

Upcoming Events



Kaw Valley Eagles Day

Saturday, January 21, 2017
From 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Free
Free State High School
4700 Overland Drive Lawrence, KS 66049
<http://www.kawvalleyeaglesday.com/>

The 21st annual Kaw Valley Eagles Day will be on Saturday, January 21, 2017 at Free State High School in northwest Lawrence just northeast of the intersection of Wakarusa Drive and West 6th Street; parking on the north side of the building. As has been done in past years, there will be owl pellets for kids to dissect to learn what a Barn Owl eats; two of the cosponsors, Home Depot and ICL Performance Products will collaborate to help kids build wooden kits. There will also be craft items for kids to make as well as lots of other educational and fun displays by participating area nonprofits and agencies, including GHF.

The program on "Nesting Bald Eagles and Live Raptors" will start at 9:00 a.m. and repeated at 1:15 p.m. Eagle viewing field trips will leave from the school at 10:45 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Buses for the field trips are available on the first come first serve basis. The event is free and open to the public thanks to the continued sponsorship of: Baker Wetlands Discovery Center, Chickadee Checkoff of the KS Department of Wildlife and Parks, City of Lawrence Solid Waste Division, Crown Automotive, Home Depot, ICL Performance Products, Jayhawk Audubon Society, Lawrence Public Schools, Westar Energy Green Team, and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

8th Annual Kaw Valley Seed Fair

Saturday, February 11, 2017 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM FREE
Douglas County 4-H Fairgrounds Bldg 21,
2110 Harper St, Lawrence, Kansas, 66044



GHF will promote the use of native plants at this seed exchange and informational fair. The event includes environmental info, seed saving workshops and children's activities. www.facebook.com/kawvalleyseeds



Grassland Heritage Foundation Annual Meeting

Monday, January 9, 2017
From 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

The Board of Governors will hold elections, conduct the required business, and discuss plans for 2017. We worked on what we wanted to make a priority at a meeting in November and are already moving ahead. If you're interested in joining us as a board member or committee member, please contact Kim Bellemere at 785-840-8104 or grasslandheritage@gmail.com. Volunteers are always welcome!

The Bison: American Icon



Until January 9, 2017
From 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Price: \$5 Adults; \$3 students; \$3 seniors
McPherson Museum & Arts Foundation
1111 E. Kansas Ave, McPherson, KS 67460
Closed Sunday & Monday (620) 241-8464
<http://bisonexhibit.org/>

"The Bison: American Icon," is a traveling exhibit exploring the past, present and future of the great North American mammal. You'll discover the meaning and significance of the iconic creature from the Plains Indian culture of the 1800s through the era of commercial exploitation and the emergence of the bison as a national symbol today. Toured by the National Buffalo Foundation in collaboration with Kauffman Museum.

Program and book signing by Alan Branhagen, Director of Powell Gardens. February 2, 2017 The presentation will be held at the Douglas County Extension auditorium. Alan's new book "Native Plants of the Midwest: A Comprehensive Guide to the Best 500 Species for the Garden" has recently been published. Watch for an email announcement from GHF with details of the time and exact location and the opportunity to reserve a book for purchase.

**GHF wishes all a very
happy holiday!**



President's Column

Thank you for your support of prairie conservation in 2016! Thank you for joining GHF for prairie restoration work days, prairie walks, and workshops. We're counting on your support during a busy 2017. The importance of what we do as prairie advocates was highlighted by this year's Kansas Biological Survey (KBS) inventory of prairies in Douglas County. KBS staff, led by Dr. Kelly Kindscher, found that 18% of the remaining prairie remnants in Douglas County were lost in the last 10 years. It's a sad fact and an alarming trend. We must turn it around, in partnership with complementary organizations, agencies, GHF members, and you. We'll need your support to do what is needed for prairie protection. Please keep your annual membership current and consider sending additional donations so that we can meet today's challenges. You're welcome to earmark your giving to match your goals, such as education, land protection, prairie management and restoration, and prairie research scholarships.

