

EVENTS

Prairie Burns at Snyder Prairie

Possible dates: Dec. 16, 2023, Jan. 13-14, 2024,
Jan. 21, Feb. 3-4, Feb. 10, Feb. 25
Snyder Prairie, Mayetta, KS
Contact Nicole at grasslandheritage@gmail.com
to receive updates and notifications.

Seed Cleaning Party for Prairie Park Restoration Project

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024, 1-5 PM, Location TBD

Groundhogs Restoration Workday

Saturday, January 13, 9 AM–noon,
Snyder Prairie, Mayetta, KS

GHF Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 20, 9 AM–noon
Neosho County Community College

Seed Spreading at Prairie Park

Saturday, Jan. 27, 2-4 PM,
2811 Kensington Rd, Lawrence KS

Groundhogs Restoration Workday

Saturday, Feb. 10, 9 AM-noon,
Snyder Prairie, Mayetta, KS

Prairie Park Restoration Workday

Saturday April 30, 5-7 PM,
2811 Kensington Rd., Lawrence KS

GHF Spring Native Plant Sale

Trinity Episcopal Church, 10 AM -1 PM
1011 Vermont Lawrence, Sat. May 18, 2024

National Prairie Day at Prairie Park

Saturday, June 11, 2024 9 AM–noon

Sign up for GHF emails to get updates on all events
at grasslandheritage@gmail.com



2023 GHF Annual Report

GHF continues to pursue a mission of protecting prairie in northeast Kansas through prairie education, protection, and management—now for over 45 years! GHF aims to strategically meet the needs of our region’s remaining prairie remnants and the needs of land managers. We strive to provide excellent land management based on biodiversity protection and proven best practices, for GHF-owned land and other community properties. We are providing hands-on, practical prairie ecology, restoration, and management education through community events and public work days. GHF is also fostering the next generation of prairie protectors with expanding scholarship programs. Through these activities, GHF offers its members a way to enable and participate in effective prairie conservation in our region.



GHF Spring Native Plant Sale

2023 was a year of transition for Grassland Heritage Foundation, as Nicole Stanton-Wilson joined GHF as Project Director and Preserve Manager. We said ‘farewell’ to Kaitlyn Ammerlaan as she joined the Douglas County Heritage Conservation program. We thank Kaitlyn for all she has done to help GHF achieve our mission and grow our public presence, and wish her all the best! With Kaitlyn’s help, we had a smooth transition and we saw success with our Spring & Fall Plant Sales, as well as with our volunteer support at our community workdays in the Lawrence area.



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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adheron@yahoo.com**

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Vice-President: Roxie McGee
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Assistant to the Treasurer:
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Megan Withiam, Lawrence**

Program Director and Preserve Manager

Nicole Stanton-Wilson

A Note from the President

I've been involved with GHF since I graduated with my degree in Environmental Studies from KU back in 1996. My husband saw that they were conducting a burn at the Prairie Center, so we went and observed. From there we joined the Groundhogs group and eventually I took the part-time job running the office we had at the time. The years have seen my work switch to volunteering in every way imaginable. I have made some lifetime friends working with GHF.

I have loved meeting many of you in person at events and through emails. I'm asking you to take that first step in getting more involved with Grassland Heritage Foundation. There are myriad ways to volunteer that can draw on your special interests or skills: Newsletter contributions, work on GHF prairies, work at sites that GHF has committed to helping protect, like Black Jack Battlefield and Prairie Park, help plan and carry out the plant sale, help with computer work, entering names in the database, social media outreach, participate with the board, planning future activities overseeing our mission, help evaluate scholarship applications and requests for Sustaining Prairies Funds.

There are so many things to accomplish, and the board members can only do so much. I was excited to see volunteers that have worked in Lawrence come down to work at Black Jack Battlefield. I was thrilled to see new volunteers at our fall plant sale. I was especially pleased that someone saw our Facebook post about the plant sale and made a detour off I-70 to come and buy plants. I am continually pleased to receive new donations from people that have seen us online or heard about us on public radio.

I sometimes feel like a broken record reaching out for volunteers. But, we keep saying we're not good at asking for money or help. So, I'm reaching out again. Contact me at sholc2003@yahoo.com or Nicole at grasslandheritage@gmail.com if you'd like to participate in any of our activities.

