



Kansas Native Plant Society

Autumn Newsletter

Volume 36 Number 4
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MEMORIES OF 2014 ANNUAL WILDFLOWER WEEKEND

by Nancy Goulden, Phyllis Scherich & Chelsea Erickson

What will the eighty-some KNPS members and friends who attended the Annual Wildflower Weekend in the Pratt area September 19-21 remember about the event? Here are some memories based on what we saw as we drove to and explored our multiple plant sites on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: the vast blue sky with intriguing cloud patterns; the long country roads; landscapes with mostly WHITE flowers blooming; clusters of plant fans huddled around one of our informal plant experts; the sudden change, as we drove along in our caravan, from flat fields and pastures to red hills and rock formations. And, of course, perhaps the dominant reason we were there— finding and identifying plants that were new to us or were old friends. (Look on page 12 for reports of the various sites).



Mike Haddock shares information with a group of AWW participants.

Photo by Dave Welfelt

In addition to our outing experiences, we heard three excellent presentations on Saturday morning that took us on mental journeys to learn more about plants: Mike Haddock's report of the plants he saw on his trip to Australia; Craig Freeman's study of the penstemons, especially those of the Midwest; and Iralee Barnard's introduction to grasses from the central U.S. based on her new book on grasses of

Inside this Issue

President's Message	Page 2
AWW-Not Just Plants	Page 4
Orange Book Reprint Help	Page 4
Pollinator Garden	Page 5
AWW Annual Meeting	Page 5
Silent Auction	Page 7
Events, Plant List	Page 8
Meet New Board Members	Page 9
Photo Contest	Page 10
Rolling Red Hills—Outings	Page 12
Out of State Interview	Page 13
Beautiful Trees	Page 14
Featured Plant	Page 15
Membership	Page 15

Have you renewed your membership in KNPS? Check the first line in your address for your membership expiration date. If the date is past, your membership has expired. To continue receiving the newsletter, please renew now.

The Kansas Native Plant Society Newsletter is printed four times a year: Winter (January), Spring (April), Summer (July), Fall (October). Readers tell us how much they enjoy the newsletter in color and in the paper format. Contributions help us continue to produce a publication of this length in this form. You may send your gift to KNPS at Kansas Native Plant Society, R.L. McGregor Herbarium, 2045 Constant Avenue, Lawrence, KS 66047-3729.



The mission of the Kansas Native Plant Society is to encourage awareness and appreciation of the native plants of Kansas in their habitats and in our landscapes by promoting education, stewardship, and scientific knowledge.

Continued on Page 3



President's Message

By Mike Haddock

As I compose my president's message, we have just completed a very productive and enjoyable Annual Wildflower Weekend in Pratt. A major "thank you" is extended to Phyllis and Dee Scherich who did the lion's share of local planning and arrangements, as well as Ken Brunson of the Nature Conservancy who helped select our outing sites. Our appreciation goes also to Dr. Bill Hunter of Pratt Community College who hosted us for our Friday board of directors meeting and Saturday morning annual meeting. Bill arranged for two PCC vans for transport. He drove one and Faye Graff from the English Dept. drove the other. Our gratitude also goes to Jane Freeman who handled registration and merchandise, Krista Dahlinger who coordinated our silent auction, Valerie Wright for chairing the photo contest, and Jeff Hansen for his assistance with AWW Publicity.

At our board of directors meeting on Friday, we elected a slate of officers to serve 1-year terms (2014-2015): Mickey Delfelder of Topeka as Secretary; Krista Dahlinger of Mulvane as Treasurer; Phyllis Scherich of Wilmore as President Elect; and Mike Haddock of Manhattan as President. It was announced that the 2015 Annual Wildflower Weekend will be held in Manhattan with the dates yet to be determined.

Following the board meeting, a large number of people gathered at the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism Pratt Education Center where a group of individuals who had created a beautiful pollinator garden were honored with the Rachel Synder Memorial Landscape Award. On our way to visit a ranch south of Sun City, we made a stop at an interesting petrified rock garden in Coats. The Alexander Ranch in the Red Hills had some of the best native grass diversity that I have observed in some time. Our day ended with a memorable gathering of more than 60 KNPS members for supper at Buster's Saloon.

At the annual meeting on Saturday morning, the Stephen L. Timme Excellence in Botany Award was presented to Dr. Tom Eddy of Emporia State University, and Valerie Wright was totally surprised as the recipient of the Sheldon H. Cohan Award for Outstanding Service to KNPS. Craig Freeman gave a fascinating talk about his work on the genus penstemon for the Flora of North America project, and Iralee Barnard gave a highly educational presentation on Great Plains grasses and their identification. At the meeting, the following individuals were re-elected to three year board terms: Iralee Barnard of Hope, Fred and Nancy Coombs of Holton, Ken O'Dell of Paola, and Susan Reimer of McPherson. Cynthia Rhodes of Whitewater and Anthony Zukoff of Holcomb were welcomed as new board members.

Our Saturday afternoon outings visited two sites only a few miles apart, which were geologically very different and displayed an amazing variety of distinctive wildflowers. My favorites for beauty were probably sand Lily, *Mentzelia*

nuda, and Rocky Mountain beeplant, *Cleome serrulate*, while scorpionweed, *Phacelia texana*, was my choice for sheer curiosity. On Sunday morning, our field excursions



Scorpionweed, with inset of blossom
Photos by Mike Haddock

stopped at an excellent sand prairie east of Pratt and a wetland area along the Ninnescah River.