GHF plays an important role in prairie conservation, and it does so efficiently. We stretch our donations and resources by involving volunteers, cost-sharing available for land management, and low-cost tools and solutions. Right now, GHF board committees are meeting to set work plans for 2017. This follows the recent annual planning meeting, where we reviewed our 2016 activities and the progress we made toward excellence in prairie education, management, and conservation. We made plans to adjust our activities to better meet our goals and provide services. I'm looking forward to what 2017 will bring. Check the GHF website soon for a new design. More online resources will be added in the next year—let us know what you'd like to see on the site. Keep your membership current for 2017 to be notified of all upcoming events, talks, and workshops. Please stay active and involved in order to protect what we care about the most.

I invite you to join me in giving financial support to GHF's good work protecting the tallgrass prairie in northeast Kansas! I sincerely thank all of you who, with your donations, time, and hard work, join GHF in this worthy endeavor.

Andrea Repinsky
adheron@yahoo.com

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

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

Volunteer Opportunities

Want to get more involved? Not sure you're ready to volunteer to be on the board but have opinions to offer and assistance to give? How about joining one of GHF's standing committees? We can always use input on the Education, Property Management, Fund-raising-Plant Sale, Web Site, Membership, or Newsletter. Contact Andrea Repinsky or Kim Bellemere with what you'd like to do.

Kim Bellemere, our membership and education coordinator, organizes GHF's booth and needs help from area members to staff and visit with people about GHF at area events. Call her at 785-840-8104 or email grasslandheritage@gmail.com if you can assist or would like to volunteer in some other way.

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2015 (September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016)

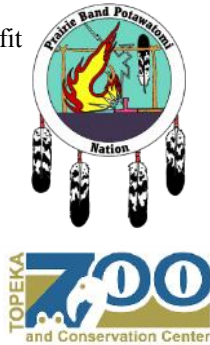
Membership and Education

2015-2016 was an exciting year for GHF! Some of last year's highlights include:



Kaw Valley Native Plant Coalition – GHF staff and board members have been closely involved in the formation of this new coalition of organizations working to preserve native plants and habitat in the Kaw Valley region. 2017 plans include educational forums, advocacy work, a website, and additional opportunities for member organizations to promote events and resources.

New Partners – We believe that we all benefit when we work with partners to achieve common goals. This year we were lucky to partner with some incredible organizations including the Prairie Band Pottawatomie Nation and the Topeka Zoo (on our Prairie Discovery Day) and we made presentations to new groups including garden clubs and new pollinator gardeners with Bridging the Gap.



Native Plant Sale – The 2016 sale was our largest yet with over 3400 plants sold! The Native Plant Sale is a fundraiser for GHF but it's also an important way for gardeners to access native plants and for educating the community about the important role they play in our ecosystem. It also gives us an opportunity to work with some fantastic volunteers and native plant experts.

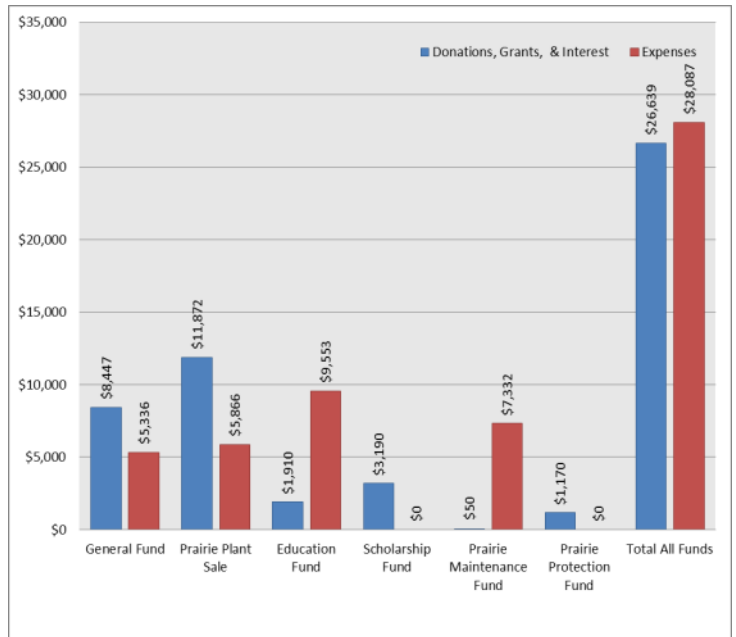
Educational Activities by the numbers

# of educational events attended or hosted by GHF (including the plant sale)	14
# of volunteer hours contributed during events (including plant sale) *	131-136
# of Children and adults participating in our outreach activities	~950-1000

*Does not include Groundhogs volunteer numbers/workdays, newsletter prep, or board member volunteer time.

