

EVENTS

Earth Day Seeding and Education Event at Prairie Park

Prairie Park restoration site, 2811 Kensington,
Lawrence KS, Saturday April 22, 1 PM–4 PM

Prairie Restoration Workdays

Prairie Park restoration site, 2811 Kensington,
Lawrence KS

Thursday May 4, 5 PM–7 PM

Saturday May 13, 9 AM–12 PM

Thursday May 25, 5 PM–7 PM

Tuesday May 30, 5 PM–7 PM (Rain date)

Sunday June 4, 1 PM–4 PM

Sunday June 11, 1 PM–4 PM (Rain date)

Emporia Native Plant Sale & Family Activities

Prophet Aquatic Research and Outreach
Center, 601 E 18th Ave, Emporia KS
Saturday May 6, 9 AM - 11 AM

GHF Annual Spring Native Plant Sale

Trinity Episcopal Church, 1011 Vermont
Lawrence KS, Sat. May 20, 10 AM -1 PM

National Extension Master Gardeners Conference

6000 College Blvd., Overland Park KS
Monday, June 19, 2023 imgc2023.com



11th Annual Grassland Heritage Foundation

Spring Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 20th, 2023
10:00 AM- 1:00 PM
At Trinity Episcopal Church Courtyard
1011 Vermont St, Lawrence, KS 66044

Online preorder will be available in April to GHF members.
More details will be available this spring on the GHF Facebook page and website!



A Warm-Season Grass Welcome to Nicole!

Greetings fellow prairie enthusiasts! My name is Nicole Stanton-Wilson, and I am excited to be starting as GHF's new Program Director & Preserve Manager. I originally fell in love with the prairie through seed collecting as a Missouri Master Naturalist many moons ago and have never turned back. Since that pivotal experience, I found my way through a career change and to a graduate program at K-State studying prairie plant ecology on "my" beloved Konza Prairie. I then worked as a Field Botanist for the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) for the Prairie Peninsula Domain, based in Manhattan, KS. Working for NEON I sampled several areas of the Konza Prairie as well as the Rockefeller Prairie & other areas of the KU Field Station. For the past several years, I have been working as the Undergraduate Biology Teaching Lab Coordinator and Instructor

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

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**Program Director and
Preserve Manager
Nicole Stanton-Wilson**

A Note from the President

This is a time of transition for GHF, with Kaitlyn moving on and Nicole getting started as Program Director and Preserve Manager. At our January annual meeting, we had a long discussion of the future of GHF. Kaitlyn has been a vital part of GHF for the last 3 years and we will miss her. We look forward to a future with new ideas and directions from our new Program Director and Preserve Manager, Nicole Stanton-Wilson.

On the board, Steve and I have done a lot of the work of GHF on a regular basis. The thought of what will happen in the future needs to be addressed. We are not getting any younger and may not spend our last years in this area. Other board members have assisted greatly, from communications to once a year jobs like reading scholarships. I appreciate Helen Alexander taking the idea of money for prairie maintenance and putting together our Sustaining Prairies Grants. Mike Campbell has served in various offices and continues as our secretary. Roxie McGee has stepped up to be vice-president the last few years and has contributed to decision making. She is also a major driver of the Little Prairie at Little Prairie Garden in Lawrence. Andrea Repinsky has also served in multiple offices and currently works on our newsletter, as well as overseeing social media and the web site. Mary Kowalski has volunteered for several activities since she joined us. Reb Bryant has gotten involved very quickly as a new member. Others participate as their time allows.

What I would love is for more people to get involved. Could you volunteer for a short-term job? The plant sale will need more volunteers this year as we transition to a new contractor. Perhaps you could help with preparation or on the day of the sale. We are also having an early sale in Emporia again and could use assistance from people who live in that direction or are willing to travel. Steve does pre-orders with a google form and we could use some help with how to better summarize orders and prepare pull sheets. He also uses Excel for all the GHF books and could use some backup to start learning the system and checking his work. Could you contribute to the newsletter, with an article, summaries of prairie-related articles you have read, photos, or other ideas? Are you willing to work on editing or layout? Would you be willing to read and assess applications for our grants next year? Could you participate in a workday at Snyder Prairie or Leadplant? Could you help with our Prairie Park project in Lawrence? There are countless ways to contribute besides the financial donations that many of you make. Please reach out to discuss if you think you'd like to get more involved.

