

PRAIRIE SITES TO VISIT

Spring 2020 has thwarted our usual busy schedule of walks, events and workshops. Perhaps you can explore outside! Here are a few recommended sites with a focus on Johnson County.

Lexington Lake Remnant Prairie
Johnson County Parks and Recreation
Lexington Lake Park
8850 Sunflower Road
De Soto, KS 66018

Big Bull Creek Prairie Restoration
Johnson County Parks and Recreation
20425 Sunflower Rd, Edgerton, KS 66021
Sunflower Road North of 207th Street

Mill Creek Streamway Trail Prairie Restoration
Johnson County Parks and Recreation
Located just West of Shawnee Mission Park,
located between Mile Markers 5.5 and 6.5
Trail access at Shawnee Mission Park near
Shelter 8 and north end of dam

Kill Creek Prairie
Johnson County Parks and Recreation
115th & Homestead Road near DeSoto, KS in Kill
Creek Park

Ogg Road Prairie
Johnson County Parks and Recreation
79th & Ogg Road in Shawnee Mission Park

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Spring 2020 Native Plant Sale

GHF's 8th Annual Native Plant Sale is here! To keep our community safe, this year's sale is online pre-order only, with pick-up and delivery options available starting May 16 in Johnson County, Lawrence, and Topeka. The first round of pre-orders ended May 10th, but plant orders will be accepted as plant supplies last. Watch the website or email ghfplantsale@gmail.com for updates.

This year's sale features 60 species of native plants, including milkweeds, grasses, sedges, and wildflowers. We are again offering Garden-To-Go kits with pre-selected plants designed for sun, shade, or containers. They're selling well, so we don't anticipate having kits available for later purchase.

Individual plants are \$4.00 each for non-members and \$3.50 for GHF members. All plants are locally-grown Kansas natives and neonicotinoid-free. The native plant sale is also a critical source of financial support for GHF's prairie conservation programs! We're in contact with Douglas County Public Health to ensure a safe sale, and we'll use masks, gloves, and social distancing while handling orders. If you missed notification of the first ordering deadline, please send us your email address, and you will receive every event announcement and update.

Find the order forms, the plant list, and more information at www.grasslandheritage.org/plantsale.

Welcome to GHF's New Staff and Board

Join us in welcoming Helen Alexander and Randy Rasa to the board, and Kaitlyn Ammerlaan, right, as GHF's new Program Director and Preserve Manager! We're excited to apply their new talents toward prairie conservation.

Kaitlyn Ammerlaan has been working with Johnson County Parks and Recreation and past GHF board member Matt Garrett, managing preserves, p. 5



Kaitlyn Ammerlaan



Grassland Heritage Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership organization dedicated to prairie preservation and education.

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GHF Officers

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Helen Alexander, Lawrence
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Sue Holcomb, Olathe
Courtney Masterson, Lawrence
Roxie McGee, Lawrence
Randy Rasa, Iola
Andrea Repinsky, Lawrence
Orley "Chip" Taylor, Berryton
Gary Tegtmeier, Mission
Megan Withiam, Lawrence
Joyce Wolf, Lecompton
Ron Wolf, Lecompton**

GHF Staff

**Kaitlyn Ammerlaan,
Program Director and
Preserve Manager**

A Note from the President

I've read many "What we're doing during this crisis" pieces and I'm not sure that I have a super inspiring message within me. But, here are my thoughts...

What a strange time to be living in. If you're like me, you're not sure what is going on or what to do about it. From one day to the next it's difficult to know how to proceed. Besides managing my own life, I've been trying to keep GHF moving along. Naturally, all the public events in which we were planning to participate have been cancelled. There were three this week that I should have been attending. We were already dealing with replacing our contractors. I'm happy to say that after wading through applications and conducting interviews, our new Program Director and Preserve Manager, Kaitlyn Ammerlaan, has been learning the ropes and jumping in with both feet.

One of the issues we've been struggling to decide about is our native plant sale. This has been a great public outreach and fundraiser for us in the past. We had ordered plants back in February and were making plans as all the shutdowns began. My first instinct was to just abandon the whole thing and hunker down. But, as soon as the weather warmed up and I could get outside, the pleasure of working in the garden made me rethink my position.