For those members who were unable to join us, here is a brief overview of our current membership and budget. As of mid-September, KNPS had 718 regular paid memberships and 77 reciprocal memberships (non-profit organizations that share a partnership with KNPS). We thank all of you, our dedicated members, for the tremendous growth our organization has had over the past few years. We had just 300 members in 2007 and ca. 500 members in 2010. In looking at our membership breakdown, 43% are individual, 19% family, 17% students, 15% organizations, 3% lifetime, and 3% contributing. There are 687 members in Kansas (86%) and 108 members (14%) outside the state. Kansas members reside in 71 counties with the six counties represented by the most members being Sedgwick, Johnson, Douglas, Shawnee, Butler, and Riley.

Our annual budget is set at the winter KNPS board of directors meeting and for 2014 was targeted at \$21,875. Membership dues comprise the largest proportion of our income at 68%. Donations bring in around 12%, our AWW silent auction approximately 5%, and merchandise sales 4%. Our website and newsletters account for nearly 60% of our expenses, with the remainder going toward scholarships, our annual brochure, and administrative costs such as renewal letters. In 2010 we established our Legacy Fund to help fund special projects and as of August 31, 2014 the balance had grown to \$6,673.

If you have never had an opportunity to attend our AWW, please consider doing so! There are limited formal meetings, highly educational presentations, a wide variety of field outings that provide an opportunity to interact with plant novices to experts, and the chance to develop strong camaraderie with plant enthusiasts from around Kansas and even other states. We hope you will be able to join us in Manhattan for the 2015 AWW!



Memories of 2014 AWW

Continued from Page 1

Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska. (See p. 4 for more).

We also had the pleasure of looking at the winning photographs from our annual photo contest (p. 10) and choosing treasures from the Silent Auction table and hoping no one else would come along and raise the bid on what we wanted. (p. 7 for more details).

All of the above are more than worthy of remembering, but there is one more aspect of the weekend that may be the most important—our interactions with the other native plant fans. Later in this issue you will read articles by Phyllis Scherich and Chelsea Erickson. Both writers included in the original manuscripts the impact of being with others who also love and enjoy the Kansas plants as much as they do. I have taken these sections and included them below in this article.

Phyllis Scherich: The interaction of the seventy or so people in the group is the reason so many return year after year to share the Annual Wildflower Weekend. New friends are made, old friendships are renewed. Some come just to enjoy the beauty and solitude of nature in the various areas of Kansas we visit. We hope everyone, regardless of his/her level of knowledge, leaves knowing he/she has made a unique, personal contribution to the success of the weekend.



AWW enthusiast introduces young Linus to his first turtle

Photo by Nancy Calhoun

Chelsea Erickson: While creating a list of observed plants is the foremost task of many members, I prefer to listen to people's comments and observe group dynamics. For example, when someone shouts excitedly, "There's a mentzelia up there!" I chuckle as the whole group flocks like moths to a flame. Remembering plant walks I've been on, I never fail to hear someone ask the name of a plant, rock, or insect and a helpful comedian says "Quick, just make something up"!

Many of the knowledgeable KNPS members from east-

ern Kansas found themselves scrambling to identify the plants at Alexander Ranch. I heard comments like, "I'm out of my element—too far west" and "I know my Flint Hills plants, but not the Red Hills".



Iralee Barnard, Matthew Richter discuss plant ID with Rick Warshaur, an AWW participant from the Big Island of Hawaii—

Photo by Mike Haddock

Some conversations that I caught in passing sounded like monologues from a botany book. I could easily tell those in the group who spoke the same botanical language. The rest of us "normal people" stood by in silent appreciation of the depth of experience and knowledge of plants that were on display. It's so much fun being in a group where someone will know the answer to any questions regarding plants, animals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, rocks, or insects!

You don't have to be a professional hiker or botanist to enjoy every activity the plant society has to offer. I observed attendees in flip flops, rubber boots, hiking boots, varying degrees of sunburn and everything from smartphones to professional cameras. I enjoy meeting people of all ages and walks of life on these tours. A great part of AWW fun is socializing at places such as Buster's in Sun City or the Club D'Est in Pratt. If you've never been to AWW, you have no idea what you're missing! Wonderful experiences at the AWW are often what keep members coming back year after year.



Careful photography of blue sage takes concentration

Photo by Mike Haddock



AWW-- IT'S NOT ONLY ABOUT PLANTS

By Phyllis Scherich

Outings on the KNPS 2014 AWW included much more than identifying the plants. Entomologists found the Clouded Crimson moth larvae on the Gaura plants, the preferred host, and shared this information with others. Carpenter bees were abundant on the white-flowered gilia,



Clouded Crimson moth larva on Guara

Photo by Phyllis Scherich

Ipomopsis longiflora. Many other host plants, larvae, and pollinators were discussed. Colorful butterflies were identified. Intricate spider webs, each with its unique spider, were admired, identified and photographed.

Information was shared on the geology of the various rock formations in the area: There were discussions about the gypsum-mining operations in the Sun City area. During the latter part of the Permian Period, about 260 million years ago, several thousand feet of brick-red shales, siltstones, and sandstones— along with inter-bedded layers of gypsum and dolomite— were deposited. These Permian deposits were exposed by erosion, forming a series of relatively flat-topped red hills, capped by light-colored gypsum or dolomite. In the Belvidere area, the Permian sandstone was exposed.

We learned there are many caves in the area and the types of bats who depend on them for survival. Big brown,

Pallid, Cave myotis, and Townsend's big-eared bats are among the ones that have been found in these caves.