Sue Holcomb
sholc2003@yahoo.com



A slice of the GHF team at the 2023 annual meeting

Douglas County Open Space Plan Underway

GHF board member Andrea Repinsky is representing GHF on the new Douglas County Open Space Advisory Committee, serving alongside representatives from Kansas Land Trust, KSU Extension, Friends of Lawrence Area Trails, Kansas Biological Survey, and more. The Committee will assist with the development of the plan through the coming year, to identify community values and cultivate an inclusive planning process, with the goal of offering a plan for County Commission approval in May 2024.

According to Douglas County Sustainability Manager Kim Criner-Ritchie, the County committed to developing an Open Space Plan with the adoption of the revised county Comprehensive Plan, Plan 2040, in 2019. The creation of an Open Space Plan will expand options for both public and private landowners. Ritchie expects our Open Space Plan to provide a high-level policy guide that serves the land needs of the community while protecting future land uses for present and

future generations.

The Open Space team is composed of board members, a consultant team from Logan Simpson, and staff from Douglas County Sustainability and Zoning & Codes, plus Kaitlyn Ammerlaan, the County's Heritage Conservation Coordinator and GHF's recent Program Director and Preserve Manager.

The Advisory Committee has already helped the consultant team get oriented to the Douglas County context. The team reviewed lessons learned from previous initiatives such as the 2003-2010 ECO2 Commission to promote economic development and ecological preservation, and offered suggestions for effective engagement. The consultant team is challenging the county to increase the availability of public land, to catch up with western Kansas and the rest of the U.S.

Watch for opportunities to contribute! The engagement plan includes a survey, events, listening sessions, and more.

Thank you, Kaitlyn!

Many thanks to Kaitlyn Ammerlaan, who is transitioning from GHF's Program Director and Preserve Manager to serve as the Douglas County Heritage Conservation Coordinator. We're sad to see her leave GHF, but we're pleased to celebrate her opportunity, and we look forward to a continued relationship with Kaitlyn in her new position.



Over the past three years, Kaitlyn has served GHF with excellence. Every major initiative we have completed—Black Jack Battlefield restoration, Prairie Park restoration, plus burns, workdays, events, and more — was due to her organization, hard work, and collaboration. Every plant sale under her watch has been more successful than the last. She provided the GHF board with exceptional Snyder Prairie management plans, board updates, contractor oversight, and an organized transition that will help us maintain our momentum. Most importantly perhaps, GHF has connected with more people than ever to share prairie experiences, to share learning through collaborative restoration, and to protect prairie through good management. Thank you, Kaitlyn!

More Plant Sale Details

Once again, GHF will offer a wide variety of native plants selected for garden success at the May 20 Native Plant Sale! We hope to have 55 species available. As previously offered, we will provide advance ordering and discounts as a 'thank you' to our members. Look for the full plant list, order form, and instructions on the GHF website! We'll give you plenty of time to plan and submit your order in advance of the sale, but we will confirm the availability of top-quality plants before posting the plant list. This year, individual plants (not in kits) are \$4.50 on the day of the sale and \$4.00 pre-order.

Visit www.grasslandheritage.org for sale details and to renew your membership!

Special highlights this year include garden kits designed for each season, offering spring, summer, and fall blooms as well as good winter foliage.

Favorite plants we plan to offer include columbine, lead-plant, sideoats grama—and seven milkweeds! Less common species to watch for: prairie onion, wild strawberry, prairie smoke, and starry campion.

Also, join us Saturday morning on May 6 for the plant sale and family activities at the Prophet Aquatic Research and Outreach Center in Emporia, hosted by board member Daphne Mayes. We look forward to helping the Emporia area access 19 excellent prairie species, such as spiderwort, blazing star, coreopsis, and butterfly milkweed.



