

Kansas Native Plant Society
2022 Spring / Summer Board Meeting and Outings
Miami County, Kansas
June 11 – 12

Join KNPS Board Members Miami County for excursions to remnant prairies and woodlands to explore the eastern Kansas flora. Miami County is located within the Central Irregular Plains ecoregion, with Osage Cuesta derived soils across the northeast half and Wooded Osage Plains soils across the southwest half. The Marais Des Cygnes river flows west to east across the County and leads to a National Wildlife Refuge in Linn County to the south. Hillsdale Reservoir and State Park are located north of Paola.

Paola's annual car show is occurring June 11, the same weekend as the KNPS event - hotel reservations may be difficult to obtain in Paola. Search nearby towns of Ottawa and Olathe for hotels of your choice. There are also Bed and Breakfast and Air BNB in the area.

We will be walking in tall unmowed vegetation, with a good chance of ticks and chiggers. Please plan to dress in light colored clothing, bring your insect repellent of choice, a wide brimmed hat, plenty of water, and your camera.

Friday - June 10th

Early arrivals can visit downtown Paola and surrounding areas for shopping, dining, and local attractions.

Saturday - June 11th

Stop #1

8 - 11:00 am - Drop in visiting at Lenora Larson's Butterfly Gardens northwest of Paola at 27995 Plum Creek Road (6.4 miles west of the intersection of US 169 and KS 68, south on Plum Creek). Lenora is an active lepidopterist, author, and educator in the field of butterflies and moths. These are private gardens and KNPS and guests have permission to visit during these hours.

11 am – 2:30 pm – Explore the Paola area and stop for lunch before meeting in Fontana to caravan to afternoon tours. Dining in Paola may be crowded due to car show in town. Paola's city-wide yard sale is scheduled for June 11th. See other options below.

The City of Osawatomie is located on US 169 about 8 miles south of Paola, on the way to Fontana. John Brown's cabin and museum is located in Osawatomie at 10th and Main. This is a Kansas Historical Society site. https://www.kshs.org/index.php?url=john_brown

Osawatomie restaurants include:

Bor Da Market – 573 Main Street, Osawatomie – European Bakery and Coffee shop

La Hacienda – 546 Main Street, Osawatomie – Traditional Mexican restaurant

Whistle Stop Café – 901 6th Street, Osawatomie – American diner

2:30 pm – Meet at the United Methodist Church in Fontana, 202 S. Stephens, to caravan to private properties for afternoon tours.

Stop #2

2:45 – 4:15 pm - Sarah Cornett, KNPS member, has arranged for us to visit two areas to explore remnant prairies. There will be a Porta-Potti available at this stop.

Stop #3

4:15 – 5:30 pm – Caravan to nearby private property to explore remnant woodlands and prairie.

5:30 pm – Chose dinner options in Osawatomie, Paola or Louisburg. Locals have recommended the restaurants on the list below. Dine in or order carry out and visit with friends outdoors at these locations: Osawatomie - John Brown Park. Paola - Wallace Park or Lake Miola.

Sunday - June 12th

Stop #4

9:00 am - Meet at northeast end of the dam at Hillsdale Lake, about 5 miles north-northwest of Paola. From Paola, head north on US 169 to W 255th/Lake Road, just east of Hillsdale (town). Turn west on W 255th Street for three miles to the Corps of Engineers Visitor Center on the north side of Lake Road. Parking is available at the Visitor Center and, if that is full, in the Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks Office immediately south across the road. Restrooms and water are available at the Visitor Center.

At this site, we will explore upland and floodplain forests, limestone outcrops, and springs along the Hidden Springs Nature Trail. Some parts of the trail are rocky and slippery if wet. Be sure to wear sturdy hiking boots. Before we leave the Visitor Center we will discuss logistics for parking at the next site.

