



# GHF NEWS

Spring Edition

March 2018

## EVENTS

**Native Plants for Your Yard or Garden.** Hosted by the Kaw Valley Native Plant Coalition.

Monday, April 16, 7:00 pm, Lawrence Public Library, 701 Vermont, Lawrence, KS.

**Landscaping with Native Plants with Patti Ragsdale.** Thursday, April 19, 7:00 pm at the Carnegie Building, 200 W. 9<sup>th</sup> St., Lawrence, KS. **Workshop #2 in the 2018 GHF Native Plant Gardening Workshop Series.**

**Lawrence Earth Day Celebration.** Saturday, April 21, 11:00 am- 4:00 pm, South Park, 1141 Massachusetts St., Lawrence, KS.

**GHF Groundhogs Prairie Restoration** (p. 7) Apr. 14, May 19 at Snyder Prairie, Mayetta

**6<sup>th</sup> Annual GHF Native Plant Sale,** Saturday, May 19, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, Trinity Episcopal Church, 1011 Vermont St., Lawrence, KS.

**National Prairie Day – Saturday, June 2**

Oak Hill Cemetery garden planting, 8 am  
Kansas Land Trust Prairie Walk 10 am

**Restoration Workshop in collaboration with the Jayhawk Audubon Society.** Saturday, June 9, 9:00 am, at the Bellemere property. Email GHF at [grasslandheritage@gmail.com](mailto:grasslandheritage@gmail.com) for directions.

**Paintbrush Prairie Easement Dedication with Kansas Land Trust,** Saturday June 16, Anderson County. Email GHF at [grasslandheritage@gmail.com](mailto:grasslandheritage@gmail.com) for directions.

**GHF Native Garden Tour.** Saturday, July 7, 9:00 am. Guided tours of the KU Native Medicinal Plant Research Garden at 1865 E. 1600 Rd., Lawrence, KS and Happy Apple's Farm in Leavenworth County.

## Plan Now for Native Plant Sale

The 6th Annual GHF Native Plant Sale on May 19 promises to be our best yet, featuring:

- Almost 50 species of native wildflowers and grasses - many of them have never been sold at a local plant sale.
- Presentations by gardening experts.
- New this year – native garden kits complete with 10-14 pre-selected plants, diagram, and planting instructions.

We're returning to Trinity Episcopal Church at 1101 Vermont in Lawrence. As always, all plants are locally grown and guaranteed to be neonic-free. GHF members may pre-order with a discount and pick up the day of the sale, so you can ensure that you get the plants you want. To verify your membership or order plants, email [ghfplantsale@gmail.com](mailto:ghfplantsale@gmail.com). Also, watch our Facebook page and website for updates. The plant sale is an important fundraiser, supporting our prairie education and outreach work. It's also a great way to boost the wildlife habitat in your home, office, or church gardens, so bring your gardening friends on May 19!

## Anderson County Prairie Protected

A prairie has been found, surveyed, and protected by longtime GHF board member Gary Tegtmeier. Tegtmeier and the Kansas Land Trust (KLT) invite prairie enthusiasts to visit the Paintbrush Prairie in Anderson County for the dedication of a conservation easement with KLT on the site on Saturday, June 16, 2018. The 77-acre site was located for Tegtmeier by a realtor with range management experience, however it was found on the same day the sale was set to close to another buyer. This was in the fall of 2014, and the prairie had been mowed that August, so Tegtmeier tried to identify recently-mown plants and quickly assess the quality of the prairie. When he found rattlesnake master and other high-quality prairie plants at the perimeter of the mowed area, he gambled that the site was worth protecting, and he outbid the competing buyer. The gamble was worthwhile.

(Continued, p. 3)



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

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#### Staff

Kim Bellemere: Education and Membership Coordinator  
Frank Norman: Preserve Manager

## A Note from the President

I'd like to thank the GHF board for voting me in as president. It's been a long time since I have served in this role. But, I'm excited to change my focus with the organization. I'd especially like to thank Andrea Repinsky who has served the last three years as president (as well as a couple of terms some years past). She worked diligently to update our web site, formalize contracts, start the process to protect more prairies, and find ways to save GHF money. She has agreed to take over editing the newsletter, and contributes to our web site, social media platforms, and other public outreach. I'd also like to welcome three new board members who have agreed to join us. (See p.4) A special thank you to those board members who have served for many years. It is wonderful to have the input and expertise of all these great volunteers.

