Lessons in School Gardens
— VICKY HILGERS – MULVANE MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

At Mulvane Middle School, a simple front flower bed and a lawn grass courtyard seemed like the perfect place to introduce young minds and hands to the native prairie plants of Kansas. The front flower bed became our pollinator garden, starting with common milkweed, given by Monarch Watch, and supported with Maximillian sunflowers, Liatris species, blue sage, Echinacea, butterfly milkweed, and Missouri evening primrose, among others.

Monarchs and Swallowtails readily laid their eggs, and my students and I began to collect the newly hatched larva to raise in the classroom. The excitement of twelve year olds over the chrysalis, the tiny caterpillars, and, finally, adult butterflies is a beautiful thing to experience. Their joy in nature’s cycles is catching and one cannot help but hope for the future of our earth and humanity.

My classroom has a large expanse of windows which look out over a courtyard area. Originally, this space was a flat lawn of Bermuda grass and chickweed. But with the help of the Earth Partnership for Schools program at the Dyck Arboretum in Hesston, ideas for a native prairie garden, which the students could build,

“We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it.”
— GEORGE ELIOT/MARY ANN EVANS

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
School Gardens  – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

maintain, and use for research, became a reality. Students researched native plants and their requirements, so we could decide which species would thrive in our situation. We were not always right, but the whole process was a learning experience.

We try to let nature be our teacher. As the flora increased, the animals and insects came also, allowing us to have a nature research station just outside the classroom. We learn to identify native Kansas birds and track migrations; we study pollinator interactions with the flowers; students become citizen scientists as they post their observations of hummingbirds and monarchs to online sources like "Journey North," and even more important, the students become lifelong learners because their natural curiosity for the world around them has been fostered.

Young voices tell me of how they have an Oriole that lives in their yard and they began to put oranges out for it, and some convinced their parents to plant native flowers because they need less water and encourage insects. Young minds ask if they can press some of the flowers and turn them into an identification bookmark or plant seeds to grow and take home.

Teachers of all different subjects have become involved: our careers teacher made name plates for the plants and our art teacher made a bird bath for the garden. Community members have become our partners helping build, plant, and maintain the school gardens. By investing in a simple living system, it has allowed all of us, child and adult alike, to connect not only with our inner curiosity and wonder, but also with each other and our surrounding communities.
President’s Message | PHYLLIS SCHERICH

So far this year, I feel like we were cheated out of spring in Kansas. After a dry winter, April refused to give us rain and was determined to retain the cold temperatures. Then May arrived and we finally did receive some rain, but the temperatures soared into summer ranges! June temperatures so far have continued the upward trend, and as a result, the native plants have had to adjust. Some of the earlier blooming ones were late to arrive, or even did not due to the lack of moisture. When it did rain and it warmed up, the plants responded quickly, allowing us to view the usually earlier flowering ones with those that normally flower a bit later, but the flowering season of the earlier ones was brief! This adjustment made by the plants does not surprise me, but I still marvel at Nature’s adaptability.

During a short period of time from mid-May through early June, Dee and I had the opportunity to spend time in four different areas of the state, in addition to ours, to discover what was blooming. And we were not disappointed.

The various locations of the May KNPS outings around Wilson each revealed its own unique mix of plants. I especially want to thank Scott and Cherilee Ward, Bernie Habiger, and Melinda Merrill for allowing us access to their properties. I also want to extend a public expression of appreciation to Ken and Iralee Barnard for helping research areas around Wilson to view. Up until two weeks before the event, I was doubtful we would find anything in bloom!

The following weekend, Dee and I were on a ranch in western Barber County. We spent two hours touring various pastures on the 4-wheeler. Using my camera, I recorded about 80 blooming species without counting grasses, shrubs, etc. We even found a gyp outcrop with scorpion weed (Phacelia texana), Steven’s blue nama (Nama stevensii), yucca (Yucca glauca), and paper flower (Psilotrophe villosa).

A week later we joined the Cowley County Tour in Winfield where we were bused to the north area of the Snyder Ranch. I was introduced to several plants I had not previously viewed including the clasping coneflower (Rudbeckia amplexicaulis), foxglove beardtongue (Penstemon digitalis), tube penstemon (Penstemon tubiflorus), and American water-willow (Justicia americana). I was surprised to see fine-leaf thelesperma (T. filifolium) that I had only found in more arid areas in far southwest Kansas. We were also able to view both the yellow and white versions of moth mulelein (Verbascum blattaria), large-flower tick clover (Hyloidesmum glutinosum), tuberous Indian plantain (Arnoglossum plantagineum), and pale purple coneflower (Echinacea pallida) that we do not commonly see further west. Kudos go to the Snyder family for caring for and sharing their special piece of property with us.

This past weekend we attended a wedding in Paola. On the way, we detoured through the Chase County Lake area to enjoy the masses of butterfly milkweed (Asclepias tuberosa) in full bloom. Before leaving the area, we made a must-do stop at Lenora Larson’s Long Lips Farm. She enthusiastically treated us to a guided, narrated tour of her gardens, identifying plants and their use by the caterpillars and butterflies. We are hoping to attend her Garden Party in July. (See the KNPS Events calendar at kansasnativeplantsociety.org for more information.)

