



Kansas Native Plant Society

Spring Newsletter



Volume 36 Number 2
April 2014

President's Message (and Special KNPS Outings)

Text and photos by Mike Haddock

As I write this, it is the first week in March and we still seem to be in the depths of winter. It has been a truly long and bitterly cold season. Hopefully, with the snow we have received in many parts of the state, we will see a bountiful wildflower display this spring and summer.

KNPS provides a wide variety of activities throughout the year and we encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities. For the past several years, KNPS board members have expressed a desire to visit the western portions of the state. Due to extensive drought conditions in that area, holding our fall Annual Wildflower Weekend there has not appeared promising. I am very happy to announce that we have made arrangements for two days of outings in that region this spring. Thanks to the efforts of Craig Freeman, we will be visiting the Nature Conservancy's



Monument Rocks

Smoky Valley Ranch on Saturday, May 3rd. This 16,800 acre ranch is located southwest of Oakley in Logan County. It is a prime example of short-grass prairie and has scenic chalk bluffs and rocky ravines. Native Americans, U.S. Cavalry, Charles Fremont, Kit Carson, and Wild Bill Hickok passed through Smoky Valley Ranch, and the Butterfield stage line stopped at a way station located on the ranch. In the late 1800s, nearly a hundred African-American families settled on and around the ranch. The KNPS directors will hold our spring board meeting at the ranch headquarters in the morning. That afternoon, KNPS will hear from ranch manager Matt Bain and will have an opportunity to do some botanizing on the ranch.

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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.



President's Message

Continued from Page 1

The following morning, May 4th, we hope to explore Scott State Park and nearby areas north of Scott City. This 1,020 acre park surrounds the beautiful spring-fed Scott State Fishing Lake and hosts a great diversity of plant species.

El Cuartelejo ruins, a National Historic Landmark that was the site of the northernmost pueblo in the United States is located within the park as well as the Steele Homestead Museum.

The outings on both May 3rd and 4th are open to all KNPS members as well as interested guests and will be a great opportunity to see short-grass prairie flora.

Monument Rocks are near both of these locations. If you have never had an opportunity to visit that site,



Monument Rocks

it is definitely worth a trip! We do not yet have all the details finalized; so watch the KNPS website for additional information in the next few weeks.

Our summer board meeting will be held in north central Kansas on July 12th. There will be a field outing that morning at a 640 acre native grass pasture near the Ottawa County State Fishing Lake. This outing will be open to KNPS members and guests, and we hope to have a good turnout.

Staff at the Minneapolis Public Library have graciously agreed to host the board of directors meeting that afternoon.

Please mark September 19-21 on your calendars for the Kansas Native Plant Society's 36th Annual Wildflower Weekend. Outings will be in the Pratt area with our Saturday business meeting and program at Pratt Community College.

We are lining up some fun social activities and are exploring the possibility of having a bus or two available to help transport participants to our botanizing sites.

Many of our KNPS member regions hold local events; so watch our KNPS website for information about those activities. As well, many of the member regions have developed Facebook pages with beautiful photos, educational information, and event announcements. These pages and the contact information for your region's leaders may be found on the Member Regions section of the KNPS website. KNPS events are always fun and are a great way to make new friends. We hope you will be able to join us for some of this year's activities!



Lake Scott State Park



View of antelope, a possible sight during the spring trip.



Landscaping: Replacements for the Callery Pear

Text and Photos by Jeff Hansen

Instead of focusing on a native plant or group of native plants, I feel obligated to discuss what I consider one of the most invasive introduced trees in Kansas. It's known as the Callery pear, but most people know it by one of its named varieties, the Bradford pear. The scientific name of the Callery Pear is *Pyrus calleryana*. Its many named varieties include: Aristocrat, Bradford, Jaczam, and Cleveland Select. It is native to China. White flowers are produced in the spring, followed by hard pea-sized fruit. The leaves are glossy green. The form of the tree is dependent on the variety, but most are globe shaped with a single trunk. Mature size is 20 to 40 feet tall.

When only one variety was originally introduced, the trees did not produce fruit as the trees were all clones and the flowers needed cross-pollination to set fruit. More varieties were introduced and cross-pollination was successful. The tree has been so over used in street plantings and landscaping that once trees produced fruit, it was the start to another invasive species nightmare. The invasion pressed forward because birds relished the fruit and spread it to other areas. Once these trees matured, they set seed and the invasion expanded exponentially. Of course the bird that relishes the fruit probably more than any other is the European starling, another invasive species.

Another "quality" of the Callery pear is that it is virtually pest free. The fact that no insects dine on its leaves means the plants can grow with no natural enemies. Because they support no insects other than pollinating ones, rarely will our native birds be found gleaning the plants for insects.

I used to think the blooming of the pear trees in the spring was a beautiful sight. And they can be beautiful trees. But now that I know the damage they do to the natural world, I cringe every time I see a Callery Pear. It seems to be the tree of choice for almost all subdivisions.