Our Annual Meeting and Elections will be Saturday, January 20, 2024 from 9:00 am to noon at Neosho County Community College at 900 E Logan in Ottawa, Kansas. We'll share a potluck breakfast before we begin the meeting.

A Strategic Planning Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 10, 2024 from 10 am to noon, to be facilitated by Jerry Jost. We will be making plans for the future of GHF. Snow date is February 17.

These are great opportunities to see how GHF works. We have been meeting every other month via Zoom since Covid began, but these meetings will be a hybrid with those available to meet in person. Regular meetings are held the third Tuesday of March, May, July, September, and November at 7pm.

Many of you have started using our website, www.grasslandheritage.org, to make your donations. We thank you for your support. We especially appreciate those who add 3% for the processing fee. Every little bit helps.

Just a reminder: If you set up an automatic renewal for either monthly, quarterly, or yearly, it will stop if your credit card expires. I have tried to watch and let people know, but it is not always easy to keep track of. If you are unsure of the status of your recurring donation, please reach out and I can look it up and let you know. Often, the easiest course is to get online and set up a new payment.

Those of you that made monthly or quarterly donations will receive a final statement at the end of the year.

Sue Holcomb

sholc2003@yahoo.com

Announcing the Gaylord Atkinson Memorial Scholarship



Gaylord Atkinson

Thanks to a generous donation from Jay Chatham, GHF will be granting scholarships for graduate level research in memory of Gaylord Atkinson, a former board member and Groundhog volunteer at the Prairie Center during the 90's. Gaylord was particularly active at GHF's former office prairie in Roeland Park, fighting Japanese honeysuckle, and hand building a boundary fence with his grandfather's tools. After he moved to Texas, he continued to support GHF and he shared stories of his time with us. His good friend, Jay Chatham, is honoring Gaylord with this memorial.

See application instructions for the Atkinson Scholarship on the GHF website, www.grasslandheritage.org.

2023 Awardees of GHF Scholarships

August Brunette, Kansas State University, Prairie bee community composition along a precipitation gradient in Kansas

Tucker Eckols, Emporia State University, Understanding the dynamic relationship between tree stands and woody encroachment in the tallgrass prairie

Max Proctor, Wichita State University, What goes in must come out: Comparison of nutrients in bison and cattle dung and effects on development of dung beetles.

Overland Park Embraces Native Plants in Ordinance Update

We work hard to protect and grow native plants, and challenges can get in the way, such as gaps in knowledge, availability of native plants and seeds, and incompatible landscape maintenance. One frustrating barrier to native plant proliferation is municipal ordinances that define some native plants as 'weeds,' or restrictions on plant height that thwart residents' hopes of exploring Kansas plants, supporting pollinators, and reducing fertilizer and irrigation needs. Cities are also interested in using deep-rooted native plants to control and absorb stormwater. In November 2023, the City of Overland Park, Kansas adopted an ordinance update that provides exemptions to height limitations for planned native and food-producing gardens. It replaces a city-defined weed list with

the weed lists maintained by Johnson County and the Kansas Department of Agriculture, and it requires setbacks and clearly-defined boundaries for native and food gardens. Prior to this change, the Overland Park ordinance conflicted with a Johnson County program, Contain the Rain, that encourages native plantings with reimbursements for plant purchases. Seventeen cities in the Kansas City metro and unincorporated Johnson County are participating in Contain the Rain. In Lawrence, the city's Sustainability Advisory Board has been preparing recommendations for ordinance updates to clarify enforcement of noxious weeds, and to promote the use of native plants and sustainable landscaping, for City Commission review. Watch for more activity on this issue in 2024.

Good Work and Persistent Problems: A Prairie Park Update

In the September 2023 newsletter, we shared the awful news that herbicide had been sprayed on a native prairie in Lawrence's Prairie Park. Updates are limited at this time. The appearance of the site has indeed changed with the removal of a row of trees next to the nature center, from an area that was, historically, prairie. Watch for restored prairie and an outdoor classroom designed by a University of Kansas Design/Build class, funded by the Douglas County Community Foundation Elizabeth Schultz Environmental Fund and arranged by Native Lands Restoration Collaborative (NLRC).

Kansas Biological Survey (KBS) faculty have made monitoring visits to collect data on how plant diversity and distribution might have changed as a result of the herbicide spraying. Anecdotally, the prairie appears to be more grass-dominant in late 2023 than in previous years. If true, this is an unfortunate sign of loss of forbs on the prairie. A more informed assessment of the damage may be possible once KBS completes more data collection and analysis. The city has arranged for monitoring through summer of 2024.

