

& Bluestem



Bison



2017 Konza Prairie Wildflower Walk

Sunday, June 4th – 6:30 pm

\$10/person – free to Friends of Konza Prairie members

Benefits the Konza Environmental Education Program (KEEP)

Take a guided hike of Konza's Butterfly Hill on a trail not usually open to the public.
Learn about the prairie wildflowers and hear about research on Konza Prairie.

More info: keep.konza.ksu.edu or call 587-0381

Research

Education

Conservation



May 2017



KPBS Director Dr. John Briggs

It is tax season, which also means that the spring burn season is going on in the Flint Hills. We have had some very smoky days and I have been getting my usual phone calls and e-mails asking me why Konza needs to burn each and every year. And of course, if there is smoke in Manhattan, everyone assumes it is coming from KPBS! I am pleased to announce that we finished the watershed burning on KPBS on 13 April 2017! We started 09 March and burned 27 different watersheds/units and over 4,500 acres!

It was an exciting year as we had large blocks (watersheds next to each that could be burned together) and we burned 20B (the first time it has been burned since the wildfire of 1991). I, along with Patrick O'Neal (KPBS Burn Coordinator), Greg Zolnerowich, and Jim Larkins (Fire Crew leaders), want to say thanks to all the faculty, staff, students, docents, and other volunteers who contributed their time (>800 hours worth!) to the prescribed burn program this spring. We had nine graduate students (two of them from Colorado State University) able to participate, although several more had signed up for days we weren't able to burn. Seven undergraduates also burned this year, which may be a recent history record. We would not be able to maintain the long term fire frequency intervals without everyone's help. It is amazing how many volunteers help us out on KPBS.

In my last report, I announced Tom Van Slyke was retiring as site manager of KPBS. He started 01 August 1993 and retired Dec 31 2017. He will be missed. He was extremely dedicated to KPBS and had a very positive attitude that served KPBS well. I am pleased to announce that we have hired Jim Larkins (long-time KPBS site foreman) as the Project Manager for KPBS and Patrick O'Neal (long-time research technician for many research programs at Konza, including, but not limited to, the Long Term Ecological Research and the Rainfall Manipulation Experiment) as the full-time Burn Coordinator for KPBS.

It is hard to "pigeonhole" exactly what is required of these full-time staff individuals who work for Konza. They are heavily involved with both the burning and grazing (both cattle and bison) programs. They need to be able to drive tractors, mowers, hay bailers, dump trucks, and backhoes, and we depend on them to keep all of the vehicles and equipment running. They are responsible for the fire burning equipment and oversee undergraduate workers. And if that is not enough, they are called upon at times to be a janitor, plumber, electrician, IT technician (keeping our Wi-Fi working!) and, of course, have good personal skills as they deal with researchers and visitors wanting all kinds of help with their projects. Finally, I also ask them to help me keep track of the expenses and income; they are involved with almost everything that is necessary to keep KPBS operating. KPBS is very lucky to have such dedicated personnel.



Photo by Greg Zolnerowich

I will keep my report short this month as I am even farther behind. This semester and year have been extremely busy and frustrating to me as I deal with the budget cuts that are occurring across campus. I won't go into details but it is not pretty and I expect it will only get worse. All of us are waiting to see what will happen in Topeka. Thus, I would like to thank all of you for your financial and moral support of KPBS! All of you are vital to the long-term success of KPBS. As always, please contact me (jbriggs1@ksu.edu; 785-532-0140) if you have any questions or concerns about KPBS as we try to continue to develop as one of the finest biological field stations in the world.

~ john

FOKP President Donna McCullum

Volunteers

The Konza Prairie provides the opportunity for you to reap personal benefits, by improving your quality of life and health through volunteering. According to Wikipedia, volunteering is considered an altruistic activity where individuals or groups provide services to benefit another person, group or organization and for no financial gain.

When people in the United States became aware of disadvantaged neighbors in the early 19th century, they began helping the needy people of their communities. During the Civil War, people volunteered to sew supplies and provide aid to servicemen.