Financial Summary of Income and Expenses for Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 2016

The summary of this fiscal year appears below thanks to Steve Holcomb, Treasurer.



Prairie Center Walk



Diversity of the prairie in October

In October Kim Bellemere and Sue Holcomb led a walk at the Prairie Center of Olathe for Baker University students. The participants were students in an ecology class for non-majors which Kim spoke to earlier that week. It was a gorgeous day to talk about the Prairie Center's history, GHF's role in its formation and the importance of preserving the tallgrass prairie.



Kim describing native plants to students



Kim showing milkweed seeds

Annual Report continued...

Snyder Prairie Restoration
September 2015 to August 2016



During Fiscal Year 2016, Groundhogs (GHF's prairie restoration volunteers who meet the 3rd

Saturday of each month except December) contributed a total of 106 volunteer hours over 8 Saturdays to cut brush and pile debris, assist in spring prescribed burns, and control invasive plants (e.g., sericea lespedeza, red cedar, rough-leaved dogwood, garlic mustard, and musk thistle). Most of the activities were conducted with the goal to make haying possible in more areas of the property.



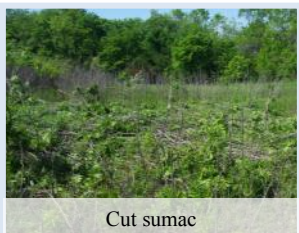
Groundhogs participants



Barbed wire removed and rolled



Cut cedar trees



Cut sumac

This year, Bruce Yonke, GHF subcontractor, continued his efforts with brushing, invasive weed control, and assisting with prescribed burns. Groundhogs, led by Frank Norman, were joined by a new and numerous returning volunteers including Myron Leinwetter, Ted Abel, Gary Tegtmeier, Dale Nimz, Melvin Depperschmidt, John Flavin, Andrea Repinsky, Brian Roh, Sierra Barron, and Tandy.

In 2017, Groundhogs will continue with similar efforts described above as will Bruce Yonke plus he will continue with haying efforts. Our contracted and volunteer efforts are all aimed at maintaining the native prairie, improving the quality of restored prairie, and reducing the extent of woody encroachment on the property.

Prairie Discovery Day



On September 17 we had a great day "discovering prairie". The morning began with a plein air workshop led by Lawrence artist Louis Copt. Later, participants enjoyed lunch, visited educational tables, viewed live animals courtesy of the Topeka Zoo, enjoyed walks with our property manager and Benny Potts of the Prairie Band Pottawatomie Nation, hunted for insects, played hedge apple bocce ball, and enjoyed a beautiful day on the prairie. Photos of Louis Copt and the art workshop were by Phyllis Copt. Other photos were by Kim Bellemere or Jason Keezer.



Painting workshop in progress



Lawrence Painter, Louis Copt



Frank leading walk



Bouquet making, photo by Kim Bellemere



Sue Ann Funk of DCCC leading insect collecting



Benny Potts sharing how PBPB uses native plants

*Annual Report continued...***Financial Contributors for the Fiscal year starting Sept. 1, 2015**

The following members contributed during the last year. This does not include life-time members, members who paid for multiple years on a previous occasion, or any of the many volunteers who give of their time and talents and don't necessarily make a monetary contribution. If you believe we've inadvertently left off your name, please contact Sue Holcomb, 913-856-4784 or sholc2003@yahoo.com. Thank you!!!