As I'm writing this, we are finally experiencing some warmer weather. When I worked in my garden last week, I was excited to see new growth popping up from the soil. Even though prairie lives on under the soil during the winter, there is not much evidence of life above ground. But, that is beginning to change. GHF, too, relaxes a bit during the coldest months, but we are gearing up for Spring and our busy season. Kim Bellemere has been busy planning our native plant workshops and our annual native plant sale in May. She has also been assisting with a public outreach project with the Kansas Biological Survey. And of course, she organizes our presence at local events. We have decided to fund more working hours for her this year with the hope of having even more programs for our members.

Members of our land management committee have met to develop a work plan for our Snyder Prairie for the year. Specially funded work to control bush honeysuckle and improve the quality of our woods has been completed by a contractor. Groundhogs continue to meet under Frank Norman's supervision and restore the prairie habitat. A native bee "hotel" and new bluebird houses are being erected at our Roulund-Wagner Prairie in Olathe.

I'm pleased we were able to award scholarships to two researchers this winter and look forward to funding more research thanks to a generous supporter. We are especially looking for native pollinator researchers and monarch research work being done in Kansas.

Please feel free to contact me if you have suggestions, questions, or concerns about any of our activities. My email is [sholc2003@yahoo.com](mailto:sholc2003@yahoo.com) or you can leave a message on my home phone at (913) 856-4784 and I'll get back to you.

Sue Holcomb

## Johnson County Leads the Way on Prairie Restoration

It's been a very busy winter for the Johnson County Park and Recreation District. In collaboration with KC Wildlands and other local partners, a total of 127 species of native seed were collected with a weight of 290 lbs and over 900 hours of volunteer labor. An additional 250 lbs of bulk seed was collected with our mechanical seed harvester. The wild type seed was over-seeded on remnant sites and mixes broadcast onto new restorations.



The much anticipated 2,000 acre Big Bull Creek Park is currently being restored with a 500 acre prairie complex. Staff have completed seeding south of I-35 and have moved north and have begun seeding south of Edgerton. Staff also completed the 100 acre prairie restoration funded by the 2015 Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund with Burroughs Audubon west of the dam at Shawnee Mission Park. Dormant season fire

season is wrapping up as well. Staff were excited to complete the first ever prescribed fire on the remnant prairie at Lexington Lake Park in Desoto, KS. Ogg Prairie was burned along with the remnants at Ernie Miller Nature Center. Staff have moved on to burning new restorations, but the window for fire is closing with species like Lomatium emerging. Staff hope to complete an additional 14 acre restoration seeding at the headwaters of the Blue River where Coffee and Wolf Creek come together in Overland Park before the end of March. Winter is our busy season!

— Matt Garrett, GHF Board Member and Johnson County Park and Recreation District Biologist



## Anderson County Prairie Protected

**Continued from p. 1**

Caleb Morse of the Kansas Biological Survey found about 230 species on Paintbrush Prairie, including the threatened Mead's milkweed, and the site's now namesake Indian Paintbrush. The previous owners told Tegtmeier that the north part of the site had been grazed, but the south part had not, at least since the previous ownership had been established in the 1930s. He assessed that the difference in management had an effect that can be seen to this day, as the north section has more multiflora rose, blackberry, and other invasive plants that he is now working to eliminate. He burned the prairie and is removing trees so that tree cover will be limited to a riparian strip that separates the two sections. Tegtmeier said he plans to manage the prairie with a cycle of haying, burning, and resting, applied so that one of the two

sections will always provide cover for wildlife. His goal is to maintain the site's biodiversity and to set the conservation easement guidelines to prevent abuse of the land in the future. The diversity of the site for its size made it eligible for a conservation easement with Kansas Land Trust. Tegtmeier said there is high potential for the species list to grow even longer as he introduces different environmental conditions with summer and fall burns, and as he continues to observe the prairie and how it responds. "I'm hopeful that the list will go from 230 to 250. There is a lot to be discovered—that's part of the intrigue to me."

