Kansas Native Plant Society 2019 Membership Meeting  
September 14, 2019 9:30 a.m. - 1:45 pm 
Jerry's Again Restaurant -- Atchison, Kansas

Kansas Native Plant Society President Brad Guhr kicked off the membership meeting at 9:32 by welcoming everyone to Atchison and giving a brief history of the building, the local Masonic Lodge, which was built in 1915.

Logistics/Acknowledgments
Brad recognized Andrew Mitchell for organizing the weekend and hosting in Atchison. Krista provided details on the silent auction with multiple opportunities to bid. This year, three books are available in the raffle and the traveling KNPS plaque donated by Phyllis Scherich is available for bid.

Brad thanked Jane and Craig Freeman for all that they do for the Annual Wildflower Weekend (AWW) and the organization. Jane reminded everyone to sign in and get a name tag.

Brad recognized the board of directors.

Brad recognized Cynthia and Brian for working on the newsletter. Cynthia said that the most recent issue came out in July; the next one will be in October. She asked for volunteers to do write-ups on the weekend activities.

Brad recognized Krista and Matthew for their work on maintaining the website. Krista asked people to submit events from other organizations.

Brad informed attendees of the 2020 meeting dates: a combined spring/summer board meeting (and outings) in Garden City on May 29/30 and the fall meeting and AWW in Pittsburg/Galena on Sept. 25-27.

Minutes
There were no changes to the membership meeting minutes last year. Attending members unanimously approved last year’s minutes without any changes.

Election of Officers
Nomination Committee member Mike Haddock presented a slate of individuals for a 3-year term (2019-2022) as a Director of the Board of the Kansas Native Plant Society:

Continuing Board Members:
- Krista Dahlinger - Mulvane
- Brad Guhr - Newton
- Mike Haddock - Manhattan
- Lorna Habegger Harder - Hesston
- Michael Heffron - Reece
- Michael Kaye - Topeka
- Joan Manor - Wamego
- Andrew Mitchell - Horton
- Dee Scherich - McPherson
Phyllis Scherich - McPherson

Patti Ragsdale - Tonganoxie

New Board Member:

Mike made a motion to accept the slate and it was unanimously approved.

Mike also recognized the following individuals who are stepping down from the board:

- Jeff Hansen - Topeka (17 years)
- Mark Neubrand - Salina (4 years)
- Chad Phillips - Soldier (3 years)

Mike said that the following officers were elected at the previous day’s board meeting:

- Secretary: Mick Delfelder - Topeka
- Treasurer: Earl Allen - Manhattan
- President Elect: Krista Dahlinger - Mulvane
- President: Brad Guhr - Newton

Craig made a pitch to have new members come onto the board. We have a 30 board member limit and we have a few vacancies. Would love to have some people coming from the west part of the state, especially if they reside west of Topeka.

Awards

Craig presented the KNPS awards. We had no entrants for the Rachel Snyder Memorial Landscape Award or Mary A. Bancroft Scholarship Award this year.

The Stephen L. Timme Excellence in Botany Award was awarded to Ken O’Dell of Paola. Ken served on the board of the Society from 2008–2016, and is a life member of KNPS. A Canadian by birth, Ken came to the U.S. in his early teens. In high school, he had a mentor who taught him about wild plants and animals, and the fundamentals of conservation. For many years, Ken owned and operated a wholesale nursery, through which he was able to share his extensive knowledge of horticulture and native plants. Ken was instrumental in establishing the Kansas City Chapter of the Kansas Native Plant Society, which regularly sponsored speakers and outings in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Anyone who reads the KNPS Newsletter know Ken’s passion native plants, which he shares during outings, especially at the Overland Park Arboretum. He has been a regularly contributor to the KNPS Newsletter going back to 2008. His popular, informative, amusing, and wide-ranging articles reflect a depth and breadth of knowledge accumulated from hundreds of walks in the prairies and forests, hands-on experience growing and observing countless plants, and decades in the nursery business.

The Sheldon and Virginia Cohen Memorial Award for Service to KNPS was awarded to Lorna Habbeger Harder. Lorna is an educator, artist, passionate advocate for the prairie, and steady voice for the stewardship of the planet. As an instructor of Biology and Statistics at Hesston College for 25 years and a Curator of Natural History at the Kauffman Museum in Bethel College for 11 years, her career has been devoted to helping students, colleagues, and members of the public understand their relationship with and dependence on the natural world, particularly grasslands. Lorna has served on the KWS/KNPS Board of Directors for 14 years during two different periods: from
Among her sundry accomplishments, Lorna and co-author Dwight Platt produced “Growing Native Wildflowers”, a popular handbook issued in installments in 1991, 1992, 1994, and 1997. “Growing Native Wildflowers” continues to provide a wealth of taxonomic, horticultural, and ethnobotanical information for 60 prairie forbs and grasses. Drawing from an extensive well of knowledge about native plants, Lorna regularly contributes articles to the KNPS Newsletter, and her beautiful illustrations often grace her articles and ones contributed by other authors. In 2003, Lorna organized a 4-day van tour of the Nebraska Sandhills, which included 22 participants. The inspiring trip included visits to Smith Falls State Park, the Niobrara Valley Preserve, Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge, and innumerable other pit stops to admire the Sandhills flora. Lorna has always been active in the Society’s education and outreach activities, and working with the Education Committee, she has helped develop strategies to promote and enhance opportunities for outreach, education, and citizen science.