Dee and I have decided that now we need to take more time to enjoy the local plants in the McPherson area. The diversity and variety of species of native wildflowers in our state continues to astonish me, even in years when our weather deviates so widely from “normal” conditions. And on Sept. 7-9, make sure to join us in Wichita for the KNPS 40th Anniversary Annual Wildflower Weekend. We hope to see you there!
**NATIVE PLACES IN CITY SETTINGS**

**2018 AWW Weekend in Wichita – Update**

— KRISTA DAHLINGER

“Native Places in City Settings” is the theme for the 2018 Annual Wildflower Weekend (AWW) which will take place on September 7, 8, and 9 in Wichita. This year’s AWW will present KNPS members and friends with exciting opportunities to connect with remnant urban native places, tour modern interpretations of Kansas prairies, and learn about the next generation of stewards of these various native spaces. This year also marks the fortieth anniversary of the Kansas Native Plant Society, originating in 1978 as the “Kansas Wildflower Society.” And a look back, as well as a celebration is in order! All are welcome, so come join us in Wichita!

During the weekend, members and friends will be able to explore some of the native areas of the City of Wichita which was founded in 1865 at the confluence of the Big and Little Arkansas Rivers around J. R. Mead’s trading post established near Wichita Indian settlements. Over time, as Wichita grew and its boundaries expanded outward, low lying areas were set aside near waterways to become city parks where people could gather outdoors to socialize and play. Development of early industry in the “Air Capitol” claimed pieces of the prairie that were once on the outskirts of town, but are now located within the city. Several local businesses have made the choice to recreate prairie scenery in their landscapes. The Wichita Public School system has also included environmental-themed schools with educators that seek to connect grade school age students to native plants and animals of the prairie, and as much as possible, bring the prairie to the classroom.

The 2018 AWW will be a busy and interesting weekend which will include seven tour stops for those who travel to Wichita, or are already located in and around the city. The outing tour on Friday will include stops at the Great Plains Nature Center, an environmental school native plant garden, and a city park by the river.

Saturday morning’s program, located at the Wichita State University Metroplex (29th Street North and Oliver) will include the KNPS annual business meeting, will feature a historic look back across forty years of the KWS/KNPS organization, and in the works are plans for a celebration of KNPS history with several founding members. The annual KNPS Photo Contest awards will be presented and a presentation of the photographs submitted by members will be displayed. The Silent Auction fundraiser will take place before, during, and after the business meeting, so be sure to bring your auction items with you on Saturday morning! New KNPS board members will be introduced, and the annual KNPS recognition awards will be bestowed to round out the morning’s meeting.

The Saturday morning featured guest speaker this year will be Katie Kingery-Page, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Regional and Community Planning at Kansas State University. Ms. Kingery-Page is a prolific designer and a long time creator of “Native Places in City Settings” through public and private projects – while also guiding adult graduate students through their landscape architecture and design curriculum at K-State. Prior to teaching, she worked in an interdisciplinary design practice focused upon downtown redevelopment.

Saturday afternoon’s tour stops around Wichita will include a remnant prairie and a modern interpretation of native spaces, while the evening’s plans include a group dinner, followed by a presentation by area teachers of their students’ “native places” school projects which were inspired by the continuing education teacher workshops offered by Hesston’s Dyck Arboretum in the form of the Earth Partnership for Schools program.

Sunday morning there will be an opportunity to visit an additional native plant garden at a Wichita school followed by a guided tour of a prairie space in a large city park. This weekend promises to be first-rate with plenty of time for working together, socializing with friends, reminiscing about the past and planning for the future, and, of course, botanizing on the Kansas prairie!

A printed invitation, full itinerary, lodging information, and registration form will be mailed to all current KNPS members by mid-July, with registration to be submitted by late August. All AWW information and registration forms will also be placed on the KNPS website: www.ksnps.org at about the same time.

Please, COME AND JOIN US IN WICHITA: KWS / KNPS 40 YEARS 1978 to 2018!
KNPS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

KNPS Celebration: A Plant Society History
— IRALEE BARNARD

Kansas Wildflower Society originated in 1978 with enormous interest. At the end of the KWS’s first full year, President Mary Jo McClure announced that experts in the field told her “there has never been a volunteer effort that has taken off with such enthusiasm in only one year’s time on a state-wide basis in Kansas.” KWS membership quickly soared to over 600 and continued in this range through the 1980s. A decline began in the 90s, and in 2003 membership fell to a low of 273 members.

A special revitalization meeting was held to “envision the future of the society.” As early as 1985, Lloyd Hulbert proposed a name change to Kansas Native Plant Society (KNPS), but it was opposed. This proposal resurfaced several times, when finally in 2004, KWS became KNPS. In the same year, the newsletter was transformed to an 8 ½ x 11 inch, mostly black and white format, with a new logo by Betty Macon that still graces the newsletter today. Experimentation with color photos eventually led to the magnificent full color KNPS newsletter you are holding.

The original KWS newsletters were 5 ½ x 8 ½ inches in journal format. The front covers were adorned with line drawings of different wildflowers. Through 1985, color was featured only on the covers (issues becoming entirely black and white in 1986). Each issue of the KWS newsletter was regularly interspersed with several witty line drawings by Charles Marshall.

By 2005, the annual meeting became a three day plant extravaganza with a full morning of programs and back-to-back field trips. The silent auction (with plants and seeds, artwork, crafts, books, and delectable foods) became a popular part of the meeting. The photo contest grew to become one of the meeting highlights.

The Bancroft Scholarship Award to fund college student plant research, Snyder Landscape Award for use of native plants in landscape design, and Timme Excellence in Botany Award for contributions in the fields of research and education were defined in 2005 and are awarded at the annual meetings.

The following KNPS projects were initiated or renewed in 2005: Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month in June; five years of participation by eighteen to twenty volunteers each year directing plant walks and educational displays during Symphony of the Flint Hills; Kansas Scenic Byways Program; the KNPS Wildflower Poster was produced; and we provided our expertise with demonstrations, presentations, and guided walks at a series of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve “Wildflower Weekends.”