Birdwatchers in the group called our attention to a few of the birds that were spotted— the scissor-tailed flycatchers, the bluebirds (and told how these are responsible for spreading the seed of the invasive eastern red cedar trees), a road-runner (probably hunting for a lizard to eat), and many others.

Herpetologists employed their “snake sticks” to turn over rocks, looking for snakes, lizards, and whatever else was under the rocks. Turtles, toads and horned lizards were encountered. (One of the benefits of the hot day was that the snakes weren't likely to be active in the areas we were exploring!)

Some attendees took the opportunity to wade in the South Fork of the Ninnescah River to cool their feet a bit and get a close-up look at the Cardinal flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*, and a nearby plant, the Camphor weed, *Heterotheca subaxillaris* and see what else was on the other side of the River.

We appreciate the generosity of the private landowners who have graciously allowed access to their special areas and appreciate that attendees will not return to these areas without first asking permission of the landowner.



AWW trekkers investigate flora and geology of the Red Hills

Photo by David Welfelt



Help Get the “Orange Pocket Guide” Reprinted

By Krista Dahlinger

The very popular and informative *Flint Hills Pocket Guide* is in short supply after two printings and nearly 20,000 copies being distributed. Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita publishes many plant and animal pocket guides, which are distributed at no charge to organizations such as KNPS and the State Parks and Wildlife agencies to share with educational groups and other interested parties.

After receiving and distributing two printings for free, KNPS has been collecting donations for the third printing of 10,000 copies of the Flint Hills guide and to date, has raised just over \$3,000 (almost half of the total cost). **If you would like to make a donation toward printing costs, you may do so on our web site or by mailing a check to KNPS, R. L. McGregor Herbarium, 2045 Constant Ave., Lawrence, KS 66047-3729. Please indicate “Donation for Pocket Guide.”** Printing should occur in late 2014.



Pollinator Garden: Try This at Home

By Cindy Ford

Of course, landscaping can add interest to space around a building. But, why not make that landscaping more useful, lower maintenance, and unusual in its attractiveness? This concept was shown effectively in a small pollinator garden in front of the historic Pratt Museum on the grounds of the Department of Wildlife and Parks and Tourism in Pratt, KS.

An entourage of AWW Friday afternoon “field-trippers” were treated to a special viewing of the pollinator garden, which won the Kansas Native Plant Society’s Rachel Snyder Memorial Landscape Award. The existing landscape pond and waterfall were enhanced with native grasses, such as blue grama, sideoats grama, switchgrass, and a number of native wildflowers, such as goldenrod,



AWW guests admire grasses and pond in the Pollinator Garden
Photo by Chelsea Erickson



Valerie Wright, assisted by Phyllis Scherich, presents the Rachel Snyder Memorial Landscaping Award to Master Gardener Kathy Stewart — Photo by Chelsea Erickson

purple poppy mallow, and spiderwort. The Pratt County Extension Master Gardeners, under the direction of Kathy Stewart, designed and planted the grasses and wildflowers purchased from Dyck Arboretum in Hesston, KS. The plants were spaced in the garden to show typical specimen characteristics. The garden features plants that blossom throughout three seasons, and then provide texture interest in the winter.

The garden is not only a beauty, but the AWW group noticed a number of insects visiting the flowers-- attesting to the success of the garden. In addition, the garden has been strategically placed just outside the insect collections inside the museum so visitors to that part of the museum can view the pollinators at work from inside the building.



AWW Membership Meeting

By Chelsea Erickson

A Quick Trip Down Under

The Saturday morning KNPS general membership meeting kicked off with a stellar presentation by President Mike Haddock, who had the opportunity earlier this year for botanizing in Australia. The AWW crowd was dazzled with photos of unusual and beautiful grasses, flowers, and trees from Uluru Park (formerly Ayers Rock) and also the Blue Mountains region in the New South Wales province. Especially interesting was learning about the various adaptations of desert-dwelling species to achieve water conservation in order to survive in such harsh conditions. Equally interesting was learning how the native Australian populations used those resources to ensure their own survival. Mike set the bar pretty high with this year’s opening presentation so it will be interesting to see how he tops that at next year’s AWW! I can’t wait!

Awards Presentation

A shocked Valerie Wright was presented with the Sheldon H. Cohen Award for Outstanding Service to

KNPS. Thanks Valerie for all your hard work and we appreciate all you do! KNPS is truly blessed to have such



Mike Haddock presents Valerie Wright with the Sheldon H. Cohen Award for Outstanding Service — Photo by Phyllis Scherich

Continued on Page 6



AWW Membership Meeting

Continued from Page 5

dedicated members as Valerie, who makes KNPS enjoyable and fun for everyone.

This year's Rachel Snyder Memorial Landscape Award was presented to the Pratt Master Gardners for their amazing work with the pollinator garden at the Wildlife & Parks education center in Pratt. A plaque was presented to the group Saturday afternoon as about 80 KNPS members gathered at the education center. The crowd was amazed to hear that the garden is comprised of 32 species of native plants. A lot of hard work and dedication went into creating such a jewel and each entity involved in the garden's creation should be extremely proud of their accomplishment!



Valerie Wright presents Dr. Tom Eddy with the Stephen L. Timme Award — Photo by Phyllis Scherich

The Stephen L. Timme Excellence in Botany Award was presented to Dr. Tom Eddy for his tireless dedication to expanding the knowledge of prairie species in Kansas. Dr. Eddy is a go-to professional for identifying plants, assisting with KNPS outings, cataloging the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, and hosting KNPS board meetings. We appreciate all Tom does and we're lucky to have such an experienced professional in our midst!

