

EVENTS

GHF Fall Native Plant Sale

Saturday, Sept. 23 2023, 10 AM–1 PM
Little Prairie Community Garden
Peterson Road Park, Lawrence

Prairie Park Education & Restoration Workdays

Prairie Park restoration site, 2811 Kensington,
Lawrence KS

Thursday, Sept. 7, 5-7 PM

Tuesday, Oct. 3, 5-7 PM

Thursday, Oct. 17, 5-7 PM (Rain date only)

Seed Collection for Restoration Projects

Sunday, Oct. 22, 1-5 PM, location TBD

Hasta Luego Monarchs (Monarch Watch and Johnson County Extension event)

Butterfly tagging and family activities
Pollinator Prairie, 320 S. Blake St., Olathe KS
Saturday, Sept. 30, 9 AM - 2 PM

Black Jack Battlefield Restoration Day

Saturday, Nov. 4, 9 AM– noon

Snyder Prairie Outings

Seed collection—Sat., Oct. 14, 10 AM-1 PM
Burn window—Nov.—Dec. 2023, TBD
Mayetta, KS. RSVP for details

Seed Cleaning Party for Restoration Projects

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

Prairie Park Burns

2811 Kensington Rd, Lawrence KS
January 8-18, 2024, TBD

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 for updates on all events



De-leafing Debriefing: A Prairie Park Recap

Sunday, April 30. We were wondering whether we were hearing awful news or the worst news. Douglas County naturalist Ken Lassman, on a regular walk at the native prairie remnant at Prairie Park in Lawrence, noticed signs of herbicide damage across the prairie. Now, four months later, we'll review what happened and we'll share the current restoration efforts and the status of the prairie.

Lassman, upon finding damaged plants, called Courtney Masterson, GHF friend and former board member and founder of Native Lands Restoration Collaborative, for a second opinion. Forbs—non-grass plant species— throughout the prairie were drooping and curling in an early, unmistakable reaction to. . . *continued p. 5*

May 6 herbicide damage at Prairie Park



Fall Plant Sale!

Join us for our Fall Native Plant Sale on Saturday, September 23, 2023 from 10am - 1pm at the Little Prairie Community Garden, located in Peterson Road Park in Lawrence, KS.

GHF is partnering with Common Ground, the community gardening and urban agriculture program in Douglas County, to help you access native plants, to get involved with community gardening, to talk with practiced gardeners about what it's like to garden with Kansas native plants, and to learn from our native plant demonstration garden, the Little Prairie. Are you ready to get your hands dirty? You can help with fall maintenance and planting in the demonstration garden.

We will have about 25 species of locally-grown, Kansas natives available for purchase. All plants will be \$4.50 each. Find the plant list and more information at www.grasslandheritage.org/fallplantsale. Please note that we are unable to accept member pre-orders for our Fall plant sales, and contact Nicole at grasslandheritage@gmail.com with questions.

GHF's Plant Sales are a great way to find Kansas native plants for your own yard and garden while directly supporting the prairie education and protection work that GHF does. We appreciate your support and look forward to seeing you on September 23!



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

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

Nicole Stanton-Wilson

A Note from the President

Every time I sit down to write a message, I think of how many times I've done this. So, before I get to my main message, I'd like to encourage you to get involved and be part of the future of GHF.

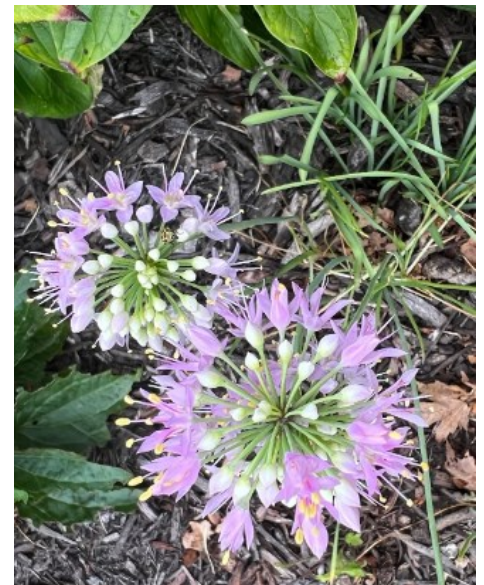
I've been growing native plants for about twenty years now on a "large garden" scale. I've had some triumphs and many failures. I can't begin to count the number of plants I've bought and had them not survive beyond the first year. While working at the spring plant sale, I had many discussions with visitors that have repeatedly bought butterfly milkweed and were buying more because it hadn't made it. I also bought three new plants and they didn't last even this summer. I tried Googling for tips and got warnings of don't water too much but be sure to water enough. I'm beginning to think that buying seed is the only real solution.

