

## Timmons Grant gives Homestead Plans a Headstart

### *Barn, spring house to be renovated*

The stone barn and spring house at the Hokanson homestead stand quietly now, a reminder of Kansas' past.

Fastforward a couple years and picture a docent in period dress bringing that past alive to a group of school children. A \$5,000 grant from the Bess Spiva Timmons Foundation will help make that vision possible. The foundation awards grants to organizations west of the Mississippi River that emphasize programs that benefit minority groups, social services and ecology.

"It will allow us to broaden our educational scope," said Valerie Wright KPRNA Environmental Educator. Most people tend to associate science with the Konza, she said. "We want to bring in the social studies and history teachers. We want to move from a strictly scientific perspective into historical and cultural contexts."

The Timmons grant provides a starting point for renovation of the barn, spring house and shed, Wright said.

Renovation will expand the use of the homestead to include living history presentations, wildlife observation, a center for discussion of the relationship between people and the land and their effects on each other.

Most of the improvements will be done by volunteers. Over the coming months, Wade Walker, a 14-year-old Eagle Scout from Troop # 74 of Manhattan will be in charge of obtaining bids from contractors, organizing volunteers and



Stone barn on Hokanson Homestead. Photo by Tawnya Ernst

drawing up a construction schedule.

Walker and his troop are participating in the project for a chance at the William T. Hornaday Award for Distinguished Service to Natural Resource Conservation. The award is designed to encourage scouts who design, lead and carry out conservation projects that are based on sound scientific principles and practices. Spring rainfall has caused damage to the barns structure which needs to be addressed. The barn will be refurbished so that it could be used as an educational center. Plans include for the barn to be re-roofed, its stone walls repointed and a concrete floor and new windows and doors to be installed.

The stone walls of the spring house will be stabilized. The spring box will be cleaned and the spring redirected into it.

The red wooden shed will be taken down and rebuilt to conceal a self-contained toilet system, perhaps a composting toilet, Wright said.

Paths around the site will be improved.

In addition, \$2,000 has been awarded from Outdoor WildLife Sites (OWLS) to renovate the lean-to as a wildlife observation area.

Despite the changes, the homestead will look similar to the way it does today.

"We want to keep the historical nature of the place," Wright said.

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# Prairie Patter

Dr. Valerie Wright

Education Coordinator

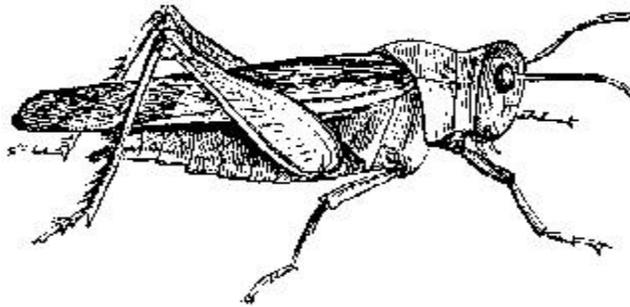


Talk about a whirlwind of activity! This September and October have been busy with several activities developed for the Schoolyard LTER program. The grant, through National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Long-term Ecological Research (LTER) program, allows us to teach kids about the type of science that is carried out at Konza Prairie. Our scientists develop databases of information over long periods of time. With this kind of data they can look for patterns and trends that show changes, as in climate or its effects on plant and animal populations.

After last June's Schoolyard LTER workshop for teachers, seven of the ten participants made reservations to bring out their classes. **Jan Evans**, docent and my assistant, has been indispensable with all of these activities. One of the first groups was Junction City High School Biology II who came to learn more about grasshoppers and help us inventory the species of Konza Prairie. Their teachers had participated in the pilot project

that we did in the fall of 1998. They teach entomology and had the students well prepared for the field trip. The students followed the same procedure as LTER scientists in collecting grasshoppers with a sweep net on a straight line or

transect. Volunteer graduate students, staff and faculty guided them from the Department of Entomology. Clint Meyer gave mini-lectures on grasshoppers and his research on Konza. The excitement of meeting a real researcher and then actually doing some research makes an excellent learning opportunity for students. The students pinned and identified their catch. The final touch was labeling each



specimen with the name of their school and their own name before the specimen went into the KEEP reference collection. Docents **Alberto Broce** and **Ted Hopkins**, both from the Entomology Department, helped with the program.

Westmoreland Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades also came to learn about grasshoppers. Their teachers (workshop participants) had their students practice by catching grasshoppers in their schoolyard. They already knew the difference between a "slant-faced" and a "spur-throated" when they came to Konza. Docents **Shauna Dendy** (entomology staff) and **Verlyn Richards** participated in both events and deserve extra thanks for helping to clean up afterwards.

Manhattan High School botany classes (**Joc Baker**, teacher and docent) came to study plant diversity by sampling 2 areas and measuring the height of the plants with **Jim Craig** and "**Ted**" **Campbell** helping. What an

experience to "wade" into the seven foot grasses of the restored lowland and find yourself lost in a mere five acres of grass! Compare that with the plant community at the top of Butterfly Hill with its magnificent vista of the prairie and you will realize what the students experienced.

