GRASSLAND HERITAGE FOUNDATION

GHF News

Winter Edition December 2022

EVENTS

GHF Annual Meeting
Saturday, Jan. 1, 9 AM to noon
Neosho C. Community College, Ottawa KS or Zoom
To RSVP, email grasslandheritage@gmail.com

Seed Cleaning Party
Supporting Prairie Park Prairie Restoration and KU Field Station Restoration
Saturday January 28, 2 to 4 PM
350 Wild Horse Rd, Lawrence KS

Kaw Valley Seed Fair
Saturday, February 18 9 AM to 2 PM
Douglas County Fairgrounds
2120 Harper St., Lawrence KS

Many native plant sale patrons in 2022 went home with both plants and GHF's new native plant garden sign. Contact GHF to order a sign and share your love of native plants!

GRASSLAND HERITAGE FOUNDATION
PRESERVING PRAIRIE

2022 Annual Report

This year at Grassland Heritage Foundation was filled with learning more about prairies, long days outdoors through all seasons, and sharing our love of the prairie with the community. In 2022, we completed our community project at Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park, we began another project in the heart of Lawrence at Prairie Park, and we hosted other events to promote and support native prairie in Kansas.

GHF spent the first half of 2022 completing our community prairie restoration project at Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park. In partnership with Native Lands, we hosted six restoration and education events in the spring, including a well-attended native seed cleaning event at Johnson County Park and Recreation District's Seed Barn and a Birding Walk at Black Jack led by Dr. Roger Boyd of Jayhawk Audubon Society. We ended the spring season with a final, large push to plant native prairie plants and cut back invasive black locust trees. Following the completion of the grant, GHF will continue to invest in the site to fund maintenance work days for the next few seasons. We completed two of these maintenance workdays this fall, continuing to remove invasive species from the site. With the completion of the two year grant-funded portion of the project, it is with great gratitude that we thank the Douglas County Heritage Conservation Council for funding the work, and continuing to invest in GHF's leadership on prairie projects in Douglas County.

Continued p.4

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

***GHF News* is published three times a year by Grassland Heritage Foundation.**
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Program Director and Preserve Manager

Kaitlyn Ammerlaan

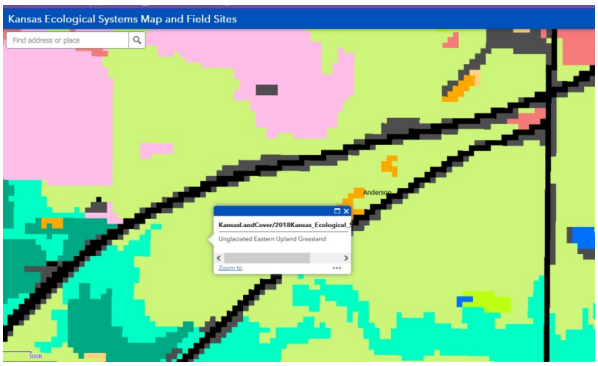
A Note from the President

I recently came across an article "Herbaceous production lost to tree encroachment in United States rangelands" by Scott L. Morford, Brady W. Allred, et al. in the October 2022 Journal of Applied Ecology. I'll admit that their imaging methodology and statistics are beyond my capabilities. But, the gist of the story is that rangeland in the U.S. is being converted to tree cover in alarming numbers. Overgrazing, fire suppression, excess fertilizers, and increasing amounts of CO_2 are all allowing more trees to invade our grasslands. This increase, coupled with conversion of grasslands to cropland or residential is threatening the future of grasslands in general. Our prairies are at much the same risks as the western grasslands in this study.

We spend a great deal of our efforts at keeping shrubs, such as sumac and dogwood, as well as trees, out of our prairies. Eastern red cedars are a particular nuisance, creating deep shade and absorbing vast amounts of water. But other species, both native and introduced, also show up in our prairies requiring cutting and treating stumps to prevent regrowth. This is an ongoing battle to prevent succession of our grasslands to woods.

In November, we saw the debut of *Mapping Kansas Ecosystems*, an ArcGIS StoryMap. Kansas Biological Survey's Dana Peterson and Jennifer Moody produced this web site after a 5 year joint project of several entities attempting to understand all non-crop vegetation classes in Kansas. Not only is there a detailed interactive map of all of Kansas featuring the vegetation, but it is a beautifully illustrated story of the history, geology, fauna, and challenges of the ecosystem. It's worth your time to visit and explore.