Do you have a Callery Pear growing on your property? My suggestion is to pull a "George Washington" and chop down the pear tree. You will be doing the natural world a favor by removing it. Once removed, you should consider planting a native tree that also has flowers in the spring. Ones I would suggest are:

- Mexican Plum (*Prunus mexicana*), a Kansas native similar to American plum but doesn't sucker
- Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*), native to

south east Kansas but adapted elsewhere

- Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), native to Kansas



Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*)

- Hawthorn (*Crataegus* spp.), *C. mollis* is our most common native species
- Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*), mostly found on the eastern edge of Kansas but adapted elsewhere

Other native trees that are of comparable size to consider as replacements are:

- American Hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*)
- Western Buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*)
- Black Jack Oak (*Quercus marilandica*)
- Western Soapberry (*Sapindus drummondii*)
- Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*)

The native trees are beautiful, are part of the natural world, and will improve our landscapes and the wildlife that lives among us. Whenever you are considering planting a tree, determine its native origin. Don't trust salespeople. Do your own research. Someone can say, "yes its native" and not be lying.

All plants are native to somewhere. Select plants that are native to Kansas, or native to the United States.



Serviceberry blossom



America's Champion Soapberry Tree Text and Photos by Ken O'Dell

Kansas is noted for wide open spaces, grassland prairies, Flint Hill's flora, but not for their trees. It seems unusual that the American Champion Soapberry Tree would be in the state of Kansas. What makes a Champion Tree? The circumference of the trunk is measured 54 inches above the ground. The height and spread of the tree is measured or estimated. Points are given for each of these. Go to the Kansas Forest Service <http://www.kansasforests.org/about/championtrees.shtml> at Kansas State University for a complete explanation.

America's Champion Soapberry is a fantastic tree that has withstood the dust bowl days, extreme droughts, disease, and civilization. Soapberry is also known as Western Soapberry and Chinaberry. The scientific name is *Sapindus saponaria variety drummondii*. *Sapindus* comes from *sapo indicus* or Indian Soap. *Saponaria* also indicates soap. The variety *drummondii* is in honor of the botanist Thomas Drummond, 1780 -1835.

The giant Soapberry that is crowned as the United States Champion Soapberry Tree is located at Ridgeview and 106th Street in Olathe, Kansas. The tree is located about 40 feet behind the John Deere

sign. This is a well-landscaped office complex with many native plants and trees. It is obvious that excellent care is given to this champion tree. The location is twelve big blocks north of the Johnson County Extension Office. It is easy to park in the John Deere lot and walk to the tree from the lot. A new concrete sidewalk will lead you to it. A plaque tells you it is the Champion Tree.



Soapberry flowers

Large clusters of creamy-white flowers in late June and early July cover the tree on every small branch. When it comes to reproduction, Soapberry is polygamous, having some flowers with stamens (male parts) only and some flowers with pistils (female parts) only and some flowers with both parts. The flowers produce shiny, round, lime green fruits one-half inch in diameter. The fruits change to a shiny, metallic light golden color when ripe. At that time you can see one black seed through the seed coat.



Soapberry fruits on the tree



Soapberry Tree Structure



Soapberry ripe fruits and seeds

It resembles a big fish egg. The seed coat is nearly clear and the black seed is easy to see. The seed coat is tough and difficult to tear with your fingers.



America's Champion Soapberry Tree *Continued from Page 4*

You can snip the seed coat with clippers and then it will open easily. When you break the seed coat the mostly clear gel will ooze out and this is the soap if you choose to wash your hands with it. It is reported some persons may be allergic to this soap.



Washing with Soapberries

Soapberry trees are found growing in groves near hillsides, prairie ravines, and the edge of woodlands.

This American Champion Soapberry tree lost one of its large limbs last year as age and weight of the branch decided to take its toll. The maintenance crew quickly trimmed the broken limb and sealed it. Now it

looks as good as new despite the fact that mechanical damage such as this never heals.



Champion Soapberry Tree

If you stop to see this magnificent old stalwart of Mother Nature, say hello to it and ask it what it has seen for the past 100 to 150 years of its life. A trunk circumference of ten and one-half feet, a height of sixty feet, makes this a fantastic tree to look at and wonder how many kids played under it over the past years and how many people (including me) had never seen one until I saw this giant.



Stewardship of Native Plants and Natural Areas

By Krista Dahlinger

While looking for native plant stewardship activities to report, I became aware of a native planting project at a school in my hometown. Vicky Hilgers teaches sixth grade in the Mulvane School District, where all classrooms have windows that face an interior courtyard. The courtyard vegetation consists of grass and young trees. Mrs. Hilgers' students have been watching birds visit several feeders, and have learned to identify and count them, and record observation dates. She has been interested in planting native plants in the courtyard to attract additional birds, butterflies and other pollinators and insects for her students to observe. Establishing a native plant garden, from seed, will be an ongoing project. Along the way students will learn to determine percentage of germination, reasons for soil improvement, identification of, and caring for young plants. As the native

plant garden grows, all students in the school will be able to look out their classroom windows at the seasonal growth, blooming and seeding of the plants, as well as the interaction of birds and insects that come to spend time in the garden. The students involved in the project will be able to realize the importance of their actions in a relationship with plants, animals and insects.

Please be sure to visit the Calendar of Events on the KNPS web page to see if there are local events you can participate in to provide stewardship of native plants and natural areas. There are regularly scheduled restoration projects in several places and "spring cleaning" opportunities. If you are involved in a native plant project at a park or natural plant area, please let me know about it by emailing me at email@ksnps.org.

2014 Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events

Information provided by Kansas Native Plant Society, see more events on our website:
www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org

Please share this information and contact us about additional events to note. Thank you! [email@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!