Reorganization of committees was accomplished in 2007 resulting in thirteen standing committees. This was also the year that the annual meeting became the “AWW” (Annual Wildflower Weekend). In 2007, KNPS also participated in the Millennium Seed Bank project sponsored by the Royal Botanic Gardens, and we became active in the Kansas Non-game Wildlife Advisory Council and Tallgrass Legacy Alliance. The Cohen Outstanding Service Award for important contributions to KNPS was initiated in 2008. After five years of dedicated work by the "little blue" committee, little bluestem (Schizachyrium scoparium) became our official state grass in 2010.

In 2008, fifteen members of the Virginia Native Plant Society visited KNPS and were treated to guided outings by our members. The Virginia group could not get enough of prairie plants, so they came to tour Kansas prairies with KNPS again for seven days in 2011.

Eventually, in 2011, Kansas was divided into twenty-one membership regions; many with regional leaders and Facebook pages. Throughout this period Webmaster Jeff Hansen refined and expanded our website. The site is packed with information about prairie restoration, plant identification, landscaping, education, regions, events calendar, photo gallery, and more.

KNPS reached a record membership number of 955 in 2013. Current membership is over 700.

The successes of KNPS continue to this day and this brings me to a point that is so important to remember. KNPS is not only about appreciation of and dedication to wild plants. It is about truly special people whose vision, inspiration, and determination made and continues to make this organization extraordinary. I wish I could tell about each one, but there are literally hundreds (over the years the board alone totals 152 individuals), too many even to list here.

We owe a debt of gratitude to those first organizers and to all the KWS/KNPS officers, board members, and the general membership. KNPS continues to thrive because of you!
Chasing Native Orchids

Springtime in the woods has become one of my favorite times of the year, right up there with leaves falling in autumn, and summer on the prairie. Every year by mid-April, I head to the woods with my trusty hackberry staff and an empty gathering bag in the hunt for the little delicacy, morel mushrooms. This year, while tramping through one of my hunting grounds along a river bottom in central Brown County, I came across two roundish leaves poking from the oak-hickory leaf litter. I was sure I had found an orchid!

Native orchids come in many sizes, shapes, habitats, and bloom times. In late summer and early fall, nodding ladies’ tresses light up the grass in my backyard with their fragrant, slender forms. This orchid of the woods was certainly not them, but well worth the trip to the woods.

After mentally marking the spot in the woods, I sent a photo to the KNPS Facebook group, searching for confirmation of my find. Although it was not the lady’s slipper orchid I was hoping for, I did, indeed, have something worth watching. The showy orchid, or orchis (Galearis spectabilis), is native to the woodlands of the eastern United States, and can be found in rich bottom woodlands of the oak-hickory forests in Kansas.

I made weekly journeys to that spot in the woods to watch these showy orchids slowly rising from the ground. In the first week of May, I was rewarded with flashy-pink flowers emerging barely six inches above the two leaves. This was a show worth waiting for! Although the grouping consisted of only a dozen plants, I will remember this beautiful little orchid and be on the hunt for more next year.

ABOVE, L TO R: Showy orchid: April 15; May 7; May 15
PHOTOS: ANDREW MITCHELL

Birding While Black

Dr. J. Drew Lanham spoke at Liberty Hall in Lawrence on the evening of May 24 to an audience of at least 500 interested people. According to Shirley Braunlich, Lawrence Public Library Librarian and coordinator of the event, Dr. Lanham commented that this crowd was his largest so far! The following morning, Dr. Lanham led 65 enchanted birders on a birding tour at Baker Wetlands Discovery Center. Shirley says, “J. Drew Lanham is much more than an Ornithologist—he is charismatic and provocative—using wise wit to connect land ethics with social justice to move the work of both causes forward.” Dr. Lanham will be the reader on the upcoming audio of his book The Home Place; he is also planning to reprint his first chapbook of poetry “Sparrow Envy,” plus, he has more books in the works. For more information about Dr. Lanham’s visit to Lawrence the following links are available.

Watch the video recording of Dr. Lanham’s talk on Lawrence Public Library’s YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/mOugt8fW3rQ

Listen to the podcast of J. Drew Lanham on EcoRadio KC: http://www.kkfi.org/program-episodes/birding-black-urban-american-outdoors/

Read Shirley’s interview with Dr. Lanham:

TOP RIGHT: Dr. Lanham and Shirley Braunlich at Liberty Hall in Lawrence.
BOTTOM RIGHT: Dr. Lanham, Dr. Roger Boyd, and enthusiastic birders at Baker Wetlands Discovery Center.
Volunteers at Kansas City Wildlands Preserve Biological Heritage

— PAUL SHOWALTER

Loss of prairies in the Kansas City region may be slowing after decades of degradation and decline. New volunteer strategies introduced by Kansas City WildLands (KCWL), its sponsors, and partners are making progress to protect what remains of the region’s biological heritage.

When KCWL started twenty years ago, many of the region’s natural communities were so degraded they were not recognizable says Linda Lehrbaum, program manager of KCWL. Most of these valuable areas on public lands were not maintained; they looked like weed patches. After several years of intense volunteer input, using prescribed burns and other methods, they are making a comeback.

Notable KCWL projects in Jackson County, Missouri, include collaborations to restore Blue River Glades Natural Area, the Blue River Parkway, and Jerry Smith Park. In Johnson County, Kansas, they include Ernie Miller Park, Kill Creek Park, Prairie Center Park, and Ogg Road Prairie, among others.