One experiment I tried this year was cutting back some of the extra tall plants early in the season. Last August I shared photos of my blue sage that had gotten up to seven or eight feet tall and was sprawled all over. I cut it back to less than a foot back in May and watched as it branched out and made more stems. It still grew to almost six feet, but it is a much more manageable almost-bush in my front garden. The other plant that was huge last year was Helenium autumnale, sneezeweed. I also trimmed it, and it is blooming now and looks to be less than 3 feet tall, a much better neighbor to the other plants. I have almost always cut back asters so they spread and will continue to assess whether this might work with other tall native plants in a home garden.

Ruminating about what ideas were worth sharing made me wonder if there were others of you who'd like to share your experiences with growing natives. Perhaps we could have a "native garden corner" where you could submit your questions or tips to help others. Maybe you'd be willing to send us your success stories or challenges. I'd love some feedback to let us know if this is a feasible idea. Please send a brief message to me if you're interested in this kind of project. Particularly, let us know if you are willing to commit to sending in your stories and photos.

Sue Holcomb

sholc2003@yahoo.com



Blue sage (l) and Prairie allium, Allium stellatum (r), from the GHF spring plant sale Photos: Sue Holcomb

Update on Community Restoration at Prairie Park

Together with Native Lands Restoration Collaborative (formerly Native Lands, LLC) and the City of Lawrence Parks & Recreation Department, GHF has helped to host 4 educational workdays since early May. To date, approximately 38 total



Photo: Taylor Mah

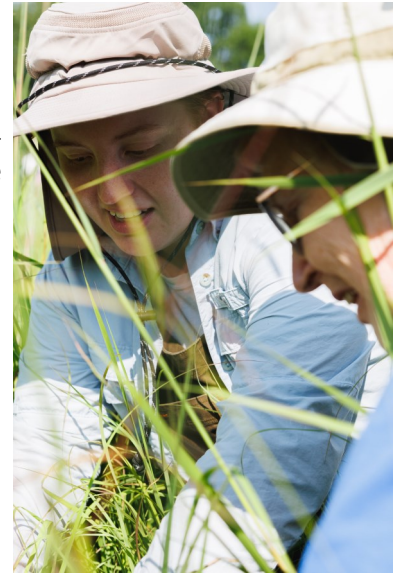
volunteers have attended these workdays, giving over 90 hours of assistance in removing invasive species and planting native prairie plants. At our most recent workday, we planted over 300 plants from 20 different species in less than 2 hours! This is a testament to the saying, “Many hands make light work.” In truth, though, the power drills with an auger attachment made extra light work for some of us! Thank you again to all of our wonderful volunteers who are willing to give a few hours of their time to help restore a little spot of prairie in Lawrence! The prairie sent her thanks to us at the last workday by treating us to a viewing of one of Kansas’ native orchids, slender lady’s tresses (*Spiranthes lacera*). Come join the fun out at Prairie Park and help GHF and Native Lands Restoration Collaborative continue removing invasive bush honeysuckle, Callery pears, and more on Thursday, September 7 and Tuesday, October 3 from 5 to 7 PM on both evenings.

More Activities at Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park

In July, GHF hosted a Prairie Talk & Walk at Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park, featuring GHF board member Reb Bryant. Despite the time of year, we had a beautiful sunny morning with cooler temperatures—a perfect morning to be out on the prairie! Reb talked to us about their research into the role of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi (MF) in potentially aiding the establishment of several native prairie species in prairie restorations. A portion of Reb’s research is taking place in the prairie restoration at Black Jack that GHF and Native Lands Restoration Collaborative have worked to improve. What Reb found is that there are several native forb (wildflower) species, such as purple prairie clover, leadplant, bee balm, ash sunflower, and rattlesnake master, that appear to only establish in the first few years of planting if native arbuscular MF are present. This study has some fascinating implications for grassland restoration work and may begin to help us better understand why we see decreased diversity in a restored versus a remnant prairie. A few of the volunteers that were present assisted Reb in taking measurements of plant size for their research while the rest of us walked through the restored & remnant prairie in search of blooming wildflowers and interesting insects. While it was a quieter time in terms of wildflower blooms, many of the “big 4 grasses,” like Indian

grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) and Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) were beginning to bloom, along with the unique spiky ‘pom-pom’ blooms of Rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*). Interesting fact: Despite the namesake of “yuccifolium”, which translates from Latin to “yucca-like leaves,” Rattlesnake master is actually in the carrot/parsley family (*Apiaceae*)!

While we won’t be holding another Prairie Talk & Walk this fall, we will be holding a prairie workday at Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park. Come on out to join GHF in removing invasive black locusts from the prairie restoration on Saturday, November 4 from 9 AM to noon, and enjoy the sights of the prairie in her autumnal shades of gold.



Reb Bryant at Black Jack Battlefield
Photo: Andrew White

Douglas County Open Space Plan

Planning and public engagement for the Douglas County Open Space Plan continues, with board member Andrea Repinsky representing GHF on the plan advisory committee. In August, the committee reviewed the responses from mailed questionnaires and focus groups. GHF participated in a focus group for conservation organizations and land managers. The team is hearing that rural landowners want to have more

tools for preserving rural land. The top choices among participants indicating what open space means to them include biodiversity, wildlife, water quality, agricultural land protection, and cultural heritage. The project team adopted an accelerated schedule. It includes an expected date of March 2024 for the presentation of the plan to the Douglas County Commission.

We're Out Standing in Our Field: A Snyder Prairie Update

In early July, members of the GHF management committee along with former Preserve Managers, Frank Norman and Kaitlyn Ammerlaan, took our new Preserve Manager, Nicole Stanton-Wilson on a tour of GHF's Snyder Prairie near Mayetta, Kansas, sharing information about the history of management and how the site has changed over time. The bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*) was in all of its fragrant glory around the forest edges. Nicole has since been coordinating management activities with our local contractors to continue controlling the spread of the invasive sericea lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*) and invasive woody plants, such as dogwood. In mid-July, Snyder Prairie was ablaze in purple with all of the blazing stars in bloom! It was gorgeous, and especially pronounced as the dry, hot summer has kept the grasses shorter than normal this year. Areas that are scheduled to be burned this fall have recently had their firebreaks mowed,

and a few of our fields have been hayed. Nicole also met with Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) agents at Snyder Prairie to tour the property and confirm that we have completed our most recent round of management activities for our EQIP grant. Our compliance has been approved, and we are moving on to planning our upcoming fall/winter burns. Stay tuned for further details on opportunities to volunteer at a prescribed burn!

Nicole is also getting our Groundhogs volunteer group back up and running. If you are a former or current Groundhog and itching to walk through the prairie with a purpose, join us for a seed collecting day at Snyder Prairie on Saturday, October 14 from 10 am – 1 pm. Visit www.grasslandheritage.org/seedcollection or email Nicole at grasslandheritage@gmail.com for more information.

Wanted: Your Mangled Monarchs, Resolved Question Marks . . .

. . . and fried fritillaries. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is asking for your help establishing a Lepidoptera Research Collection. If you live in Alabama, Georgia, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma or Texas, USGS is asking you to mail in dead moths, butterflies, or skippers. USGS hopes to identify contaminants and environmental factors that may contribute to the decline of insect populations.

These states were chosen because they either are on the migration path of monarch butterflies, are in the Corn Belt where pesticides are heavily used, or have a large presence of Confined Animal Feeding Operations, or industrial farms that raise animals for consumption.

USGS instructs participants to look for dead insects, and to not collect live specimens for this project. Find butterflies, moths, or skippers larger than two inches wide that are not listed as a protected, endangered or threatened species under state or federal law. Within the six states in the pilot program, the Mitchell's satyr butterfly is currently the only protected species and it is found in Alabama.

Place the insect in a resealable plastic bag, put in a sealed envelope and mail via USPS, or deliver in person, to: **USGS LRC, 1217 Biltmore Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049** by November 1, 2023. Freeze the dead insects if you cannot ship them within three days. It is acceptable to send in damaged insects.