Anthony presented the photo contest results and thanked the judges who helped him this year.

The winners are:
- Wildflower of the Year – Andrew Mitchell, Horton
- Scenery - Valerie Wright, Manhattan
- People - Krista Dahlinger, Mulvane
- Gardens – Rose Lee, Atchison
- Flora – Emmett Sullivan, West Mineral
- Fauna – Valerie Wright, Manhattan

President’s program
Brad shared his excitement about this year’s meeting because we will be touring an ecosystem near to his heart: savannas and eastern woodlands were a subject of his post-graduate work.

Eastern Kansas is in a transitional zone between the grassland prairie communities of the Great Plains and the great forests of the east coast. The Rocky Mountains create a rain shadow inhibiting rainfall through central Kansas. Far west Kansas may see as little as 8 inches per year while southeastern Kansas may see more than 41. The rainfall directly affects the plant communities as you progress eastward.

Brad reviewed four ecosystems that exemplify this transition:
- Prairie – fire common, few to no trees, dominated by grasslands and forbs
- Savanna – fire occasional, scattered open-grown oaks with shrubs, mixed with grasses and forbs
- Woodland – fire infrequent, oaks with hickory, walnut, elm and cherry mixed in
- Forest – fire rare to nonexistent, forest oaks with maple and no low branches

Eastern Kansas falls into the Midwestern Oak Savanna which stretches from the gulf coast of Texas up through Missouri and into the Great Lakes.

Brad reviewed some of the species found in each area. Bur oak is one of the key species; as they mature, you will find additional oak species and shagbark hickory filling in. Eventually, understory shrubs take hold and replace the prairie. As non-fire tolerant
species (such as maples, black cherry and black walnut) take hold, they shade out the seedlings of oaks and become the dominant species.

Bur oak can be found in old savanna settings, even extending into central Kansas. Some of these trees could be 150 years old or more.

Brad recommended a few resources for further study:
- the website Oaksavannas.org by Tom and Kathy Brock
- journal article “Chronicles of Restoration: Just a Few Oddball Species: Restoration and the Rediscovery of the Tallgrass Savanna” by Steve Packard, 1998

Brad concluded by reviewing some of the wildflower species that grow in savannas including hyssop, anemone, purple milkweed, and pale indian plantain.

We took a break at 10:45 for refreshments.

**Keynote speaker**
At 11:10, Andrew introduced Doug Grimm to present on “Champion Trees and How to Grow Your Own!”

Doug is a Master Gardener and an ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) and Kansas Certified Arborist. He has 20+ years experience working with trees, is a farmer and owns and operates several retail garden centers.

Doug reviewed the three measurements (which are summed and) used to determine a tree’s Total Point Score:
- circumference - measured in inches, 4 ½ feet above the ground
- height - measured in feet
- crown spread - measured in feet

Doug then reviewed some of the significant champion trees that he has measured or visited:
- Cottonwood(s) - Near Studley - Likely the largest tree in Kansas, this tree (and its neighboring large Cottonwoods) is interesting because the exact planting date in 1902 is documented. With a trunk over 37 feet in circumference, this tree’s root system extends into an alfalfa field giving it a beneficial nitrogen boost.
- Sycamore – Topeka - The size totals 451 points. However, the trunk is split so the argument is: is this a single tree or two or more trees? Nobody wants to take a core sample because it could damage the tree.
- Ginko Tree - Leavenworth - Not native to Kansas, but there’s speculation that this tree could have come from Chinese explorers of the Louisiana Purchase (a gift of the Empress of China to Native Americans).
- Ponderosa Pine – Leavenworth - A tree not normally associated with Kansas, this species may have been native to Kansas prior to European settlement.
- Bur oak – St. George - This is the largest oak in Kansas and may be over 400 years old.
- Dwarf chinkapin oak – Morrill - Mature trees may look like a shrub because they are such slow growers. The state champion tree is just 28 feet tall, but it could be hundreds of years old.
For those interested in supporting pollinators, Burr oak, black cherry, and basswood/linden trees are the best. For an overall solid, fast growing, strong tree, look at planting a Scarlet Oak. Everyone should be conscious of planting trees that future generations will enjoy.

So what are the hidden qualities of many state champion trees? Doug feels that luck has a lot to do with it (e.g., not getting struck by lightning or a tornado), plus being in an optimal growing spot. Better genetics may even play a role.

How do you grow your own state champion tree?

- plant the right tree in the right place
- when planting, examine the roots eliminating circling roots or kinked/crossed roots
- plant at the proper depth (better to plant a little high than too deep)
- provide adequate water during establishment
- mulch the proper amount and not along the trunk bark

Brad thanked Doug for his presentation and wrapped up the meeting at 12:15. Krista told everyone 15 minutes remained on the silent auction. Nadine Chaplin won the traveling plaque at the silent auction.