Our interest in growing things has not been stopped by this virus. There is still joy to be found in digging in the earth, watching new life sprout up from the ground, and gazing on beautiful flowers. So, we have decided that there will be enough interest in purchasing native plants that we can proceed with the sale. As noted elsewhere, things will be a lot different. We won't have a big day of the sale, but rather have pre-orders, and pickups planned in a safe manner. We hope many of you will be able to obtain some natives to start a garden, fill in holes in your existing garden, or just experiment with some new species. While we look forward to sharing plants with you, we'll really miss getting to know many of you and getting to visit with you about the plants. I always enjoyed the sale because I got to put so many faces with the names I recognized.

Along with the thought of anticipating a better future, the photo here is one of the plants I bought at last fall's sale and just stuck in pots because I was harried planning a big trip. Now, I get to see them bloom this year, maybe still in the pots or maybe I'll find spots in my garden.

Sue Holcomb sholc2003@yahoo.com



Color your Spring with The Pitch

This spring's event cancellations will present a challenge to GHF's ability to achieve the fundraising we need to do and the education and outreach goals we'd like to meet. Many other organizations and the arts community are sharing the same concerns.

The Pitch, Kansas City's monthly independent news and culture magazine, published a KC-themed coloring book to support local artists and the magazine. GHF has a page, drawn by Andrea Repinsky, in the coloring book, along with 60 other regional artists. Thanks to The Pitch for this great idea, and for including GHF.

You can order yours through The Pitch. GHF's page is in the second volume. We think you'll enjoy coloring the diverse, fun, regionally-themed images. The Pitch is at thepitchkc.com, and the coloring book is at: mailchi.mp/thepitchkc/coloringkc



Snyder Prairie Burn Report

On Sunday, March 1 and Friday, March 13, we conducted successful burns at our Snyder Prairie near Mayetta. Thanks to Frank Norman (Norman Ecological Consulting) for leading the burns and Bruce Yonke, who often works at Snyder, for assisting. We also had the help of Snyder neighbors Dwayne & Chance Hug. This gave us multiple small vehicles with water tanks and enhanced safety. GHF volunteers, Ted Abel, Sue & Steve Holcomb, and Brian Roh participated on 3/1, manning the rakes. On March 13, our new contractor Kaitlyn Ammerlaan joined

us, along with Courtney Masterson (Native Lands, LLC) leading a small group of students. This gave us two burn lines to work on simultaneously. All but one of the volunteers from the first burn returned. So, it ended up being the most people we'd ever had out to burn at Snyder Prairie, making for a pretty easy work day. Kaitlyn and Sue took time out for a walk through more of the property.

Thanks to Luke Terry of Custom Forestry Applications, we had wide mowed fire breaks and several areas where brush was already removed. Over the two days we were able to burn the native unplowed prairie as well as most of the reconstructed areas, the Red Cedar Debacle area (which remains cedar-free), a lower grass area that is succeeding from cool season grasses to a lot of Indian grass, and the southwest field which is in danger of woody takeover.

Mr. Yonke had plans to get in and mow sumac and dogwood, so some new areas could be hayed this summer. Haying really helps keep down the woody encroachment. With the early warm weather, we were fortunate to get these burns accomplished before things started greening up too much, and before the COVID-19 crisis shut down activities. Thanks to all the volunteers and contractors.



Kaitlyn Ammerlaan and Frank Norman managing the back burn at Snyder Prairie

Rachel Snyder Memorial Scholarship Awardees

Congratulations to the awardees of this year's Rachel Snyder Memorial Scholarship! We were able to give \$1000 to four students throughout the State of Kansas. We're pleased with the diversity of prairie-related research among students at these four Kansas universities. We were happy to be able to assist with the funding of these research projects, and look forward to hearing their results in the years ahead. Our scholarship program was made possible through generous donations from Susan Lordi Marker and other donors to the scholarship fund. You are welcome to designate your GHF donations to the scholarship fund.

Bethany Robertson, who is seeking a Master's Degree at Emporia State University in Ecology and Biodiversity, was awarded a grant to pay for a student assistant in the field and lab for her project: "Effects of seasonal burn treatments on native perennial plants and pollinator recruitment." This will be her second season of observing the effects of the timing of burns on species diversity of flowering plants, whether four species of milkweeds react in the amount of nectar produced (ability to attract pollinators), and how successful pollination was, based on biomass and successful germination of seeds. She is the first student from ESU to receive a GHF scholarship.

