, and Duane & Cosette Kelly

**Thanks to members returning after more than a year lapse:** Kirk Vaughan, Robert & Mary Beth Metcalf

#### **Special recognition for gifts**

PEO Chapter GI sent an honorarium for Frank Norman's talk at their meeting

The Ozark Wilderness Waterways Club sent a donation for a talk by Rex Powell and Andrea Repinsky

AJ Loscalzo in honor of Elaine Jones

Doug Guess designated prairie preservation

#### **Thank you**

**Kevin Bachkora** for accounting services

**Bruce Sergeant** for filming and editing our GHF video

**Frank Norman** for organizing our Groundhogs and working so hard at Snyder, sometimes by himself

**Rex Powell** and **Andrea Repinsky** for volunteering with the RPLL

**The Lawrence Public Library, Community Mercantile, and the Pickin' & Fiddlin' Festival** for hosting our RPLL

**Gary Tegtmeier** and the **Holcombs** for harvesting plants from the office prairie to move to Roulund-Wagner

Those who contributed to our breakfast at the August board meeting

#### **Volunteers are always needed**

GHF depends almost entirely on volunteers to complete its mission of prairie preservation and education. In addition to Groundhogs, prairie maintenance workers, we are always looking for people with expertise in some prairie aspect that they'd be willing to share with us or the general public. Sue would really, really like some help with the newsletter, either in writing articles or in layout and production. Our Douglas County Prairie project group meets monthly and is particularly looking for people with an interest in saving this small bit of prairie. We don't always know to ask the right people. Please let us know if you're willing to help, even if it is on a one-time basis. Contact Sue, see page 1.

**Grassland Heritage Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 394**  
**Shawnee Mission, KS 66201**

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**CALENDAR 2007**

**Groundhogs Prairie Maintenance**, Snyder Prairie, **3rd Saturday** of each month, 9:00am, page 1.

**Douglas County Prairie Project Meetings**, 7:00pm **1st Wednesday** of each month in Lawrence. Contact Andrea Repinsky at [adheron@yahoo.com](mailto:adheron@yahoo.com) or call the office 913-262-3506 for details.

**September 29**, Saturday, 9:30 am Wildflower Walk at John Wright's Middlecreek Prairie, Louisburg, Kansas, page 1

**October 5**, Friday, 9:00am to 1:00pm, RPLL at Missouri River Watershed Festival, Kaw Point Park, Kansas City, Ks.  
**October 10**, Wednesday, 7:00pm general meeting in the meeting room of Freestate Brewery, Lawrence, Ks.  
**October 20**, Saturday, 9:00am Groundhogs at Snyder Prairie

**November 5-9** Art for the Sky project See page 1  
**November 17**, Saturday, 9:00am Groundhogs at Snyder Prairie

**December 2**, Sunday, 4:00pm Winter Party at the Holcombs. Board member, members, and guests are welcome.  
260626 W 150th Street, Olathe, Kansas, Chili dinner, Contact Sue to let her know you're coming or with questions 913-856-4784.

### On the WEB

The GHF News is now available with color photos at our web site

[www.grasslandheritage.org](http://www.grasslandheritage.org)

Pay your dues online with Click & Pledge

Watch for our 3 minute video production on saving tallgrass prairie in Douglas County