KCWL founders were convinced that city, county, and state land managers were too burdened and understaffed to take on labor-intensive restoration work. What was needed, they believed, was a trained volunteer organization to help managers identify and restore remnant communities under their care.

To document the presence of a remnant, KCWL staff and professional volunteers survey public land for plant diversity and look for plants that have a high fidelity with natural communities. Plants with a conservancy value of “C7” or above (on scale of 0-10) may be indicative of a remnant.

Once a remnant community is identified, project volunteers begin the grueling process of removing invasives says Lehrbaum. The top suspects for removal are familiar villains—red cedar, honeylocust, bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, multiflora rose, Sericea lespedeza, and the like. The methods used are also familiar: manual and chemical treatment, followed by a long-range management plan that includes prescribed burns.

Native seeds gathered that first year of the project were delivered to Powell Gardens (east of Kansas City) to be grown into seedlings in its greenhouse. They were returned the next spring for planting by volunteers. Today, KCWL plants seed exclusively by means of a planting drill (by the land manager), or broadcasting by hand (by volunteers).

The Seed Team last year collected seed from fourteen prairies located in a forty-mile radius. The record bounty comprised 290 pounds of unprocessed seed—127 species in all—with an estimated market value of $108,000. But one could make the case that the seed was priceless because comparable local genome seed is normally unavailable at any price. KCWL also partners with Johnson County to maintain a fenced seed plot for propagating rare or hard-to-collect species.

Prolific plants such as rattlesnake master, slender mountain mint, grayhead coneflower, prairie blazing star and its relatives yield enough seed to fill grocery bags. Seeds of scarcity, such as prairie violet, prairie parsley, and rattlesnake root, may fill an envelope. Eventually, all the seed is combined into mixes to meet the needs of particular restorations.

KCWL is a project of parent organization Bridging the Gap, a non-profit organization that promotes recycling and tree planting. Readers can learn more about KCWL at www.kcwildlands.org.
FEATURED PLANT

Broadleaf milkweed | ASCLEPIAS LATIFOLIA

— ANTHONY ZUKOFF

One of the distinctly “western” species of milkweed in Kansas, broadleaf milkweed (Asclepias latifolia), is perhaps one of the toughest I have encountered. Right at home in the hot, wind-swept high plains of western Kansas, this milkweed is often the only noticeable forb growing on the dry, compacted roadsides and in pastures of the region; its rhizomes creeping happily through sandy or gravelly ground. Its short stems of closely layered and almost succulent broad leaves are hard to miss even at 70 miles an hour. In fact, “latifolia” translates to “broad-leaf.”

While the plant itself is easy to pick out among the short grasses of the western plains, its flower clusters require a more thorough investigation to enjoy properly. Dense clusters of relatively large flowers can be found hidden between the layers of leaves along the upper portion of the plant.

The light green to white flowers serve as an oasis to a wide variety of insects when other species cease to flower in the typically droughty conditions of the region. Ants, beetles, wasps, and bees of all kinds can be found utilizing this milkweed, and it tends to be a regional favorite for Monarch butterflies passing through as its broad leaves provide ample food for developing caterpillars.

If you find yourself traversing the western plains, stopping to meet this milkweed will surely be a worthwhile experience.

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Prairie Wildflower and Pasture Tour

June 7 was the date of the 24th Annual Flint Hills Prairie Wildflower and Pasture Tour. Sixty-six or so interested persons of all ages boarded the two school buses at Cassoday Grade School or Matfield Green on that pleasantly cool evening. The first stop was at the Bell Pasture owned by Jane Koger, east of Matfield Green in Chase County. Participants spread out into three main groups to botanize with a knowledgeable leader assigned to each group. Observed were butterfly milkweed (Asclepias tuberosa) of the orange variety, blue wild indigo (Baptisia australis), and black sampson echinacea (E. angustifolia), among the various native wildflowers and grasses. After several minutes of botanizing, picture-taking, and socializing, participants were called to load onto the buses in order to proceed to the second stop atop the 1626 foot hill on the Nation Ranch, owned by Scott Ritchie of Wichita. The group found many of the same wildflowers and grasses, however, the site was chosen for the 360 degree view of the rolling green-carpeted Flint Hills. With the cattle grazing near the sky-reflected pond in the distance, and the dramatic white thunderheads building even farther off, the scenery was worthy of the various exclamations of “Beautiful!” that were declared. Dr. Tracey Graham talked briefly about “Flint Hills Geology in a nutshell” while participants were served home-made cookies (prepared by local 4-H Club Cooking project members) and ice-chilled water. The tour was sponsored by the Butler County and Chase County Conservation Districts, and The Butler County and Flint Hills (Chase County) Extension Districts. At the end of the tour, most agreed that the weather was perfect and the wildflowers set amidst the spectacular views certainly depicted the Flint Hills at their absolute showiest.
The mulched woodland trails of the Overland Park Arboretum make their way through over five hundred thousand trees of more than forty different species. While walking with Ken O’Dell along one of these bluff paths last October, I could not help but notice the beautiful yellow fall color of one of the more widespread, yet under-appreciated trees in North America: the hophornbeam tree (*Ostrya virginiana*). Also known as Ironwood, the tree is native in Kansas as well as every other eastern state, and in eastern Canada. It even appears naturally in the mountains of Mexico and northern South America. The hophornbeam grows as an understory tree along rocky bluffs and upland slopes in the woodlands. It is a small to medium-sized deciduous tree, growing at a slow rate to a height of twenty-five to forty feet and a spread of fifteen to thirty feet.