No free refills: previously dried wetlands function differently than undried wetlands following refill with implications for vertebrate fitness

Krista J. Ward

with Emily A. Stybr, Shania E. M. Burkhead, & Thomas M. Luhring

Snyder Scholarship Research Report

Streams located throughout grassland ecosystems within the Midwest change dramatically within and among years due to the high variability in weather patterns. This leads to bouts of local extinctions as streams dry up and subsequent recolonization of vertebrate groups such as fish and larval amphibians as streams refill after a rainfall event. To avoid streams with predaceous fishes (e.g., largemouth bass), adult amphibians frequently lay their eggs in streams that frequently dry up. However, the effects of drying and refilling of wetland soils on larval amphibians is unknown. Using 64 1,000 L cattle tanks to create replicate aquatic mesocosms, we tested the effects of prior drying on amphibian and fish growth and survival. Four vertebrate treatments (no vertebrate control, larval amphibians, fish, larval amphibians and fish) were crossed with two drying treatments (undried and dried-refilled). Mesocosms with amphibian treatments received 50 *Lithobates blairi* tadpoles (1,600 total) and mesocosms with fish treatments received one *Lepomis cyanellus* juvenile (32 total). We recorded amphibian growth rates, survival, and time/size at metamorphosis, and fish growth over 12 weeks from May 9, 2021 to August 1, 2021. Prior drying significantly hindered the growth and development of larval amphibians but surprisingly increased their survivorship. Fish growth and survival were unaffected by the treatments. Our results show that the effects of a short-term drying event were not immediately reversed by refilling and were still perceivable across nearly all trophic levels several months post-refill.

The GHF Rachel Snyder Scholarship assisted in provided funding to hire a field technician to conduct a portion of the data collection component of this research project. This allowed me to allot additional time towards the data analysis and technical writing components of the project. This research has been written into a manuscript and was submitted for publication through the Journal of Freshwater Biology in September 2022. This research has also been continued by graduate student Samantha Skerlec who led the second year of data collection in 2022. Furthermore, the field technician whom I hired in 2021, Shania Burkhead, has since been accepted into graduate school at Wichita State University in Dr. Luhring's Aquatic Ecology Lab and she also plans to continue this mesocosm project in 2023. As for me, I graduated from Wichita State University in May 2022 and recently accepted a position as a wildlife biologist for a private consulting company, EC Source Services, based in Phoenix, Arizona where I conduct biological surveys and ensure that construction activities are in compliance with all environmental regulations.



Sustaining Prairie Award Recipients

This past fall, Grassland Heritage Foundation created a pilot program that provides financial help for prairie management or use for groups who have created small prairie plantings at their school, church, or other location. We are particularly enthusiastic about our funds being used in such a way to increase the awareness and interest of young people to prairies. The funds for this project were made possible by a donation from Dennis & Susan Lordi Marker.

Why are we developing this program? Our experience is that people embark on prairie plantings with great enthusiasm. But sometimes as years go by, these plantings are neglected or underused. We accepted applications from small gardens to larger prairie restorations if they were predominantly native plants. We invited applications that focus on either prairie management or prairie use.

We awarded six grants. We were surprised by the variety of groups that were interested. All recipients will submit a report on how they spent their grant.

Botanical Belonging Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has a vision of reconnecting our communities to the natural world and the natural systems that support life. With a goal of offering opportunities that would expose families with kids to our native prairie ecosystem and the life found there, they requested money for 7 educational sessions at Happy Apple's Farm for families and 8 toolsets and gloves.

Stanley Nature Park and Education Center at Blue Valley High School is a student led project. Since 2018 Blue Valley Students and staff have established a Pollinator Garden, a Rain Garden to help mitigate runoff from the parking lot, a Prairie area which is about 1/3 of an acre in size. They were granted funds for tools to work on their prairie site, professional consultation, and a small amount for seeds that students will germinate and grow in their own greenhouse so they can add more plants.

Grassland Groupies, Inc. is another non-profit working to restore a neglected Monarch Waystation garden in Pawnee Prairie Park in Wichita. Funds will provide tools for the volunteers who have been recruited and have begun working. Additionally, magnifying glasses and handheld microscope will be purchased to provide educational opportunities focusing on plant and insect interactions.