 **April 17:** Overland Park Arboretum Spring Wildflower Walk, 10am-noon. The Kansas City Region of the Kansas Native Plant Society is conducting a woodland walk at the Overland Park Arboretum, led by experienced botanists. Participants can expect to see over thirty species of flowers as well as native trees, shrubs and vines. The trails have steep sections and may be muddy if it has rained recently; so good boots and jeans are recommended. An admission fee of \$3 is charged for entrance to the garden unless you are a member of Friends of the Arboretum. Contact: Lenora Larson <Lenora.longlips@gmail.com> (913) 284-3360.

April 19: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. Volunteer prairie maintenance and preservation projects, third Saturday each month except Dec. [www.grasslandheritage.org]. Wear appropriate clothing. No special skills or tools needed. For details, please contact Frank Norman <fnorman@sunflower.com> (785) 887-6775 (home) or (785) 691-9748 (cell).

April 19th & 26th: Missouri Prairie Foundation Spring Plant Sales 8am - noon. Location: City Market, 5th & Walnut, Kansas City, MO. [http://www.moprairie.org] (888) 843-6739.

April 19: Chisholm Creek Park Honeysuckle Removal, Wichita, KS. The Great Plains Nature Center and the City of Wichita Park Department are conducting a half-day event to remove bush honeysuckle at Chisholm Creek Park in northeast Wichita. Bush honeysuckle is a woody invasive non-native plant that aggressively out-competes native shrubs and trees. It degrades wildlife habitat, reduces species diversity, and can prevent regeneration of Kansas' native forests. This work project will improve the health and long-term survival of the riparian forest within the park. The event is from 8am to noon. Bring gloves (leather work gloves are best) and a spade shovel for digging out the plants. Small honeysuckle plants are easily pulled because of their shallow roots. Meet at the main GPNC parking lot at 6232 E. 29th Street North. A hotdog/hamburger lunch will be provided afterwards for participants. Sponsor: Great Plains Nature Center. Please RSVP so we have an accurate head count for lunch! Contact: Jim Mason <jim@gpnc.org> (316) 683-5499 x103.

April 19:  Wyandotte County Lake Park Spring Wildflowers, 1pm. Join Elizabeth Petroske in exploring the woodland wildflowers at Wyandotte County Lake Park. The park's oak-hickory woodlands are full of a variety of wildflowers. Meet up in the main parking lot by the Park office, 91st Street and Leavenworth Road, Kansas City, KS. Take the left fork when you come in the 91st entrance at the south end of the Park. The terrain is rugged so boots and jeans are recommended. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Contact: Elizabeth Petroske epetroske@hotmail.com.

April 22:  Friends of Konza Prairie Spring Program will be held on Earth Day, Tuesday, April 22, at 7:00 pm at the Beach Art Museum on the KSU Campus, Anderson at 14th Street. The event is sponsored by FOKP, in collaboration with the Beach Art Museum, KSU Departments of English, Landscape Architecture & Community Planning, Claflin Books & Copies, and Kansas Native Plant Society.

April 23:  Presentation: Wildflower Slideshow & Guide to Growing Native Plants, Emporia, KS. Join KNPS's Emporia Region Leader & wildflower expert, Glenn Fell, for a slideshow of native wildflowers found in the Emporia area, 6:30pm. He will also give advice on growing native plants as well as information about the Kansas Native Plant Society. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Meet at the Emporia Public Library, 110 E 6th Ave. Contact Glenn if you plan to attend. Contact: Glenn Fell <glenfell13@gmail.com> (620) 794 8478.

April 24-28:  FloraKansas Great Plains Plant Bazaar, sponsored by Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, KS. [www.dyckarboretum.org] <arboretum@Hesston.edu> (620) 327-8127.

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2014 Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events—Continued

April 26:  Webster Reservoir Wildflower Walk in Stockton, KS, 10am-noon. Join KNPS region leader Chelsea Erickson and her husband Donald at Webster Reservoir to observe wildflowers. Park staff recently expanded Coyote Trail so there are new opportunities to explore! Join us for a wonderful outdoor experience! The group will congregate at the park's northeast entrance headquarters building at 10am. Bring a picnic lunch if you wish to continue exploring the area beyond the allotted time period. Wear appropriate clothing and shoes for hiking, bring plenty of water, and wear sunscreen. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Webster Reservoir is located just south of Highway 24, about 8 miles west of Stockton, 1210 Nine Rd. A State Park permit is required to enter the park. Contact Chelsea if you plan to attend. Contact: Chelsea Erickson <cjuricek@hotmail.com> (620) 290-3918

May 3-4:  Kansas Native Plant Society Spring Weekend, Board Meeting and Outings in Logan and Scott Counties. Explore The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Smoky Valley Ranch (SVR) and Lake Scott State Park (LSSP). May 3 the KNPS board meeting will be held at the conference area of shop at ranch headquarters, 10am-noon. At 1pm Matt Bain will provide an overview of work TNC is doing at the ranch. From 1:30-5:30 we will carpool to several ranch sites to see shortgrass and mixed-grass prairies and riparian habitats. Lodging is available in Oakley and Scott City. On May 4, meet at LSSP Barrel Springs Trout Pond parking area near the south entrance to the state park at 9am. We will hear instructions and carpool before entering the park. Tentative plans are to hike (9:15am-1pm) the Big Springs Nature Trail and then the Timber Canyon areas, including Suicide Bluffs. **Note:** state park permit or day pass fee required for LSSP. Directions to SVR: Travel south of Oakley on Highway 83 11 miles. Head west on Seneca Road 7 miles. Turn south again on 370th Road, travel approximately 7 miles until you reach the ranch headquarters entrance sign. Note: The address for the headquarters is for the mail box which is 5 miles from the headquarters. As of 2/16/14 the Google map marker is incorrect. Contact Craig Freeman <ccfree@ku.edu> (785) 864-3453

