At 9:08, President Phyllis Scherich welcomed everyone to Concordia. She introduced Concordia Mayor Chuck Lambertz who appreciated everyone coming to their city.

Phyllis talked about founding member, illustrator and writer Lorraine Kauffman. Valerie Wright read the poem September by Helen Hunt Jackson which captures Lorraine’s spirit and appreciation of the natural world.

Phyllis recognized the fantastic turnout and offered thanks to organizers Nadine Camplin, Andrew Mitchell and the rest of the AWW committee.

We quickly went around the room and introduced ourselves. We have five states represented: Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma and Hawaii.

Lorna spoke a bit about Friday morning’s event engaging high school and junior college students in a variety of prairie-related activities.

Krista talked about the silent auction and this year’s awesome donations. Bidding is in $1 increments and all proceeds go into the KNPS general budget. There are two books available through the raffle and that money also goes into the general budget.

Craig presented the membership highlights. The organization focuses on people, places and plants with a 39-year tradition, plus the newsletter, the Annual Wildflower Weekend, volunteer and educational opportunities.

We have 632 paid members which is down from our historic high of approximately 800. We have paid members from 21 states, reciprocal/gratis memberships with 79 organizations, and an 11-year turnover rate of 17% (which is typical for organizations like ours).

52% of memberships are individuals with members from 66 Kansas counties (primarily in the eastern half of the state). With 93 members, Sedgwick County has the greatest membership.

We have 21 membership regions and many have leaders who are here.

Krista gave the treasurer’s report with an overview of our sources of revenue and expenses. Earl explained the Legacy and scholarship funds and solicited additional donations.

Phyllis asked if anyone could help with the website because board member Matthew Richter is recovering from a car accident.
Krista talked about the website and the resources available there.

Phyllis discussed the 2018 board meeting locations and Annual Wildflower Weekend dates. The combined spring/summer board meeting will be Wilson, KS on May 8-9 and the membership is invited to enjoy the outings that weekend.

The 2018 AWW will be Sept. 7-9 in Wichita. Joan discussed the tentative theme: “native plants in an urban environment.”

Brad mentioned the Dyck Arboretum plant sale which is this weekend.

Mike Haddock took the stage for the election of officers and board members. Recommended for a three-year term (2017-2020) are:
- Returning members:
  - Iralee Barnard, Hope
  - Cynthia Rhodes, Whitewater
  - Anthony Zukoff, Holcomb
- New members:
  - Karen Hummel, Manhattan
  - Paul Showalter, Shawnee

Mike calls for vote. All ayes.

Mike informed the membership that at yesterday’s board meeting, the board elected officers for the following year:
- President - Phyllis Scherich, McPherson
- Vice President - Craig Freeman, Lawrence
- Treasurer - Krista Dahlinger, Mulvane
- Secretary - Mickey Delfelder, Topeka

Craig and Mike Kaye talked about Sheldon and Virginia Cohen, KNPS charter members who were killed in a traffic accident in Bonner Springs in July 11, 2017. Mike explained how the Cohens were active in Washburn University and scientific activities for many decades. Mike read the letter-to-the-editor from Phyllis (on behalf of the organization) that appeared in The Topeka Capital-Journal. (The letter can be found at: http://cjonline.com/opinion/letters-editor/2017-07-15/letter-gratitude-sheldon-and-virginia-cohen)

Craig presented the awards on behalf of the Awards committee.

The Mary A. Bancroft Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Ph.D. candidate Samantha Sharpe at Kansas State University. Samantha’s $1000 cash award will aid her research into “Rapid adaptation in a contaminated environment: Evolutionary adaptive response of old field grass Andropogon virginicus to heavy metals in an abandoned Lead and Zinc mine.”
The Sheldon H. Cohen Award for Outstanding Service to KNPS went to 10-year board member, past President and current Secretary, Mickey Delfelder.

The Stephen L. Timme Excellence in Botany Award went to long-time board member and past President, Jeff Hansen. Over the past 15 years, he has made a significant contribution to botany in the midwest. Thanks to his keen eye and attention to detail, he has over 500 specimen contributions to the University of Kansas herbarium, including 15 previously unknown species in Kansas and three from South Dakota. He has led countless outings and events to control invasive species.

Anthony took the stage to talk about the great photos submitted to the photo contest. We had 52 total entries and he announced the winners. The full list of winners can be found on the KNPS website.

We broke for refreshments and silent auction bidding at 10:14.

We started back up at 10:47.

Krista reminded people that following the main speaker, there will be 15 minutes left to bid on silent auction items.

Andrew introduced our speaker, Dale Strickler, a former Ag teacher at Cloud County Community College and current farmer/rancher near Scandia.

Dale’s presentation was titled: “Wildflowers for Profit, Not Just Pretty”.

Dale delved into the complexities of monoculture cattle pasturing versus fostering a diverse polyculture. Among the highlights were:

- The best solution for any farm ground is organic matter. Human farming practices for 7,000 years have depleted organic matter.
- The more diverse a pasture, the more cattle eat. Forbs are higher in protein than grass. Forbs are high in mineral content and contain minerals that aren’t found in mineral blocks.
- 25% of the energy that a native plant produces goes out the roots to support microrhizomes. In turn, microrhizomes “eat rocks” to turn them back into minerals and soil.
- Native prairie grasses are extremely drought tolerant. Bluestem is 3-times more water efficient than Kentucky bluegrass. Forbs and other natives plants pull water from deep in the ground and release it at and near ground level at night.

Dale practices what he preaches by rotating his cattle through different and highly diverse pastures. Unlike traditional ranching, he’s able to graze his cattle 10 months out of the year with no mineral supplements.
Following the speaker, Nadine came on stage to thank him and remind us that Star Seed provided this morning's breakfast. Our second scheduled speaker, Bryan Sorensen, couldn't make it this morning, but he provided notes that we'll include in a future KNPS newsletter.

After a final reminder that we should carpool to Jamestown, we concluded the meeting and broke for lunch at 11:57.