In the first few decades of the 20th century, several volunteer organizations were founded including the Rotary, Kiwanis, Junior Leagues and Lions Clubs, to name a few. The Depression years saw nationwide efforts to coordinate volunteering for the financially vulnerable people among them. During World War II, thousands of volunteer officers supervised unpaid persons who helped with the needs of the military including collecting supplies, entertaining soldiers on leave and caring for the injured.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2015, over 62.6 million Americans gave nearly 8 billion hours of volunteer service worth \$175 billion. Many more people volunteered informally for friends and neighbors.

There are many proven personal benefits of community volunteerism, including a reduction in stereotypes when working together with a group of people who have different ethnicity, backgrounds and views. Volunteering has the ability to improve the quality of life and health of those who donate their time. Research has found older adults benefit significantly from volunteering. Physical and mental ailments plaguing older adults can often be eased by the simple act of helping others. Volunteering improves not only the communities one serves but also the life of the individual who is volunteering.

According to Jill Haukos, Director of Education for the Konza Prairie, in 2016, docents volunteered 1,725 hours for educational activities. In addition, docents volunteered a total of 2,212 hours to both KEEP and KPBS. The training to become a docent begins in the spring and continues in the fall. New docent training teaches the basics of the natural history and ecology of the tallgrass prairie. Some examples of docent opportunities include guiding hikes, guiding bison loop tours, assisting with educational activities for visiting school groups, helping with workdays on Konza Prairie, and becoming active in the Friends.

The next docent training will begin next spring. If you are interested, please email Jill Haukos at konzaed@ksu.edu.



“Autumn Calf “ Illustrator Visits Konza

Joyce Turley, illustrator of “The Autumn Calf,” visited Manhattan on April 22, Earth Day. At 1:00 p.m., Joyce and author Jill Haukos held a book signing and reading at the Manhattan Public Library. The event was well attended,

and more than 70 children received free copies of the book, “The Autumn Calf,” authored by Jill Haukos and illustrated by Joyce Turley.

At 3:00 pm, FOKP members gathered in the Hulbert Center at Konza for a viewing of the original artwork and book signing. The group then boarded a bus and toured the bison area. Half a dozen groups of bison were assembled on various grazing lawns in the bison area, enjoying fresh new grass after the spring burns.





From the Stone House
 Director of Education
 Jill Haukos

KEEP, Environmental Education across the LTER Network, and Online Curriculum!

Konza Prairie is part of a 28-member network of Long-Term Ecological Research sites scattered across the country and down into Antarctica. Each of these sites is devoted to studying the ecology of a specific sensitive ecosystem. Additionally, each of these sites is required, as part of their grant funding, to have an educational program. After working with these other sites, I can attest that the Konza Environmental Education Program (KEEP) is an amazing thing!

KEEP has one of the largest and busiest on-site environmental education programs in the nation. We invite students from throughout the state of Kansas to visit a tallgrass prairie and to study firsthand the factors that influence the ecology of this highly endangered ecosystem. We certainly benefit from the proximity of many schools to our site and having a facility amenable to on-site visitation. Can you imagine trying to do what we do in Antarctica, or in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, or along the northern border of Alaska?

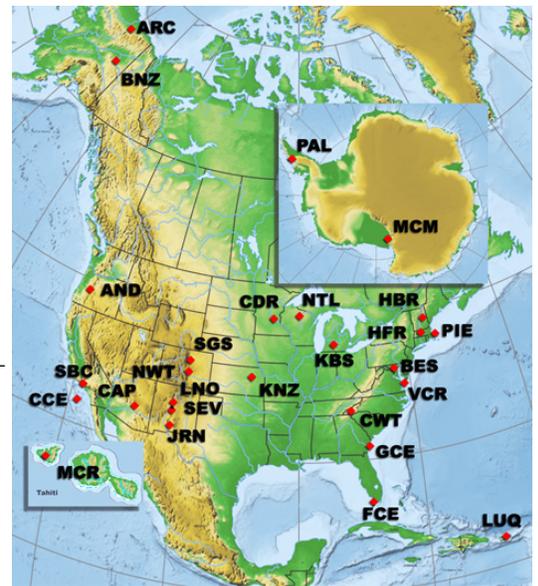
KEEP is one of the only LTER sites to have docents. As you know, docent volunteers are integral to our program – they lead the majority of our activities, and bring their own energy, enthusiasm, and experience to the prairie to share with our visitors.