The City sponsored workdays led by NLRC in 2023 to remove

sumac and other woody plants from the native prairie, and GHF funded an additional work day. GHF submitted a list of suggested immediate, short-term, and long-term mitigation measures to protect the prairie, such as removal of the sericea lespedeza and honeysuckle that had been a problem on and around the prairie prior to the herbicide application. City Parks & Recreation staff say they have not made removal of honeysuckle and sericea lespedeza a higher priority at the native prairie over other land managed by the city. Parks & Recreation staff may need support and education over time to develop into professional native landscape managers.

City Parks & Recreation staff told GHF that the department is reassessing its Integrated Pest Management Plan, and that there may be a Prairie Park Plan in the future.

GHF will continue to coordinate with other prairie advocates and to promote prairie management and natural areas in the current Park Plan development for Lawrence Parks and Recreation. Also, look for opportunities to support the completion and adoption of the Douglas County Open Space Plan in early 2024.

GHF Annual Report, Continued

Thanks to the many donations from our members, grants for special projects, and another year of successful plant sales, GHF was again able to achieve several of our project and financial goals. We completed a second year of work at the Kensington Road restoration site at Prairie Park in Lawrence utilizing a Natural & Cultural Heritage Grant from the Douglas County Heritage Conservation Council. The Prairie Park project will end next summer. GHF funded a workday at the Prairie Park native prairie, and we added a workday at Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park near Baldwin in November to continue controlling woodies in the prairie restoration.

We continue to utilize the EQIP cost share funds at our Snyder Prairie north of Topeka. The work on this project will end next year. Also, GHF provided 3 \$1,000 scholarships in the spring to college students for prairie-related research. We received a generous donation in October to support these scholarships next year. We completed the first year of our Sustaining Prairie Fund, providing grants to organizations for maintenance and education work at existing prairie plantings. The Lordi-Marker Matching Fund will allow us to continue to help other groups next year with the funding to enhance and maintain their prairie plantings. Without your donations, GHF could not accomplish this important work.

Much of GHF's focus this year has been on the Prairie Park restoration project. GHF, Native Lands Restoration Collaborative (NLRC) and the KU Field Station held a seed cleaning event at the Field Station that brought over 60 people out to help clean seed that will be used for the restoration project.



*Volunteers at the Seed Cleaning Party at the KU Field Station
Photo: Wendy Holman*

Additional partners on the project include Haskell Indian Nations University, Kansas Association of Conservation and Environmental Education, and the City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department. We held four events in the spring and four events in the fall. We kicked off the Spring with an Earth Day event where attendees planted wildflowers and

learned about the use of native plants to dye fabric with local artisans. This event also celebrated the new non-profit status of NLRC! In total, about 150 volunteers gave almost 350 hours of time to this project. In 2023 alone, GHF and NLRC volunteers cleared over 3.5 acres of bush & Japanese honeysuckle, Callery pears, and other woody species, and planted over 500 native wildflowers, grasses and sedges. The City of Lawrence helped to increase awareness of our work through sharing our events and posting photos and videos online, and we had over 20 volunteers attend our final two fall workdays. We appreciate the time and energy of everyone who have helped us make this project a success!



Volunteers planting native prairie wildflowers at the September Prairie Park Education & Restoration Workday Photo: Nicole Stanton-Wilson

We closed out the fall work season for Prairie Park with a seed collection event in partnership with the newly-formed Douglas County Seed Team: a partnership between NLRC, Bridging the Gap, and Kansas Land Trust. We enjoyed a spectacular autumn day collecting seed at Blazing Star Prairie, home of NLRC. An extra big 'thank you' to Courtney & Ryan of NLRC for hosting this event and sharing their land with all of us. The scaly blazing star (*Liatris squarrosa*) was in full seed & we can only imagine the glory of this patch when it is blooming!

After the unfortunate herbicide damage at the remnant prairie at the Prairie Park Nature Center, residents of Lawrence, botanists, GHF, and other organizations asked the City of Lawrence to mitigate the damage and better manage and protect prairie and other native landscapes. The GHF board voted to fund an additional workday at the remnant prairie on Oct. 11 to remove invasive smooth sumac and other woody plants. We will continue to monitor management of the prairie.