"There are some questions that can't effectively be answered without help from a lot of people. It's what makes citizen science so special and valuable," said Julie Dietze, USGS scientist-in-charge of the effort. "Collections like this one are important because they have the potential to provide scientists now, and 20 years from now, access to specimens. Without the specimens it will be far more difficult to answer questions related to contaminants and environmental health."

The specimens will be made available to all USGS scientists for research. Dietze said she hopes the pilot is successful enough to expand to other states and include other kinds of insects. She also urges the program to be used within schools.

"I think community science projects like this one can be really impactful for just teaching students about science and how they can help, and other opportunities within USGS," she said.

The insect world at large has been threatened over the years by climate change, habitat loss and pesticide use. The USGS Environmental Organic Chemistry (EOC) unit, located at the USGS Kansas Water Science Center, will specifically be looking at the occurrence of antibiotics, pesticides, hormones, and mycotoxins in Lepidoptera.

A De-leafing Debriefing, continued

recent herbicide spraying. After calls to the city, a May 1 press release from Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department (LPRD) confirmed that a broadleaf herbicide was sprayed on Thursday, April 27 to control noxious weeds. The press release stated, “Some early-growing native plants have been affected; however, some of the established plants that have not yet emerged will not be affected. Parks and Recreation will work with local suppliers of native plant seeds to reestablish and replenish the prairie plant species that may have been impacted by this early spring spray.” Details were few, and questions remained about the severity of the damage, and exactly how and why it happened. Among the plants we saw with herbicide damage on May 1 were ashy sunflower and other late-flowering species— not just ‘early-growing’ plants.

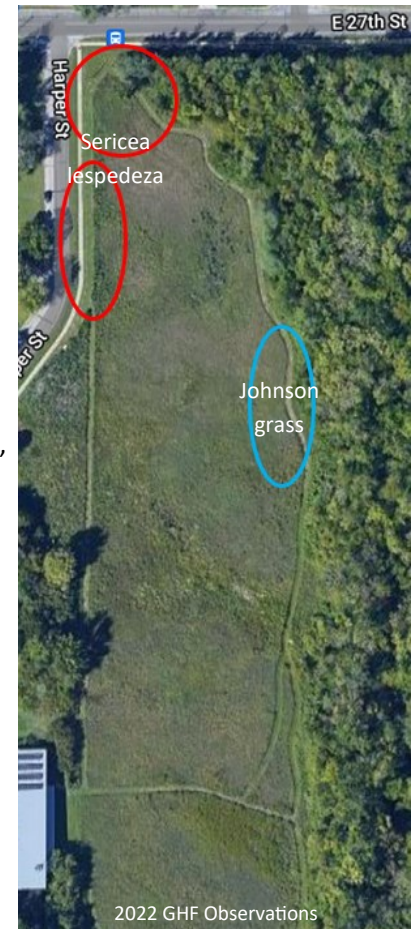
At this point, GHF had already been working with the city on restoration of an overgrown site east of the native prairie, close to Prairie Park Elementary, with Native Lands Restoration Collaborative, and funded by the Douglas County Heritage Conservation Council. Also, a 2022 survey by GHF found that sericea lespedeza was known on the very north end of the native prairie site near the nature center. GHF shared this survey (at right) with LPRD in December 2022, encouraging control of invasive species in these limited locations.

GHF, Kansas Biological Survey (KBS) and Monarch Watch representatives, Ken Lassman, and others met to discuss potential responses on May 5. On Monday, May 8, at the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board meeting, Mark Hecker, Assistant Director of LPRD, claimed personal responsibility for not training staff, including the supervisor involved with the incident, to properly manage a prairie. He said that LPRD failed to post notification signs on site before and after herbicide application. Hecker also said he is leading an internal investigation. He offered few specific details about the people involved and actions and authorizations made. Later on May 8, at a community gathering at the prairie, Lassman, Masterson, Haskell Indian Nations University, and others led about 200 people in an expression of grief, mourning, and hope. On May 9, LPRD Director Derek Rogers told the Lawrence City Commission that PastureGard was used on the prairie, and offered to undergo restoration efforts and to hold staff accountable for any intentional violation of policy. GHF sent a letter to the city with suggestions for short– mid– and longer-term actions to mitigate the damage. On May 10, Lassman, Masterson, and Sara Baer of KBS met with Parks and Rec staff to initiate monitoring, and to discuss the need for a management plan for the park and other native habitat managed by LPRD. In May, KBS and other botanists found that a few unsprayed spots luckily remained in the prairie due to uneven application. KBS continued site visits to draft a monitoring plan that can inform future restoration and management. Masterson is leading four work days in 2023, funded by LPRD, to remove sumac and black locust from the native prairie, and GHF decided to fund an additional work day. LPRD has not scheduled work to remove invasives from the