Here is the image of our Leadplant prairie near Welda from *Mapping Kansas Ecosystems*.



A few volunteers worked at our Leadplant Prairie in early June pulling teasel and spraying for invasives. We trimmed up the entrance and cut some small cedars from our new parcel. A small sign is in production that will better identify the entrance. A neighbor hayed for us this year after having rested it two years. Small woodies were already moving in. Road construction finally seems finished, so we'll have a much easier access.

A limited amount of mowing continues at Roulund-Wagner Prairie in Olathe. The state continues to mow a path up and through our property to keep it contiguous with the Prairie Center. We've had good communication with the new property manager out there. We were able to burn most previous piles of downed wood and a lot of the big cedar tree that was cut down by the driveway.

So, once again, I'm asking you to consider being part of our volunteer squad working to help keep out woody invaders. You can contact Kaitlyn Ammerlaan to volunteer at any of our properties or on one of our special projects. Steve and I continue to work at our Roulund-Wagner property adjacent to the Prairie Center in Olathe and can always use some assistance.

Sue Holcomb Sholc2003@yahoo.com

Thank you for supporting GHF's mission

Our gratitude goes out to all who supported Grassland Heritage Foundation and attended events this year. We are grateful for the support of prairie lovers, nature enthusiasts, and lifelong learners who help us throughout the year in many different ways. Because of your donation of your time, money, or expertise, Grassland Heritage Foundation is able to provide quality prairie and native plant education and make a positive impact on our community.

Outside of project-specific grants, GHF's prairie protection and education work is supported entirely by individual donors, like you. As the year comes to a close, consider making a donation to Grassland Heritage Foundation to help us continue to preserve prairie in eastern Kansas. Your contribution to GHF helps support our native prairie landscape that includes plants, insects, wildlife, and people! Make an investment in the future of prairie today by visiting ***grasslandheritage.org/support-prairie-protection***.

Are you unable to financially give this year? Volunteering and attending our events is another great way to support and protect prairie. Almost all of our events are available at no cost and you have the opportunity to learn directly from experts in the field. Sign up to become a volunteer and join our email list at: ***grasslandheritage.org/signup.***

Resources Available to Landowners

If you own land and are interested in restoring prairie and habitat, reach out to your local NRCS office or county conservation district for information about **cost-share programs** that may be available to you. There are a variety of programs, both on the state and federal level, that can help offset the costs of land management and habitat restoration projects that can help pay for seeds, prescribed burns, invasive species control, infrastructure improvements, and more. Agents and staff work with you to create an individualized conservation plan and connect you with local natural resource contractors. Visit *nrcs.usda.gov/contact/find-a-service-center* to find contact information for your local NRCS office.

The **Kansas Forest Service plant sale** is open until May 1, or as supplies last. Get great prices on conservation trees and shrubs at *kansasforests.org.*

Prairie reconstruction begins at Emporia State University campus

During the 2022 spring semester, faculty and staff from Emporia State University agreed to implement a 6-acre prairie reconstruction in an unused turfgrass field north of the Prophet Aquatic Research & Outreach Center (PAROC) and adjacent to the Campus Woods Natural Area. This field is located in a floodplain and near the Neosho River, which is home to the federally threatened Neosho Madtom and also the source of drinking water for the city of Emporia.

The addition of native grasses and forbs will have many benefits, including reduced soil erosion into the Neosho River, improved habitat for wildlife including birds and pollinators, as well as a multitude of educational opportunities focusing on prairie ecology (above and belowground) and overall watershed health. The "Campus Prairie" at ESU will be within walking distance of the main campus and open to the public to enjoy. Student and faculty research projects focusing on the soil within the prairie and water quality in the Neosho River are underway. The prairie will also be an outdoor classroom space for the many outreach programs taking place at the PAROC.

The prairie reconstruction is led by GHF board members Daphne Mayes, PAROC Outreach Director and William Jensen, Professor and Natural Areas Director, Emporia State University. The project is supported by a Habitat First grant through the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, as well as individual donor support, which enables ESU to purchase a higher quantity and select species of native grass seeds and forbs.