Congratulations, Gary! Contact KLT or email GHF at [grasslandheritage@gmail.com](mailto:grasslandheritage@gmail.com) for more information on the June 16 conservation easement dedication.

# Welcome to the GHF Board

**Courtney Masterson** is an Ecologist currently assisting with research at the Kansas Biological Survey. She teaches Field Botany for KU and Environmental Science at JCCC. She also runs a business, Native Lands LLC, that specializes in native landscaping design and installation, natural areas management, and providing education on the plants of the region. Courtney also co-chairs the Kaw Valley Native Plant Coalition and assists with botany education at local non-profits and schools. Courtney is passionate for the plants of Kansas and has a diverse native seed collection, much of which she grows each year in benefit of local fundraising events.



Courtney Masterson

**Ted Abel** is a lifelong resident of the Kansas City area. He received a B.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from KU, and a M.S. in Biology from the University of Central Missouri. His thesis work investigated various management techniques to control the invasive Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), as well as the effects of bison grazing on riparian plant communities. He has been a volunteer with GHF's Groundhogs crew for approximately ten years, and as a board member, hopes to make an impact on future management strategies at Snyder prairie.



Ted Abel

**Roxie McGee** grew up in the Kansas Flint Hills and now resides in Lawrence. As a Master Gardener, she serves as the caretaker of the Native Medicinal Plant Garden at KU. Roxie is also a textile artist, using native and natural materials to create dyes.

In Roxie's own words:

"Growing up, grassland was our back yard. I didn't call it prairie. It was little, a couple hundred acres. Prairies, it seemed to my child self, were big, and so prairie started on the other side of our fence. Our barn pasture, made up of grasses and flowers, high ground and slopes, was a place to wander: to hunt for fossils in the rim rock; to look for arrowheads in the ravines; to be surprised by the flowers that weren't there last year; to sneak off from work and to read; to try counting plant species in one square yard, to fight wild fire. And it was a place to wonder... what is that 4 sided potato chip (*oenothera*); were there ever bison here; did native peoples travel through just long enough to leave some arrowheads and scrapers, or did they stay for a while; could someone long ago have stood in this exact spot, looked across the valley while wishing the grass wasn't so prickly."

I walked in tall grass once. A farmer in Michigan planted grass and forb seeds from Kansas (go figure) on several acre plots. The farmer and I enter the plot a few feet from the road and within a short distance I was enclosed by fog of grass. The farmer walked ahead and out of sight. With no horizon, no landmarks, no discernible direction, stories of tall grass prairies came to mind while panic built. When I looked down I saw baptisia, achillea, coreopsis—all I've grown wherever I've had soil. How do they grow here as well as in our full sun gardens, I wondered. How does this collection of grasses and forbs incite panic, awe and wonder. To me wonder is the richness that is grassland--prairie."

Have you renewed  
your 2018  
membership yet?

## BENEFITS OF GHF MEMBERSHIP

- Discounts at fee workshops and native plant sale
- GHF Newsletter in your mailbox or inbox
- Together, we accomplish more prairie education, restoration, and protection

## Douglas County Community Conservation Priorities

While natural areas continue to be lost in Douglas County, the Kansas Biological Survey (KBS) is reaching out to landowners and residents to identify opportunities to protect important remaining cultural and natural heritage sites, thanks to funding from the Douglas County Heritage Council. KBS hosted four public meetings in February and March 2018 throughout Douglas County. GHF provided support to KBS in meeting planning and setup, and GHF's Kim Bellemere provided prairie information to attendees. In a full room in Baldwin, Baker University professor John Richards said that the geography of Douglas County shaped its history. While the Santa Fe Trail and associated activity occurred on the high-elevation land in the county, other development occurred along the Kansas River, with connections and interactions between the two areas. At the Lawrence meeting, Barbara Higgins-Dover of the Kansas Riverkings Museum discussed the Delaware/Lenape tribe, who were great sturgeon fishermen, dugout canoe builders, and plant-fiber net makers until they were removed to Oklahoma. Later settlers, starting in 1855, included the fisherman Jake Washington, who arrived in Lawrence via the Underground Railroad in the 1860s.