May 3:  Wyandotte County Lake Park Spring Wildflowers, 1pm. Join Elizabeth Petroske in exploring the woodland wildflowers at Wyandotte County Lake Park. The park's oak-hickory woodlands are full of a variety of wildflowers. Meet up in the main parking lot by the Park office, 91st Street and Leavenworth Road, Kansas City, KS. Take the left fork when you come in the 91st entrance at the South end of the Park. The terrain is rugged so boots and jeans are recommended. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Contact: Elizabeth Petroske <epetroske@hotmail.com>

May 5:  Woodland Wildflower Walk along Shunga Creek in Topeka, 6:30pm. See spring woodland flowers in the woods along Shunga Creek. Volunteers have been clearing Amur honeysuckle from the woods since 2010. This invasive shrub eliminates the native wildflowers. With the honeysuckle gone, the native plants will rebound. Some flowers we should see include: blue phlox, Virginia waterleaf, paw paw, violets, and others. Sponsor: Kansas Native Plant Society. Meet at the Felker Park parking lot at the Tennis Courts at 2540 SW Gage Blvd. RSVP Jeff if you plan to attend. Contact: Jeff Hansen <hanjd@cox.net> (785) 806-6917

May 10:  Barber County Wildflower Tour. Meet at the Medicine Lodge High School, 8:30am. Enjoy continental breakfast and slides of flowers we expect to see. Buses will provide transportation. Morning participants will return to the school at noon. Full-day participants will enjoy a delicious lunch and entertainment at a tree-shaded country park. Ride through the beautiful gyp hills to a second site. Refreshments will be served before we return to the school around 3:30pm. Barber Co. Conservation District and Kansas Native Plant Society are co-sponsors. Pre-paid reservations should be sent before May 6th, \$8 half-day, \$15 full-day. Barber Co Conservation, 800 W. 3rd Ave. Medicine Lodge, KS 67104-8002, Courtney Pilkington <pilkington@ks.nacdn.net>, phone (620) 886-3721, ext. 3.

May 10:  Restoration of The Prairie Center & Survey of Wildflowers, Olathe, KS. Come learn about the history and methods used to restore and maintain the prairies at Olathe Prairie Center from Elaine Neelly-Hudlin, the Prairie Manager, 9-11am. The presentation will be followed by surveying areas in the 300 acre prairie for wild flowers. We will meet in the parking lot behind the stone house on 135th and Cedar Niles Rd. Address: 26235 West 135th Street. Sponsored by Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism & Kansas Native Plant Society. Contact: Edna Hamera <ednahamera@gmail.com> 913-963-9149.

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2014 Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events—Continued

May 10:  Old Military Trail Wildflower Walk, Ozawkie, KS. Meet at 1pm at Casey's (150 Main St.) in Ozawkie to carpool to the trail head, as parking is limited. The trail is rich with spring woodland wildflowers. We should see woodland phlox, may apples, and Virginia waterleaf just to name a few. Sponsor: **Kansas Native Plant Society**. If you plan to attend, please contact: Fred or Nancy Coombs <coombs@rainbowtel.net> (785) 872-3463.

May 17:  Webster Reservoir Wildflower Walk in Stockton, KS, 10am-noon. See April 26 for details.

May 17:  Tuttle Creek Lake Spring Wildflower Walk, 10am-noon. Plan to be a part of the spring wildflower walk at Tuttle Creek Lake, led by KNPS guides. This is an opportunity to see and learn about the spring flowers of the Flint Hills. Each participant will receive a free copy of A Pocket Guide to Kansas Flint Hills Wildflowers and Grasses to use during the hike and then take home. So we will know how many to expect for the outing, please pre-register with UFM Community Learning Center (785) 539-8763 or <info@tryufm.org>. There is no registration fee. Sponsor: Tuttle Creek Lake and **Kansas Native Plant Society**. Tuttle Creek Lake Visitor's Center 5020 Tuttle Creek Blvd, Manhattan, KS. Contact: Paul Weidhaas <paul.k.weidhaas@usace.army.mil> (785) 539-8511.

May 17: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Apr 19 info.

May 24:  Concordia Wildflower Tour, 1pm. This is an opportunity to explore a privately owned, preserved native area in north central Kansas! There is no charge and anyone can join the tour. Follow a KNPS guide and tour the property to discover wildflowers, native grasses, sedges, trees, shrubs, and more. The rare "Fremont's Clematis" can be found on this property. Bring a camera and a snack if you choose. Meet in the SE corner of the Concordia Walmart Parking Lot for introductions and follow a caravan to the tour site. We will leave the parking lot at 1pm. If you are late or prefer to drive directly to the site, you may follow these directions from Concordia: Go south on Hwy 81 three miles to Noble Road. Turn and go east on Noble Road for 1.5 miles to 160th Road. Go south on 160th road for 2.5 miles. The property will be on the left, look for the American Flag. Sponsor: **Kansas Native Plant Society**. Contact: Nadine Champlin <nadinechamplin@yahoo.com> (785) 285-0054.

