SPRING/EARLY SUMMER BOD MEETING – MAY 19-20

Wildflower Walks

ALL ARE WELCOME!

The KNPS Board of Directors invites anyone interested, including friends and families, to join them for the outings during this special two-day Spring/Summer Board Meeting and Wildflower Outings. Members may consider extending your stay in the area through Saturday night to have an opportunity to visit some of the unique shops and restaurants in the Cottonwood Falls/Strong City/Tallgrass Prairie Preserve/Council Grove area on Sunday, as well. There will be no registration and no charge for the wildflower tours. Go to www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org to make your reservations for meals, to print the itinerary, get info on lodging, etc. Following is a brief schedule of the weekend’s events. Further details can be found on the KNPS web page: kansasnativeplantsociety.org

The newly-completed Preston Outdoor Education Center at Camp Wood near Elmdale will be the first stop on the May 19 tour. The Center consists of five separate stations along a trail, each featuring a different element of the prairie ecosystem. Designed and built by Kansas State University students in the Design+Make program, it is completely fireproof to withstand the regular controlled burns that keep the prairie healthy. The Flint Hills Map Project of a large three-paneled map of the Flint Hills that is being distributed to schools, along with lesson plans for varying age groups, will be used by campers and others at the camp. The director, Ken Wold, is excited to host KNPS this weekend to show off this new outdoor center.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
Spring BOD Meeting & Outings
— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

FRIDAY, MAY 19

Check into lodging in Cottonwood Falls Area (chasecountychamber.org for listings of area accommodations)

10:30 - 12:30 Board Meeting at Camp Wood YMCA (Cottonwood Falls to Elmdale via Lake Road to Camp Wood Road about 6 miles; turn south to Camp Wood sign about 2-1/2 miles - allow 15 minutes)

12:30 - 1:00 Eat sack lunch (bring your own; can pick up a sandwich at Subway or Casey’s in Strong City/ Cottonwood Falls)

1:30 - 3:15 Guided tour of Preston Outdoor Education Station at Camp Wood

3:30 - 4:00 Clements Stone Arch Bridge via Camp Wood Road to Hwy 50 to Clements to Clements Bridge Road G (marked)

4:00 - 5:00 Clover Cliff Ranch and Bed & Breakfast – Warren and Susie Harshman (Hwy 50 to Clover Cliff Ranch and B&B on north side of highway)

5:30 - 7:30 Dinner on your own (recommended options are Jacalito and Ad Astra Food & Drink; both in Strong City)

7:30 Friday Night Music in Cottonwood Falls (no charge)

SATURDAY, MAY 20

Breakfast on your own (Jacalito in Strong City has a great breakfast menu)

8:30 Meet on street near Jacalito in Strong City to caravan to the Bennie and Marie Holtsclaw residence (Lake Road to Hwy 50 to CP road, turn north to house)

9:00 - 11:00 Private prairie Bennie and Marie Holtsclaw

11:15 - 1:00 Private prairie Gary and Charlotte Sneed

1:30 Lunch in Florence (on your own)

2:30 Visit Crystal Spring/City Spring (from Hwy 50, turn north at Hillcrest Cemetery sign, cross two bridges, take next right at the White house, take first right turn to Crystal Spring)

3:00 Drinkwater and Schriver Flour Mill in Cedar Point

4:00 Chase County Lake (on Lake Road east of Elmdale)
President’s Message  |  PHYLLIS SCHERICH

As I sit to write this my mind is on the wildfires that have devastated so many areas of our state the first week of March. We drove through the area of the fires in Clark and Comanche County as we were coming home from Colorado a few days after the fires. It brought back so much of the emotion we felt when the Ranch we managed was burned and our homes threatened just a year ago in the Anderson Creek Fire.

However, there was so much more loss of lives, homes, fences, buildings, equipment, cattle, and wildlife in this fire; so many of our personal friends and acquaintances lost so much. The short-grass pastures will take longer to recover than ours; the cattle herds, even longer. Already the blowing topsoil and sand are piling up. A year ago, we did see the promise of recovery with the small spears of grass soon appearing after the fire. They have recently received the beneficial rain so badly needed. Our hearts go out to them as they struggle.

Other areas of the state that burned will also struggle to recover. The verdant green grasses and the many-colored wildflowers will return, especially the natives, as they did in our area last year. They will give encouragement and hope as they did to us last year and to the early settlers in the area when times were tough.

I was looking through previous KNPS Newsletters last evening. As I came to the January 2008 issue, suddenly it was just black and white and lacked the beautiful color photos that we now take for granted. It reminded me of the strides KNPS has taken through the years. It is through the volunteer work of our current editors, Brian Martin and Cynthia Rhodes, and the many members who continue to submit articles and photos, that make this possible. If you have a photo or an idea for an article that would be of interest to members, submit it to Cynthia or Brian. If you have an event of interest to KNPS members, submit it on the form on the Events Calendar page of the KNPS website.