GHF has continued the restoration work at Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park in partnership with NLRC. Although our

grant-funded project was officially completed in June of 2022, we have continued to maintain a relationship with the Black Jack Trust to support the project. Prairie restoration is a long-term commitment and requires diligent and intentional stewardship. In July, GHF hosted a Prairie Talk & Walk highlighting the research that KU Doctoral student & GHF Board Member, Reb Bryant, has been conducting at Black Jack. We learned about the role of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi in assisting the successful establishment of many prairie wildflowers, such as purple prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea*). In early October, we hosted another workday to remove invasive black locusts from the restoration area. We were gifted with beautiful weather and attendees for both events!

GHF continued to support native plants in gardens and landscaping this year by hosting three plant fundraiser sales in 2023. Our first plant sale was at the Prophet Aquatic Research and Outreach Center at Emporia State University. Next, our largest sale of the year was our Annual Spring Plant Sale, held in Lawrence. We held one fall plant sale at our native plant demonstration garden, The Little Prairie at Little Prairie Community Garden. Umut Bayramoglu of the Common Ground community garden and urban agriculture program hosted us and gave garden tours. We sold over 4,700 plants in 2023, which is the second largest number yet!

At Little Prairie Community Garden, Board Member Roxie McGee continues to nurture and maintain GHF's native plant demonstration garden. We plan to continue native garden workshops there in 2024. We also continue to care for the native garden in historic Oak Hill cemetery in Lawrence. To get involved with either of these gardens, please email us at grasslandheritage@gmail.com.

GHF is now preparing next year's events and activities to support our mission to preserve prairies through education,

stewardship and land protection. We will begin 2024 with a seed cleaning day in early January with NLRC and the Douglas County Seed Team, followed by seed spreading at the Prairie Park restoration site in Lawrence. We will continue our work at Prairie Park, with workdays in the Spring, closing out the grant with a Prairie Day celebration on National Prairie Day on June 1. We look forward to continuing conversations about how to protect, preserve, and steward prairies in eastern Kansas.



Volunteers collecting data for Reb Byrant's research at Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park
Photo: Andrew White

We continue to partner with our neighbors, Groundhogs volunteers and Custom Forestry Applications to ensure that necessary stewardship activities continue at Snyder Prairie. Custom Forestry Applications has helped spot spray sericea lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*), large stands of rough leaved dogwood (*Cornus drummondii*), and other encroaching woody plants. Many thanks to Luke Terry and his crew at CFA for your hard work and helping GHF be good stewards of Snyder Prairie!

We will burn this winter as weather allows, to further diminish the vigor of undesirable species while increasing the vigor of native prairie species to better outcompete them. To participate, email us at grasslandheritage@gmail.com.

GHF will continue management activities related to our EQIP grant to increase the number and types of milkweed plants at Snyder Prairie to improve the habitat for monarch butterflies. This work includes seeding two additional fields this winter with a mix of five different milkweed species. We will also host monthly Groundhogs work days, on the 2nd Saturday of the month as weather allows. Email us at grasslandheritage@gmail.com to receive Groundhogs updates!

At GHF's Leadplant Prairie in Anderson County, GHF has installed a sign along Old Colony Road to improve access to visitors. Board Members and volunteers continue to remove teasel, sericea lespedeza, crown vetch, and other invasives.

GHF 2023 Activities

GHF Annual Meeting – January
Seed Cleaning Event at KU Field Station – January 28
Kaw Valley Seed Fair – February 18
Seed Spreading at Prairie Park – February
Johnson County Healthy Yards Expo—March 11
Douglas Co. Conservation Dist. Prescribed Burn Workshop—Mar. 25
Earth Day and Prairie Park Prairie Education & Restoration – April 22
Prairie Park Prairie Education & Restoration Workday – May 04
Spring Native Plant Sale in Emporia – May 07
Prairie Park Prairie Education & Restoration Workday – May 13
11th Annual Spring Native Plant Sale in Lawrence – May 20
Prairie Park Prairie Education & Restoration Workday – May 25
Prairie Park Prairie Education & Restoration Workday – June 04
Prairie Talk & Walk at Black Jack Battlefield & Nature Park – July 22
Prairie Park Prairie Education & Restoration Workday – August 26
Prairie Park Prairie Education & Restoration Workday – September 07
Fall Native Plant Sale at Little Prairie Community Garden - Sept. 23
Prairie Park Prairie Education & Restoration Workday – October 03
Native Seed Collection at Snyder Prairie – October 14
Native Seed Collection to Benefit Prairie Park – October 22
Restoration Workday at Black Jack Battlefield & Nature Park – Nov. 04

The 2023 GHF Prairie Protector Community

GHF donors as of December 1, 2023. Lifetime members may not be included.