Many other LTER sites simply aren't close to other communities and don't have the options we have. They rely on the Internet to distribute site-specific curriculum based on their research. One nice thing about this model is that any school in the world can experience that sites' science-based curriculum.

Konza Prairie can now join that club because we now have curriculum, based on Konza data, that any classroom can access. There are two activities currently available and designed to accompany the children's book, "The Autumn Calf." One activity, titled "Have You Ever Wondered What a Bison Weighs?" (<http://keep.konza.k-state.edu/docs/Bison%20Weights%20Activity.pdf>) gives students background information based on the year in the life of a bison such as, when bison calves are typically born, how long a calf nurses, and when the calves are brought in to roundup to be weighed for the first time. Not all calves weigh the same and we ask students to think about reasons for these differences. We also provide them with data of real bison weights and to guess why some calves are quite a bit lighter than other calves.

A second curriculum activity builds on the first one and it is titled "Bison Weights Over Time" (<http://keep.konza.k-state.edu/education/Bison%20Weights%20Over%20Time%20-%20Activity.pdf>) Students are provided with six years of bison weight data and are then asked a series of questions for them to help explain the data. Within the data pool, individual bison are identified with their ear tag numbers and the students are able to track each bison's weights over those six years. Students get a reality check when some bison disappear from the data set – they will quickly learn that the lightest bison are sold and removed from the herd.

KEEP will continue to develop curricula for anyone to use. We expect to see exercises that address fire, grasshoppers, and Kings Creek to be available in the future.



LTER network sites

~Jill

Docent Profile: Mary Breneman

1. What motivated you to become a Konza Prairie docent?

I've always loved being outside and in nature. When I moved to Manhattan in 2009, my son-in-law (Patrick O'Neal) told me about the docent program. As a former school teacher, I enjoy learning new things and sharing that knowledge with others.

2. What are some of your hobbies & interests?

Reading, walking/hiking/yoga, playing with my grandchildren, geology and seeing new places.

3. What has been the best part of being a volunteer at Konza Prairie?

The best part of volunteering is getting to meet new people, helping children explore nature, and getting to spend time outside.

4. What brings you the most joy in your life?

Definitely spending time with my family (and having picnics).



Photographers - Submit Your Calendar Photos for the 2018 FOKP Calendar

It is time to choose the photos you would like to submit to the calendar committee for the 2018 calendar. You are asked to choose five of your very best, high resolution photos that you have taken while on the Konza Prairie Biological Station. Submission criteria include the following:

1. Images (10x7.5 inches) must be taken on the Konza Prairie Biological Station, and may include landscapes, flora, fauna, or activities at Konza (research, environmental education, etc.) We hope to receive images taken at different seasons on Konza and are particularly interested in unique and original subjects.

2. Images must be in LANDSCAPE format. The printed calendar will contain photos printed approximately 10 inches horizontal and 7.5 inches vertical. Portrait format photos may be considered only for use on FOKP note cards.

Email your photos to kchummel1@gmail.com. We will send you a release form, which you should sign and return to

FRIENDS OF KONZA PRAIRIE
DIVISION OF BIOLOGY
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, ACKERT 116
MANHATTAN, KS 66506-4901

The deadline for submitting your photos is June 26, 2017. We are looking for some really great and beautiful photos this year. Docents, FOKP members, and Konza Biology staff are eligible to submit their photographs. If you have questions contact Karen Hummel, 785-341-0143.