On the weekend of May 19 and 20, KNPS will hold a two-day Spring/Summer Board Meeting and outing in the Cottonwood Falls area and all are welcome. We hope many members will take advantage of this opportunity to view the spring wildflowers in the area and get to know the board members. It will be like a mini-AWW, but more relaxed. Keep checking for updated information on the home page of the KNPS website. I strongly recommend you make a room reservation in Cottonwood Falls for Friday night as soon as possible as they do fill up quickly during this time of the year. Campsites are also available for anyone interested. Come and join us this spring!

KNPS Website News  – KRISTA DAHLINGER

Have you visited the KNPS website lately? www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org Here are a couple of highlights of what you will find there.

2017 Wildflower of the Year, Plains Coreopsis. Each year, KNPS chooses a native plant for education about identifying characteristics, potential use in your landscape for beauty and for pollinators, plus interesting facts about the plant or plant family. Also read about and see images of past Wildflowers of the Year: when they bloom, where they grow.
http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/wfoy.php

KNPS publishes an Events Calendar on the website — we list events hosted by KNPS and like-minded nature groups. Also use this page to submit information about an event you would like to add to the Events Calendar.
http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/events.php

You can sign up to receive a weekly email of the Events Calendar.
http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/email_list.php

The Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita has published a series of small pocket guides to identify flora and fauna in Kansas. You can download a PDF version of the Flint Hills Wildflowers and Grasses and also the Red Hills Wildflowers pocket guides. Several other out-of-print native plant identification guides are also available online at:
http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/pocket_guide.php

Are you a member of KNPS? You can initiate or renew your membership quick and easy on the website. You can also make additional donations to our Scholarship Endowment Fund or Legacy Fund. A new member benefit includes a free copy of the colorful “Gems of the Plains” poster featuring 54 native plant images (add $5.00 for postage).
http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/membership.php

You can reach KNPS by email at email@ksnps.org
Check us out!
Finding Common Ground with Native Landscaping

– BRAD GUHR

With the beginning of a new growing season, you may be thinking about bringing new life to a part of your home landscape. Consider a plan that resonates with the general public by finding common ground with native landscaping. I will offer some suggestions that help keep your native landscaping from looking like a "weed patch."

Let us start with some perspective. Landscaping in the United States has many different influences and varies greatly from formal to wild/ecological. You have a whole spectrum of styles to consider.

Formal Gardening

Many of us were taught to appreciate the formal landscapes and garden designs made famous in Europe and France centuries ago featuring rectilinear lines with meticulously-trimmed lawns and hedges. Much of our society today still prefers this landscaping style as is evident in city codes and homeowner association regulations that encourage and even mandate manicured vegetation. With this style, we value leaves over flowers, vegetation simplicity, order, control, and tidiness. Intensive use of mowers, trimmers, water, fertilizer, herbicides, fungicides, and pesticides help efficiently maintain this style of landscaping that symbolizes human domination of nature.

Ecological Restoration

On the other end of the landscaping spectrum is ecological restoration. Plant communities native to a place are used as the blueprint to reconstruct a functioning ecosystem. Seeds of that plant community (i.e., prairie grasses and wildflowers in South Central Kansas) are planted and disturbance vectors (i.e., fire and grazing) that originally maintained that plant community are restored. While intensive preparation and planning go into reconstructing a prairie, this style of landscaping is eventually low maintenance, requires only implementing/simulating occasional disturbance, and mostly embodies working in sync with nature.

Native landscaping advocates promote many benefits of this latter landscaping style which include the following.

• Colorful flowers and seed heads with varied shapes and textures
• Diverse habitats with food and shelter that attract various forms of wildlife
• Dynamic landscapes that provide year-round visual enjoyment
• Long-term low input needs with regard to water, fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides
• Adaptation to natural environmental conditions
• A cultural connection to earlier inhabitants that used native vegetation for food, medicine, and ritual; building a "sense of place"

There are barriers, however, to landscaping this way in cities. Fires and grazing are not practical in urban areas. Annual mowing adequately simulates these activities, but dealing with that much biomass can still be cumbersome. Codes limiting vegetation height and social expectations driven by the formal garden mindset are hurdles for folks wanting to landscape with native plants. Native plantings are often seen as messy "weed patches."

But you can still landscape with native plants in publicly palatable ways and enjoy many of the listed benefits. While my training and education are in ecological restoration and I used to be an advocate for restoring diverse prairies in urban areas, I realize that is not usually practical. I have moved towards the middle of the landscaping spectrum when it comes to recommendations on landscaping with native plants, to find common ground between formal and ecological styles.

With more than a decade of lessons learned from helping schools implement native plant gardens, I would like to offer some of the following management practices to make native plant gardens more visually appealing to the general public.

Native Plant Garden Best Management Practices

1. Define Garden Goals – Wildlife habitat in general? Single species habitat (e.g., monarch)? Rain garden? High profile or in a backyard? Prairie or woodland?