May 31: Rock Springs Annual Wildflower Walk, Junction City, KS. Come and see the colorful spring wildflowers at Rock Springs 4-H Center, 9am-2:20pm! Rock Springs is located just south and west of Junction City, KS (1168 K-157 Hwy) and consists of over 735 acres of land in the gorgeous Flint Hills. One of the most unique features of Rock Springs is the 2nd largest natural spring in Kansas that supplies 1,000 gallons of water a minute! The Wildflower Walk will include morning snacks, a hot lunch at the dining hall, and a guided wildflower ID and info walk, for a cost per participant of \$20. Registration form is available on KNPS events webpage or request from contact here. Sponsor: Rock Springs 4-H Center. Contact: <jwilson@rocksprings.net> (785) 257-3221.

June 1-30:  June is Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month! Each year **Kansas Native Plant Society** makes a formal appeal to the Governor for June to be proclaimed as Kansas Native Plant Appreciation Month. This opportunity promotes greater appreciation for the diversity, value, and beauty of Kansas native plants and their habitats. [www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org].

June 7: Birds, Butterflies and Breakfast at Chaplin Nature Center, Arkansas City, KS. There is nothing better than breakfast on a shady porch surrounded by the beauty of nature. After a hearty breakfast we will hike the trails of CNC in search of birds, butterflies and wildflowers, 8:30-10am. Call to make a reservation by June 3. A donation of \$5 is suggested. Sponsor: Wichita Audubon Society. Leader: <cnc@wichitaudubon.org> (620) 442-4133

June 7:  Webster Reservoir Wildflower Walk in Stockton, KS, 10am-noon. See April 26 for details.

June 8:  Chase County State Lake Prairie Walk, Cottonwood Falls, KS. Join us at 9am at Chase County State Lake to see amazing amounts of wildflowers, especially butterfly milkweed. This will be a leisurely informal walk to enjoy the wonders of the prairie and identify native flora. Glenn Fell will be the official "guide" but everyone's knowledge will be called upon for an informal and fun experience. This is a KNPS Emporia Region event. Please RSVP Glenn if you plan to attend. The lake is located 2 miles west of Cottonwood Falls 1130 Lake Road. Sponsor: **Kansas Native Plant Society**. Contact: Glenn Fell <glennfell13@gmail.com> (620) 794 8478.

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2014 Kansas Area Native Plant & Wildflower Events—Continued

June 12:  Identifying Native Trees at Wallace Park, Paola, KS. Kansas State Forester Kim Bomberger will conduct a two-hour stroll (10am-noon) through Wallace Park which contains many magnificent, mature specimen trees that are native to our area. Afterwards, KNPS members are welcome to join us for a brown bag lunch and tree-planting workshop at the Extension Office. Sponsor: MI CO Extension Master Gardeners. Contact: Lenora Larson <lenora.longlips@gmail.com> (913) 284-3360 .

June 21: Grassland Heritage Foundation Groundhogs. See Apr 19 info.

June 21:  Tuttle Creek Lake Summer Wildflower Walk, 10am-noon. See May 17 for details.

June 21:  Coombs Prairie Restoration Tour in Holton, KS. Tour Fred and Nancy Coombs' ongoing restoration of native grasses and forbs on their 157-year-old family farm at 1pm. Highlights include reseeding of old fields, patch burning, and timber stand improvement. Directions: 6 miles east of Holton on K-116, right on X Rd, right on 222nd Road, 3/8ths mile to driveway on the right, 18160 222nd Road. Sponsor: **Kansas Native Plant Society**. Contact: Fred or Nancy Coombs <coombs@rainbowtel.net> (785) 872-3463 .

June 28:  The Prairie Center Wildflower Walk, Olathe, KS. Come see the 300 acre prairie wild flowers and spring grasses and learn the history of the Prairie Center, 9-11am. Leaders: Edna Hamera and Michael Miller. The prairie is located west of Olathe on Santa Fe which becomes 135th street. We will meet in the parking lot by the stone house at 135th and Cedar Niles Rd. Address: 26235 West 135th Street. Sponsored by the **Kansas Native Plant Society** and Sierra Club. You will need to sign a liability waiver for the Sierra club. Please wear sturdy shoes, sun and insect protection. For questions please contact Edna Hamera <ednahamera@gmail.com> (913) 856-7669.

June 28:  Webster Reservoir Wildflower Walk in Stockton, KS, 10am-noon. Join KNPS region leader Chelsea Erickson and her husband Donald at Webster Reservoir to observe wildflowers. Park staff recently expanded Coyote Trail so there are new opportunities to explore! Join us for a wonderful outdoor experience! The group will congregate at the park's northeast entrance headquarters building at 10am. Bring a picnic lunch if you wish to continue exploring the area beyond the allotted time period. Wear appropriate clothing and shoes for hiking, bring plenty of water, and wear sunscreen. Sponsor: **Kansas Native Plant Society**. Webster Reservoir is located just south of Highway 24, about 8 miles west of Stockton, 1210 Nine Rd. A State Park permit is required to enter the park. Contact Chelsea if you plan to attend. Contact: Chelsea Erickson <cjuricek@hotmail.com> (620) 290-3918 .

July 9: Grass Management and Weed Control - Pasture Management Session #5 of 7, Longford, KS. Being a good grass manager is the key to long term sustainability. Many times problems can be avoided by using proper stocking rates, seasonal grass evaluations, and rainfall monitoring. Controlling problematic weeds early with a variety of techniques will also be discussed. This class will be from 7:30-11am. Sponsored by Cloud County Co-op & K-State Research and Extension. Lunch Sponsored by American AgCredit. \$15/person for individual sessions. More Info: Pasture Management Series Brochure linked on KNPS events webpage. Contact: <robinreid@ksu.edu> (785) 325-2121 .