perimeter of the prairie or additional restoration or monitoring past 2023. Masterson said she observed that ashy sunflower, indigo, and other plants are struggling, but alive. Without additional monitoring, she said, we lack good data on the survival of early-growing plants in particular, such as puccoon, bastard toadflax, wild strawberry, and wood betony.

Normal use of broadleaf herbicide on a native prairie would be limited to careful spot application of targeted weed species. Certain plants, like sunflowers, are particularly sensitive to PastureGard. The PastureGard label states: “Do not use on alfalfa, or other desirable forbs. . . Unless injury or loss of such plants can be tolerated.” We know that the loss of genetic diversity cannot be repaired with reseeding, and that complete restoration of any prairie is not possible.

The public’s attention had already been on Prairie Park because the budget for the Prairie Park Nature Center had been cut in an early draft of the 2024 budget. The incident clarifies the importance of informed management planning, oversight, and the inclusion of botanists and the indigenous community. Engagement opportunities continue with the LPRD parks plan and the Douglas County Open Space Plan, and our input on whether LPRD is meeting restoration and monitoring expectations.



A Serious Threat to Pollinators, Still in Use

The 2022-23 issue of Audubon of Kansas Prairie Wings featured an article by entomologist J.P. Michaud, a professor at Kansas State University, calling neonicotinoid seed treatments “Hazards to Insects, Birds and Entire Ecosystems.” This article illustrated the extent to which these chemicals, ‘neonics,’ are being overused and poisoning our environment.

Awareness of these pesticides that bind to the same nerve receptors as nicotine has grown over the last decade with many groups sounding the alarm about the effects on not only the intended targets of insects that might eat seeds or young plants, but other beneficial insects that are in close proximity. Since many birds feed on insects the cumulative effect on them is reminiscent of the days of DDT and Silent Spring. Michaud argues that “Big Ag” has returned us to the irresponsibility of 1950’s agriculture, “promoting the prophylactic use of pesticides that are orders of magnitude more toxic...”

Many countries have banned this entire class of insecticides for outdoor use on crops, but Bayer has purchased Monsanto and is responsible for a large amount of the seed planted here in the US. Globally seed production is dominated by a small group of companies who are also the largest purveyors of herbicides and insecticides. In Kansas and Oklahoma there is no evidence these products increase yield and no justification for their widespread use.

On the EPA’s website is their response to calls for action. They propose management methods to reduce the amount used on crops, requiring protective clothing, limiting application to blooming crops that leads to honey bee exposure,

labeling advice that homeowners not use, and canceling any spray use on residential turf.

Numerous groups are fighting the proliferation of neonics. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation works to protect pollinators from pesticides through education and promotion of action. The American Bird Conservancy is endorsing The Protect America’s Children from Toxic Pesticides Act (S.269/H.R.5085) that would restrict the sale and use of harmful pesticides, protect farmworkers, and empower citizens to help control the chemicals used in their communities. The National Wildlife Federation encourages gardeners to carefully read labels and avoid neonics. Home Depot even has a list of the products they carry that are neonics and some that are not. So, you can at minimum be informed. Health organizations are looking for the presence of these chemicals not only in food but in people.

What can we do? First, be informed. Learn which products contain neonics. Neonicotinoids include acetamiprid, clothianidin, dinotefuran, imidacloprid, nitenpyram, nithiazine, thiacloprid and thiamethoxam, cycloxaprid, imidacloprid, paichongding, sulfoxaflo, guadipyr, flupyradifurone, and Imidacloprid.

Protect yourself and nature by choosing neonic free plants and chemicals.

Encourage our government to protect us from the results of overuse of chemicals in the farming industry.

And, of course, you can depend on GHF’s fundraiser native plant sales as a source for neonic-free plants that will benefit pollinators.