Stop #5

11:30 am. – Caravan to La Cygne Reservoir and Wildlife Area. From Hillsdale Reservoir, head back east on W 255th Street to US 169, then south 3 miles to KS 68, then east on KS 68 for 7.6 miles to US 69, then south on US 69 approximately 15 miles to W 399th Street (Jingo exit). Head east on W 399th Street (paved initially, then good gravel) for 1.8 miles. Three gravel parking areas are available north and south of the road before the bridge across North Sugar Creek. From these parking areas, we will have to shuttle people to the trailhead at the top of the hill, where parking is very limited.

This stop will involve a one-mile hike into the forested area we plan to visit, and hiking conditions may be wet and muddy depending on the weather. Knee high rubber boots or waterproof hiking boots are recommended. At this site we will explore upland and floodplain forests, small glades, and go-back areas around abandoned farmsteads along North Sugar Creek and La Cygne Lake. Besides five species of ferns, nearly 30 species of sedges and populations of several state-rare plants have been documented in the area.

Lodging:

In addition to chain hotels found on travel websites, here are several locally owned businesses:

Casa Somerset Bed and Breakfast – east of Paola, Italian style venue with Chef prepared breakfast. Website lists information about local wineries, numerous local farms and other attractions.
<https://www.casasomerset.com/>

Canaan Oaks Bed and Breakfast - east of Paola, theme rooms in a quiet wooded setting.
<http://www.canaanoaks.com/>

Dining:

In addition to chain restaurants, these eateries are recommended by locals:

Paola:

Spudley's – lunch and dinner – American Café – Closed Sunday. 2 Morningside Drive
Café Latte – breakfast and lunch – Mon-Fri. 139 W. Peoria St
We B Smokin BBQ – lunch and dinner Mon-Fri. Breakfast on weekends. 32580 Airport Road
El Potro Mexican Café – lunch and dinner, Fri-Sat open until 10pm - TexMex. 602 N. Pearl
Milo's Steakhouse – lunch and dinner, steaks/burgers/sandwiches. 16 W. Peoria
Chen's Chinese Buffet – lunch and dinner, large variety of dishes. 901 N. Pearl

Osawatomie:

Whistle Stop Café – breakfast and lunch, (Fri – dinner) American Café. 901 6th Street
Bore da Market – breakfast and lunch (closed Sun.) French bakery and café. 573 Main Street

Louisburg:

Timber Creek Bar and Grill – lunch and dinner, steaks/burgers/sandwiches. 14 E Amity Street
Miss B's Café – bakery, breakfast and lunch, buffet and menu. 1006 S. Metcalf

History and Culture:

Miami County Historical Museum, 12 E. Emporia, Paola
<https://micomuseum.org/>

Miami County Courthouse – Master Gardeners garden – 120 S. Pearl, Paola

Miami County Wine Trail – vineyards and wine venues are a popular attraction
<https://www.miamicountywinetrail.com/>

Whispering Elm Farm – organic and regenerative farming of culinary and medicinal herbs.
<https://whisperingelfarm.com/home/about/>

John Brown Museum and Park, Osawatomie – KS State Historical Society site - Osawatomie
https://www.kshs.org/index.php?url=john_brown

Flint Hills Trails – newer part of the biking and hiking Kanza Rails-Trails Conservancy – Osawatomie to Herrington <http://kanzatrails.org/flint-hills-nature-trail/>

Bicycle trail from Wallace Park around Miola Lake. Extensive trails in Wallace Park system.
<https://www.paolapathways.org/>

Sunday June 12

As you turn toward home, here are some natural areas you can visit on your way.

Miami State Fishing Lake – approx. 4 miles north of LaCygne
<https://ksoutdoors.com/KDWP-Info/Locations/State-Fishing-Lakes/Northeast-Region/Miami>

Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Gardens - 8909 W. 179th Street, Overland Park, KS 66013
<https://www.opkansas.org/recreation-fun/arboretum-botanical-gardens/>

Big Bull Creek Park – a park and prairie restoration project, planted in 2018.
20425 Sunflower Road, Edgerton, KS 66021 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUdMejhr-oo>

St. Philippine Duchesne Memorial Park– 20 miles south of Osawatomie. Wooded park with trails.
<http://www.potawatomi-tda.org/kansas/stphilip.htm>