2. Start Small – Hand irrigation to establish plants in the first year is important, as well as establishing a regular weeding routine takes time. Keep the workload manageable. You can always enlarge/add more gardens later.
3. **Prepare the Site** – Eradicate existing perennials with a couple of Glyphosate treatments in summer, especially important for getting rid of weed enemy #1, Bermuda grass.

4. **Consider Height Proportions** – Think about being able to see layers of plants. Island gardens are visually more appealing with shorter plants and there are many short to medium height native options to consider. Gardens against building walls do allow for taller vegetation in the back.

5. **Add Hardscaping** – Include features such as bird baths, feeders, houses, artwork, and benches for human enjoyment.

6. **Get Edgy** – Establish the boundary where weeding meets mowing. A flexible edge such as flat pieces of limestone is a favorite. A visible edge also conveys that this garden is purposeful.

7. **Clumping of Species** – When a garden has high visibility for the public, choose fewer species and plant them in clumps or waves to convey that this garden is intentional. Too many species planted will appear random and thrown together over time.

8. **Do not Fertilize** – Native plants will survive fine without fertilizer. Extra nutrients benefit weeds and only make native plants taller (and more wild looking).

9. **Mulch Is Your Friend** – One or two applications (2 to 4 inches deep) of free wood chip mulch from the municipal pile or delivered by a tree trimmer keeps the native garden looking good and helps control weeds. A layer or two of newspaper under the mulch also minimizes weeds.

10. **Signage Educates** – Whether utilizing a wildlife certification sign or species identification labels, signage helps convey that this garden is intended to be there. Education leads to acceptance.

11. **Weeding Is Mandatory** – Weeding regularly and often minimizes the need for a long backbreaking weeding session that will make you hate your garden. It is therapeutic and good exercise. Plus, a high frequency of visits to your garden will add to your appreciation and enjoyment.

Now, resume your planning and consider going native. Do so in a visually pleasing way and maybe your neighbors will follow suit.

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**New botanical nonprofit**

- **BRUCE BARNES**

Flora ID, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the mission of promoting botanical education and research, and developing plant identification tools, is now continuing the production and development of the interactive plant identification software previously produced by Flora ID Northwest.

One of their first actions has been to release new comprehensive apps for Android devices. These apps, simply named “(state/province/region) Plants”, are a major step forward. Each of the new apps includes all the native and naturalized vascular plants of each region named in the app title (one of the apps is for Kansas plants). They are, in effect, a complete flora on your phone or tablet in your pocket, independent from wifi or cell towers. The apps are now in the Google Play store: search for “flora id” including quotation marks, and look for their mostly white icons. They work the same as the wildflower apps published three years ago which are still available (with mostly green icons).

All net proceeds from the sale of the apps or PC software go to support the mission of the organization, Flora ID.

Bruce Barnes
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*Limestone edging helps define this garden.*

*Suggestions for planting in waves or clumps.*
2017 Annual Wildflower Weekend
- NADINE CHAMPLIN

2017 AWW and Educational Outreach

Plans are underway for the 39th Kansas Native Plant Society Annual Wildflower Weekend (AWW). Mark your calendars for September 8-10. It was discussed at the January Board meeting to incorporate an Educational Outreach program in Concordia before the AWW. Many local organizations, schools, and the general public are not informed early enough to plan to attend and thus miss this great opportunity to tour private land and learn about native plants. By advertising early and having an Educational Workshop prior to the tour we hope to have a good attendance of all age groups. The best way to learn about native plants is to experience them! We encourage everyone to attend the tours. Knowledgeable members explain the characteristics of native plants and share stories and information about them.

The public meeting will be held at Cloud County Community College on Saturday morning, Sept. 9, with registration at 8:30 am, and the meeting held from 9 am until noon. A catered meal will be available for lunch.

Dale Strickler, a local well-known Agronomist, will be our speaker Saturday morning. He will discuss his experience and research in Sustainable Agriculture. We have also asked a Star Seed representative to discuss how they gather native seed and their experience with distribution.

Do not miss the opportunity to visit Cloud County Community College. It is very unique with its domed buildings tucked in the rolling hills on the north side of Concordia. If you are new to KNPS, AWW is the highlight of the year for everyone interested in native plants. Join fellow enthusiasts as we explore native plant communities in north central Kansas. The theme is "Stewardship", with tours planned in diverse settings over three days.

We will visit locations with vegetation benefitting from sound stewardship and conservation activities. Cloud County lies in the Dissected High Plains. High flat upland areas in the west are combined with gently rolling hills dotted with mounds or buttes. The broad flat valleys of the Solomon and Republican Rivers provide a diverse ecosystem for native plants. Approximately two-thirds of Cloud County is drained by the Republican River. This stream arises in Colorado and flows generally eastward through Colorado and Nebraska to about the NW corner of adjoining Republic County, and then bends southeastwardly to join the Smoky Hill River at Junction City to form the Kansas River. The rare Fremont’s Clematis can be found in Cloud County, Kansas.