KBS' Jennifer Delisle invited attendees to envision the historic prairie landscape of Douglas County, with native woodlands, such as the Baldwin Woods, along some streams and floodplains. According to KBS surveys of natural areas in Douglas County, less than .5% of the original prairie remains in the county, and 18% of the remaining prairie was lost from 2005

to 2015. Delisle said this loss is due to rural residential development and to woody encroachment, with more than 80% of the county's woodlands occurring on prairie soils. KBS' Dr. Kelly Kindscher said that much of the floodplain was prairie in the 1856 survey, but much of the historic riparian forest is gone.



Jennifer Delisle of KBS presenting at the Baldwin forum

KBS cited reasons to support the protection of heritage sites, such as our cultural heritage and strong public support for natural areas protection, as expressed in the comprehensive plan community survey. Also, rare animals require prairie for their survival, such as the rattlesnake master borer moth, which depends on rattlesnake master to reproduce.

Courtney Masterson provided guidance on how to recognize native prairies and forests. Invasive plants such as pear and cedar trees may obscure sites with good restoration potential, but remaining scattered wildflowers may signal their presence. High-quality forests may contain spring ephemeral flowers and ferns, and they may have little undergrowth.

Since most prairies and forests are on private lands, KBS seeks to learn about landowners' conservation goals and to help identify technical and financial resources to meet those goals. KBS is also looking for opportunities to link multiple project areas using habitat corridors, trails, and public parks. Attendees suggested sharing information on places that currently have public access and aligning projects with Kansas Forest Service priority funding areas.



Courtney Masterson and Kim Bellemere at the KBS forum in Baldwin

## Follow the Prairie Restoration Process with GHF

GHF presents a great opportunity to follow a small prairie restoration in progress. GHF Membership and Education Coordinator Kim Bellemere and her family are replanting a small 2-acre portion of their property back to prairie natives. We're frequently asked how to conduct prairie restorations, so we're taking the opportunity to show everyone how one family does it.

The area that is being restored is a brome pasture which was grazed in the past, though idle for several years. The Bellemeres started the restoration process last fall by contacting the Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism to investigate restoration cost-share opportunities. Through the winter, they worked on removing brush, and they met with the KDWPT State Biologist and private consultants to further develop their plan. Now that spring is almost here, they're prepping the site by burning off last season's growth and they're working with a contractor to herbicide the brome. After the site is prepped, they'll plant the new seed and cross their fingers for a wet spring.

While the plan sounds straightforward, the Bellemeres have learned that there is more than one way to restore a prairie. The basics are simple – get rid of the current growth and replant – but the details can vary. They've had to decide what seed mix to order,

how heavy to seed, when to start the process, and even which cost-share program is the best fit. They're learning a lot along the way and we're excited to share some of their new-found knowledge with you. Watch for the GHF Restoration Blog on our website which will follow the project from now until the end of the year. On the blog, we'll document almost every step in the restoration process and talk about important resources like cost-share programs, seed vendors, and contractors. We'll post a lot of pictures showing how it all works and links for more information.

GHF is also fortunate to participate in a collaborative grant with the Jayhawk Audubon Society to host two workshops at the site. The workshops, in June and October, will focus on the relationship between native plants, insects, and birds, and on the steps taken to restore the site. Thank you, Jayhawk Audubon, for inviting GHF to apply for the grant through the national Audubon Society and for partnering with us on the project.

Follow along and let us know if you have any questions or comments on how the restoration is happening. We can't wait to get to work!

## Donations and Memberships

Educational Fund: Dennis & Susan Lordi Marker, Ann Danner, and Tasha Wolff

Scholarship Fund: Dennis & Susan Lordi Marker and Elizabeth Marshall

Land Management: Matthew Garrett

Prairie Protection/Prairie Maintenance: Ted Abel and Robert Barnhardt, Jr.

