

**KANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
September 9, 2006  
Holton, KS**

The meeting was called to order by President Jeff Hansen. Jeff welcomed those in attendance and thanked them for coming. A special introduction was given to Sue Holcomb and her husband, Steve, representing the Grassland Heritage Foundation.

Jeff reviewed some of the many positive recent accomplishments of the organization, including the revamping of the Newsletter, updating of the Brochure, Planting at Flint Hills Scenic Byway, four board meetings in the year, Proclamation of June as Wildflower Month, Presentations at the Wichita Garden Show, and the Smoky Hills Audubon meeting, participation in Eagle Days in Lawrence and Manhattan Earth Day, volunteers for the Symphony on the Prairie, and participation in the Barber County, Wilson County, and Chase County Flower Tours. He further noted the Wildflower of the Year Planting at the Botanical Garden in Wichita, the purchase, creation and use of the Display Boards for KNPS, new Banner Sign for KNPS, the updated Book List, Invasive Plant Facts List, Standardized Forms, and the Reorganized Web Site. He noted a slight increase in membership to 328.

In the Board Planning for next year Jeff acknowledged the Guide for Planning Wildflower Tours created by Krista, a desire for KNPS to plan a workday event with Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to help control sericea lespedeza, a commitment of \$500 to scan 1000 slides that have been donated to KNPS, and a commitment to increase publicity of KNPS.

Jeff announced the Wildflower of the Year for 2007 is the Purple Poppy Mallow, Callirhoe involucrata. He asked Cynthia Ford and Steven Timme to do the write-up for the Newsletter for it. He announced an upcoming workshop on making paper with plants at Karlyle Woods in Topeka, presented by Art Professor Betsy Roe.

Sister Pat Stanley asked about a Speaker Bureau for KNPS. It was agreed that requests for speakers will be directed to individuals who may be able to assist.

Jeff announced the Board selected September 21, 22, & 23 for the 2007 Membership Meeting to be held in Hutchinson. Jim Smith with the Dillon Nature Center had extended the invitation. The Sand Hills State Park is another possible foray.

Jeff announced the resignation of Jane Freeman as Administrative Assistant at the end of 2006. A job description has been created. He asked that anyone interested apply for the paid position.

Ann Simpson said that she wanted to resign as Chair of the Publicity Committee. Jeff appointed Phyllis Scherich to replace her. Phyllis asked for volunteers to add to the committee. Diane Backer and Marsha Newton volunteered. Others on the committee are Jeff Hansen, Shirley Braunlich, and Anita Smith. Ken Bronson of Topeka, who has worked for Stauffer Communications, volunteered to help establish a list to mail press releases to. Steve Fry of Manhattan, a reporter with the Manhattan Mercury will assist.

Phyllis Scherich asked attendees to send an e-mail showing a total of money spent in Holton during this year's annual meeting. This is a suggestion by the Kansas Explorer Club to show the host community the benefits of hosting events.

Sister Pat asked for articles for the next issue of the Newsletter, slated for mailing in October 2006.

A discussion about the KDOT mowing and spraying program followed. Ann Simpson moved we pass a Resolution: Be it resolved that KNPS reaffirm its support of a reduced roadside mowing policy, as set forth by KNPS' previous statement of support of August 16, 2002 (previous statement attached at the end of these minutes). Ann indicated it should be sent to the Kansas Secretary of Transportation, Governor Sebelius, Media outlets by way of a Press Release. Second by Sister Pat Stanley. Passed.

Fred Coombs moved and Jay Newton seconded we table action on the Resolution and that KNPS establish a Public Policy Committee to handle this item. Passed. Members who volunteered for this committee are Fred Coombs, Jay Newton, Ann Feyerharm, and Ann Simpson. Carrol Morgenson and Gary Weisenberger were also recommended as members of the committee. The general outcome of this part of the meeting was that KNPS did reaffirm its position on roadside management, as expressed in the earlier letter to KDOT, but that we did not want to go beyond that position at this time. Rather, the Public Policy Committee will examine the issues and will recommend a course of action.

Valerie Wright made the awards presentations. The Rachel Snyder Memorial Landscaping Award was presented to Sylvia Michaelis with the City of Topeka for the Storm Water Control Project at Jackson and Eighth Streets. (see [www.greentopeka.org](http://www.greentopeka.org)). She then presented Anita Smith with the Excellence in Botany Award for her 10+ years of planning, organizing, and staging of the Wilson Wildflower Tour. Sister Pat, Nancy Goulden, Valerie Wright, and Meredith Fry were the ribbon winners of the photo contest. Judges were Cindy Ford and Valerie Wright. (Valerie abstained voting on her entry.) Craig Freeman gave the report for the nominating committee (Craig, Jeff Hansen, and Valerie Wright) for the 2007 year.

**New board members:** Earl Allen, Manhattan, new; Shirley Braunlich, Lawrence; Cynthia Ford, Pittsburg; Craig Freeman, Lawrence; Jane Freeman, Lawrence, new to board, effective upon official resignation as administrative assistant; Nancy Goulden, Manhattan.