July 12:  **Kansas Native Plant Society** Summer Board Meeting and Outing in Minneapolis, KS. There will be a field outing from 10am noon at a 640 acre pasture near the Ottawa County State Lake. The Board meeting will be held at Minneapolis Public Library 1-3pm. Food is allowed, so folks may bring sack lunches if they so desire. There is also a microwave available. Please contact KNPS President Mike Haddock for more information <haddock@ksu.edu> (785) 776-0680.



Tech Notes

By Mickey Delfelter

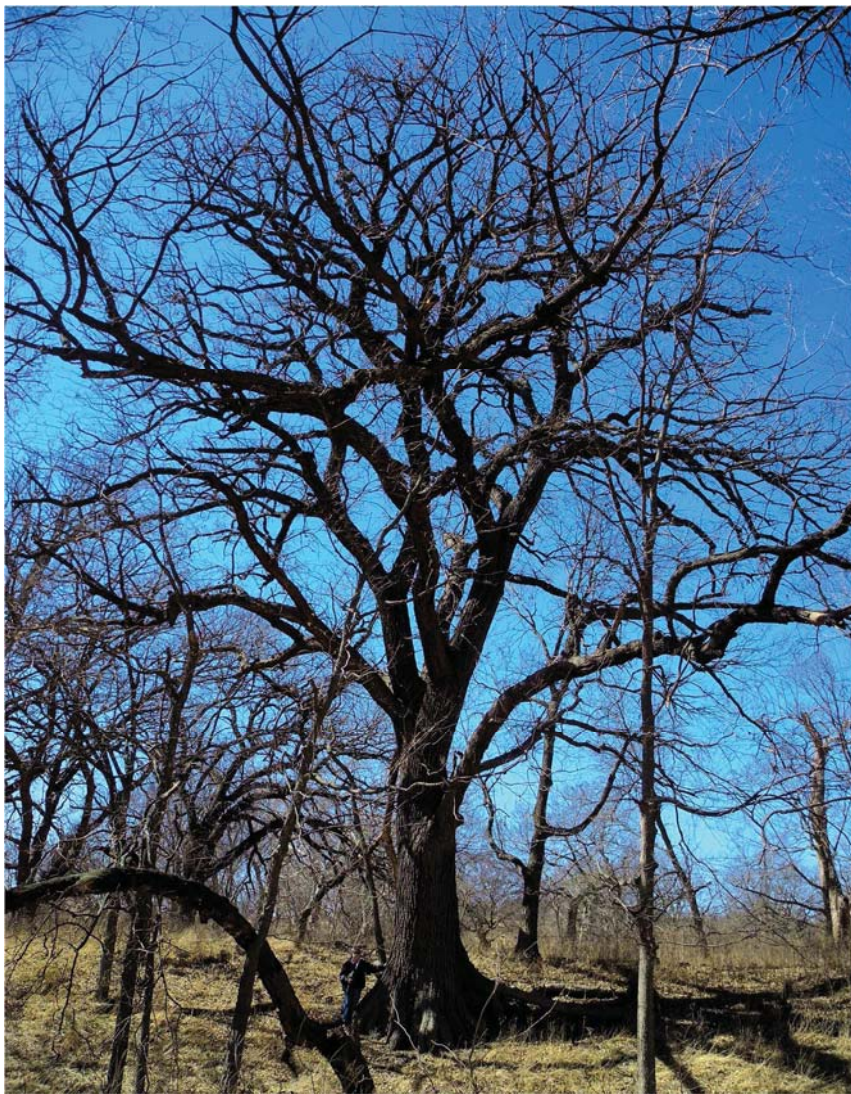
We all enjoy the wildflower tours that KNPS and our fellow nature-related organizations love to host each year. But what if you live in a region that does not host an event? Or what if you host one and would like to boost your attendance? Information on the KNPS website can help with both of those issues. Check out our *Guide to Hosting a Wildflower Tour* by clicking on “Host a Wildflower Tour” in the left column on the front page of our website. And don't forget to submit events to the KNPS online calendar for maximum exposure.



The Bur Oaks (and Their Neighbors) of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

Text and Photos by Iralee Barnard

More than most trees, oaks hold symbolic value. They symbolize strength and endurance. Both impressive and inspirational, their aura of timelessness may come from the fact that they grow slowly, developing a solid structure to persist through many hardships thus providing a sense of permanence.



15th largest Bur Oak, 14'5" circumference, 67' tall, 91' spread
Note the hiker at the base of the tree, for size comparison

As groves or as individual trees, oaks around the world have served as communal sites for rituals, treaties, and festivals. The name of one Kansas town in the Flint Hills bears witness to this--Council Grove. Heritage trees such as the Council Oak and Post Office Oak played an important role in the settling of Kansas. In Council Grove, native bur oaks are still honored as living monuments to Kansas history. Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve lies 20 miles south of Council Grove. Here too, historic bur oaks may be found.

According to the Kansas Natural Heritage Inventory, high-quality floodplain tallgrass prairies and riparian areas are rare plant communities in Kansas. Historical survey records from 1856 indicate that at the time of early European settlement riparian forests were a characteristic part of the prairie ecosystem in Chase County, Kansas. An 1883 artist's representation depicts the creeks at Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Chase County as heavily wooded.