Learn more and stay updated on the Campus Prairie project at *https://sites.google.com/g.emporia.edu/natural-areas/natural-areas/campus-prairie.* We will also be organizing many opportunities for community outreach, which will be shared via PAROC's social media (https://www.facebook.com/ESUPAROC) and website (*www.esuparoc.com*).

The "Campus Prairie" is located across the road from ESU's Prophet Aquatic Research & Outreach Center and will expand opportunities to teach visitors about prairie ecosystems and conservation.

Annual Report, continued

Following in the footsteps of our project at Black Jack, GHF and Native Lands secured funding once more from the Heritage Conservation Council to embark on a two year prairie restoration project at Prairie Park in Lawrence. This project has a strong focus on education, connecting prairie restoration work with the community and sharing the cultural and ecological importance of protecting prairie in Douglas County. After beginning the project in June 2022, we hosted five public events and work days through the fall, opening up a large amount of the site and visibly reducing the amount of invasive plants and trees in just one season. In addition to our onsite work this year, we partnered with the KU Field Station to host a seed collection event to collect prairie seeds for use at Prairie Park. We have been overwhelmed with the positive support that we have received from this project, both within the Prairie Park neighborhood and from other community groups in the Lawrence area, and we look forward to continuing work on this project through Spring 2024.

Community projects like those at Black Jack and at Prairie Park effortlessly combine education, community engagement, and prairie protection. We are excited to continue this model to offer site-based programs that support our mission of prairie education and stewardship.

The new interpretive sign at the prairie restoration site at Black Jack Battlefield. In fall 2022, the GHF board committed to at least one additional GHF-funded year of restoration and maintenance work at the site.

In addition to our large landscape and prairie protection work in 2022, we continued to advocate for native plants in gardens and landscaping. We hosted four plant sales this year, featuring our first plant sale in Emporia in partnership with the Prophet Aquatic Research and Outreach Center at Emporia State University. We also had wonderful weather for our large Spring Native Plant Sale in Lawrence, allowing us to host this event outdoors for the first time since 2019. Our fall sales were also very successful. Our fall sale at Jungle House

GHF's 2022 Annual Spring Native Plant Sale

sold out in just about 45 minutes (we'll be sure to order more plants for this sale next year!). Overall, we sold 5,700 plants in 2022, becoming the most plants we've sold in one year!

In addition to our plant sales, we continued to maintain our native plant demonstration gardens in Lawrence. Our native plant garden at Little Prairie Community Garden is maturing and we used this growing space as a location for hands-on gardening workshops in the spring. We continue to care for a native garden in historic Oak Hill Cemetery in Lawrence.

2022 Events

Seed Cleaning Party- January 22
Black Jack Seeding and JAS Bird Walk – February 13
Kaw Valley Seed Fair- February 12
Native Plant Gardening Workshop- April 9
Groundhogs Honeysuckle Workday- April 16
Black Jack Earth Day Planting Event- April 23
Emporia State Plant Sale and Outreach Event- May 7
Spring Native Plant Sale- May 14
Black Jack Invasive Plant Removal- May 20
Black Jack Invasive Plant Removal- May 28
Black Jack Project Wrap-Up/Planting- June 11
Seed Ball Event with JCPRD- June 18
Anderson County Prairies Workshop- July 24
Prairie Park Community Information Session- August 11
Prairie Park Prairie Restoration Workday- August 30
Fall Native Plant Sale at Jungle House- September 10
Fall Native Plant Sale at Cottin's Farmers Market
Sustainability Science Fair at South Park- October 2
Prairie Park Prairie Restoration Workday- October 8
GHF Seed Collection at Snyder Prairie- October 15
KU Field Station Seed Collection- October 22
Black Jack Workday- October 23
Prairie Park Prairie Restoration Workday- October 29

We are busy preparing for next year's events and outreach activities. 2023 will include more prairie restoration events at GHF's prairie sites and many more opportunities to get involved in our Prairie Park project. We're excited to continue to host native plant sales, expand our seed collection efforts, and start to grow our own native plants for use in restoration and garden projects. Watch GHF's website and our Facebook and Instagram pages over the next year to be informed of future programs and events. You can also join our email list and sign up for event notifications from GHF at: *grasslandheritage.org/signup*

LAND MANAGEMENT REPORT

Our land management activities at Snyder Prairie this year started off HOT! We burned about 20 acres to reduce woody encroachment and help rejuvenate our remnant prairie areas. These burns were made possible thanks to groundhogs volunteers and assistance from neighbors.