The Amazing World of Penstemons

Former KNPS president Craig Freeman was the first of two guest speakers at this year's AWW. Nearly 70 KNPS members were treated to photos from across the Midwest of the many species of penstemons, which are the 3rd largest genus of flowering plants in North America.

The most distinctive feature of the genus is the prominent staminode, which is an infertile stamen that often gives the appearance of a fuzzy tongue protruding from the tube-shaped flower thus giving rise to the common name "beardtongue".

It was surprising to find that 80% of the penstemons

(white, blue or purple flowers) are pollinated by bees or wasps, with the remaining 20% of penstemons (red or pink flowers) being adapted to hummingbirds. There are also general pollinators involved with penstemons, such as flies and moths.

Craig reported that the greatest challenge to determining the evolutionary relationship between the many species of penstemon is that there are few genetic barriers between the species and thus hybridization happens with reckless abandon! The world is lucky to have a dedicated professional like Craig to lead the charge in discovering what secrets are locked in the history of penstemons.

Those who want to immerse themselves in all things technical about penstemons should put *Flora of North America, Volume 17* on their wish lists. The volume is still under development, but will be available in the coming year. If you lean more toward the gardener's perspective, then the book *Growing Penstemons: Species, Cultivars and Hybrids* by Ellen Wilde and Dale Lindgren is recommended. Thanks to Craig for his wonderful and eye-opening presentation about a very beautiful and diverse group of wildflowers!

Get to Know Your Grasses!

KNPS board member Iralee Barnard was the second guest speaker for this year's AWW. Iralee is also a retired botanist who worked with the National Park Service as well as the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Chase County. The AWW audience enjoyed listening to Iralee describe her personal and professional journey that led to the creation and publication of the new *Field Guide to the Common Grasses of Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska*.

The grass guidebook is an excellent resource for anyone who struggles to identify the members of the largest plant family in the world (*Poaceae*). The AWW audience was treated to an excellent slideshow by Iralee that illustrated the various traits that you need to know when identifying a grass. Many AWW attendees put that knowledge to use that very afternoon during the group's visit to Bricker Ranch near Sun City. Big thanks and a round of applause to Iralee for her informative presentation and for her dedication to Kansas prairies and native plants!



Cynthia Pederson surveys sideoats grama from a rocky perch

Photo by Mickey Delfelder



Silent Auction—Our FUNdraiser

By Krista Dahlinger

The Silent Auction event during the Saturday morning meeting at the AWW received donations of the popular home-made persimmon-walnut cookies, jelly and fruit butters, zucchini and oat bread, many interesting plant books, live plants, a leather bag, native plant paper and other plant and mineral



Silent Auction Items

Photo by Krista Dahlinger

items. The Silent Auction is a FUNdraiser held each year where event-goers donate and then bid on all of the wonderful items, many of which are hand-made by members. The Silent Auction raised \$622, and this year's Book Drawing for Iralee Bernard's new release, *Field Guide to the Common Grasses of Kansas, Oklahoma and Nebraska* brought in \$46. Slim and Jodi Gieser won the book. A big "thank you" to everyone who participated in the Silent Auction this year-- your generosity is much appreciated.



Mom supervises a Silent Auction bid

Photo by Phyllis Scherich

A new tradition has begun as part of the annual Silent Auction-- we have been "gifted" with a KNPS sign made from barn wood from the Red Hills and barbed wire from the Flint Hills. This sign will be auctioned each year, with the high bidder taking possession until the next AWW, when it will be put up for auction again. Each annual "steward" of the sign will autograph the back during his/her turn. Susan Reimer has the honor of "first steward."

Recipe for Persimmon-Walnut Cookies

Shared by Sara Cornett from Cy Littlebee's *Guide to Cooking Fish and Game*

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 cup persimmon pulp | 1 egg, well beaten |
| put through fruit colander | 1 teaspoon soda stirred into persimmon pulp |
| 1 cup shortening | ½ teaspoon baking power |
| 1 cup brown sugar | ½ teaspoon salt, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg each |
| 1 cup raisins simmered in a little water and drained | |
| 1 cup nut meats, chopped and stirred into 2 cups of flour (Sara used ½ cup black walnuts) | |

Beat sugar, shortening, and egg together well, add other ingredients and drop from spoon onto well-greased cookie pan, bake 10 or 15 minutes in 350 oven.



2014 Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events



Information provided by [Kansas Native Plant Society](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org), 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!



Oct 15th @ 1-3pm • Presentation: The Colors of Autumn • Overland Park Arboretum • 8909 West 179th • Bucyrus, KS • Why do plants change color in the fall? This presentation will explain the processes that reveal the vivid red, orange and yellow pigments in leaves. The Powerpoint presentation illustrates the many trees, shrubs, colorful perennials, vines and grasses that glory our area each fall. Ken O'Dell is a master plantsman and Regional Director of the Kansas Native Plant Society. He is a frequent, favorite presenter to gardening groups throughout the area. There is a \$3 fee to enter the Arboretum but the class is free. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Contact: Ken O'Dell [ken@springvalleynursery.com] 913-832-0745



Oct 18th @ 1pm-3pm Wyandotte County Lake Park Fall Trees #1 of 3 • 91st Street and Leavenworth Road • Kansas City, KS • Learn more about trees on our woodland walk at Wyandotte County Lake Park. Meet up in the main parking lot by the Park office; take the left fork when you come in the 91st entrance at the South end of the Park. See fall foliage and nuts from oak and hickory species along the Missouri River bluffs by the dam. Some trails may be steep and muddy if it has rained recently; so good boots and jeans recommended. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Contact: Elizabeth Petroske [epetroske@hotmail.com]

Oct 18th: 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 [fjnorman@sunflower.com] (785) 887-6775 (home) or (785) 691-9748 (cell).