Helen Alexander	Dale Funk	Barbara Mason	J. Bradley Short
Kevin and Angie Babbit	Prairie Acres Garden Club	Courtney Masterson	Debra Small
Lora Barnett	Kelly Haller	Florence and Robert Middleton	Susan Smith
Robert G. Barnhardt, Jr.	Dr. Edna Hamera	Mike, Pam, and Lia Miller	Madonna Stallmann
Grace Beam	Mary Haskin	Zora Milne	Ruth Stepien
Joanne Berns	Jean Hiersteiner	Darla Mitchell	Betty C.S. Sterling
Deborah Borek	Steve Holcomb	Rick Mitchell	Al and Linda Storms
Brian Brinkman	Steve and Helen Horton	Carol Morgan	Toni and Chip Taylor
Stan Bower	Nancy Hubble and Tom Kellogg	Wayne Morton	Gary Tegtmeier
Richard A. Brune	Carole and John Hunter	Jo Ann Myers	Topeka Zoo Conservation Committee
Danielle Brunin	Brenda Kappelman	Wade and Rachel Myslivy	Julie Trowbridge-Alford
Mike and Julie Campbell	Mary Kowalski	Kenneth and Gayle Nicolay	Ione Unruh
Barbara Clark	Carol and Dave Kyner	Dale E. Nimz	David L. Wagner
Marnie Clawson	Marie Alice L'Heureux	Stan and Sandy Nolind	Martha Wagner
The Community Mercantile	Becky and Lisa LaBlanc-Willis	Frank Norman	Joan Wagstaff
Mary Conrad	Anna Landauer	Alexis Powell	Westar Energy Spirit of Giving
Fred and Nancy Coombs	Carol Larson	Rex Powell	Nancy Hamill Winter
Phyllis Copt	Myron Leinwetter	Catherine Reed	Ron and Joyce Wolf
Mary Cottom	Susan Lordi Marker	Durand Reiber	Gayle and Richard Wyman
John Cougher	Margie Lundy	Cynthia Rhodes	James Zunda
Bruce and Lucy Cutler	Richard and Betty Marshall	Margaret Rose	
Roger and Virginia Emley	Brian Martin	Janet Roth	
Craig and Jane Freeman		Barbara and Dick Schowen	
Meredith Fry			

Future Plans

Looking ahead, we expect 2016-2017 to be even more productive. We're planning to re-launch the GHF Conservation Lecture Series with a spring/summer forum, we're working with the Climate and Energy Project on a new program addressing the relationship between land/habitat, energy, water, and climate change, and we're planning some great ancestral arts workshops. We hope you can join us!

Prairie Research Scholarships Available for 2017

The Lordi Marker Family has generously donated more funds to be used for scholarships for research and education programming. The board of GHF would like to express our gratitude for your support!

The Education committee is meeting this month to start on plans for programs to be held in 2017. Sue Holcomb is finalizing our application and requirements for two scholarships for up to \$1000 to be used for research into monarchs or pollinators. These will be available for either graduate or undergraduate students at Kansas colleges and universities. Contact Sue Holcomb, sholc2003@yahoo.com if you are an interested researcher. Recipients will be asked to acknowledge the support and share the results of their work with our group. We have previously given our scholarships through the Kansas Native Plant Society and will use a similar process.

Groundhogs

One of our priorities as prairie preservationists is hands-on work at actual prairies. Because of fragmentation, fire suppression and introduction of invasive species, there is always work to be done. Our Groundhogs group does prairie maintenance on our own Snyder Prairie, located about 20 miles north of Topeka, off Highway 75, near Mayetta, Kansas. This year's planned work days will be the third Saturdays of January, February, March, April, May, September, October, and November, with a planned start time of 9:00am. Extra work days in the spring may be held for prescribed burns. Frank Norman, our property manager, also wants to reinstate seasonal prairie walks at Snyder Prairie. These will be in March, June, September, and December, with dates to be determined.

Work ranges from helping with burns, cutting trees, hauling cuttings off the prairie, lopping woodies (sumac & dogwood), collecting seeds, etc. Contact Frank Norman at 785-691-9748 or fjnoman@sunflower.com to get on the volunteer list and be informed of work day activities. Please don't show up without contacting us, as we may need to cancel on a given workday. Always dress for the prairie with long pants, gloves, a hat, and sturdy shoes or boots, and bring along water.

Red Cedar Disaster

By Sue Holcomb

In March of 2016, the Anderson Creek fire, fed by 40 mph erratic winds, spread from Oklahoma into southern Kansas. By the time an Easter snow extinguished the blazes, it had consumed nearly 400,000 acres of prairie, burnt millions of dollars worth of fences, several structures, and killed hundreds of cattle. Left behind was a charred landscape littered with many Eastern red cedar tree (*Juniperus virginiana*) skeletons. These trees made the fire much harder to fight. Where grass fires can usually be stopped at roads, even live cedar trees are combustible and can literally explode—sending embers long distances.