The hophornbeam is a member of the birch family (*Betulaceae*) and is closely related to the American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*). A major difference in the two is their bark. That of the hophornbeam is grayish-brown and appears to be broken into longitudinal strips, while the American hornbeam has smooth blue-grey bark.

The hophornbeam boasts a number of interesting features. Both female and male flowers are borne on the same tree (monoecious). The small red-tipped female flowers appear in the spring, and are rather inconspicuous. Male catkins, on the other hand, frequently grow in groups of three, each about one inch long, and persist on the tree through the winter months. The female flowers give way to drooping clusters of seed-bearing papery sacs that turn from green to brown when mature. They resemble true hops used in the production of beer, and are also very similar in appearance to those of the Kansas native hop vine (*Humulus lupulus*). The papery sacs of the hophornbeam contain a small nutlet that is the fruit of this tree, and it provides food for grouse, turkeys, deer, squirrels, and a variety of songbirds.

Feel the leaves of the hophornbeam tree and you will be impressed at how paper-thin, fine, and smooth they are. Also check out the sharp, finely-toothed, double-serrated margins of the leaf. While similar in shape to the leaf of the elm tree, these two features will help you differentiate the hophornbeam leaf. The attractive lemon-yellow colored leaves in the fall become coppery-tan and often persist on the tree through the winter months.

As the common name Ironwood suggests, the wood from this tree is very hard and durable. It has been used for fence posts, fuel, and tool handles. Native Americans used the bark and inner wood for a variety of ailments including toothache, cough, and sore muscles.

While under-utilized, and perhaps difficult to find in nurseries, the hophornbeam makes a very nice small to medium-sized landscape and street tree. The next time you are in the woods, keep your eye out for this very special tree: take a close look, and then feel the leaves. You just might be gazing at a hophornbeam tree.
JULY | 14

LEONORA LARSON’S 9TH ANNUAL
GARDEN PARTY AND MOTHING,
7:00 PM to midnight.
Potluck dinner at 7 PM. People are welcome to come early to enjoy the garden, birds, butterflies, and pollinators in action. 90% of insects, including the Lepidoptera, are highly host-plant specific, so focusing on native plants in the garden fosters an incredible diversity of moths that will be drawn to mercury vapor lights after sundown. Bring a dish to pass, your adult beverages, lawn chairs, and swim suits if you wish to dip in the lake. We will set up black lights at sundown and should start seeing action by 9:30 PM. Long Lips Farm is a certified wildlife habitat. Sponsor: Idalia Butterfly Society; Long Lips Farm, 27995 Plum Creek Rd., Paola, lenora.longlips@gmail.com, 913-284-3360.
WARNING: ONLINE MAPPING may send you way south to Osawatomie. Long Lips Farm is north of Paola, block south of K-68 on Plum Creek Road. Look for the Long Lips Farm sign on K-68, 6.5 miles west of K-7/169.
NOTE: No Pets Please.

AUGUST | 8

NATIVE TREES OF KANSAS,
WYANDOTTE COUNTY, 1 PM,
F.L. Schlange Library & Environmental Learning Center, 4051 West Drive, Kansas City, KS. Jim Earnest will give a one hour PowerPoint presentation on Native Trees of Kansas. Mr. Earnest is with the Kansas City region of KNPS and has given several tree tours and presentations in this area. This will be a good event for master gardeners needing advanced training. Reservations are not needed or taken as there is seating for fifty people. The Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Schlange Library & Environmental Learning Center is located in the 1400 acre Wyandotte County Lake Park. Walking trails are nearby. The Kansas City Region of the Kansas Native Plant Society is sponsoring this important presentation.
Contact: Jim Earnest, jjemd00@gmail.com.

AUGUST | 11

NIGHT SKY AT THE PRESERVE,
6:30 TO 10 PM,
Tallgrass National Prairie Preserve, 2480B KS Hwy 177, Strong City. Enjoy the wonders of the night sky with a star party (weather permitting). Learn about the Milky Way Galaxy, constellations, and cultures. View planets and stars using large telescopes. Bring a lawn chair or blanket to place on the ground. Shuttle buses begin at 6:30 from the visitor center and continue until 7:30. Call ahead to confirm the program.

AUGUST | 17

NATURE BOOK CLUB, 6:30-8 PM,
East Lawrence Recreation Center. Join us to talk about fiction and nonfiction connected to the natural world. Hear recommendations from co-leaders Jake Vail and Shirley Braunlich and other book club members. East Lawrence Recreation Center, 1245 East 15th St. Lawrence. RSVP is helpful, but not required.
Contact: Shirley, sbraunlich@lpks.org, (785) 843-3833.

AUGUST | 25

BUCK CREEK WALK AND TALK,
BUCK CREEK WILDLIFE AREA,
10 AM TO 12 PM, 3900 Buck Creek Rd, Oskaloosa. Free guided walk on this rustic Jefferson County property preserved by Kansas Land Trust. Explore and observe the rocky edge of Buck Creek with its exposed cliff face. This is a primitive area with terrain that is rough with slopes, tall and thick vegetation, and occasional obstacles. There are no hiking trails or restrooms. Sturdy shoes/boots, long pants and sleeves, and insect repellent are strongly recommended. Bring water. The land is accessible for seasonal hiking and hunting only by permission from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism. Approximate parking location: along the east side of Buck Creek Road, north of 35th Street at 3900 Buck Creek Road.
Contact: Jerry Jost, jjost@klt.org, (785) 748-3297.