Oct 19th @ 2pm-6pm Colors of Nature: A Natural Dyeing Workshop • Kansas Wetlands Education Center • 592 NE K-156 HWY • Great Bend, KS • If you love fiber, have we got a workshop for you! Knitters, crocheters, spinners, quilters, anyone who works with yarn or fabric will go home with a new appreciation for nature's resources. Learn what plants in our area have hidden secrets, the process of going from plant to dye, and techniques to make sure your hand dyed creations last. We will do one dyepot from start to finish, and all workshop participants will leave with samples of our creations. No previous dyeing experience necessary! Call the Kansas Wetlands Education Center at (877) 243-9268 to register for this FREE workshop! Space is limited to 15 participants, so register today. Sponsor: Kansas Wetlands Education Center. Contact: Jean Ayccock [jeaycock@fhsu.edu] (877) 243-9268



Oct 25th @ 1pm-3pm Wyandotte County Lake Park Fall Trees #2 of 3 • 91st Street and Leavenworth Road • Kansas City, KS • Learn more about trees on our woodland walk at Wyandotte County Lake Park. Meet up in the main parking lot by the Park office; take the left fork when you come in the 91st entrance at the South end of the Park. See fall foliage and nuts from oak and hickory species along the Missouri River bluffs by the dam. Some trails may be steep and muddy if it has rained recently; so good boots and jeans recommended. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Contact: Elizabeth Petroske [epetroske@hotmail.com]



Nov 1st @ 1pm-3pm Wyandotte County Lake Park Fall Trees #3 of 3 • Wyandotte County 91st Street and Leavenworth Road • Kansas City, KS • Learn more about trees on our woodland walk at Wyandotte County Lake Park. Meet up in the main parking lot by the Park office; take the left fork when you come in the 91st entrance at the South end of the Park. See fall foliage and nuts from oak and hickory species along the Missouri River bluffs by the dam. Some trails may be steep and muddy if it has rained recently; so good boots and jeans recommended. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Contact: Elizabeth Petroske [epetroske@hotmail.com]

Nov 15th: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Oct 18 info.

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



AWW Plant List

AWW attendee and botanist Gary Breckon recorded seeing 132 distinct species of flora at this year's KNPS Annual Wildflower Weekend. In the future, this list will be available on the KNPS website, along with other records of the 2014 AWW. Go to www.ksnps.org. Select Annual Wildflower Weekend in the Things We Do section of the menu on the left side of the page, then select 2014.



MEET THE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Cynthia Rhodes

Where are you from? Where do you live? What do you do for a living? I am a Kansas native and live on a farm near Whitewater in Butler County. I teach Language Arts at Brooks Center for STEM & Arts Magnet Middle School, which is part of the USD259 Wichita Public School District.

How did you become interested in wildflowers and other native plants? I grew up knowing the names and attributes of animals, and have decided that I need to learn names of plants, trees, and grasses, too. I learn best through a hands-on and in-the-field approach. The more I learn, my appreciation for the natural world deepens.

What are some of your favorite native plants and why?

My favorite native plant is the purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*). However, I have developed an appreciation for the Kansas grasses and forbs that grow in ditches and pastures.

What is your favorite natural area of the state and why?

There is no way that I can identify just one area. I simply love being alive in outdoor Kansas!

How did you learn about KNPS?

I learned about KNPS while serving for seven years on the Kansas Wildlife Federation board.

What do you like best about KNPS?

The best part of KNPS is the enthusiastic friends I have made on the wildflower walks!



Anthony Zukoff

Where are you from? Where do you live? What do you do for a living? Originally from Georgia, I moved to western KS in the spring of 2013 after 4 years of living in central Missouri. I currently live outside of Garden City in Holcomb. I work for the K-State Entomology Department out of the Southwest Research and Extension Center in Garden City.



How did you become interested in wildflowers and other native plants?

My serious interest in native plants and plant communities began as an undergraduate in my "Organismic Biology" class when we had to put together plant collections. Also I did spend a lot of time playing in the woods growing up and recall always being fascinated by the different plants I would find.

What are some of your favorite native plants and why? This is a hard one! I think I still have a soft spot in my heart for some of the really cool native bog plants in the southeast where I grew up, especially some of the carnivorous ones such as pitcher plants, sundews and butterworts. One of my favorite new species I've found in Kansas so far has been Fragrant Sand Verbena. The various sage species here have also been fun to learn and sniff.

What is your favorite natural area of the state and why? The western portion of the state is extremely interesting to me because there are a large number of species that were completely new to me that I never saw back east. It is also amazing that so many great species can thrive in such a harsh part of the state.

How did you learn about KNPS?

I came across Mike's great site trying to identify some plants my first spring in Kansas and then saw the KNPS link on his "links" page.

What do you like best about KNPS?

It is awesome to be able to get together with people who appreciate the importance of native plants and who also get super excited to see plants in person that they had only seen in guides before.



THE PHOTO CONTEST

By Valerie Wright, Awards Committee Chair

What beautiful photographs! There were 77 photos in 6 categories. This year was our first digital contest with photos sent in to Shutterfly.com and posted on a share-site in the proper categories. This worked quite well. Participants had one month to upload photos. Everyone who submitted photos could see the other postings. Our share-site was closed on September 2 and judging began the following day. The judges had a difficult time agreeing on the winners. There were so many great photos from which to choose. Winners from 2014 and past years are posted on our web site along with the contest rules http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/photo_contest.php.