In Gratitude, ‘Thank You’ from GHF to:

Kaitlyn Ammerlaan for helping so much with the transition to Nicole being our Program Director and Property Manager, and to Frank Norman, Mike Campbell, Ted Abel, and Kaitlyn for meeting Nicole at Snyder Prairie.

To Daphne Mayes, Outreach Director at the Prophet Aquatic Research & Outreach Center at Emporia State University for sponsoring a native plant sale and talk and pollinator craft projects. Thanks to students Alex Gentry, Grace Higgins, and Trevor Jones, plus Sara Abeita, Sue & Steve Holcomb.

To the spring plant sale volunteers, Helen Alexander, Mary Kowalski, Roxie McGee, Stacey Stewart, Pat Kehde, Mike Campbell, Megan Withiam, Reb Bryant, Margaret Rose, Jennifer Delisle, Ann Davin, Sara Abeita, Jacob Penner, Lan Gegenheimer, Andrea Repinsky, and Sue & Steve Holcomb. Thanks to hosts Trinity Episcopal Church. We sold 1,473 plants the day of the sale, and 1,974 sold and picked up by members in the pre-sale.

To Reb Bryant for sharing their research at the Prairie Talk & Walk at Black Jack Battlefield and Nature Park, and to Emery Compton, interim Executive Director at Blackjack, for welcoming us.

To everyone that responded so swiftly to the herbicide spraying at Prairie Park.

To Roxie McGee for continuing to nurture the Little Prairie at Little Prairie Community Garden.

To Andrea Repinsky and Sara Abeita for weeding the Oak Hill Cemetery garden.

To Kevin Bachkora for continuing to volunteer to review our monthly reports.

Thank you to the many volunteers at Prairie Park and our project partners: Native Lands Restoration Collaborative, City of Lawrence, Haskell Indian Nations University, and Kansas Association of Conservation & Environmental Education.

A special thank you to the City of Lawrence for sending photographer/videographer Taylor Mah to capture the work that our volunteers and partner, Native Lands Restoration Collaborative, completed at Prairie Park.

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

- Scholarship Fund
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You can also send
 membership renewals and
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www.grasslandheritage.org

2023 Donations

Welcome to new members: Jennifer Forth, Jane Cotitta, Carol Estes, Catherine Houlihan, Bridgid Mendenhall, Sara Baer, Marlene Bailey, Harold Beckerman, Reb Bryant, Vanessa Carlos, Kelsie Crable, Carrie Crowther, Jennifer Dropkin, Rebecca Zarazan Dunn, Christina Gallick, Elaine Gill, Wendy Haas, Jana Jorn, Mary Anne Jordan, Wendy Mosiman, Kellee Pratt, Jenn Preston, Shannon Reid, Amy Schweppe, Sandra Jane Seiler, Linda Strieby

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

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

Donations to Funds, Memorials, and Tributes

Prairie Education Fund: Jennifer Forth, Julie Schwarting, and Barbara Schwering in memory of Margery Nickerson

Land Management Fund: Zachary Carr

Prairie Protection Fund: Ann Marie Boncella, Barbara Clark, Jane Cotitta, Carol Estes, Catherine Houlihan, Courtney King, Bridgid Mendenhall (in honor of Michael and Kathleen Bayne), Linda Mangelsdorf-Oshel, Maggie Wagner

Ang Babbit in honor of the women of GHF past, present, and future

Natalie Jackson in honor of Donna McAllister

Katy Lange in honor of Sue & Steve Holcomb

Byril Sanders in honor of Joseph O. Berger

Thank you to all other returning and renewing members who will be listed in the annual report. We appreciate those of you who have set up autorenewals through the website.



Through poetry, Wild Words celebrates the innate relationship Kansans have with the prairie. During the summer of 2023, Humanities Kansas is partnering with Kansas cultural organizations to distribute free copies of this original poetry chapbook within their communities.

The chapbook features 11 poems inspired by Kansas native plants and wildflowers with original illustrations by Melissa Dehner, followed by questions to engage readers in humanities-themed conversations.

On their website you can either order a copy to be sent to you, (if they are still available), find project partners offering copies, or download a free pdf copy until September 12. www.humanitieskansas.org/grants-programs/wild-words

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