

**Kansas Native Plant Society  
2015 Spring Board Meeting  
Saturday May 2, 2015; noon - 2:00 PM  
Klinefelter Barn; 1774 230th Street, Hiawatha, Kansas**

**Board Members Present:** Earl Allen, Iralee Barnard, Shirley Braunlich, Nadine Champlin, Fred Coombs, Nancy Coombs, Krista Dahlinger, Mick Delfelder, Cindy Ford, Craig Freeman, Jane Freeman, Nancy Goulden, Brad Guhr, Mike Haddock, Jeff Hansen, Matthew Richter, Cynthia Rhodes, Dee Scherich, Phyllis Scherich, Valerie Wright

**Guests Present:** Ken Barnard, Bob Champlin, Wendell Ganstrom, Chad Phillips

**Welcome & Introductions**

The board meeting kicked off with a hearty welcome and presentation from the manager of the Klinefelter farm, Wendell Ganstrom. Wendell covered the objectives of the 480-acre facility, which includes sustainability and the realization that there is value in land and the environment beyond revenue generation. The property is owned by Highland Community College and hosts occasional classes and labs. There are active collaborations with The Land Institute and local native tribes researching heirloom seed varieties.

Following the presentation, Valerie moved to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2015 board meeting held in Wichita. Iralee seconded and the motion passed.

**Committee reports**

**Budget/Finance:** Krista provided a report on the first quarter income and expenses. We have seen good membership renewal and there have been no major unexpected expenses thus far. Website sales of t-shirts, ball caps, posters and decals have been brisk. Major budgeted expenses include website updates, office assistant salary, postage, printing of the newsletter and printing expenses for the Flint Hills Pocket Guide.

The available cash on hand is approximately \$21,000 with an additional \$7,500 in the Legacy Fund. Total income for the first quarter is approximately \$11,500 with expenses just shy of \$9,000.

There were no questions about the budget. Craig moved to accept the report and it was seconded by Nancy C. The motion passed.

Following the budget report, Earl noted that there was an increase in quality scholarship applications this year. He suggested that we discuss investing in another mutual fund, much like we are doing with the Legacy Fund, but with the interest and income earmarked for scholarships. This fund could eventually alleviate pressure on the budget to support scholarships.

KNPS would publicize this new fund in the newsletter, on the website, on the membership renewal form and on Facebook in hopes of getting donations into the fund.

In theory, \$10,000 in a mutual fund could support \$250 to \$500 in scholarship funding each year. We need a minimum of \$2500 to open an account and it took KNPS a year to raise that amount for the Legacy Fund.

To get the fundraising kick-started, Phyllis and Dee Scherich offered \$500 in seed money. That was quickly matched by Jane and Craig Freeman. The board gave those members enthusiastic thanks for their generosity.

Valerie suggested that we call this endeavor the Mary Bancroft Scholarship Fund as an extension of the existing scholarship named for a long-time KNPS member and supporter from Ottawa, Kansas. The board agreed that this was an appropriate tribute.

The board gave approval to begin publicizing the fund and for Krista to establish the new account once the base funding is secured. Krista acknowledged that the fund would be reflected in the budget.

**Annual Wildflower Weekend meeting:** Mike reported that most of the planning for the September event in Manhattan is done, as is the flyer, which could be ready to print in June.

Attendees will be encouraged to visit the Flint Hills Discovery Center at some point during the weekend.

Outings are planned for Butterfly Hill (an area off limit to the general public) at Konza Prairie Biological Station, several prairies near Tuttle Creek, KNPS board member Valerie Wright's prairie restoration and, finally, Shane Creek (another area normally off limit) at Konza. The Friday board meeting will be held at Konza and Saturday morning's activities will be in the Big 12 Room at the KSU Union.

Earl offered to donate a copy of the new book "Kansas Wildflowers and Weeds" to Bob Haines on behalf of KNPS for giving us access to his prairie on AWW weekend. The board agreed this was a nice gesture.

**Membership Report:** Craig shared his report on membership trends. We are pretty much on the mark compared to past years. There are 191 members who have not renewed since 2014 which accounts for a potential loss of nearly \$4000 in dues. Craig will continue to track membership numbers on a quarterly basis.

**Awards Committee:** Fred reported on the five quality applicants for the Mary Bancroft Memorial Scholarship. Courtney Masterson was selected as the winner of the \$1000 scholarship for her Masters research on "Effects of White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) Herbivory on Remnant Tallgrass Prairie Plant Species and Communities."

Craig will approach Grassland Heritage Foundation to share several of the applicants to be considered for GHF scholarships. Presently, only one of the four unsuccessful applicants for the Bancroft Scholarship has granted KNPS permission to share their proposal with GHF.

The other scholarship and grant deadlines are not due until July 1<sup>st</sup>, so there was no update on those.

Valerie reported on the AWW photo contest. The Shutterfly photo-sharing website will be used again, and Valerie has already updated it for this year's content. It's ready to go!

Valerie reported that there were seven people on the judging committee in 2014, and it was difficult reaching a consensus in several of the categories. She asked if any of the judges wanted to step down from the photo contest; Mick volunteered.

**Education Committee:** Iralee reported that 2016 will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Park Service. KNPS has been asked to participate in the festivities, which will likely consist of three days of demonstrations and hikes with an emphasis on plants and pollinators. Iralee will recommend the weekend of June 18<sup>th</sup>. Nancy G. will consider coordinating weekend volunteers on behalf of KNPS.