Riparian forests on Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve today have important implications for stream water quality and as habitat for wildlife. Currently riparian forest covers approximately 2.7 percent of the preserve. These forests are found along two creeks with a combined span of 4.5 miles.

Palmer Creek is clear and rocky, with shallow riffles. The water originates from many springs and runoff from surrounding native prairie pastures. The deep soils of the Reading series are suitable for tree growth. Bitternut hickory, *Cary cordiformis*, is well established on Palmer Creek. This hickory adapts to dryer conditions and extends west beyond others of the genus. Lower Fox Creek has a more permanent flow and a broader valley. The Ivan silt loam soils on Fox Creek are excellent for mixed hardwood trees. The dominant tree on Fox Creek is hackberry, *Celtis occidentalis*. Hackberry is a broadly distributed, hardy tree that adapts itself to a wide range of soils, though it prefers rich, moist, well-drained soils.

Of the all forest trees found on the preserve, the most notable by size are sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis*, and *Quercus macrocarpa*, bur oak. Sycamore is a characteristic tree of bottomland, and individual trees are widely scattered. Round fruit balls and exceptionally large leaves identify this tree. The distinctive white inner bark is exposed when the thin red-brown outer bark peels away. One large sycamore along lower Fox Creek has served as a great blue heron rookery for many years.

Continued on Page 11



The Bur Oaks (and Their Neighbors) of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

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Bur oak is the most common oak of Kansas and the prairie states. It never grows in dense stands, but individually or in groups. Seldom more than 80 feet high or 3 feet in diameter, U.S. record trees are 170 feet to 180 feet tall and 6 feet broad at the upper half. Leaves are dark green above and silvery green and downy below. In May blossoms of both sexes appear as the leaves unfold. The scientific name *macrocarpa* means large fruit and refers to the large, edible nut. The acorns are 1-2 inches long. The conspicuous awns on the cup scales suggest the common names bur oak and mossycup oak. The bark of older trees can be $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to 2 inches thick and gives the trees protection from fire damage. Bur oaks can reach a great age and are not considered mature before 200-300 years.

By measuring a dead bur oak that had fallen along Palmer Creek, it was estimated that the tree died in 1987 and its sprout date was approximately 1847, making it 140 years old. This tree measured 8 feet in circumference without its bark. By comparison, the largest bur oak on the Preserve measures 17 feet 5 inches circumference. There are 39 bur oaks at Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve that measure 10 feet or more in circumference.

Nine of the extant bur oak trees in nearby Council Grove are believed to date to the 1700s, with the earliest sprout date of circa 1715. The famed Council Oak was 259 years old with a 16 feet circumference at the time it was blown down during a wind storm in 1958. More of the local historic trees might remain today, but many trees in the original mile-wide grove were used for building, fuel, and repairs on the Santa Fe Trail.



The 21st largest Bur Oak, 11'5" circumference, 62' tall, 76' spread

Because of their location on the Neosho River, the second largest river in Kansas, the trees at Council Grove may be larger for their age than trees growing on drier, smaller creeks at Tallgrass Preserve. Therefore, a tree on Tallgrass Preserve of the same circumference could be older. It is impossible to make an exact age comparison by size but important to recognize that some of the living oaks in the Flint Hills may predate settlement by a century or more.

The Kansas Forest Service maintains a database of champion trees of Kansas. The record bur oak in Kansas with a circumference of 19 feet 11 inches is located in Pottawatomie County. I first documented the huge oaks of Tallgrass Preserve in 2007. I revisited them in March of 2014 to see how they fared with the prolonged drought. They are doing well. In 1945 Albertson and Weaver reported that bur oak endured the 1933-

40 drought better than most other Kansas tree species because of deep, widely spread, and branching roots. The weight of the root system equals that of the top.

Some large trees at Tallgrass Preserve

Tree	Circumference	Location
Cottonwood	5.60 m (18' 5")	Fox Cr
Hackberry	4.62 m (15' 2")	Palmer Cr
Green Ash	4.46 m (14' 8")	Palmer Cr
Silver Maple	4.14 m (13' 7")	Fox Cr
Honey Locust	2.50 m (8' 2")	Palmer Cr
Kentucky Coffee	2.44 m (8')	Red House
Black Walnut	2.40 m (7' 10")	Fox Cr
Box Elder	2.34 m (7' 8")	Red House
Bitternut Hickory	2.30 m (7' 6")	Fox Cr

The big, old trees on Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve each stand out as individuals. Many have massive gnarled arms spreading out low, parallel to the ground. But others stand tall with a single strong, straight trunk. Some are sharply leaning. A couple of giants cling to the eroded bank with huge angled roots exposed. Two have been deeply girdled by wires. One has a deep scar down its trunk where lightning ripped out a strip of wood. Another has a broad, blackened fire scar up one side. In an ecosystem where grasses have long reigned, these distinctive heirloom trees are truly special.



Historical Letter

Here is a letter written in 1966 by an avid fan of the wildflowers of Kansas, Elizabeth Waite. KNPS member Joyce Fent shares this letter she received from Elizabeth that takes us back to the wildflower world of the 1960's in Kansas. We not only get to experience Elizabeth's joy at treasure-hunting for native plants, but also her unique contact with a woman who was a part of Lady Bird Johnson's wildflower project.