Debbie Roberts, the teacher for Harveyville Elementary 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, wanted her students to experience the stream invertebrates in Kings Creek. They collected "critters" with a special sampling device and identified them from a picture key. David Stagliano\*, a K-State graduate student in entomology, helped us with this activity. We then talked about stream geology and took several pictures with the digital camera to keep a historical perspective of what happens when high water events change the streambed.

Kathleen Jones (workshop participant) brought the Eisenhower Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> grade to learn about sampling insect galls on goldenrod. Phil Fay was the LTER researcher involved along with docents **Bob Gorton**, **Brock Dale**, **Doris Burnett**, **Ted Hopkins**, **Hoogy** and **Carol Hoogheem** and **Anni McLeod**.

The Schoolyard LTER program this fall has interacted with 380 students. *Thanks to all who participated!*

## \*Grad Student Volunteer Wins Award

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, it was announced David Stagliano had won the O. W. "Spide" Morse Graduate Student Service Award in large part for his work with KEEP. David has volunteered several times for Schoolyard LTER activities since 1998.

# Collection Provides Wealth of Konza Information

More than 90 years ago, the Dewey-Berry gunfight fueled not only a lengthy lawsuit but a ballad.

..... "A man with silvery hair was cruelly murdered that bright day by the outlaw millionaire....."

The ballad's lyrics were used to bolster public sentiment against Chauncey Dewey. This ballad in its entirety is one of the thousands of items currently housed in the Konza Collection at K-State's Hale Library. The collection is a one-stop shop for historic information related to the Konza.

An article's title in the files sums up the collection's contents quite well, "From Six Guns to Science". Research data, newsletters, budgets, correspondence, photos, interviews, journal articles, mowing records, soil surveys share space with Dewey family history.

"Konza is a long term ecological research site and there aren't very many of those. The research needs to be

documented. That's part of what the collection is for. The collection is valuable to historians, people interested in Konza and the general public as well as scientists," said **Jim Sherow, associate professor of history**. Sherow has been one of the key people in the organization of the collection.



*C.P. Dewey on mule. Courtesy Riley County Historical Society*

The records came from a variety of sources, including the Konza office, Lloyd Hulbert's collection, the K-State Division of Biology and the Riley County Historical Society.

About 10 years ago, the Konza History Committee



*Chauncey Dewey outside his Manhattan Beach Resort, circa 1903. Courtesy of Riley County Historical Society.*

decided to put the hodge podge of records into a single, organized collection.

Over the years, materials were numbered and placed into order.

The task was not a simple one. Many people contributed to putting the collection together. Quite a bit of legwork was done by the history committee to get interviews with people who still remembered working out at the ranch. Sherow, his wife **Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, an assistant professor in history** and **Tony Crawford, Hale Library's head archivist** have been instrumental in the collection's development.

There were also a series of students sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the Research Experience for Undergraduate program and graduate students have helped catalogue and group the information by subject matter. The entire collection was moved to the fifth floor of Hale Library in Special Collections in the summer of 1998. Crawford has developed a notebook with a table of contents that guides people to specific subjects and their location. This notebook is also on the web at <http://www.lib.ksu.edu/depts/spec/findaids/konza.html>

The collection is not finished though. More information remains to be found about such things as companies who owned the property and more research papers can be added.

"We're not done by any means," Sherow said.

by Tawnya Ernst

## Editors' Notes

Welcome to the first issue of the Tallgrass Gazette, a newsletter for and by docents. Our purpose is to keep docents informed of ongoing activities that might be of interest to them.

This newsletter is the brainchild of Janet Throne and Phoebe Samelson. Your chief editors are Susan Bale and Tawnya Ernst. We've recently been tagged

and released from the Spring 1999 Docent Training Program. We encourage our readers to contribute articles, photos, snippets or ideas for future issues. You may contact us at:

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## More Space for Researchers, Education Groups, Firetrucks



*Increased lab space in existing building.*

The recently completed firehouse provides much needed indoor room for the firetrucks used on Konza. Aside from protecting the equipment from wear due to exposure to the elements, water trucks housed inside during the winter can remain filled with water and ready for emergencies. The site maintenance shop has also been moved to this building.

Researchers benefit from double the space for laboratory work and research equipment thanks to the relocation of other services. The lab building now boasts a meeting room (the old upper garage) to be used for larger groups.



*New firehouse. Photos by Susan Bale*

## November In-Service for Docents

### *Teaching Children About the Prairie*

Docents will have an opportunity to participate in an in-service program, at 9:00 a.m. November 6th at the Education Center.

A panel of two experienced docents, Charlie Given and Sue Dwyer will discuss their experiences and techniques in teaching children about the prairie. The panel will be moderated by Valerie Wright. Following their presentations, the floor will open up to discussion and a question and answer session.



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