Iralee next reported on the Chisholm Trail 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration occurring in 2017. KNPS does not have to commit to anything or join anything, but the organizers are looking for events to list on their websites. Iralee is willing to be the contact person to get outings and activities on the Chisholm Trail websites. Iralee will also include a write-up on the celebration in the newsletter.

**Events Committee:** Shirley apologized for the confusion on several incorrect event listings that somehow made it into the most recent newsletter. A brief discussion was held on how to reduce the chance for errors in the future.

**Newsletter Committee:** Nancy explained how the newsletter "just comes together" and that she was thankful for everyone submitting articles. She also receives a lot of feedback from members about how they appreciate getting the newsletter.

**Nomination Committee:** Craig reported that there are eight board members with terms expiring in 2015: Earl, Shirley, Nadine, Mick, Cindy, Craig, Nancy G. and Matthew. Craig and Mick will be in touch with each of them over the summer to ask if they are willing to serve another term.

Mike's term as President is expiring, and the committee will confirm with Phyllis about moving from President Elect into President. A new President Elect will be determined.

Krista confirmed that she is willing to continue as the organization's treasurer if nominated.

**Plant Resources and Stewardship Committee:** Brad reported that Dyck Arboretum's recent plant sale emphasized milkweed, particularly the KNPS 2015 Wildflower of the Year: Spider milkweed (*Asclepias viridis*).

Brad next updated us on conversations with the Kansas Forest Service and their interest to collaborate on fighting invasive bush honeysuckle within the state. The Forest Service has applied for a grant, some of which would go toward stewardship and control of honeysuckle. Brad will continue to keep the board informed as he learns more.

Finally, Brad received an email request about picking the top 10 native trees in Kansas. Craig replied back to the email on behalf of the organization. There was a brief discussion on whether we should put this information on the website. Brad will take that suggestion to the rest of the committee and report back during a future meeting.

**Public Policy Committee:** Fred reported on the Old World Bluestem Workshop which was held on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015. KNPS was represented by Fred, Nancy C., Valerie and Mike. The event was co-sponsored by Audubon of Kansas, Kansas Wildlife Federation, Kansas Native Plant Society, Protect the Flint Hills, Kansas Land Trust, Grassland Heritage Foundation, Prairie Heritage Inc., and Bird Runner Wildlife Refuge. The workshop had around 90 attendees, and everyone was quite interested in how to control these invasive species.

**Publicity & Outreach Committee:** No update was provided.

**Kansas Non-game Wildlife Advisory Council liaison report:** Cynthia reported that the Kansas Non-game Wildlife Advisory Council met twice in 2015 to advise Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Secretary Robin Jennison on topics such as conservation easements, black-footed ferrets, water bill plans and the eastern spotted skunk.

There will be another meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup> in Manhattan to review legislative action from this year's legislative session.

**Website Report:** Jeff said he would email the latest web statistics to the board in the upcoming week.

Jeff stated that he updates the KNPS blog when he publishes updates to the website. Krista asked if she could have access to the blog to make updates. Mick said he would look into having the blog updates automatically post to Facebook. Jeff said he would grant administrative access to both Krista and Mick.

Jeff then mentioned that updating the website's CSS to make sure the site displays properly on mobile devices should be done in the near future. This action should lead to improved Google search result rankings.

**Facebook and Get Outdoors Kansas report:** Mick reported that he still posts several times per week to the organization's Facebook page. We have 1,620 "likes" which is

comparable to Missouri Prairie Foundation. This remains a good, economical way to spread the word about KNPS and its mission.

We have a nice group of volunteers managing Facebook pages for the Emporia Region (Glenn Fell), the Western Regions (Anthony Zukoff), the Salina Region (Mark Neubrand) and the Wichita Region (Krista Dahlinger). Their posts are often re-posted to the statewide page.

Mick has published 11 past and future KNPS outings to the Get Outdoors Kansas website ([www.getoutdoorskansas.org](http://www.getoutdoorskansas.org)) which promotes a healthy, outdoor lifestyle for all Kansans.

### **Old business**

**Hiking liability:** This item remains tabled.

### **New Business**

**Budgeting for Non-profit Funding Grant:** The Awards Committee reported that funding for this grant has not been earmarked in the 2015 budget. After some discussion, it was decided we should wait until July 1<sup>st</sup> and see if we have any applications. We then can decide whether to fund any proposals received.

**Possibility of our membership database being the primary means of contact via email:** Jeff suggested that we combine our separate contact databases: the Google Group and the master membership database. Jeff and Jane will continue to look into it.

Craig said he had talked with Dyck Arboretum about using MailChimp bulk email service. MailChimp allows up to 12,000 emails to be sent per month to a maximum of 2,000 subscribers at no expense, yet get quality usage statistics in return. He and Jeff will continue to discuss this between board meetings and hope to make a final recommendation soon.

**Proposal to send a letter encouraging renewals or return to three renewal notices sent via mail before dropping non-renewing members:** Craig suggested that we send a letter to lapsed members from 2014, excluding student members, in hopes that they will renew for 2015. It will cost approximately \$100 to print and mail 107 letters, but the expenses will be recouped if we get five or more renewals. The board gave verbal approval for Craig and Jane to proceed.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:09 with a request from Krista that everyone take promotional business cards containing details about 2015 AWW.

Following the meeting, we joined several members of the public to botanize around the farm site and trails. Some board members retired to the home of Bob and Nadine Champlin for hotdogs and a small bonfire.