SEPTEMBER | 7-9

KANSAS NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY’S 40TH ANNUAL
WILDFLOWER WEEKEND (AWW),
WICHITA. The weekend is filled with outings! Come enjoy native plants in beautiful South central Kansas; visit natural areas in and near Wichita and Sedgwick County. Sept. 7: KNPS Fall Board Meeting, Great Plains Nature Center. Sept. 8: Annual membership meeting, guest speaker Katie Kingrey-Page, silent auction fundraiser, photo contest, awards, lunch, WSU Metroplex. Outings (Fri, Sat, & Sun), and socializing—join us! All are welcome.
Contact: Krista Dahlinger, email@ksnps.org.

SEPTEMBER | 7-9

DYCK ARBORETUM OF THE
PLAINS FALL NATIVE PLANT
FESTIVAL AND SALE, HESSTON.
Hundreds of varieties of plants are available for sale, many locally grown. Knowledgeable staff and volunteers are on hand to answer questions and give suggestions. All proceeds from plant sales support the mission of the arboretum.
Contact: dyckarboretum.org, 177 W. Hickory St, Hesston, (620) 327-8127.

SEPTEMBER | 22

KANSAS LAND TRUST
5TH ANNUAL DISC GOLF
TOURNAMENT, 8 AM TO 1 PM,
Thornfield Disc Golf Course, 6701 W. 167th St, Stilwell. 2018 Fundraising event to support KLT, all levels encouraged. Registration begins at 8, lunch and awards at 12:30. Play on one of KLT’s beautiful, conserved lands and help preserve more woodlands, stream banks, and wildlife habitat.

SEPTEMBER | 28-30

THE LAND INSTITUTE PRAIRIE
FESTIVAL, SALINA. The Prairie Festival offers a unique opportunity to interact with some of the world’s most compelling authors, thinkers, artists, and advocates focused on agriculture, food, the environment, science, sustainability, and social and environmental justice. Science staff provides tours and in-depth update on plant breeding and ecology work and partnerships. Food, music, art, Hedge Fire Circle, and always a few surprises. Information and registration forms: https://landinstitute.org. 2440 E. Water Well Rd, Salina, (785) 823-5376.

Join the KNPS email list to receive the latest event announcements: www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/email_list.php

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@KSNPS.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!
LIFETIME MEMBERS AS OF 6/20/18 ($500 MEMBERSHIP LEVEL -- ONE TIME PAYMENT)
Earl Allen – Manhattan
Susan Appel – Leawood
Robert G. Jr. & Martha Barnhardt – Bucklin
Susan Blackford – Manhattan
Caroline Blakeslee – Boise, ID
William Bradley – Overland Park
Edith M. Bronson – Topeka
Fred & Nancy Coombs – Urbana, IL
Donna Cooper – Hays
Daniel Corbett – Topeka
Cowley County Conservation District – Winfield
Barbara Davis – Wichita
Joseph Davis – Topeka
Mickey Delfelder – Topeka
Phillip Eastep – Cherryvale
Lynn Fogle – Paola
Sally Haines – Lawrence
Harriet & Joe Harris – Wichita
R. Clay Harvey – Topeka
Cynthia Higgins – Eudora
Karen Hummel – Manhattan
JK Enterprises LLC – Andover
Michael Kaye – Topeka
Kelly Kindscher – Lawrence
Elizabeth Leech – Mercier Island, WA
Lusk Family Foundation – Wichita
Douglas R. May – Lawrence
Carol McDowell – Topeka
Brian McFall – Topeka
Joey McFall – Marion
Roxie McGee – Lawrence
Carol Morgan – Topeka
Ken O’Dell – Paola
Dan & Brenda Pace – Pretty Prairie
Carl Paulie – St. Paul
Cynthia & Ron Pedersen – Mound City, MO
Chad Phillips – Soldier
Prairie Place Designs – Sabetha
Bob & Doris Sherrick – Peculiar, MO
Jason & Lisa Spangler – Austin, TX
Ruth Steinke – Wichita
Margy Stewart & Ron Young – Junction City
Lisa Stickler – Bucyrus
Ray Woods – Independence

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS AS OF 6/20/18 ($100 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP LEVEL)
Al Alspach – Manhattan
Dolores Baker – Fredonia
Nick Bertram – Great Bend
Shirley Braunlich & Peggy Robinson – Lawrence
Bill Busby – Baldwin City
Kit Carlsen – Lawrence
Pete Ferrell – Beaumont
Craig & Jane Freeman – Lawrence
Dale Funk – Omaha, NE
Dale & Jackie Goetz – Overland Park
Nancy Goulden – Manhattan
Edna Hamer – Shawnee Mission
Joe Holland – Iowa City, IA
Margaret Johnson – Lawrence
John Kenney – Leawood
Lenora Larson – Paola
Lorraine McCain – Abilene
Patrick & Deborah O’Malley – Overland Park
Catherine Reed – Lawrence
Susan Reimer – McPherson
Robert Russell – Lawrence
Betty Sterling – Kansas City
Doug Wirtz – Vacaville, CA
Valerie Wright – Manhattan

NEW MEMBERS FROM 3/12/18 TO 6/03/18
Kristen Adams – Garnett
Gwen Bailey – Leawood
Carol Baldwin – Manhattan
Linda Bryan – Overland Park
Kerry Chapman – Lawrence
Renee Conway – Towanda
Jessica Daniels – Topeka
Jean Hogan – Cheney
Viv Mag – Topeka
Sarah Meeks – Derby
Melinda Merrill – Wilson
Cora Mertens – Clearwater
Margaret Moore – Beloit
Anjelique Powell – Wichita
Keith Riggs – Wichita
Susan Sanders – Roeland Park
Santa Fe Trail Association – Salina
Jacqueline Wachtos – Wichita
Scott & Cherielee Ward – Wilson
Chris Wilson – Manhattan

MEMBERS RETURNING AFTER A HIATUS
Ann Wilson – Elmdale

CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL
Want to know the status of your KNPS membership? Check the mailing label on the back of each issue for your membership expiration date.
Walking in the prairie has long been a pastime of mine, going back to when I was a lad growing up in the Smoky Hills of north-central Kansas. When my family would head out to my grandparents’ ponds to fish, I would eventually wander away from the water to look at the plants. And since they collected plants as a hobby, much of my love for plants, even native flora, arose from these periodic outings with my grandparents.