Returning members look forward to traditional activities, including the presentation of Annual Awards; the display of outstanding photographs in the Photo Contest; and the fun of placing bids and winning items in the Silent Auction. The Photo Contest is open to KNPS members only and is conducted online. ➤
Growing KNPS Education Outreach...

“...I’m lucky to have spent my childhood summers among woods, streams, meadows, and marshes, but most suburbanites have never searched for frogs’ eggs, caught fireflies in a jar, or peeked into a grassy nest of adorable baby mice. As the years pass, fewer and fewer people will long for the call of bullfrogs. Today’s children, growing up on lawns and pavements, will not even have nostalgia to guide them, and soon the animals [and native plants] will be not only missing but forgotten.” From Noah’s Garden: Restoring the Ecology of Our Own Backyards, by Sara Stein.

After attending September’s 2016 AWW meeting for the first time in ten years or more, I came away inspired by the passion, the experience, and the expertise of our organization’s members. As a new KNPS board member, and particularly with my interest in citizen science, membership on the Education Committee seemed a natural fit. Education was on my mind as I drove home from the 2016 AWW. How might we, indeed, could we increase KNPS’ visibility and involvement in informal native plant education for Kansas citizens of all ages? Might the AWW be a venue for that?

Fast forward to the present. The KNPS board subsequently gave the Education Committee a green light to explore the potential to include local participation in future AWW meetings. This spring the Education Committee, working closely with Nadine and Andrew (our 2017 AWW organizers in Concordia), developed a strategy to pursue our outreach options.

1. Identification of potential audiences. What groups exist and are interested, e.g. scouting groups, school students, gardening clubs, Cloud County CC staff and students, local families, interested members of the general public? Nadine and Andrew are currently working with the Concordia Chamber of Commerce and the city Mayor to create a list of contacts from these groups.

2. Scheduling. What options exist for the addition of an interactive programming element on either Friday or Saturday that piggy-back with existing outings, and that continue to meet the expectations of our membership?

3. Public school outreach. Brad Guhr is available to present Dyck Arboretum’s Earth Partnership for Schools program to school teachers for teacher recruitment for the June 2017 EPS Workshop. EPS classrooms could readily integrate into an AWW weekend activity.

4. Cloud County Community College outreach. Contact has been made with a Cloud County Community College Range Management instructor to determine whether she would be interested in including a plant ID outing in her autumn coursework.

5. Identification of programming activities. We want to utilize activities that are easy, fun, interactive, mapped to Common Core Standards for public schools, adjustable for multiple ages, and most important, activities that make native prairie species interesting and accessible to participants. Developed EPS curriculum activities are available to use and be distributed.

6. Marketing. Nadine and Andrew continue to work with our Concordia hosts so that, as finalized, public programming can be marketed to the local community in advance of the 2017 AWW.

7. Website. Preliminarily, we would like to begin work on content for an outreach audience on the web site.

8. Contacts. The Education Committee will pursue contacts to introduce outreach programming and to seek participation. We recognize that lead time is important so that instructors can appropriately incorporate this programming into fall teaching plans.

9. Fees. We would like to offer free participation in outreach programming. Further participation in scheduled AWW activities would require the regular registration fee.

The Education Committee looks forward to pursuing these and other possibilities, recognizing that we are moving into some new endeavors. We will keep you informed going forward!

We are “Growing KNPS Education Outreach...advocating for citizens that fall in love with the inhabitants of our native prairie landscapes...advocating for citizens who remember these inhabitants and notice when they are missing!”
A Brief Introduction to Foraging | KAREN HUMMEL

It was a fine spring day, and more than twenty enthusiastic foodies had gathered at a rural home near Manhattan, Kansas. Our leader was Tama Matsuoka Wong, author of the book Foraged Flavor. Tama lives on acreage in New Jersey and supplies chefs at high-end restaurants in New York City with fresh wild produce from her fields, woods, and stream areas. We were introduced to the concept of foraging, and led through an exercise of harvesting wild plants from the yard and pasture. Our goal, in addition to learning about the plants, was to pluck a sufficient supply of these native treasures to supply a team of chefs, who would prepare us a feast. In truth, the most abundant edible native plant we found was Henbit, and we picked lots of it.

Tama had come prepared with additional supplies, and the harvested goods were given to the chefs. Later, we were the guests at a three course luncheon.

Morel bisque
Crab-stuffed squash blossoms
Beef tenderloin medallions with henbit pesto
Chocolate mousse with wild mint

The food was beautifully plated and delicious. What I described above is a rare experience, but foraging need not be a rare pastime. Throughout the ages, foraging has been a mainstay in providing food for the table. Here in the Midwest, indigenous populations foraged for centuries. KU professor Kelly Kindscher’s book, Edible Wild Plants of the Prairie, documents the use of 123 plants for native use, and there were many more. Beginning with westward expansion in the mid-1800’s, European settlers commonly foraged for edible and often delicious native herbs, roots, and berries.