TJ Everett applied on behalf of the **Kansas Zen Center** (KZC) in Lawrence. He is one of the volunteers who have been working on the site of a Zen garden. They were seeking funds to pay Native Lands for assistance in managing their planting, as well as replacement of plants that have not survived. Additionally, KZC wants to provide on-site educational information about the plants in the garden and the importance of prairies in our ecosystem, including labeling plants in the garden with plaques, creating a large map of the garden with general prairie information to be displayed near the entrance, and hosting volunteer workdays to engage the community in working with prairie plants.



Gardner Edgerton High School garden

The Mid-America All-Indian Museum in Wichita has an Outdoor Learning Center with native plant beds. The OLC began with an Outdoor Wildlife Learning Site grant in 2013 and includes prairie, American Indian medicinal garden, and a butterfly garden. Funds will be used for a variety of tools and workers to clear the beds of invading turf grass and general maintenance.

Garden Edgerton High School's pollinator garden was created in the fall of 2021 by biology and field biology students to increase biodiversity on campus. The students worked with Johnson County and Miami County Soil Conservation Districts on the design and construction. The 1,000 sq. ft. garden contains 29 species. Funds will be used to purchase an interpretive sign and paving stones that will cover the 50 feet from the sidewalk out to the garden. These items will make the garden more usable by the community.

Welcoming Nicole to GHF Continued

at UMKC, managing & teaching a variety of biology & ecology labs (and daydreaming about returning to the prairie!). My time at UMKC started to wind down after my husband and I started a little family, and so here I find myself at your doorstep!

My hope with GHF is to combine my training in field botany with my interest in restoration and love for education to con-

tinue to expand and enrich the work that GHF is known for. As someone who has had literally life-changing volunteer experiences, I know how impactful such experiences can be. I hope to be able to provide experiences to GHF members, donors & volunteers that have just a fraction of that impact. I look forward to meeting you all in the coming months and can't wait to see you out on the prairie!

Welcome to the Board!

Welcome to two new members to the GHF board of governors!

Sara Abieta teaches in Lawrence, was the 2020 Outstanding Biology Teacher for the Kansas Association of Biology Teachers. Here's how she introduced herself:

I am a life-long Kansan who has a deep love for prairies and our native landscapes! I grew up outside of Salina on an 80-acre untilled pasture and have been lucky to get to know many native plant and animal species through my upbringing. I moved to Lawrence in 2011 after graduating high school to attend KU, where I graduated with a degree in Teaching Biology in 2015. During my time at KU, I worked in Dr. Helen Alexander's lab throughout the summer, where I helped to set up the Free State Prairie Restoration site along with Julie Schwarting and other undergrads/community members. I've taught various levels of high school life science courses (all some version of Biology) for 8 years now - two at Washburn Rural High School and six at Lawrence Free State High School. I love utilizing the restoration site on our campus and exposing students to the diversity of prairies. I am also a member of the Knowles Teacher Initiative, a nation-wide fellowship for early career math and science teachers to develop their skill and improve the state of STEM education. Through funds provided by this fellowship I have traveled and done field exercises at many locations including Yosemite and the Galapagos islands. During my time in the fellowship I have led professional development at both state and national conferences. I am



Sara Abieta



Reb Bryant

very excited to have the chance to participate with the Grassland Heritage Foundation and all the work you do to take care of and spread the word of our state's prairies!

Reb Bryant, joined GHF at the Black Jack restoration project and jumped right in to working with the board. They introduced themselves as follows:

I grew up in north Louisiana, but I fell in love with prairies and the humans who come together to support them while attending Rice University in Houston. I am currently a PhD candidate in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at KU, and I study how we can use soil microbes like mycorrhizal fungi to promote diverse, resilient plant communities in prairie restorations. I'm also passionate about the power of communities (human and otherwise), and I want to explore the relationship between people and restorations in my work. With GHF, I'm excited to help contribute to our community's efforts to conserve our local grasslands and connect with the folks making this happen.

2023 Snyder Scholarship Recipients

Thank you to all the students who applied for our Rachel Snyder Memorial Scholarship and the advisors who took time to write letters of recommendation. A committee read and assessed the applications, and we are happy to announce the recipients of this year's grants.