We will have a digital contest again in 2015, so save your best photos for submission!

Here are the winners:

Best in Show — Brian Martin for “Prairie Gentian”

Flora — 1st Place, Brian Martin for “Frosty Morning”

2nd Place, Andrew Mitchell for “Clematis fremontii”

3rd Place, Vivian Smith for “Horse Gentian”

Fauna — 1st Place, Brian Martin for “Eastern Tiger Swallowtail”

2nd Place, Betty Patterson for “Showing Off Hairdo”

3rd Place, Krista Dahlinger for “Assassin on Fistulosa”

Garden — 1st Place, Vivian Smith for “Kansas Children’s Discovery Center”

2nd Place, Janet Krack for “Lisa’s Garden”

3rd Place, Phyllis Scherich for “Garden”

People — 1st Place, Brian Martin for “So Many Choices”

2nd Place, Betty Patterson for “High on a Hillside”

3rd Place, John Morrison for “Field Trip Orientation”

Scenery — 1st Place, Brian Martin for “Blazing Star Ablaze”

2nd Place, John Morrison for “Big Basin Road”

3rd Place, Janet Krack for “September at Coronado Heights”

Wildflower of the Year — 1st Place, Janet Krack for “Blue-eyed Grass”

2nd Place, Carolyn Oroke for “Blue-eyed Grass”



“Prairie Gentian” — Brian Martin
Best in Show



“Frosty Morning” — Brian Martin
1st Place Flora



THE PHOTO CONTEST

Continued from Page 10



"Eastern Tiger Swallowtail" — Brian Martin
1st Place Fauna



"Children's Discovery Center" — Vivian Smith
1st Place Garden



"So Many Choices" — Brian Martin — 1st Place People



"Blazing Star Ablaze" — Brian Martin
1st Place Scenery



"Blue Eyed Grass" — Janet Krack
1st Place Wildflower of the Year



THOSE ROLLING RED HILLS — AWW OUTINGS

By Chelsea Erickson

Ken Brunson with the Nature Conservancy served as guide for many of the 2014 AWW outings. Ken relayed to the nearly 80 KNPS adventurers that the Alexander Ranch,



Ken Brunson addresses AWW hikers at the Alexander Ranch

Photo by Mike Haddock

located near Sun City, is a mixed-grass prairie that has dealt with several years of drought. June 2014 brought decent rain in the area, and the lingering effects of that moisture were noticed by members who commented on the amazing health of the pasture. The site was dominated by grasses such as Indian grass, little bluestem, big bluestem, sideoats grama, and blue grama. Some of the wildflowers identified by the group included: Fendler's evening primrose, James' nailwort, gayfeather, hairy golden aster, buckwheat, prickly pear, western ragweed, Texas croton and Pitcher sage.

An Afternoon on the Bricker Ranch

Saturday afternoon a group of 80 AWW attendees gathered at Bricker Ranch, located near the Medicine Lodge River in Kiowa County. The group was delighted to observe Stout Scorpion Weed, which is considered one of the most iconic



Can you find the large brown stick bug in the photo?

Photo by David Welfelt

flora representatives of the Red Hills. As the KNPS group fanned out over the low hills, they observed gayfeather, Devil's claw, scarlet globemallow, paper flower, nine anther dalea, and Fendler's aster among many other species. A true delight was observing the colorful harlequin grasshopper and a brown stick bug that blended nicely with the landscape. A rare sight was a whole hillside of white-flower ipomopsis, which was quickly renamed (unofficially) by Jeff Hansen to the much easier to pronounce "ibuprofen flower". Other stars of the show were the white sand lily and ten-petal mentzelia.



Butterfly on Aster

Photo by Mickey Delfelder

Exploring the Sand Prairie

Sunday morning the large AWW group caravanned to Hamm Prairie located east of Pratt. About 80 attendees were introduced to the sand prairie characteristics by Craig Freeman. The eager wildflower enthusiasts broke into



Plant lessons on the sand prairie

Photo by Mike Haddock

Continued on Page 13



THOSE ROLLING RED HILLS — AWW OUTINGS

Continued from Page 12

several small groups and roamed the hillside for over an hour. Many wildflowers and grasses were enjoyed such as: big bluestem, little bluestem, sideoats grama, tall dropseed, sand lovegrass, Louisiana sagewort, wild four-o'clock, wax goldenweed, scarlet gaura, and gayfeather. Many people bring cameras, guidebooks, water bottles, but something central to any KNPS plant walk is a person who has a loud whistle in their repertoire in order to signal "time to go." We could have enjoyed that area for hours!

All weekend, the skies had vied for attention, with beautiful blue hues and interesting cloud formations. On Sunday,



Mare's tail cirrus clouds against blue sky, with copper and gold grasses below.

Photo by Mickey Delfelder

they were particularly spectacular.

Mickey Delfelder explains:

"Following nearby thunderstorms on Saturday night, Sunday morning skies brought us mare's tail cirrus clouds. Cirrus clouds occur at the highest altitudes of our atmosphere (about 35-thousand feet) and are composed almost entirely of small ice crystals. The name is fitting because the wispiess of the clouds evoke the flick of a horse's tail."