In foraging, plant identification and safe consumption are paramount. Kelly Kindscher documents five rules for foraging: 1) Know how to identify plants correctly. If there is any doubt, do not eat it. 2) Do not eat anything that does not taste good. 3) Eat new foods only in small amounts in case you have an allergic reaction. 4) Do not disguise the flavor when cooking, but do not hesitate to enhance flavors with salt, butter, sauces, sweeteners, or other seasonings. 5) Do not harvest plants from along roadsides or other areas that may have been treated with herbicides or affected by toxic emissions. Samuel Thayer, author of several books on foraging, states, “Anybody can avoid eating the wrong plant by following one simple rule: never eat a plant unless you are 100% positive of its identity.” One more rule is important for environmental conservation: if the plant is rare, leave it undisturbed.

It is winter 2017, not an ideal time for foraging, but project your thoughts forward to spring and plan to forage a common ‘weed’ as an ingredient for a luncheon of Chicken Salad with Henbit and Avocado. Henbit, *Lamium amplexicaule*, is one of the first plants to emerge in spring. It is common in sunny, disturbed open ground, lawns, garden beds, and field edges. Originally from Eurasia, it is a member of the mint family, with square stems, opposite leaves, and reddish-purple to purple flowers. The growth pattern is low, sprawling, and spreading. To harvest, pull out handfuls or cut with scissors from the time of early leaves through flowering. Use the top three to five inches of fresh growth. According to Chef Eddy Leroux, the taste is “…nice! Fresh, subtle, herbal, hints of celery… a bit nutty…”

Chicken Salad with Henbit and Avocado
Serves 4

**INGREDIENTS**
- 2 Hass avocados, peeled and pitted
- 2 cooked boneless skinless chicken breast halves, shredded
- 2 ounces (1 ½ cups) henbit tops, preferably with purple flowers
- 1 jalapeno, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons drained brined small capers
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

**DIRECTIONS**
Dice one of the avocados and put it in a large bowl. Add the chicken, henbit, jalapeno, and capers. In a food processor or blender, puree the remaining avocado with the lime juice while adding the olive oil by pouring in a constant stream. Blend 1 – 2 minutes, or until the dressing becomes smooth and creamy. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon the dressing over the salad and toss, making sure to coat the henbit.

In this dish, the frilly texture of raw henbit balances the smooth and creamy avocado; jalapeno and salty capers add a little kick. This is a mosaic of the spring colors to come once again: light green, dark green, and flecks of purple. Enjoy!
BOOK REVIEW

Hope for Wildlife and the History of How We Got Here

– SHIRLEY BRAUNLICH

I treasure wildlife sightings. During the winter season I sometimes glimpse bald eagles soaring in the sky outside my kitchen window, and I’ve been fortunate on several occasions to see beavers swimming in the Haskell-Baker Wetlands. Last summer my East Lawrence neighbors and I were frequently serenaded by the territorial calls of barred owls. Being reminded that wildlife still thrives nearby is reassuring for the future of our environmental heritage.

I’ve been musing more than ever about wildlife since I started reading American Serengeti: The Last Big Animals of the Great Plains by Dan Flores—a book recommended to me by local author George Frazier. I reviewed Frazier’s book earlier; The Last Wild Places of Kansas inspires an appreciation for the remaining Kansas wilderness using wry wit to share his personal adventures and historical anecdotes which enhance context.

Frazier commented to me that what is most salient about American Serengeti is the skill used to link the experience of a place with the accounts of early explorers’ writing. Flores describes camping in the White Cliffs Narrows of the Upper Missouri River; the reflective surface of the white cliffs create a stunning-visual sensation at sunrise.

Flores writes:

I had never been on the Missouri River before. But standing there under that impossibly lit sky, watching ducks arrowing low over the surface of the water and a small herd of mule deer pogoing away through hoodoos and pedestal rocks at my sudden appearance, while a coyote yipped a dawn serenade across the river, after a few moments it came to me. I had read books and pored over nineteenth-century art and dreamed daydreams of the wilderness Great Plains for much of my life, and now here I stood, on the banks of the Missouri, in the very stretch where Meriwether Lewis had wondered whether these scenes of “visionary enchantment would never have an end.”

He continues:

This place was déjà vu for me not from some past life, but from the minds of others, who had made me know what a magical world the Great Plains once had been. The poetry of the plains was considerably fainter in my time on earth, but this particular morning on the Missouri I was hearing enough of the passages to realize that despite all, we had not entirely lost the American Serengeti. Not yet.

Flores features many vivid accounts like the example above. This is accessible natural history focused on a selection of some of the most charismatic mammals that used to flourish in the Great Plains, including: pronghorns (antelope), coyotes, horses, grizzly bears, bison, wolves, and humans. Candid discussions of early explorers’ accounts of seeing great numbers of wildlife and the harsh reality of these predecessors’ responses is sobering.

It seems everyone who ventured into the Great Plains from Lewis and Clark to John James Audubon was compelled to kill. But Flores frames this book with hope, describing efforts by a nonprofit group based in Montana working to expand the American Prairie Reserve.