Haley Burrill, a student in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Kansas, was funded for her research "Using native pathogen buildup to inhibit invasive *Lespedeza cuneata*: a novel biocontrol approach." Haley has been working on plant pathogen diversity and composition and their role in structuring plant communities for her Master's degree. As she starts her doctoral work, her soil sequencing techniques will be used to look for natural-

ly occurring pathogens that may limit the growth of *Lespedeza cuneata*, *Sericea lespedeza*. Control of this very aggressive non-native is difficult and usually involves the heavy use of herbicides. This approach could feasibly control it without harming native plants. The funds will be used for MoBio PowerSoil DNA extraction kits.

Also, for the first time, we are awarding a Wichita State University student, Jacqueline Baum, a scholarship toward her Master of Science research "Effects of white-tailed deer browsing in grasslands near agricultural and wooded edges within the Great Plains." She has completed one year of study determining which plants deer prefer when grazing prairie from wooded and agricultural edges. This year she will continue observations but conduct experiments as well using that information as a basis. These funds will pay an undergraduate technician to assist and for expenses of traveling to each of her 10 sites over a four county area in south-central Kansas.

Finally, with funding donated for pollinator research, we are funding Jessica Butters from Kansas State University for her project "The effects of fire and grazing on ground nesting bees." During her first year of this study she observed how pollinators utilized floral resources while under different fire and grazing regimes through hand-netting and pan-trapping. This spring and summer she plans to focus more on ground nesting bees that will be captured in emergence traps purchased through this scholarship, hoping to gain a big-picture view of the habitat preference and utilization of under-studied native bees. She plans to mentor undergraduate students interested in pollinator conservation and insect taxonomy.

Becoming Grassland Heritage Foundation

In March of 1980, the name **Grassland Heritage Foundation** became official. Tallgrass Prairie Foundation was incorporated in 1976 as a sister organization to *Save the Tallgrass Prairie, Inc.* STP was a citizen's lobbying group whose purpose was the creation of a Tallgrass Prairie National Park. Tallgrass Prairie Foundation was formed as a non-profit with the dual purposes "To educate concerning the tallgrass prairie, its ecology, its history, its effect on American life, wealth and tradition and its present threatened condition; and to acquire by purchase or gift, tracts of tallgrass prairie lands (perhaps 20 to 50 acres) near population centers for demonstration plots which will allow many people to see what an ungrazed tallgrass prairie looks

like....lovely flowers throughout the season, and by late summer, grasses six or more feet in height." The incorporating directors were Kay Wahl, Brian W. Miller, Patricia Duncan, and Lawrence R. Wagner. The name change became official with an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation which was filed March 6, 1980. So while we are 44 years old, "Grassland Heritage Foundation" has just turned 40. Thanks to Helen Alexander and Elaine Jones, both of whom were going to do presentations involving our history (cancelled due to pandemic), for getting us digging through the Archives. We are in need of an archivist/historian who is interested in organizing our boxes into "Needs to be Archived" and "Trash."

Welcome New Leadership to GHF

Continued from p. 1 harvesting seeds, and controlling invasive species. We were impressed by Kaitlyn's natural desire to develop programs and build organizations, plus her strong academic and education background. Also, she's a really nice person, and we look forward to having you meet her at GHF events!

Kaitlyn said, "I grew up in the desert of Chandler, Arizona and I am now a proud resident of Lawrence. I graduated from Colorado State University last May with a degree in Ecosystem Science and Sustainability and a minor in Conservation Biology. While there, I found my love of working with nonprofits after a group of friends and I created a nonprofit of our own upon returning from a study abroad trip to South Africa. I loved the idea of finding ways to connect human communities with best conservation and sustainability practices. After moving to Lawrence, I found a job working as a Resource Technician with Johnson County Parks and Recreation District where I had my first, and incredibly inspiring, encounters with prairie. Over the past year I have learned so much about the prairie ecosystem and the flora and fauna that make it so beautiful. One of my favorite parts of that job has been identifying, collecting, and processing native seed (the smell of grey headed coneflower seeds might be one of my favorites!).