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 Becki Almeida
 Michael Ammerlaan
 Jenny Archibald
 Ang Babbit
 Michael Babbit
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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
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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 Management
 Prairie Protection Sustaining Prairies Lordi Marker
 Education Programs Matching Fund

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



Gifts since the September Newsletter

Welcome to new members: Eldon Hix, Vaun Kampschroeder
 Katherine Klutter (a Gift Membership from Mary Powell), Carol
 Lunn, Sadie Nisly

Returning member: Jo Myers

Monthly donors: Stephen Hight, Kenneth & Gayle Nicolay, and
 Clint Thrasher

Donations to Funds, Memorials, and Tributes

Prairie Education Fund: Sue & Steve Holcomb, Jo Myers, Mary
 Powell

Land Management Fund: Katherine Klutter, Myron Leinwetter,
 Vaun Kampschroeder

Prairie Protection Fund: Wayne Morton, Sadie Nisly

Scholarship Fund: Eldon Hix

Matching Grant for Sustaining Prairies Fund: Dennis & Susan
 Lordi Marker

New Scholarship Fund in Honor of Gaylord Atkinson: Jay
 Chatham

Courtney Masterson in honor of Ryan Riedel

Byril Sanders in honor of Joseph O. Berger

Thank you to all other returning and renewing members.
 We appreciate those of you who have set up autorenewals
 through the website.

'Thank You' to:

To the many volunteers who have given their time, energy
 and attention to Prairie Park – we couldn't have accom-
 plished what we have without you.

To Courtney Masterson and Ryan Riedel of Native Lands Res-
 toration Collaborative for their time and expertise in making
 the restoration project at Prairie Park a reality. A special
 thank you to Courtney for sharing your extensive knowledge
 about native plants and prairie ecology with the community.

To all of our Prairie Park project partners: Native Lands Res-
 toration Collaborative, City of Lawrence, Haskell Indian Na-
 tions University, and Kansas Association of Conservation &
 Environmental Education.

To all the volunteers who were brave enough to cut and
 wrangle the thorny young black locust trees at Black Jack
 Battlefield & Nature Park, and to Emery Compton of Black
 Jack Trust, Inc. for hosting and working alongside us.

To fall plant sale volunteers, Helen Alexander, Ann Davin, Sue
 and Steve Holcomb, Mary Kowalski, Roxie McGee, Sadie Nis-
 ley, Andrea Repinsky, and Megan Withiam. Special 'thank
 you' to Umut Bayramoglu and the Common Ground program
 for giving tours of the Community Garden, and to the City of
 Lawrence Parks & Recreation and Little Prairie Community
 Garden for hosting us.

To Kevin Bachkora for his long-term assistance with the GHF
 books

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Enjoy your newsletter in full color on our website: www.grasslandheritage.org.



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Double your Donations for Sustaining Prairies

Dennis and Susan Lordi-Marker are generously offering a Matching Gift Opportunity up to \$10,000 to benefit GHF's Sustaining Prairies fund! GHF has distributed assistance funds to help maintain prairies and to increase educational uses of prairies. Last year, the fund supported plantings at schools, community gardens, the Mid-America All-Indian Museum, and the Kansas Zen Center in Lawrence. We know there are a lot of small plantings that can use this assistance. Join Dennis and Susan in funding this important prairie protection and education mechanism.



Susan Lordi-Marker

Many students wanted to be part of this project and they signed the bottom of the pavers to leave a legacy at the high school garden. They are already seeing elementary students and community members using the walkway to get closer to the garden and read the interpretive sign. Thanks to biology teacher, Aaron Batterbee, for applying and involving GHF in promoting their prairie planting.



Gardner-Edgerton High School

Photo: Aaron Batterbee

One of last year's recipients was Gardner Edgerton High School. They were able to purchase an interpretive sign and walkway stones leading from the city sidewalk to the garden.