Konza lands – The Dewey Years - Rise and Fall of a Dynasty

(The following synopsis is taken from Charles Givens' History of the Dewey Ranch, posted on the KPBS website at <http://kpbs.konza.k-state.edu/history/land.html>. It is followed by the land description, in bold, from the 1931 land sale.)

Charles Paulson Dewey was a shrewd businessman from Chicago who acquired parcels of land in the 1870's and 1880's, resulting in a 10,000 acre ranch on what is now Konza Prairie. Dewey put his son, Chauncey, in charge of a larger ranch in western Kansas. Chauncey ran afoul of the law and became embroiled in a land dispute with the Berry family. Two members of the Berry family were killed in a shoot-out between the families. Chauncey was charged and found 'not guilty', but the bitterness remained.

Back in the Manhattan area, C. P. Dewey had acquired land east of what is now the Manhattan airport, and constructed Eureka Lake, with a resort and electric park, including an electric trolley that ran from the resort into the town of Manhattan. The ranch was thriving. Times seemed good.

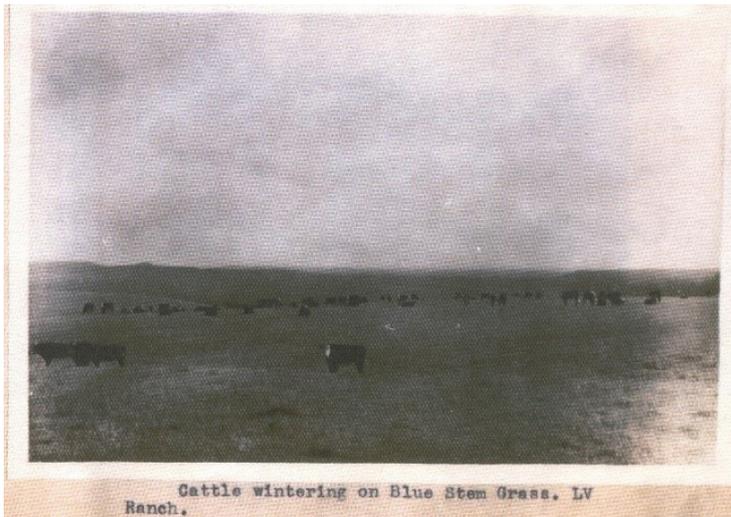
The success was brief. A massive flood in 1903 destroyed Eureka Lake and the resort. C. P. Dewey died in 1904 and Chauncey took over the ranch. The limestone barn and bunk house were built in 1911 and 1912 by Walter Burr, a stonemason, with limestone quarried on site. Chauncey built a frame home north of the bunkhouse, and traces of the foundation remain.

Chauncey was married twice, once in 1908 to Elvira Millspaugh, a Chicago socialite. They divorced around 1920. He later married Lavon Presson of Junction City. Chauncey died in 1959 and Lavon passed away in 1994. They are buried in the Junction City Highland Cemetery.

Chauncey brought cattle via rail from Texas to graze on the rangeland and then sell. During World War I, he leased land to Fort Riley to graze up to 5000 mules. However, Chauncey lacked his father's business acumen, and in the end, the land was sold at forced auction. Joe Gelroth was able to find a record of the land description, and some photos provided for the land sale in 1931.

The photos on the left are from the 1931 record. The ones on the right were taken this spring, for comparison.





Chauncey Dewey's LV Ranch in Riley County (as described in 1931 sales prospectus)

This ranch is located in Riley County, Kansas, 5 miles south of the City of Manhattan, a city of about 12,000, having 2 main line railroads. This tract is in the northern edge of the Flint Hills, with about 300 acres fronting on the Kansas River bottom. It is 120 miles to Kansas City.

This ranch comprises approximately 6600 acres, 6300 acres of bluestem pasture and 300 acres of excellent farmland. The pasture is watered by never failing springs with numerous tanks to hold the supply. The grass in the pasture is heavily sodded and free from weeds.