I am so excited to join GHF and help build and sustain the wonderful work that GHF has been doing. I can't wait to help educate and spread the joy that prairies and native plants can bring to our community."



We're delighted to announce that Helen Alexander, KU Biology Professor, joins the board after being a long-time member and lifetime prairie enthusiast.

She said, "I have been interested in prairies for a long time. I grew up in Madison, Wisconsin and took many hikes when I was young at the Curtis Prairie in Madison, the

country's first prairie restoration. I stayed in Madison for my undergraduate degree. However, I then moved around quite a bit—I spent time in North Carolina, Minnesota, Virginia, and Kentucky. Since December 1987, I've enjoyed living here in Lawrence, Kansas with my husband Dave and two kids (now grown). I have many interests such as traveling, hiking, reading, baking, and local history. In my job as a biology professor at University of Kansas, I teach a variety of classes, including a "Kansas Plants and Landscapes" class. In my research, I study the ecology, conservation, and evolution of plants, including prairie plants. I've also been involved with local schools; a Free State High School teacher and I worked with many people to create a prairie restoration on the high school grounds. I see prairies as an important part of the natural heritage of Kansas and look forward to working with GHF."



We're also very happy to have Randy Rasa join the GHF board! We met Randy Rasa after acquiring the Leadplant Prairie on the Prairie Spirit Trail near Welda, and reaching out to conservation and trail groups along the trail. Randy is the primary steward at Lehigh Portland Trails in Iola, managing over ten miles of singletrack trails and roughly 150 acres of natural spaces. He also serves Thrive Allen County as a board member and bike/trails expert, and runs the Kansas Cyclist (www.kansascyclist.com/) and Bike Prairie Spirit (bikeprairiespirit.com/) web sites, among many others.

Randy said, "My interest in prairie restoration began with photographing and identifying wildflowers, and evolved into learning about their habitats and lifecycles, and efforts to restore and nurture high-quality natural spaces. At Lehigh, I've been able to put that research into practice, and begin to see results. I'm particularly interested in exploring the connections between the health of our natural environment and the health of communities and individuals."

Thank You, Members, Donors, and Prairie Protectors

New members:

James Young,
Jay Van Blaricum,
Troy Brasher
Jan Escandon
Austin Stum
Jessica Kleoppel
Jean Janecek
Payson Lowell
Nancy & Doug Yost
Frances Cain
Ellen Jones
Lori Callow
Sheila Stogsdill
Susan Stahl
Linda Meinig
Matt Ochs
Judith Taylor
Margaret Thomas
Debbe Smith
Fred & Jenna Sack
Tyson Russell
Ann Marie Boncella
Julie Trowbridge-Alford
Rod Shriwise
Lucie Black

Returning members:

Robert Barnhardt, Jr.
Jill Kleinberg
Joanne Berns
Michael Morley & Angela Candela
John & Patricia Solbach

Phil & Ellen Loomis
Kylee Sharp
Douglas May
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Tasha Wolff
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Andi Back
Jessica Daniels
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Tracey Graham
Becky & Lisa LaBlanc-Willis
Karen Dove
Alex Eddins
Denise Brubaker
Alexis Powell
Karen Folsom
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Michael Babbitt

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Jan Butin

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Douglas May
Sheila Stogsdill
Barbara & Dick Schowen
Ronald Sisk

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Prairie Protection:

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Jan Butin
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Kylee Sharp
Travis Weller
Andrea Repinsky

Lori Callow
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Scholarship Fund:

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Thad Holcombe
Frank Norman

In Honor of Chip Taylor:
Barbara Mason & Ron Christ

In Honor of Courtney Masterson: Mary Powell

In Honor of Frank Norman:
Gary Tegtmeier

In Honor of Kim Bellemere:
Gary Tegtmeier

In Honor of Roxie McGee:
Susan Stahl

In Honor of Larry and Martha Wagner: Frances DiSarro

In Memory of Everett Oyster:
Linda Meinig

In Memory of Lawrence Wagner:
Martha Wagner and David Wagner

Thanks to Payson Lowell for sharing a native restoration project at The Sheridan of Overland Park Assisted Living complex. Residents are involved in planting native flowers next to the facility. This year, they plan to enhance the garden with purple coneflower seeds. The area serves as a stormwater diversion area from City Place.