Burn at Snyder Prairie

Custom Forestry Applications returned to Snyder Prairie to spot spray sericea lespedeza and undesirable woody species throughout most of the site. GHF's subcontractor, Bruce Yonke, and our neighbors, Dwayne and Chance Hug, mowed, baled, and removed select areas for hay, leaving plenty of prairie standing to be burned or rested as winter habitat for birds and other wildlife. GHF's Preserve Manager, Kaitlyn Ammerlaan and volunteers removed bush honeysuckle that has crept back into the woodlands at the site following our Timber Stand Improvement Project that was completed in 2018. In the fall, volunteers collected 15 species of native prairie seed that will be used for restoration and planting projects in 2023.

In 2022, we continued to make progress on our Monarch Butterfly habitat project at Snyder Prairie under EQUIP Monarch, a federal cost-share program. This winter we will be conducting prescribed burns and interseeding a milkweed seed blend into our existing prairie. This work should increase the amount of milkweed available to monarch butterflies in the area.

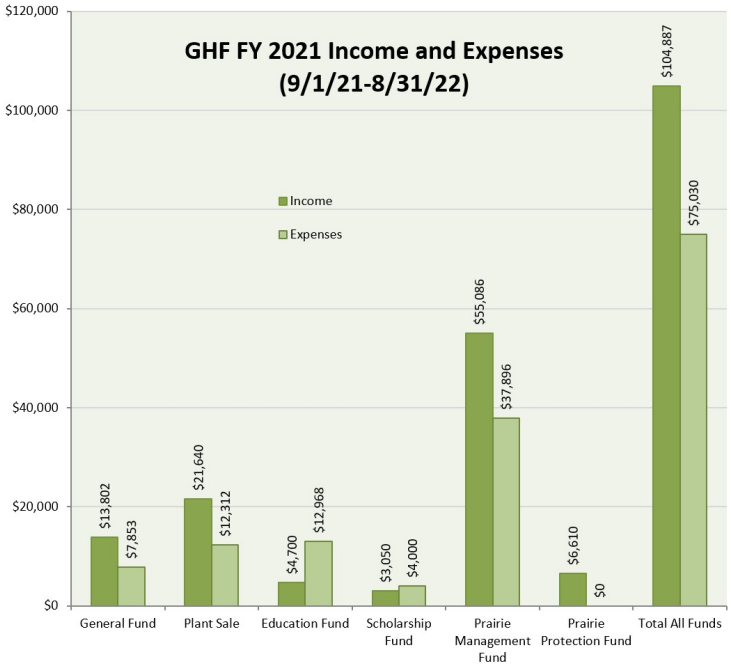
At Leadplant Prairie on the Prairie Spirit Trail in Anderson County, we continued to reduce invasive species. Next, we'll remove cedars and teasel from the new parcel we purchased to improve site access.

In 2023, we will continue to make progress on our Monarch habitat project at Snyder Prairie and to reduce the amount of invasive bush honeysuckle on the property. We will continue Groundhogs volunteer workdays to do brush management, invasive honeysuckle removal, and native seed collection. Contact Kaitlyn at grasslandheritage@gmail.com to join the Groundhogs email list!

FINANCIAL REPORT

GHF has been fortunate that donations, grants, and successful plant sales have kept us thriving for the last few years. The grant projects were administered through our accounts and are included in the totals below. The board voted to fund additional work days at Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park out of our own budget. Our new Native Garden signs were popular. The EQUIP cost share project has allowed us to double the amount of work we can do at Snyder improving monarch habitat. Thanks to the health of the Snyder Memorial Scholarship Fund, we awarded three $1,000 scholarships and two $500 scholarships last spring for prairie related research.