The general scope of the pastureland lies in the foot hills of the northern edge of the Flint Hills, with an under-laying soil of white limestone and flint rock which gives perfect drainage and makes it particularly adapted to the well-known bluestem grass. The land is generally rolling with few trees in the valleys. The farmland which borders the Kansas River bottom land is of good black soil with just enough slope to give good drainage.

While no definite geology on the tract of land is at hand, it is generally understood that several oil domes or structures exist. This land has never been tested for oil, however, the land 2 miles east has been drilled and a trace of oil found.

This ranch has 3 sets of ranch improvements established at suitable locations scattered over the tract. The main improvements known as the headquarters consist of a large cut stone house with a barn of the same material adjoining. Also shops, two sheds, chicken houses, hog houses, and a water supply system. The estimated cost of these improvements would be \$50,000, and they are in a good state of repair. The fences on the ranch are in good state of repair, with good cross fences. The watering places fed entirely by springs have adequate 20 foot in diameter concrete tanks. There is sufficient timber on the place for wind breaks and wood supply. Good roads leading from the ranch to Manhattan, Kansas, also Junction City, and a main highway runs along the east side. This ranch is listed at \$_____ per acre at present prices. The products this ranch will produce will pay 6% on the investment.

This ranch would make an ideal location for a pure bred beef cattle or dairy farm, with adequate housing facilities for such a business. However, at the present time the pastureland is leased out to Texas cattle owners who make a business of bring aged steers to this section for fattening during the summer.

The farmland is run by tenants, and corn, wheat, oats, alfalfa, and prairie hay are the crops principally grown, and in most cases these products are sold for cash. The headquarters place would also make a fine summer place for anyone that wished and could afford such improvements as these.

Annual Visions of the Flint Hills Art Show and Benefit

For Art Lovers and Konza Supporters

Mark your calendar for the 9th annual Visions of the Flint Hills Benefit and Sale, a juried exhibition benefitting the Friends of Konza Prairie and the Konza Environmental Education Program. This year's show runs from October 2 through November 17, 2017, at Buttonwood Art Space, 3013 Main Street, Kansas City, MO.

Each year, there are more than 100 beautiful pieces of original artwork sold at reasonable prices. Artworks are juried into the show and displayed at Buttonwood Art Space, as well as online. On October 2, an online silent auction will begin for art lovers and Konza supporters to bid on their favorite pieces. Buyers will also have a "Buy It Now" option to ensure they are not outbid on their favorite artwork. The silent auction will end at 9pm on October 6, following the First Friday reception at Buttonwood Art Space. Any items purchased during the online auction will be acknowledged at the time of purchase. Buttonwood Art Space and Friends of Konza Prairie will help to coordinate pick up and delivery of artwork sold online at the end of the exhibit. Any artworks purchased at the Opening Reception on October 6 or during the exhibition will be distributed after the show's end on November 17, 2017. Fifty percent of each purchase benefits Friends of Konza Prairie, meaning art buyers receive a tax deduction on 50% of their art purchase.

If your walls are full and you are out of room for new artwork, it's still a great event! Join in on the fun at the First Friday Reception on October 6 from 6 – 9 p.m. at Buttonwood Art Space. Enjoy great artwork, live music, sample appetizers, and have a cold beer or glass of wine! With Christmas just two months after the exhibit, it's a great chance to find a unique present for your loved ones.

For Sponsors

Konza Prairie, along with other vitally important entities serving research, conservation and education, is under extreme pressure from budget cuts in Kansas. Programs may be in jeopardy. We are soliciting sponsors for this benefit art show. Sponsors may donate funds to sponsor the show, with funds going to support programs that expose school children to the beauty, history, geology, flora, fauna, and ecological importance of the tallgrass ecosystem and Konza Prairie.