Although I was aware of one of our greatest state treasures, The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, I had not taken the opportunity to visit and hike there until Father’s Day weekend of 2016. Once, a few years before this, my wife and I had driven past and stopped at the visitor’s center on a trip through the area, but we were not able to hike the trails at that time due to other commitments. Thus, once there and with plenty of time, several morning hours were spent walking a loop of one of the three hiking trails, and then, after lunch, I walked the nature trails again with several members of KNPS who were already there for an event held on the preserve that weekend.

This may be the greatest place to view wildflowers in the state of Kansas. There are many micro-biomes within the whole of the preserve ranging from rich woodland creeks to uplands covered in tallgrass prairie. Watch out when walking through the bison enclosure; I was sure they were watching me the whole time. All trails are open 24 hours, but there is no camping.

The Flint hills region is loaded with many wonderful natives, from Nuttall’s death camas (Zigadenus nuttallii) to butterfly milkweed (Asclepias tuberosa) and many more. As with any prairie, there are always some plants that bloom through for many weeks, and others that only bloom for a week or two at most. Plan multiple visits to catch the peak blossoms during each of the four seasons. It would take a walk on many days to discover all the native plants that lurk in these tallgrass prairies.

The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is located at 2480B Kansas 177, north of Strong City in Chase County. Parking and admission at the preserve is free, and a modern, heated or air-conditioned visitor’s center is available with chilled water and restroom conveniences. Check ahead of your visit for the operating hours of the visitor’s center as they vary with the seasons. The nature trails are well-marked and labeled, and maps are available at the visitor’s center.

I recommend everyone to go to this prairie at least once in their lives; it is an amazing treasure!
CRACK! BOOM!! “Fire! Everybody out!” The Kansas Native Plant Society Spring/Early Summer mini-AWW wildflower weekend got off to (what one might call) an “explosive start” with a gas leak plumbing problem in the kitchen of the Midland Railroad Hotel at Wilson. Although the proposed Friday evening steak dinner after an afternoon of wildflower hunting had to be abandoned, bierocks, burgers, sandwiches, and sodas at Grandma’s Soda Shop offered a tasty evening substitute repast just around the corner from the hotel.

Upon first glance, Friday afternoon’s first wildflower tour stop at the brome pasture of Scott and Cherilee Ward looked totally devoid of flowers. However, our one school-aged attendee, Kylee, granddaughter of Nadine and Bob Champlin, bounded like a jackrabbit from pale poppy mallow to prairie ragwort and many more. The next stop, a quick pause along the roadside to Wilson Lake, revealed a graceful display of penstemon, colorful sandstone rocks, and carved post rocks which added to an already picturesque drive. Tour attendees proceeded into the Lucas Park Campground area on the north side of the lake. Sara Cornett of Paola remarked that she had enjoyed her botanizing walk along the Rocktown hiking trail. Other wildflower enthusiasts, including Sharon Heidemann, took delight in the profusion of skullcap “priest caps” and a horned toad. Sharon noted she had spent time on the local soil conservation board and pensively remembered the lake area before the eastern red cedar invasion.

Melinda Miller, owner of the Midland Railroad Hotel, the Wilson Grade School (which has been renovated into an apartment building), and Wilson’s new art gallery just west of the world’s largest hand-painted Czech egg, also owns the prairie of Saturday morning’s excursion. The temperature was glorious, and clouds of many blue hues floated nonchalantly over a colorful spring prairie ecosystem. Rick Warshauer, from the “big” island of Hawaii, returns to Kansas each spring to experience this mini-AWW weekend. He was particularly excited by the open, low vegetative communities of this limestone-studded area.

Marilyn Armstrong of Mulvane discovered what, for her, was a “new western plant” (marbleseed) and a handsome slender glass lizard.

Later Saturday morning, KNPS tour members found that exploring Lucas is always a treat for folk art aficionados and anyone needing a potty stop at Bowl Plaza. Next year, or even this fall, pretend there is a fire in your kitchen and come “out” to join the Kansas Native Plant Society for an “eventful,” yet relaxing commune with nature and like-minded flora enthusiasts. I did, and it was fabulous.

TECH NOTES

KNPS members are aware of the potential that roadside native plant habitat holds for plant and insect diversity, birds and small animals, erosion control, as a blowing snow barrier, enhanced scenery and tourism, and more. The KNPS website has a position paper describing reasonable roadside management in Kansas, as well as links to similar management plans produced by other prairie states. If you are a roadside manager, or would like to be an influencer to recommend reduced excessive mowing and herbicide spraying, avoiding those costs, while still providing a safe travel environment, check out the resources on the KNPS Roadside Management page. Learn about the history of roadside management practices, best times to mow, existing successful programs, and the many benefits of a contemporary roadside vegetation management program.

http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/roadside_management.php — KRISTA DAHLINGER
My First Wildflower Tour

KYLEE KUTSCHER (Granddaughter of Nadine and Bob Champlin)

I am Kylee Kutscher, 11 years old, and will be in grade six at Tecumseh South Elementary in Topeka. When my Mema and Papa (Nadine and Bob Champlin) invited me to join them on the Wilson tour, I had to ask permission to miss school on Friday, May 18. I told my teacher it would be an educational experience learning about a new place that I had never been and learning about plants that grow there.