The last stop on the KNPS AWW weekend journey was a location along the Ninnescah River about 5 miles east of Pratt. Western sage was prominent in the area as well as little bluestem. Mike Haddock pointed out the many patches of Scribner's panicum grass. The group enjoyed a short hike along the river and marveled at the clear water. Besides the abundance of grasses and occasional wildflowers, there were many insects and amphibians to observe. With the KNPS outings there's always something for every-

one to enjoy whether you're a flower person, grass person, bug person, or just enjoy socializing with a group of fun and interesting people! Count me in next year!



Interview with Out-of-state KNPS Members

By Dianne and Bill Blankenship

Where are you from? Sioux City, Iowa which is where South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa meet.

Where do you live? We live on 25 acres in town. We have 16 acres of native remnant prairie and are encouraging our brome fields to return to native grasses and wildflowers. We also have some woodland and gardens.

How did you first become interested in wildflowers and other native plants? We attended the 1978 Loess Hills Prairie Seminar, near Onawa, Iowa. We met the spring wildflowers. That fall we attended a Save-the-Tallgrass-Prairie weekend event in Kansas and met the prairie grasses. We were hooked. From then on, every trip we take, we make sure we have some books that help us recognize the native flora there. Also, most trips are designed to be to

locations that are wildflower hotspots.

What are some of your favorite Kansas native plants?

They are the same plants we like in Nebraska and the Loess Hills of western Iowa which is where we live. Those include *Dalea enneandra*, *Argemone polyanthemus*, *Yucca glauca*, *Mentzelia decapetala*, and of course, the Penstemon, Tradescantia and Aster species. I also have a xeric garden with species not found in the Loess Hills but which are found in Nebraska. We did especially enjoy meeting some new ones in Kansas such as *Psilostrophe villosa*, *Dalea aurea*, *Stenosiphon linifolius*, *Ipomopsis longiflora*, and *Phacelia integrifolia*. Although we did not see any *Ipomoea leptophylla*, it is also a favorite of ours; we have a huge one that blooms for most of each summer in our xeric garden.

Continued on Page 14



Interview with Out-of-state Members

Continued from Page 13

Approximately, how many times have you come to the KNPS annual meeting? This was our first time. We will definitely return.

How far did you have to drive/travel this year? It was 456 miles each way from Sioux City to Pratt.

What is it about the Kansas AWW that attracts you to make the trip? We know that we enjoy “prairie people”, and Jeff Hansen had come to an event I organized in Iowa; so at least we knew one person, and we knew we’d meet many more. We wanted to visit Kansas prairies with others who know the plants there. I organize many native plant

and prairie events and field trips in Iowa, and I was curious to see how this Kansas event was organized and to see the KNPS in action. I was very impressed!! I got some ideas and also recognize better the differences in our states. I hope that some KNPS members will want to visit some Iowa prairies or plan to attend the 39th annual Loess Hills Prairie Seminar, May 29-31, 2015. There is no registration fee; so unless you want to order meals, all you need to do is come. Information about Iowa field trips and events including the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar can be found on the calendar on the Iowa Native Plant Society website, www.iowanativeplants.org.

What do you like best about KNPS? It is so well organized and has such an active, energetic, dedicated board.



Beautiful Trees on our Annual Wildflower Weekend in Pratt and Barber Counties

Text and Photos by Ken O'Dell

Two months ago I finished reading a very riveting book *The Worst Hard Time* about the dust bowl that covered sixty percent of Kansas and completely covered all of the western two-thirds of the state. Most of the few trees that existed in western Kansas during the Dust Bowl days of 1930 through 1937 or 1938 did not survive the extreme drought.

On our recent Annual Wildflower Weekend to Pratt and Barber Counties, I was thrilled to see so many beautiful trees that have been planted around the towns and parks of that area. I was able to talk to one of the maintenance workers in Lemon Park in Pratt about the trees planted when the park was built in 1920. Ten years later the Dust Bowl was beating up on everything in that part of Kansas. How in the world did some of the trees survive that were planted in 1920 and then had to experience the Dust Bowl days?

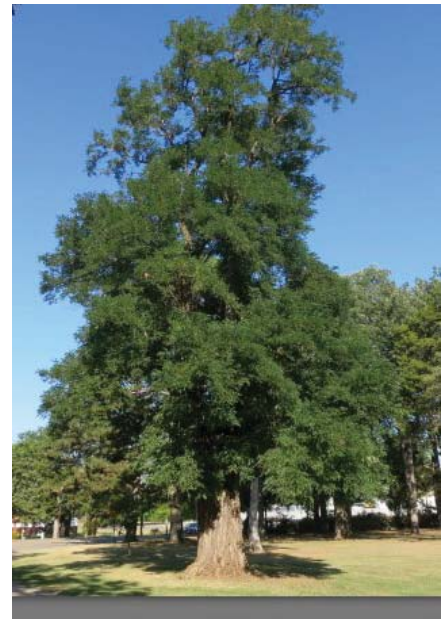
Lemon Park in Pratt has some of the most magnificent bald cypress trees I have ever seen. If they were planted in the 1920's as suggested, they have grown since then to become towering specimens up to 70 feet tall with trunk circumference of 24 feet. Bald cypress is not native in Kan-

sas but grows very well here. A few years ago I planted several bald cypress on our farm in eastern Kansas where we get about 34 inches of rain each year, and they survived with no additional water and have done well. Large persimmon trees about 40 or 50 feet tall in Lemon Park were loaded with fruit. The persimmon showed no signs of dry summer weather as the foliage was completely green, and healthy.

Western soapberry trees are all over Stafford, Pratt and Barber counties and most were loaded with beautiful marble size bright golden-yellow fruit. Soapberry is rare in eastern Kansas; so I thoroughly enjoyed seeing large colonies of these interesting trees.