**Members going off the Board:** Donna Cooper, Hays, 1 year; Allison Hamm, Wichita, 2 years, Dwight Platt, Newton, 28 years, charter member, past president; Gary Weisenberger, Toronto, 6 years; Marion McGlohon, Ulysses, 10 years.

**Officers for KNPS for a 1-year term:** Secretary, Phyllis Scherich, Wilmore; Treasurer, Sr. Patricia Stanley, Bel Aire; President Elect, Michael Heffron, Eureka; President, Jeff Hansen, Topeka.

Sheldon Cohen moved we accept these, second by Shirley Braunlich. Passed.

Special recognition was given to Dwight Platt of Newton who announced his retirement from the Board of Directors after 28 years of service, including two terms as President. He was a Charter Member of KNPS.

Brad Guhr presented an interesting and informative program on the Prairie Window Project in Hesston. He discussed the challenges of collecting seed, preparing the ground and then seeding two acres of an 18-acre prairie restoration project. He emphasized that the entire process, especially the work with volunteers of all ages, made the work especially gratifying for him.

Frank Norman explained the Grassland Heritage Foundation's Management Program of the Snyder Prairie in Jackson County, which our group will visit this afternoon.

Jeff Hansen declared the meeting adjourned.

Attachment:

## **Statement from the Kansas Wildflower Society**

With regard to

Kansas Long Range Transportation Plan

Draft – August 16, 2002

Kansas Department of Transportation

The Kansas Wildflower Society (KWS) commends the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) for its current planning insight into transportation in Kansas. We support the inclusion in the plan of statements of sensitivity to the environment and commitment to minimize environmental impact. We also support the concept of context-sensitive design and consultation with all stakeholders in the earliest phase of projects. We especially support the inclusion of the 10 pilot projects in Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM). However we are concerned that IRVM is not receiving sufficient priority from KDOT in our view.

As native vegetation has been removed from much of our land in the USA, including Kansas, people are beginning to appreciate native ecosystems like the tallgrass prairie. There is a growing interest to preserve and restore remaining fragments of the prairie. The attendance and enthusiasm at the biennial North American Prairie Conferences demonstrate this interest. The eighteenth conference was held last June in Kirksville, Missouri, with more than 500 persons in attendance at the four day event. The upper Midwest is leading the way with numerous preservation and restoration programs at private and public levels. Some of these states, such as Iowa and Minnesota, have developed innovative ways to utilize prairie vegetation on their roadsides, which preserve and restore this vegetation and at the same time reduce maintenance and associated costs.

Prairie vegetation is our natural heritage and an important natural resource in Kansas. In fact, Kansas has more tallgrass prairie vegetation today than all the other states combined. KDOT, being the largest landowner in the state, has a unique opportunity to utilize native prairie vegetation. Many of the roadsides are refuges for prairie remnants that can be preserved by KDOT with very little effort; native grasses and forbs (wildflowers) can be seeded on other roadsides. All that is needed is a change in roadside vegetation management methods. This can do more than save native vegetation and reduce maintenance money. Rural communities are realizing that tourism can be tied to the prairie. Roadways are important to tourists who are seeking

an aesthetically pleasing motoring experience. Native plants on KDOT roadsides can contribute an ever-changing display of diversity and interest if allowed. Numerous communities have developed themes for tourism around their native prairie heritage. In addition, prairie vegetation on roadsides will enhance wildlife, also important for tourism. This indirect support of ecotourism by KDOT is yet to be fully realized, although the Prairie Passage is an important step in the right direction.

IRVM, as developed by a number of other states, can provide guidance for practical roadside vegetation management techniques. The Federal Highway Administration is promoting native plants and IRVM in their publications (See especially "Roadside Use of Native Plants" published by Federal Highway Administration in September 1999). Kansas roadsides are a natural for this type of management with their many remnant populations of prairie plants.

**Therefore, the Kansas Wildflower Society makes the following recommendations with regard to planning for roadside vegetation management:**

- 1. That KDOT increase the priority of current IRVM pilot projects and accelerate their implementation. Although KWS members have volunteered to serve on advisory committees for some of these projects, many of these committees have never met. Money, time and people need to be allocated to these projects.**
- 2. That KDOT include a timetable for these projects in the planning document. This should include a timeline for establishment of the projects, for evaluation of the projects, and for implementation of successful techniques in roadside vegetation management policy.**
- 3. That KDOT, along with the public education program mentioned in the planning document, implement an education program for KDOT personnel at all levels with regard to Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management.**
- 4. That KDOT, in implementing the use of native plants in roadsides, pay attention to the local plant communities. Plants native to the natural plant communities in a local area should be used for roadside vegetation in that area and non-native plants should not be included. A statement to this effect should be in the planning document. This is an important part of the program in states like Iowa. Methods, such as the use of fertilizers, which stimulate non-native invasives should be avoided.**
- 5. That KDOT initiate a program to identify roadside areas with good stands of native vegetation and immediately implement management, such as reduced mowing, to maintain that vegetation. Otherwise these prairie remnants may be lost before IRVM techniques are adopted, necessitating greater effort and cost in restoring native vegetation.**

The Kansas Wildflower Society is anxious to cooperate with the Kansas Department of Transportation in developing a program to use native vegetation and IRVM techniques in roadside vegetation management.