Monthly donation: Kenneth & Gayle Nicolay

Donation in memory of Lawrence Wagner: David Wagner

Donation in honor of David Wagner & memory of Lawrence Wagner: Martha Wagner

Welcome to new members: Greg & Patty Hylton, Ann Danner, Kathy Porsch, Jessica Daniels, Stan Brower, Sharon Ashworth, Kathy Kinder, Margaret Thomas

Thanks to renewing members since the last newsletter:

Myron Leinwetter, Kevin & Angie Babbit, Mike & Julie Campbell, Matthew Garrett, Ken Tillery, Melvin Depperschmidt, Frank Norman, Ted Abel, Dennis & Susan Lordi Marker, David L. Wagner, Mary Cottom, Kenneth & Gayle Nicolay, Julia Cotter, Byril J. Sanders, Debra Small, Deborah Borek, Jean Hiersteiner, Margie Lundy, Richard A. Brune, Martha Wagner, Carol Fields & Charles Downing, Margaret Rose, Dr. David Alspaugh, Robert G. Barnhardt, Jr., Elizabeth Marshall, Evelyn L. Davis, Catherine Reed, Zora Milne, Roger & Virginia Emley, Bruce & Lucy Cutler, Ronald L Sisk, Kelly Kindscher, Mike, Pam & Lia Miller, Jerry Jost, Stan & Sandy Nolind, Tasha Wolff, Julie Trowbridge-Alford, Cynthia Pederson, Andrea Repinsky, and Edna Hamera

**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.

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**Membership renewals and donations  
can also be sent to GHF online:  
[www.grasslandheritage.org](http://www.grasslandheritage.org)**

## Thank you to...

Patti Ragsdale and Courtney Masterson for presenting in the 2018 Native Plant Gardening workshop series

Megan Withiam for helping with the GHF table at the Kaw Valley Seed Fair on Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>

Roxie McGee and Andrea Repinsky for setup and cleanup help at the March 15 gardening workshop

Kevin Bachkora for monthly accounting services

Ted Abel, Gary Tegtmeier, Myron Leinwetter, and Jim Jennings for Groundhogs restoration work



Members of the 2018 GHF Board of Governors

**Kim Bellemere organizes GHF's educational outreach.  
Call her at 785-840-8104  
or email [grasslandheritage@gmail.com](mailto:grasslandheritage@gmail.com) to assist at an event or volunteer in another way.**

## Gain Restoration Experience as a Groundhogs Volunteer

Do you want to learn more about prairie restoration on GHF's Snyder Prairie? We need more workers to join our Groundhogs volunteer restoration crew to preserve and improve Snyder Prairie. No experience is necessary. We just need people willing to cut trees, lop sumac and rough-leaved dogwood, help with burns, collect seeds, remove invasives, and other tasks. Even if you can only attend once or twice, you are still welcome! Snyder Prairie is located near Mayetta, Kansas about 20 miles north of Topeka.

Groundhogs usually meets the third Saturday of the month at 9:00am. This spring's Groundhog dates are April 14 and May 19. Contact our site manager, Frank Norman at 785-691-9748 or [fjnorman52@gmail.com](mailto:fjnorman52@gmail.com) to join the volunteer contact list. **Please don't show up without contacting us, as we may need to cancel or move a work-day.** Always dress for the prairie with long pants, gloves, a hat, and sturdy shoes or boots, and bring along water.



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## Native Gardening Workshops

GHF's 2018 native gardening program kicked off with an introductory workshop on March 15th. We'll educate homeowners on the benefits and methods of incorporating natives into home gardens. At the first workshop, prairie ecologist Courtney Masterson shared her favorite sun groundcover plants, squirrel stories, great tips for assessing your garden site and soil condition, and on when to clean the garden in the spring. Her top reasons for enjoying native plant gardening are opportunities to observe how animals interact with plants, and to observe bloom times as a guide for when to visit prairie sites.

The April 19 workshop will cover landscaping and garden design. Join us again on July 9 for a garden tour! GHF will share written gardening guides in print and online. Let us know if there is a topic or native gardening issue that particularly interests you. We'd like to know your questions, too.



To receive your newsletter in pdf form by email, contact Sue Holcomb at sholc2003@yahoo.com or (913) 856-4784.

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