Honey locust and black locust are both native in Pratt and Barber Counties, as well as in many other counties in Kansas. Lemon Park has several magnificent honey locust 45 to 50 feet tall, and black locust were even taller up to 60 to 70 feet tall.

With the dry summer weather in western Kansas, it is amazing the trees are so green and showing very few signs of stress in the area where I saw them. Lemon Park is 120 acres, and I did not see any watering or sprinkling systems to water the trees. I notice Lemon Park did not have any annuals or perennials and only a dozen or so shrubs. It was a tree park and a stunningly beautiful park it was.



Black Locust Tree



Bald cypress trees in Lemon Park, Pratt



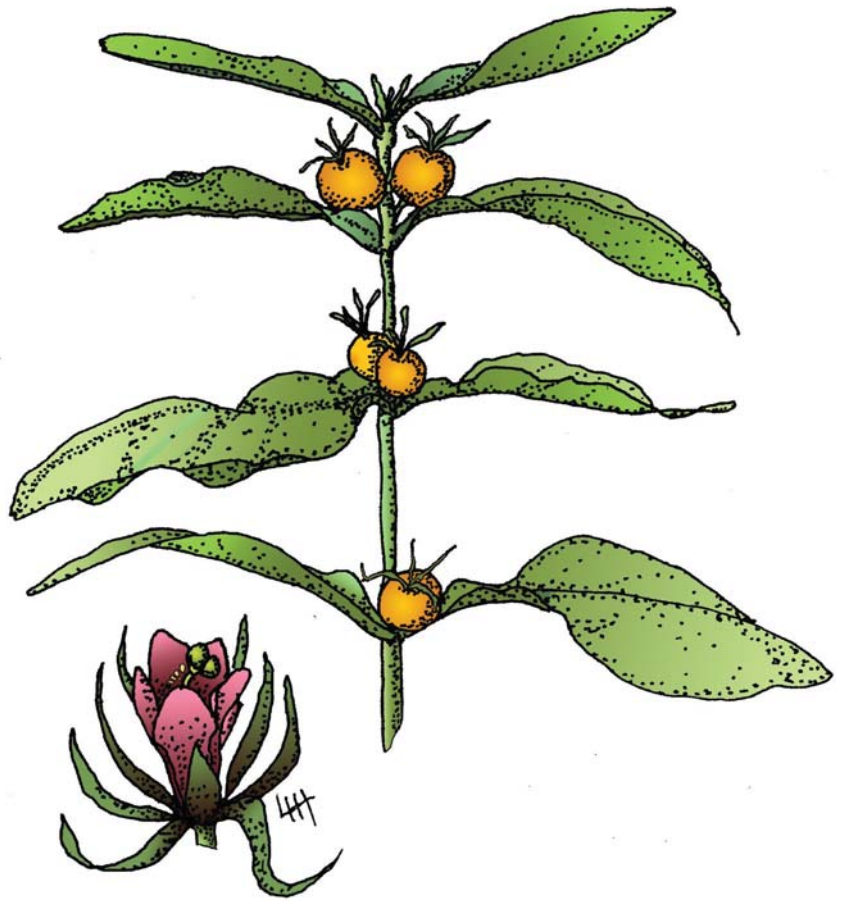
FEATURED PLANT— Horse Gentian (*Triosteum perfoliatum*)

Text by Lorraine Kaufmann, Rendering by Lorna Harder

As I ambled along a rocky dirt road one glorious mid-October afternoon, I was amazed to spot a large plant with brilliant orange berries oddly clustered immediately around its stem. I'd never seen fruits in this position on a plant before, nor had I noticed the plant earlier in the year when it was blooming. Magnifying the puzzle was the fact that only the one lone individual plant was present all along the ditch and the adjacent field. Whatever could that be and how did it get there?

Despite the absence of flowers that are the easiest characteristic to identify, the plant proved to be "horse gentian," *Triosteum perfoliatum*, aka feverwort, wood ipecac, wild coffee, horse ginseng, or Tinker's weed. This herbaceous perennial produces stout stems 2-5 feet high with 3x8 inch ovate leaves positioned oppositely every 4-5 inches up the stem. One to four inconspicuous 1/2-1 inch purplish-brown hairy flowers develop at each leaf axil and explain the odd location of the fruits. The corolla lobes overlap, and the corolla tube is of a length that restrict pollination to certain kinds of bees and prevents pollination by other insects— which may partly explain why the plant is fairly uncommon.

The multiple common names derive from the numerous uses of the plant over the years: the fruits can be dried and roasted for a coffee substitute; an infusion from stewed leaves was used to induce sweating during fevers; and it has been used as an emetic like ipecac. Seeds are available from the nursery trade, but the presence of only the one plant in the ditch that afternoon— and the fact that no others have ever appeared in that location— underscore the fundamental problem of our native prairies: only a tiny remnant remains, largely restricted to a tissue of roadside ditches that are aggressively mowed and sprayed. While we can plant a few of these treasures in our gardens, we're losing them where they belong out in what little remains of the Wilds.



Horse gentian (*Triosteum perfoliatum*)



MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS 6/21/14 TO 9/25/14

Kaden Anderson - Wichita

Lisa Ballout - Wilmore

Fiona Beattie - Mission

Caroline S. Blakeslee - Boise, ID

Quentin Brown - Wichita

Amber Bryon - Augusta

Elizabeth Conard - Wichita

April Evans - Lecompton

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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

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
2045 Constant Avenue
Lawrence, KS 66047-3729

A membership in 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

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Membership Category

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