The goal of the organization is to re-create a sustainable ecosystem, bringing back all the wildlife that thrived in the Great Plains for the past two centuries on an expanse of land even larger than Yellowstone National Park.

The library also has a copy of Dan Flores’ other recent book, Coyote America: A Natural and Supernatural History. I am anxious to read this book, especially because I enjoyed the chapter in American Serengeti on coyotes.

Kirkus Reviews noted that Coyote America is “…a spirited blend of history, anthropology, folklore, and biology.” While most of the large herds of charismatic mammals are documentary American Serengeti drastically reduced, coyotes have thrived and expanded their range even into urban environments. A few of my neighbors have reported seeing a coyote exploring nearby in Lawrence.

Another venue to appreciate the message of Flores’ book is expressed in the similarly-titled documentary American Serengeti. This is a beautiful, romantic, and sentimental story of conservation heroes, focused on the American Prairie Reserve.

Finally, a more local view of similar efforts is the focus of the documentary The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. This national park in the Flint Hills of Kansas celebrated their 20th anniversary in 2016 at the same time the National Parks celebrated their centennial.

I can’t help but reflect on the words of Dan Flores now while appreciating the natural vistas at the Haskell-Baker Wetlands. I hope we all eventually see more of a sustainable, holistic Great Plains with all the charismatic fauna like the vision of the American Prairie Reserve.

– Shirley Braunlich is a Reader’s Services Assistant at Lawrence Public Library.

TECH NOTES

Are you on our email list? If not, it is easy to sign up by going to our website (www.ksnps.org) and clicking on “Email List” in the left navigation. Put your email address in the form field and hit Subscribe. You will get our weekly email of event listings around the state and an occasional email about other KNPS topics of interest.

– MICKEY DELFELDER
2017 KANSAS AREA NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER EVENTS

Information provided by Kansas Native Plant Society, see more events on our website: www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org
Please share this information and contact us about additional events to note. Thank you! email@KNSP.org
Sturdy shoes, long pants, a hat, insect repellent, sunscreen, and water are recommended for outdoor events.
Mark your calendar now and plan to attend some fabulous happenings!

MAY 17

Moser-O’Dell Prairie Tour at 1 pm. Tour the pristine prairie home of over 100 species of native plants and a few naturalized rogues. We should see the rare milkweed, Asclepias meadii, yellow star grass (Hypoxis hirsuta), breadroot (Pediomelum esculentum), pink prairie phlox, orange puccoon, ground plum (Astragalus crassicarpus), pussytoes, and more.
Directions at www.ksnps.org. Sponsor: The Kansas City Region of KNPS.
Contact: Ken O’Dell ken@springvalleynursery.com (913) 837-5112

MAY 19-20

Kansas Native Plant Society Spring Board Meeting and Outings in Chase County, KS. We will visit several sites in the area to view the native plants, including a private property near Cedar Point, and the new Preston Outdoor Education Station at Camp Wood. Any interested persons are invited to join us for any part or all of the activities. Make a room reservation as soon as possible, check http://chasecountychamber.org/lodging. Contact Phyllis Scherich pscherich@yahoo.com (620) 213-0751

MAY 20

Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. Volunteer prairie maintenance and preservation projects, third Saturday each month except Dec. www.grasslandheritage.org. Wear appropriate clothing. No special skills or tools needed.
For details, please contact Frank Norman fnorman@sunflower.com (785) 691-9748 (cell).

JUN 1-30

June is Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month! Each year Kansas Native Plant Society makes a formal appeal to the Governor for this proclamation. This opportunity promotes greater appreciation for the diversity, value, and beauty of Kansas native plants and their habitats. www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org

JUN 3

Wilson County Wildflower Tour and Nature Walk with the Wilson County Conservation Auxiliary. There will be walks to identify and discuss native wildflowers and grasses, trees, birds, and insects – maybe even the occasional mammal or amphibian. There may be a nominal fee to cover expenses. Meet at 8:30am at Old Iron Club Meeting Building, 10392 Jade Road (east of US 400 roundabout on K-47, then south on Jade Rd.), Fredonia, KS. Sponsor: Wilson County Conservation District. Contact: Pam Walker pamela.walker@ks.nacdnet.net (620) 378-2866

JUN 5-9

Earth Partnership for Schools Summer Institute at Dyck Arboretum in Hesston, KS. Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) is inviting K-12 teachers to apply for the 2017 Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) Program. EPS is making its ever-growing mark in Kansas. The message is clear – get kids outside and in touch with their natural surroundings and teach them about the prairie and natural history of Kansas. Learn to engage your students in the process of prairie gardening on school grounds, earn three hours of graduate credit, take home an extensive curriculum, eat good food for a week, and have a fun and meaningful experience at the Dyck Arboretum! This 40-hour institute for school teachers and staff will train you in the award-winning EPS Program that you can share with your students and colleagues for years to come. Sponsor: Dyck Arboretum of the Plains dyckarboretum.org. Location: 177 W. Hickory, Hesston, KS. Contact: Brad Guhr for more information brad.guhr@hesston.edu (620) 327-8127