Within days, the rain helped new growth to emerge. This is how prairie reacts to fire. But, the cedars were no longer alive to sap gallons of water a day out of the soil. It was soon obvious that creeks that had been dry for years now had water flowing. So out of this disaster, there was good news. Eventually, what had been bare ground under cedars had grown to waist-high grasses, bushes, brambles and wildflowers.

An Oklahoma State University study says a 12-inch cedar tree can use up to 42 gallons of water per day. Many thousands of cedars died in this fire. While some ranchers admit that they may be better off in the long run, the fear is that this “worst fire in state history” could become the second worst if things don’t change. Mechanical methods of cutting and removing these trees are difficult and expensive. Controlled burning is the best way to rid the prairie of cedar trees and other fuel and prevent another major wildfire.

This area of Kansas, the Red Hills, southwest of Wichita is known for buttes, rugged canyons and great grazing. Native people commonly burned the prairie for protection and the benefits of the fresh new growth, feeding horses and attracting buffalo. But as settlers moved into the area, they brought along a fear of fire. Most blazes were quickly extinguished. But this year, conditions had combined to make this fire particularly hard to

fight. Last year’s rains had allowed the grasses to grow lush and tall. But conditions in March were extremely dry. This was complicated by the cedar tree proliferation. Ranchers say government agencies need to step up education efforts while memories of the Anderson Creek fire are fresh in the minds of local landowners. Assistance with controlled burns and cost sharing for removal of cedars may be necessary.



Cedar catching fire



Upwind catches



Cedar fire gets away



After cedar burn

Fifty years ago, red cedar trees in Kansas were counted in the tens of thousands. Now the estimate is closer to 100 million. The lack of consistent rainfall and high temperatures in south-central Kansas makes even limited cedar encroachment a more dangerous fire hazard. Counties along the Kansas-Oklahoma border face increased fire risk because the number of cedar trees in Oklahoma is four or five times greater than in Kansas. They are attempting to find economic uses for cedar products, ranging from oils and furniture to biomass energy generators. A profit motive could spur removal of these pests.

While originally found only along creeks, cedar trees gained favor when wood was scarce. The government actively promoted their expansion after the Dust Bowl, along with hedge trees for windbreaks that could prevent erosion. The mayor of Medicine Lodge – the town nearly burned up by red cedars– tried to turn Highway 160 into “Cedar Tree Lane” in the mid-20th century, a point of pride mentioned in his obituary.

Those of us more familiar with the Flint Hills and how it is managed need to understand how different customs are in this part of the state. Up to half of the 5 million acres in the Flint Hills are burned each year. Fresh green grass can help calves gain an extra 30 or 40 pounds a year. In the Red Hills, most of the ranches are selling calves after they are weaned, so there is less incentive to burn and produce this early green grass. Local rules, lack of training and experience, and weather conditions are also more problematic in the Red Hills. Cost of insurance, equipment and personnel needs, and the time involved are all limiting factors in the ability to conduct a prescribed burn. If a burn doesn’t get hot enough because of humidity, it may not even kill the cedars.

Cedars hog enough water and block enough sunlight from more beneficial plants that one scientist called them “the green glacier,” which slowly crushes everything in its path. They contribute to habitat fragmentation and loss of prairie acreage. Eventually they attract woodland birds which perpetuate the cycle of seeds being spread to new locations. Cedars also add

risk to animal and human communities. The lesser prairie chicken doesn't tolerate vertical structures like these trees because it perceives them as a haven for predators. The endangered black-capped vireo has suffered from loss of preferred habitat and increases in the nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds. Other research says that birds such as the Eastern wood pewee, the grasshopper sparrow, the Rio Grande turkey, and bobwhite quail, along with white-tailed deer, could be adversely affected by the junipers' advance. The loss of animal species is a strong signal of prairie in distress.

Cedars can also affect city dwellers. Research shows that Eastern red cedar is favored by two species of mosquito that carry diseases dangerous to wildlife and humans, causing dengue and other viruses. It could enhance West Nile Virus or these types of transmission by attracting woodland birds that are carriers. Another health issue that's not lethal, but that could affect thousands of people even hundreds of miles away, is the highly allergenic juniper pollen.

Protecting prairie from encroachment is a monumental task these days. The Eastern red cedar is a native plant that is multiplying in huge numbers beyond its historic range. How we deal with the encroachment is an ongoing dilemma. But the fire in northern Oklahoma and southern Kansas this year shows how devastating it can be to ignore this threat.