We have information about Elizabeth from a brief biography written in 1963 by Verna Fowler, president of the Salina Garden Club. We learn that Elizabeth's family operated a green house in Salina for many years. She was not only a plant person, but also "keenly interested in all historical and geological information." Fowler concludes, "She is our authority on the wild flowers we see when we go to the country."

While preparing the letter for the newsletter, we have added in parentheses the scientific names that were used in the 1960's.

Dear Friends,

I am still enjoying the memories of Friday night. I had never heard of the Broomrape (*Orobanchaceae*) being here—excepting once I thought Mrs. Fent said you had found some. I wasn't sure I'd heard correctly. I have May 5, 1962, in Ellsworth County, and May 7, 1961, in the pasture south of Upper Mills Heights, for the Blue Funnel-lilies (*Androstephium caeruleum*). Do you folks have the Spring Beauty (*Clatonia virginica*), also the *Evolvulus nuttallianus*? I envy you being near the fields at the right times.

After the Hawks built 3 miles south of the airport, two cars of us went to help identify what we saw. This is where I saw the Nuttall's Evolulus—while the book says "May--June," we saw it in August. I found *Berlandiera Texana* (sunflower) at Venango Point at Kanopolis Lake (not supposed to be this far north). Somewhere southeast of Salina, I think we had passed Gypsum. While just wandering September 22, 1963, we found the Blue Mud Plantain (*Heteranther limosa*)—this little pond was edged with Violet Boltonia (*Boltonia latisquama*), which gave me two new ones.

If you have never seen a field of Lamberti crazyweed (*Oxytropis lambertii*), May 30th, 1965, we saw a field a few miles north of McPherson. Attractive and pretty, but when you read about the damage it can do, you wonder why someone didn't use a mower. When you see new ones, you always want to share with someone who cares.

I am like you; after I've seen something once, then I'll see it often. I'm sure that many times the plants were there, but I hadn't recognized them. Last spring, east on Iron Ore Road, several miles out, we found the ditch was full of blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium compestre*). The prairie west of Calvary Cemetery used to be a good hunting ground. A little rocky field northwest of Brookville gave me the first Skullcap (*Scutellaria*).

Last week I had a few minutes talk with a lady who is classifying the plants on L.B.J's ranch in Texas, and "pressing" the best plants for a book. We only got 30 good ones last March or April; 30 in October but will go out in May this year—where she should do wonders. She is a retired teacher from a university in Texas. She lives in the guest house and has a chauffeur. This is Lady-bird's project.

I had never heard of blue birds staying all winter. Here you had them and the deer. I have not seen a deer here.

Thank you for a wonderful evening, and a lovely bouquet.

Elizabeth Wait

April 11, 1966



Featured Plant: Carolina anemone (*Anemone caroliniana*)

Text by Lorraine J. Kaufman, Illustration by Lorna Habegger Harder



Carolina Anemone (*Anemone caroliniana*)

On a gorgeous late May morning last year, I was searching through the old section of the cemetery of the First Mennonite Church in Moundridge for the Carolina anemone (*Anemone caroliniana*). I'd spotted anemones the prior year, but just briefly before the inevitable annual Memorial Day mowing that whacked them and everything else taller than two inches. There! I'd reached them before the mowers! Swaying in the breeze inches away from a grave-stone were several slim 5-7 inch stems topped with a single head of many showy purplish sepals and yellow anthers. How lovely! How captivating!

These marvelous natives, memorably described by John Madson in his book *Where the Sky Began -- Land of the Tall Grass Prairie*, are often called wind flowers. They grow in shallow, drier soil in the eastern four-fifths of Kansas. Their leaves cluster at ground level and are deeply divided into three lobes with toothed margins. Their solitary showy flowers rise on stems rarely taller than eight inches and bloom in April and May, opening during bright daylight hours and closing on cloudy days.

Old cemeteries are great locations to look for lonely remnants of our native prairies. Established early in pioneer days and never plowed or grazed, cemeteries retain original plant populations impacted only by mowing. Let your feet lead you in search of these charmers some time in your local cemetery or favorite prairie. Consider how these simple prairie flowers brought solace to the early pioneers grieving an untimely death. And then lobby the cemetery's management to let these native flowers continue to decorate grave sites instead of aggressively mowing them down.



Membership News

NEW MEMBERS

FROM 12/16/13 TO 3/15/14

Darlene Arnett - Raymore, MO
James Beck - Wichita
Nancy Clark - Shawnee
Patrick Claycomb - Wichita
Kelly Haller - Topeka
Joe Holland - Iowa City, IA
Lance Jessee - Kansas City, MO
Margarete Johnson - Lawrence
Tom Johnson - Overland Park
Courtney Masterson - Lawrence

Rob McMinn - Wichita

Brenda Rew - Louisburg

Catherine Schmidt - Rose Hill

Shana Schmidt - Wamego

Dick & Martha Seaton - Manhattan

Neil Snow - Pittsburg

William Stuhlsatz - Wichita

Ken Tillery - Topeka

Sheryl VanDoren - Wichita

Elizabeth Wigglesworth - Dwight

Anthony Zukoff - Holcomb

MEMBERS RETURNING AFTER A HIATUS

Mary K. McKenney - Wichita

Andrew Wright - Denver, CO

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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 of the following year.

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

Kansas Native Plant Society
R. L. McGregor Herbarium
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©(3) organization. Gifts to KNPS are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Membership application/renewal form

Member information

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Membership Category

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