Thanks to the generosity of Dennis and Susan Lordi Marker, we are working on a new project to help fund maintenance and education at previous prairie plantings in northeast Kansas. The Markers' funds will kick start our program, but we hope that many of you will support this work. While different organizations fund planting of native gardens and spaces, few provide ongoing support once they are planted. We hope to help fill this niche.



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Our special gratitude goes to those donors who have made a monetary contribution of $500 or over this past year: **Robert Barnhardt, Jr., Jay Chatham, Robert Hagen & Deborah Smith, Steve & Sue Holcomb, Tad & Margaret Kramar, Dennis & Susan Lordi Marker, Kenneth & Gayle Nicolay, Cathy Reinhardt, Ronald Sisk, David Wagner, and Nancy Yost.** These large donations give us more freedom in our planning for the future and in maintaining our prairie properties. Jay Chatham's gifts to three of our special funds were a welcome tribute to a past board member. The Markers' gift is an important part of the establishment of our special prairie plantings maintenance fund. David Wagner has continued to support GHF through the years. His father and grandfather were vital to the preservation of The Prairie Center and to the foundation of GHF.

We depend on your contributions!

Please help GHF protect prairie by sending your donation today.

The date of your last contribution is printed above your name on the mailing label.
Contribute online or send this form to: Grassland Heritage Foundation, PO Box 394, Shawnee Mission, KS 66201

Membership Categories: ___$20 Friend ___$35 Family ___$50 Steward ___$100 Sustaining ___$250 Conserver
___$500 Patron ___$1000 Benefactor ___ $5000 Founder ___$15 Student/Retiree

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_____Save postage/printing and email my PDF newsletter **OR** ____ Send my printed newsletter to the above address

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_____Gift in *honor* or *memory* of (mark which) _____

Your contribution will support prairie conservation in the general fund unless you designate your donation for:

_____Scholarship Fund
_____Prairie Protection
_____Education Programs
_____Prairie Management

You can also send membership renewals and donations to GHF online at www.grasslandheritage.org

Tribute and Fund Donations

Ruth Stepien in honor of Andrea Repinsky, GHF creative editor, board member, and long-time member

Wanda Green in honor of Elliot Skinner to the Scholarship Fund

Ann Simpson in honor of Sue & Steve Holcomb for years of service

Heather McIntosh in memory of Martha and Larry Wagner

Mary Cottom in memory of Wayne H Hagerman of Larned, KS to the Prairie Protection Fund

Deb Handy donated for a gift membership to Becki Almeida

Donations to special funds

Prairie Education Fund - Courtney Masterson & Ryan Riedel, Steve & Sue Holcomb

Land Protection Fund - Courtney King

Land Management Fund - Myron Leinwetter, Susan Lawson

Scholarship Fund - Dennis & Susan Lordi Marker

Sustaining Prairie Fund—Dennis & Susan Lordi Marker

Welcome to New Members

Hilary Kass, Becki Almeida, Wanda Green, Heather McIntosh, Kelsie Crable, Susan Lawson, Hannah Zehr

'Thank You' to:

Ted Abel for rehabbing our shed locks at Roulund-Wagner Prairie

Jesse Belt, Ken Tillery, Ann Davin, Roxie McGee, Helen Alexander, Courtney Masterson, Ryan Riedel, Sue Holcomb, Steve Holcomb, Andrea Repinsky, Hannah Pippert, and Megan Withiam for volunteering to help set up and help customers at our Fall Plant Sales.

Jungle House and Cottin's Hardware Farmers Market for hosting our Fall Plant Sales.

Thank you to the many volunteers who helped out at Prairie Park this fall and our project partners: Native Lands, Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education, Haskell Indian Nations University, and Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department. Thank you to Ted Abel and Joey Shondell for chainsaw work. Thank you to Cuinn Brazee and the crew at Kansas Tree Care for clearing trees on the project site. Thank you to Wendy Holman and staff at the KU Field Station for hosting a seed collection and sharing seeds from the prairie.

Roxie McGee for work at Little Prairie Community Garden.

Our board members for another great year of their work for GHF and its mission.

Kevin Bachkora for continuing to compile our income, expenditures, and cash flow each month and for year ending. We appreciate this volunteer service.

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Rachel Snyder Memorial Scholarship Applications Due March 15, 2023
Find information and application materials at grasslandheritage.org