As a sponsor, you are automatically awarded a year's membership in Friends of Konza Prairie. The contributions are tax deductible, and the funds go directly to supporting the Konza Environmental Educational Program. The options are:

- KONZA – Gift Level of \$2000 or above
- TALL GRASS – Gift Level of \$1000 or above
- PRAIRIE CHICKEN – Gift Level of \$250 or above
- FLINT HILLS – Gift Level of \$150 or above

For Artists

All entries in the show must depict or be derived from the Flint Hills region of Kansas. This is your chance to show your appreciation for the tallgrass prairie environment through photography, painting, or three-dimensional works inspired by this unique ecosystem. Artists can enter up to four artworks for a single entry fee of \$35.00. All artwork must be submitted through Call For Entry (https://www.callforentry.org/festivals_unique_info.php?ID=4368) by August 14, 2017. In addition to the opportunity to sell your artworks as an exhibitor, monetary prizes will also be awarded. Artist awards include Best of Show- \$500, plus \$100 for 1st Place in each category (Photography, 3D, Painting, Other).

Flint Hills artists, this is another chance to shine! If you need help with transporting art pieces to Kansas City, please email karenhummel@yahoo.com.

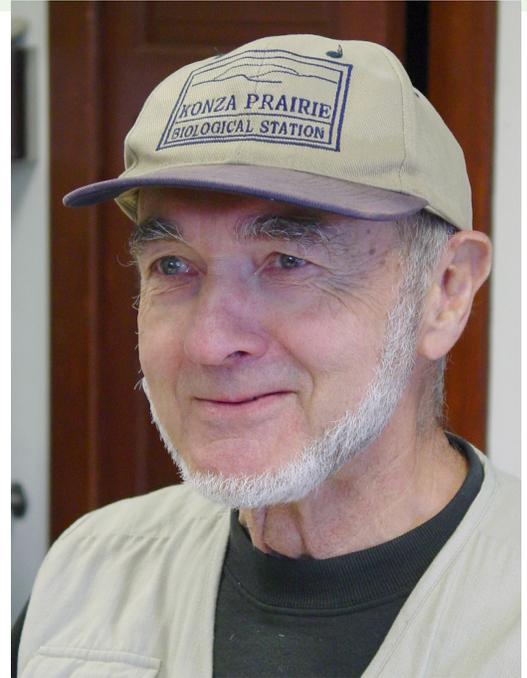


In Memoriam
Loren Alexander
1930 – 2017



Photo by Valerie Wright

In 2001, an up-beat docent trainee was ready to help at any time. He hiked the trails, caught grasshoppers and even came out for a special magazine photo shoot. By 2002, Loren Alexander was serving on the Docent Committee and later that year agreed to become Docent Coordinator, sharing the responsibility with Verlyn Richards until 2004.



In those years the Docent Coordinator position required many hours on the phone talking with trainees and scheduling hikes and tours. It was a volunteer position that wore out several docents before the KEEP office had a full time assistant. Loren was there for new docent training, answering questions of potential trainees and making all feel comfortable. He served on the Friends of Konza Prairie Board for 3 years, acting as Vice President in 2003 and 2004. In 2005, he was elected President, serving for one year. Loren and Donna Alexander were long and loyal supporters of Friends of Konza Prairie, and good friends to the Konza Environmental Education Program.

~ Valerie Wright



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If you wish this service, but have not provided your email address, please send it to Hallie Hatfield at keeped@ksu.edu.



<http://keep.konza.ksu.edu/friends>



2017 FOKP Board and Committees

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Assistant Environmental Educator

Hallie Hatfield

The Friends of Konza Prairie (FOKP) promote the interests of Konza Prairie Biological Station as they pertain to its mission of Research, Education and Conservation. Membership in FOKP is open to all individuals, groups and businesses that share an interest in the common goal of supporting the Konza Prairie Biological Station. For FOKP membership and general information, call 785-587-0441, or visit the Konza Environmental Education Program (KEEP) website at: <http://keep.konza.ksu.edu> Also, see the back of this issue for a membership form.

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#308

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