Lowell family distributing seeds of 16 native perennial species

We depend on your contributions!

Please help GHF protect prairie by sending your donation today.
The date of your last contribution is printed above your name on the mailing label.

Send to: Grassland Heritage Foundation, PO Box 394, Shawnee Mission, KS 66201

Membership Categories: ___\$20 Friend ___\$35 Family ___\$50 Steward ___\$100 Sustaining ___\$250 Conserver
___\$500 Patron ___\$1000 Benefactor ___\$5000 Founder ___\$15 Student/Retiree

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

___ Save postage/printing and email my PDF newsletter **OR** ___ Send my printed newsletter to the above address

___ Contact me about volunteering

___ Gift in *honor* or *memory* of (mark which) _____

Your contribution will support prairie conservation in the general fund unless you designate your donation for:

___ Rachel Snyder Memorial Scholarship Fund

___ Prairie Protection

___ Education Programs

___ Prairie Management

**Membership renewals and donations
can also be sent to GHF online at
www.grasslandheritage.org**

Thank you to . . .

Sue & Steve Holcomb for sharing the Bison Box with attendees at the Kaw Valley Eagles Day

Courtney Masterson for designing and drawing our Garden to Go Kits for the plant sale

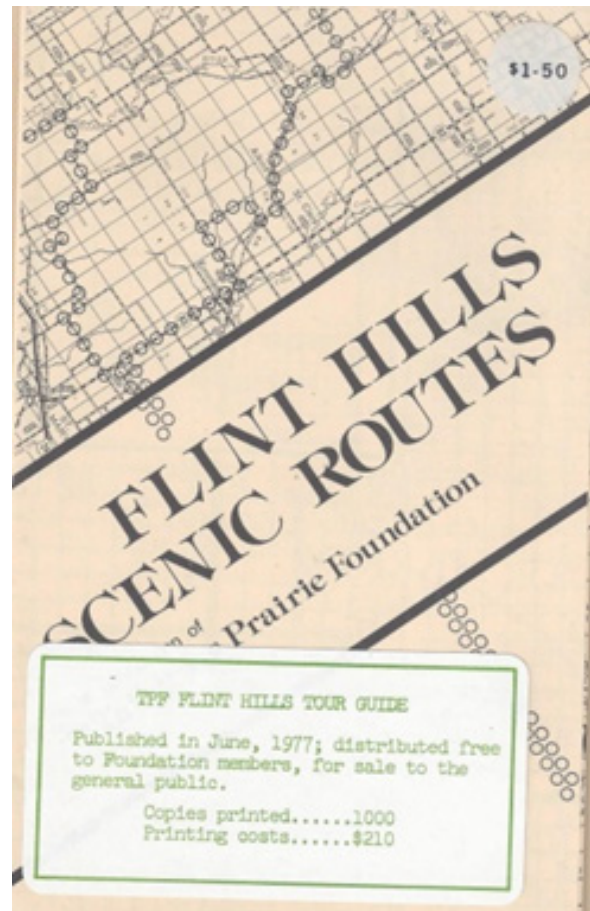
Roxie McGee, Courtney Masterson, Sue & Steve Holcomb, Andrea Repinsky for working on plant sale logistics

Mike Campbell, Courtney Masterson, Andrea Repinsky, and all our volunteers at the seed cleaning day at Lawrence Public Library

Helen Alexander, Courtney Masterson, Joyce Wolf, and Sue Holcomb for reviewing scholarship applications

Snyder burn volunteers and crew: Dwayne and Chance Hug, Bruce Yonke, Sue and Steve Holcomb, Apolonia Arteaga, Courtney Masterson, Kaitlyn Ammerlaan, Jonathon McElwee, Maeve Hilgers, Hanna Baird, Frank Norman, and Ted Abel

Kevin Bachkora for accounting services



More GHF history: One of the early GHF projects was this guide, free to members and on sale to the public as a fundraiser.

**Grassland Heritage Foundation
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Shawnee Mission, KS 66201**

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Participants at GHF's February Seed Cleaning Party, preparing seeds for enhancement of Leadplant Prairie (left)

The March Snyder Prairie-burn crew (top right)

GHF board member Courtney Masterson demonstrates seed cleaning at the February Kaw Valley Seed Fair (bottom right)