The information in this article is from several pieces in the Wichita Eagle. www.kansas.com. The accompanying photos are of our own "red cedar debacle" in 2004 when burning some cut cedars let some fire spread into our woodlands at Snyder Prairie. Luckily, it didn't escape and cause any other damage.

Special Donations

GHF Members

Thanks to members who joined or renewed since our last newsletter and for special donations!

New members: David & Michelle Gundy, Laura Downey-Skochedopole

Returning members after a lapse: Denise Brubaker, Ozark Wilderness Waterways Club

For Education: Ron & Joyce Wolf

For Prairie Management: Ozark Wilderness Waterways Club

For Monthly donations: Kenneth & Gayle Nicolay

For Scholarship & Education: Dennis & Susan Lordi Marker

Watch out for Teasel!

By Sue Holcomb



Dipsacus fullonum Fuller's teasel or common teasel USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Vol. 3: 289.

In 2003, Alaine Hudlin of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks wrote an article warning of teasel invasion at The Prairie Center from a neighbor's yard. At the time, I rarely noticed this plant. This has changed in recent years. Teasel infestations are common along the highways in central Missouri. Lately, I've noticed more and larger patches as I drive along Highway 56 in Olathe. If treated in the early stages of infestation, it is possible to cheaply and quickly control teasel. If teasel is noticed in a natural community, get control of the teasel before it gets too aggressive. Teasel is a biennial that produces rosettes in the first year, and sends up a

flowering shoot in the second year. Young rosettes can be dug up like dandelions. Older plants may have taproots 2 foot long. Mowing has proven ineffective, as the plant may send up shoots multiple times or even flower below the level of a mower. Fire has also proven ineffective in control. A single plant can produce 2000 seeds which remain viable in the soil for some time. Use of herbicides may become necessary if the infestation is too severe. Cutleaf teasel is also commonly found and can be even more aggressive. So, keep your eyes open and control this plant if it shows up in your native areas.

Thank you to:

For our 5th Annual Prairie Discovery Day:

Louis Copt for leading the Plein Air Painting Workshop *Ma'Ko'Quah Jones of the PB Pottawatomie Nation (PBPB)*, *Sue Ann Funk with the Douglas County Conservation District*, *Rex Powell*, and volunteers with the *Topeka Zoo* for hosting educational tables,

Frank Norman for leading the plant walk,

Benny Potts with the PBPB for speaking with participants about native plants,

Jason Keezer for taking pictures,

Jennifer Dropkin, Andrea Repinsky, Joyce Wolf, and Megan Withiam, for planning and logistical help

Sharon Gan-Yang for her much appreciated assistance with the newsletter

Kevin Bachkora for monthly accounting assistance

We depend on your contributions!

Please help GHF complete its mission by sending your donation today. The date of your last contribution is printed above your name on the mailing label. **Send 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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

____ Send my newsletter by mail **OR** _____ Send my pdf newsletter to the above email address

____ Contact me about volunteering

____ Gift in *honor* or *memory* of (mark which) _____

Your contribution will be placed in the general fund unless you designate your donation for :

____ Rachel Snyder Memorial Scholarship Fund

____ Prairie Acquisition

____ Education programs

____ Prairie Management



Give the gift of a Grassland Heritage Foundation membership this year!

Make a donation in honor of someone and we will send acknowledgment to them and print it in our next newsletter. You can make special donations for Education, Prairie Management, or Scholarships.

Use the enclosed envelope to renew your membership in GHF today!

GHF Native Plant Sale 2017

The planned date for our sale next year is Saturday, May 13, 2017 in Lawrence, Kansas. We are beginning to work on our order from the grower. If you have a native plant that you're interested in us having at our sale, please let us know. We will of course have more of the milkweeds that were so popular this year, as well as other butterfly attractors, native grasses, and even some shade plants. Contact us at grasslandheritage@gmail.com with your suggestions for plants or the sale in general. Pre-ordering for members worked well last year and we encourage you to be sure your membership is current! Look for more information in the next GHF News.



To receive your newsletter in pdf form by email, contact Sue Holcomb, sholc2003@yahoo.com or 913-856-4784. Also, please let us know if you no longer wish to receive the GHF News. Thank you! Follow us on Facebook for the latest news.