JUN 10

12th annual Symphony in the Flint Hills at Deer Horn Ranch in Geary County, Kansas. More information: http://www.symphonyintheflinthills.org/. Contact: info@symphonyintheflinthills.org (620) 273-8955

SEP 8-10

Kansas Native Plant Society’s 39th Annual Wildflower Weekend (AWW) will be in Concordia, KS. We will visit natural areas in and near Cloud County. Come enjoy native plants with us in beautiful northcentral Kansas! The weekend is filled with outings, programs, a silent auction, photo contest, dinner, and socializing. For more information, contact KNPS Board Member Nadine Champlin nadinechamplin@yahoo.com
FEATURED PLANT

Cat’s claw sensitive briar | MIMOSA NUTTALLII

— LORRAINE KAUFMAN

One of the worst aspects of having to rely on a walker to get around is that it is simply impossible to push it through thick prairie grass. Hence, my experiences of the solitude, the subtle, but exquisite beauty of our remnant prairie, must be done through the lens of recollection.

Right now I am thinking of a glorious early summer day near the beginning of my wildflower wanderings when I came upon a remarkable plant covered with fragrant pink fluffy spherical blossoms. Even though I was still a novice at plant identification, I was certain that I had never seen this plant in our family farm’s pastures while growing up. But, there it was now. So where had it been all those years?

It was easily identified as cat’s claw sensitive briar, also known as Nuttall’s sensitive-briar. Stems of this perennial herb are sprawling, one to seven feet long, with short, curved prickles. Each central leaf stalk has four to eight pairs of side stalks; each with eight to fifteen pairs of leaflets which fold inward when touched or jostled by strong winds -- hence the name. This behavior likely is a moisture preservation technique in response to hot prairie winds. The fragrant pink three-quarter inch diameter “fluff” blossoms are punctuated with tiny yellow anthers.

Mimosa nuttallii is a native legume that grows on a wide variety of soils, so one would expect to see it everywhere. It is also highly nutritious and particularly favored by all types of livestock -- which is why you do not. And indeed, all those years that my dad had grazed cattle on our farm, they had nibbled it down to invisibility. Then, when my husband and I took over the farm and moved out the cattle, voila, the cat’s claw sensitive briar reappeared. So give a patch of your prairie a rest from your cows and see if this marvelous plant shows up with its spectacular blossoms. Or, per the recommendations of the National Wildflower Research Center, plant it in your garden. I hope you can make its acquaintance soon!

NEW MEMBERS FROM 12/12/16 TO 3/12/17

TABITHA ABEL - WICHITA
CHARLES ARMSTRONG - WICHITA
RILEY BAKER - WICHITA
TAMMIE BARLOW - KANSAS CITY
COCO BARNES - WICHITA
JOE BARTELS - LAKE QUIVIRA
SARAH BOWERSOX - WICHITA
SARAH BROWN - LEAWOOD
DAN CARPENTER - DERBY
JACOB COCKRAM - TOWANDA
HANNAH COFFEY - MULVANE
JULIA COTTER - LAKE QUIVIRA
KAITLYN DELONG - WICHITA
KAYTLYN DODGEN - ANTHONY
JOHN DUONG - WICHITA
REBECKA EARP - CLEARWATER
MORGAN FORE - CLEARWATER
HAPPY APPLE’S FARM - TONGANOOXIE
LOIS HART - LOUISBURG
NANCY HARVILLA - ABILENE
SUSAN HAVEN - CONCORDIA
ALLISON HERNANDEZ - AUGUSTA
ALLYSSA KIRKHAM - BENTON
KERRY MORRIS & TONY VARGAS - LAWRENCE
FREDERICK MCMILLAN - LAWRENCE
KATELYN MIRANOWSKI - CHENEY
MORGAN FORE - CLEARWATER
HAPPY APPLE’S FARM - TONGANOOXIE
LOIS HART - LOUISBURG
NANCY HARVILLA - ABILENE
SUSAN HAVEN - CONCORDIA
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LOIS HART - LOUISBURG
NANCY HARVILLA - ABILENE
SUSAN HAVEN - CONCORDIA
ALLISON HERNANDEZ - AUGUSTA
ALLYSSA KIRKHAM - BENTON

MEMBERS RETURNING AFTER A HIATUS

MIKE BEAM - TOPEKA
LILA MARTIN - OVERLAND PARK

Join the KNPS email list to receive the latest event announcements:
www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/email_list.php
March 3, 2017 and the redbud trees on our farm in eastern Kansas are already showing the color of their flowers. Springtime weather is two to three weeks early this year as our temperatures have been 20 degrees higher than average. If a late freeze does not halt or destroy their progress, we will see thousands of beautiful pink to burgundy colored flowers on the native redbuds.