On Friday we arrived in Wilson and I got to see the World’s largest egg. I learned that Czech people started the community. As I was waiting for the KNPS Board meeting to be over, the fire alarm went off in the hotel where the meeting was. There was a fire in the kitchen, so we all had to leave. I was glad no one was hurt. But I learned about what a volunteer fire department was as the two fire trucks arrived and police cars appeared. It was my first real experience of a fire!

After the excitement of the fire we went on the first tour. It was a hay field with tall grass, so I put on my tall boots. There were a lot of flowers once you looked past the grass. That evening we could not eat at the hotel because of the fire, so we drive to a nearby town, Sylvan Grove. We ate at a restaurant called “The Fly Boys.” The KNPS members were very nice and fun to talk to.

The next day (Saturday) we woke up early and went to the lake (Wilson Lake). We first stopped at a sandy hill and there were lots of large flowered purple penstemon. It was everywhere blooming and beautiful! We went to several places around the lake. I learned about the Topeka plant. There is a plant called the breadroot scurf-pea that the Indians pronounced like the word Topeka and that may have been how the city was named. The plant was an important food and they dig up the roots and ate them like a potato.

In the afternoon we went to Lucas, called the Grassroots Art Capital of Kansas. I enjoyed the Garden of Eden and the story that was told about it. Cheriee Ward is the Librarian in Wilson and she gave me some books to read! She suggested going to Ellsworth to eat at “Pretty Boy Floyd’s” restaurant. A lot of the KNPS members went along. It was an interesting place! We found the alley where the entrance was and it was underground or in a basement. It was a fun place.

Although I learned much more from the tour than at school, I am excited about attending another tour that will not be on a school day.
On Wednesday, April 18, some thirty or so KNPS members and other plant enthusiasts met at the Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Gardens for a woodland wildflower walk. Despite a cold-blowing north wind, we walked the lower hidden trails of the arboretum looking for the early spring bloomers.

The Overland Park Arboretum is a wonderful place to spend the day looking at woodland wildflowers in the spring. Walking among the trees with Ken O’Dell and other KNPS members, we saw an abundance of both wildflowers and wildlife. Birds were out overhead, including my first confirmed spotting of the red-shouldered hawk.

The beautiful Wolf River flowed through the heart of our walking trails, as we headed up and around the glades and cliffs of the area. Along our gentle hike, we were rewarded with a delicate showing of bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). Though the flowers were mostly past the peak-blooming stage, I hiked into the upper areas of the cliff to retrieve a flower for the group to see.

Viewing new plants and animals, I always enjoy hiking and botanizing in untried places. A first time viewing for me this day was leatherwood (*Dirca decipiens*), spotted growing on the edge of a rocky trail. Also observed were many other spring favorites growing along the many trails including Virginia spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), cut-leaved toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*), and Dutchman’s breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*).

Ken O’Dell is a knowledgeable guide, and we all learned about many new and exciting plants; I am now ready for next year’s early spring woodland walk.

Abbreviated minutes from the May 18, 2018 combined Spring/Summer board meeting held at the Midland Railroad Hotel in Wilson are as follows.

President, Phyllis Scherich, called the late morning meeting to order with eighteen members and six guests present.

(Budget Report) Treasurer Krista Dahlinger reported that we have approximately $33,000 available cash on hand, with the Legacy and Bancroft Scholarship Funds containing another $19,500. Our total assets are approximately $52,500. Earl Allen will assume Treasurer responsibilities from Krista following this board meeting.

(Membership Report) Craig Freeman said that for the most part, the organization’s membership is right where we expect to be this time of year with no major surprises. One positive note is that several members have recently upgraded their memberships from Contributing member to Life member levels.

(AWW Planning Committee) Krista and Joan Pritchard have been busy planning the Annual Wildflower Weekend to be held September 7 to 9 in Wichita. The theme is “Native Plants in Urban Settings.” They reviewed the tentative itinerary with multiple outings located within the Wichita city limits. All are welcome.

Registration information will be forthcoming in late July.

(Awards Committee) Mike Haddock reported that KNPS will not award a Mary Bancroft Scholarship in 2018. He moved that we transition $1000 from the general fund into the Mary Bancroft Scholarship Fund as an investment.

Craig mentioned that several of the other annual awards had received nominations, and we can expect their announcement at the fall membership meeting in Wichita.

(Plant Resources and Stewardship Committee) Brad Guhr announced that (*Verbena stricta*), woolly vervain or woolly verbena, has been selected as the 2019 Wildflower of the Year. Two more years (2020 and 2021) of Wildflowers of the Year will be announced at this year’s Annual Wildflower Weekend in Wichita.

Following their approval at the next board meeting, all meeting minutes may be found at kansasnativeplantsociety.org.

The meeting was adjourned by President Scherich as the Midland Railroad Hotel kitchen fire alarm went off. Members were dismissed to the parking lot to form the first caravan of the weekend’s wildflower tours around the Wilson area.
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

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 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. See upper right of mailing label for expiration date.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

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Additional Donation: Legacy Fund $_________  Scholarship Fund $_________  General Fund $_________