Max Proctor, a Master of Science in Biology student at Wichita State University will be taking samples at Konza Prairie Biological Station, the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, and the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve near Pawhuska, Oklahoma to study the seasonal changes in the nutrient content of bison and cattle dung and dung beetle morphology. His \$1,000 grant will be used for nutrient analyses and travel expenses. His advisor, Dr. Mary Liz Jameson endorsed Max enthusiastically for this award.

From Emporia State University and the lab of Dr. David McKenzie, **Tucker Eckols** is a Master of Science in Biology candidate whose work will address the relationship between tree stands and woody encroachment in the tallgrass prairie. Tucker will work in prairies in Butler, Lyon, and Chase counties in Kansas with adjacent tree stands and different combi-

nations of management, including grazing and prescribed burning. This will be the second year of his field work. The grant will be used to fund a field assistant for 100 hours of work. He expects his results to help with future management decisions to prevent woody encroachment.

Our third recipient is a Master of Science in Entomology student at Kansas State University in Dr. Tania Kim's Insect Ecology lab. **Gus Brunette** will be sampling prairie bees along the precipitation gradient across Kansas, also looking at management practices and proportion of surrounding grasslands. His \$1,000 grant will help fund travel expenses around Kansas to his multiple sampling sites. We felt this was a project that would provide valuable baseline information on native bees before habitat changes projected with climate change.

The Rachel Snyder Memorial Scholarship was founded after the passing of Rachel who was the benefactor of our Snyder Prairie and has received support from the Lordi-Marker Trust and members of Grassland Heritage Foundation. Recipients are asked to share their results with us through newsletter articles (see page 4) or other public outreach.

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

Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone Email

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

☐ Contact me about volunteering

☐ 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



2023 Donations

Welcome to new members: Michael Ammerlaan, Bob Burns, Colton Chapman, Kelsie Crable, Jordan Diekmann, Carla Fromm, Randy Rasa, Micah Seybold, Kevin Siek, Sarah Trowbridge-Alford, Jan Turner, and Hannah Zehr

Returning members: Bruce & Lucy Cutler, Darla Mitchell, and Jan & Ken Tillery

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

Donations to Funds, Memorials, and Tributes

Prairie Education Fund: Carla Fromm (in memory of Gaylord Atkinson), Steve & Sue Holcomb, Bitsey Patton, Tyson Russell

Land Management Fund: Stephen Hight, Susan Lawson, Myron Leinwetter, Frank Norman, Sarah Trowbridge-Alford

Prairie Protection Fund: Jordan Diekmann, Courtney King, Courtney Masterson & Ryan Riedel, Wayne Morton, David Wagner

Scholarship-Sustaining Prairie: Dennis & Susan Lordi Marker

In Memory of **Gary Tegtmeier:** Mary Kowalski

In Memory of **Rex Powell:** Cathy Reinhardt

Thank you also to those who have set up annual renewals.

Thanks to everyone else that renewed since December and apologies for missing Elizabeth Miller on our previous list.

'Thank You' to:

To Helen Alexander for spearheading our Sustaining Prairies Grant formation and to Paul Showalter of Kansas Native Plant Society and Elaine Hudlin of Kansas Wildlife Education Service for their input based on the programs they sponsor. Thanks to Helen, Roxie McGee, and Reb Bryant for reviewing applications. And, of course, thank you to Dennis and Susan Lordi-Marker for funding this initiative and supporting great projects!

To Kathy Denning, Daphne Mayes, Mary Kowalski and Sue Holcomb for reading and assessing the scholarship applications.

To Kevin Bachkora for his continued accounting support.

To Mike Campbell and Neosho County Community College for hosting our annual meeting, our first in-person board meeting since COVID.

To Jerry Jost & Jenny Trucano Muller for organizational guidance.

To Kaitlyn Ammerlaan for three years of being the face of GHF. Thank you for all your effort in making the transition to a new contractor as easy as possible.

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



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MAY 6

NATIVE PLANT SALE

 **9 AM - 11 AM**

 **@ PROPHET AQUATIC RESEARCH AND OUTREACH CENTER (PAROC): 601 E. 18TH AVENUE**

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

- Native plant information
- Habitats and pollinators
- Kansas Grassland Heritage Foundation native plant sale
- New campus prairie update





Visit GHF's Leadplant Prairie near Welda, Kansas and look for our new sign along Old Colony Road to find the best access.