Redbud trees, Cercis canadensis, have been around for thousands of years, and as with most trees, if we pay attention to our surroundings, we will find redbud trees that are different than the species: some with white flowers, some shiny leaves, colored leaves, variegated leaves, upright growth, weeping growth, and stunted growth. Several of these varieties have been selected and propagated to produce some very interesting cultivars. Some of these cultivated varieties are propagated from tissue culture, budding, grafting, or softwood cuttings. My experience over the years has been that members of the pea family (fabaceae) are difficult to root from softwood or hardwood cuttings, but is possible with mist timers for softwood cuttings.

Powell Gardens in Kansas City has a nice collection of named cultivars of redbuds. The Johnson County, Kansas Extension Office has several beautiful white flowering redbud trees growing in the eastern edge of their parking lot. The Overland Park (OP) Arboretum has the purple leaf redbud, known as Forest Pansy, growing in the Stous Promenade just west of the visitor center. The OP arboretum also has a large planting of white redbud along the walkway in Legacy Gardens. A few years ago the OP Arboretum planted a ‘Lavender Twist’ weeping redbud. Lavender Twist is very slow growing. It is top grafted at about five feet and has grown less than a foot in the past several years, but is still loaded with beautiful pink flowers every early spring. This original weeping redbud was found growing in a garden in New York State.

In Kansas, the native redbud is scattered in our woodlands, gullies, stream banks, and the edge of fields. Driving the main highways from Paola to Manhattan, they are quite showy in the springtime just before the leaves appear on the other trees. This tree is easy to grow from seed collected in late November. Take the seed out of the long seed pod, store it in the fridge at about 35 degrees, and plant it in the cold greenhouse in mid-January. Keep it moist, and it should germinate well by mid-March to early April. Grow a few in pots, transplant them to your yard or farm after frost, and enjoy them year after year!
The first time I saw our property was in the summer before we purchased it. I was hooked from the beginning. Not only did I see a large space for vegetable gardening in the sunny backyard, but there were already enough natives popping through to catch my eye. Yes, the front half is loaded with remnants of existing oak/hickory woodland, filled with shady spots for gardening and exploring, but the back is a wet meadow coming through what was once terraced cropland.

Since purchase, I have walked the property once a week, and each time I am astounded by my findings. I am both a plant and an animal lover: I get super excited over insects and birds as much as I do plants. I have kept a notebook on my smartphone with a record of each species of bird that I have seen, plus all the woody plant species including non-natives and those planted by me. But the prairie habitat has somewhat confounded me. I take endless photos of the plants I see, but I have yet to put them into a definitive inventory.

Such is the nature of many plant enthusiasts. We can remember the scientific and common names of a rare prairie or woodland plant, but we fail to both write them down and record where we noticed the plant. Recording our species of plants and insects should be just as important as photographing and learning their names. At my work, I keep a plant inventory of the landscapes of my customers, but fail to do this at home.

Therefore, with the start of today, I have begun to categorize and inventory the native plants on our property. I will include all that I find, from the shade loving Tall Bellflower (Campanula americana) to the fall blooming Nodding Ladies Tresses (Spiranthes cernua). There are many ways to track and inventory your plants, from paper and pencil to apps on your phone. I prefer to use Microsoft Excel.

People have told me that Excel is outdated, but I find it familiar to work with and easy to use. I can add columns and rows whenever I need to, and it is easy to add formulas. For my native plant inventory, I use headings of Genus, species, common name, location, date discovered, bloom time, bloom color, insects found, seed collected Y/N, and best propagation. These headings are what I am using for my natives; you can change them up or use whatever comes to mind for your location.

As with any landscape inventory on natives, it will be forever changing or increased. Natives may come and go depending on the weather or rainfall, and many more will not even show up until the soil is disturbed again or trees removed. Keep your inventory handy and even add photos to it, if possible. Indeed, it is convenient to have a list of plant species available when your KNPS friends come to see you.

Now that you know the struggles and importance of inventorying your native plants, I hope this serves as an important reminder to get you started. Do not wait until winter, start as soon as you see plants in the early spring!
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL GUIDELINES

Annual dues are for a 12-month period from January 1 through December 31. Dues paid after December 1 are applied to the next year. Note to new members: the first year of annual membership is effective from the date of joining through December 31 of the following year.

Please complete this form or a photocopy. Send the completed form and a check payable to the Kansas Native Plant Society to:

Kansas Native Plant Society
R. L. McGregor Herbarium
University of Kansas
2045 Constant Ave.
Lawrence, KS 66047-3729

A membership to the Kansas Native Plant Society makes a great gift for friends and family members. Recipients of gift memberships will receive notification of your gift membership within two weeks of receipt of your check. The Kansas Native Plant Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Gifts to KNPS are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

Member Information

Name _____________________________________________________________
Address _________________________________________________________
City/State _______________________________________________________
Zipcode _________________________________________________________
Phone __________________________________________________________
Email __________________________________________________________
County (if KS) __________________________________________________

Additional Donation: Legacy Fund $________ Scholarships Fund $________ General Fund $________

Membership Category

☐ Student $10.00  ☐ Individual $20.00  ☐ Family $30.00
☐ Organization $35.00  ☐ Contributing $100.00  ☐ Lifetime $500.00