



## FACT SHEET:

# Organization of Konza Prairie

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### The Nature Conservancy in Kansas

- Acronym = TNC
- Also known as = the Conservancy
- Role = **Owner** of the 7,220 acre north portion of Konza, including headquarters and the Nature Trail. This land was purchased with funding from one donor, Katharine Ordway, in 1977. The current footprint of Konza was completed 1979 when the final parcel of land, the Thowe land which is located southeast of headquarters, was purchased.
- Funding = a national charitable environmental organization headquartered in Arlington, VA. The Kansas office is a branch of TNC. The mission of TNC is to “conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends” and it uses charitable donations to purchase and manage imperiled lands. The Nature Conservancy is the largest environmental nonprofit by assets and by revenue in the Americas.
- People of The Nature Conservancy in Kansas – as of 2019:
  - Rob Manes – director
  - Brian Obermeyer – landscape programs manager
  - Laura Rose Clawson – director marketing and outreach

### The Kansas State University Foundation

- Known as = “the Foundation”
- Role = **Owner** of the original 916 acres of Konza that was purchased in 1971. The Nature Conservancy of Kansas originally purchased this land using funds from a single donor and then immediately transferred the ownership of the land to the Foundation.
- All donations to KPBS, KEEP, or FOKP go into accounts that are established at the Foundation. The Foundation is tax-exempt and it’s their tax-exempt status that makes donations tax-exempt and allows KPBS, KEEP, and FOKP to author grants as tax-exempt organizations.

### Katharine Ordway

- Role = **Funder of Konza land purchases**
- Provided the source of funds to purchase the original 916 acres in 1971 and 7,220 acres in 1977.
- Ms. Ordway not only provided funds for the purchase of Konza Prairie but also for 22,000 acres of prairie in other states.

- Ms. Ordway’s personal fortune was bequeathed her father, Lucius Pond Ordway, one of the founding members and primary stock holders in Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing, now known as 3M.

### **Konza Prairie Biological Station**

- Acronym = KPBS
- Role = **Manager** of the 8,616 acres of land known as the Konza Prairie Biological Station. The 3-pronged mission of KPBS is: research, education and conservation
- Affiliation with Kansas State University = KPBS is a part of the Division of Biology at Kansas State University. Many of the people who work and conduct research at KPBS are faculty, staff, or students of the KSU Division of Biology.
- People of the Konza Prairie Biological Station:
  - Dr. John Blair – director
  - Dr. Eva Horne – assistant director
  - Jill Haukos – director of education
  - Jim Larkins – project manager
  - Patrick O’Neal – burn coordinator, co-project manager
  - Barbara Van Slyke – administrative assistant
  - Hallie Hatfield – environmental educator
  - Previous directors:
 

▪ Lloyd Hulbert	1972 – 1986	
▪ Don Kaufman	1986 – 1987	
▪ Ted Barkley	1987 – 1990	
▪ Don Kaufman	1990 – 1991	
▪ Ted Barkley	1992 – 1993	
▪ Jim Reichman	1993 – 1995	
▪ David Hartnett	1995 – 2006	
▪ Eva Horne	2006 – 2008	
▪ John Briggs	2008 – 2018	First full-time director
▪ John Blair	2018 -	

### **Konza Prairie Advisory Board** - includes:

- Dr. John Blair
- Dr. Eva Horne
- Brian Obermeyer
- Dr. Jesse Nippert
- Dr. Keith Gido
- Dr. Lydia Zeglin

## Konza Environmental Education Program

- Acronym = KEEP
- Role = **K-12 education and docent training/management**. KEEP utilizes an average of 50-60 docent volunteers to provide guided hikes and hands-on scientific investigation specific to the tallgrass prairie and the Flint Hills. The program seeks to introduce its audience to current research at KPBS and to instill a sense of awareness, understanding, and appreciation of a tallgrass prairie ecosystem.
- History =
  - 1992 - Docent program initiated under the direction of John Zimmerman and Phoebe Samelson
  - 1996 – KEEP established - Dr. Valerie Wright, environmental educator
  - 2000 – Jan Evans, assistant environmental educator
  - 2000 – The Schoolyard Long-term Ecological Research – SLTER - (students collecting data in experiments similar to site researchers) began
  - 2012 – Jill Haukos, environmental educator
  - Kansas Master Naturalist program initiated
  - 2013 – Hallie Hatfield assistant environmental educator
  - 2020 – Hallie Hatfield left and KEEP reduced in activity - Covid
  - 2022 – Retta Kramer hired as assistant environmental educator
- Funding = KEEP is funded by:
  - Konza LTER – 43%
  - Friends of Konza Prairie – 35%
  - Konza Prairie Biological Station – 21%
  - Annual grants and donations from the community – 1%
- People of the Konza Environmental Education Program:
  - Jill Haukos – director of education
  - Retta Kramer – environmental educator
- Numbers
  - 2,500 – 3,500 area K-12 children visit Konza annually
  - 30 – 40 different schools
  - 15 – 20 different school districts
  - 800 – 1,500 area students participate annual in SLTER activities
  - 25,000 – 45,000 visitors hike or run the Nature Trail annually
  - 1,500 – 2,500 volunteer hours donated annually by docents

## Friends of Konza Prairie

- Acronym = FOKP
- Role = FOKP is a non-profit organization with members who care about, and support the operations of KEEP and KPBS. Membership funds and additional donations are used to provide direct charitable contributions to KEEP and KPBS for operations.
- Newsletter = Bison & Bluestem is published 3 times/year

- Annual events for FOKP members
  - Cure for Cabin Fever - soup, speaker, music      Last Sunday in January
  - Wildflower Walk      1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in June
  - Annual meeting and Bison Event      Last Sunday in Sept
  - Vision of the Flint Hills – art show      Oct & Nov

## Konza Long-Term Ecological Research program

- Acronym = KNZ LTER
- Also known as = LTER
- Role = **Researchers**. The KNZ LTER is part of a national network of other research sites – there are currently 28 different sites – that receive grant funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to conduct long-term research in ecologically-sensitive sites. The LTER program is the largest and most active group of researchers and students to utilize the facilities and area of the KPBS. The KNZ LTER annually contributes significantly to the operating income for KPBS.
- Grant = LTER grants are 6-year, multi-million dollar grants that fund several large research projects at one site.
- Personnel:
  -
- KNZ LTER grants and associated Principal Investigators (PI's):
  - LTER I      1981 – 1986
    - Richard Marzolf
    - Dean Bark
    - Lloyd Hulbert
    - Mike Johnson
    - Robert Robel
    - John Zimmerman

Description: LTER I focused on comparative investigations of biotic responses to fire and climatic variability. Long-term research sites and sampling protocols were established during this period with an emphasis on studies of the extremes of annually burned vs. unburned watersheds and upland vs. lowland sites. Many of these research sites and datasets, established at the onset of the Konza LTER program, have continued as core components of our LTER program.

- LTER II      1986 – 1990
  - Edward Evans
  - Lloyd Hulbert
  - Richard Marzolf
  - Don Kaufman

- Tim Seastedt
- John Zimmerman

Description: LTER II expanded our research efforts to include a wider range of fire frequencies (specifically 4-yr fire cycles) and increased exploration of ecosystem responses. An increased emphasis was placed on soil processes, and new plot-level experiments (e.g., the Belowground Plot Experiment) were initiated. LTER researchers began to address more complex questions of scale and make use of remotely-sensed satellite data to explore landscape-level issues.

- LTER III 1991 – 1996
  - Alan Knapp
  - Timothy Seastedt
  - John Briggs
  - David Hartnett
  - Don Kaufman
  - Walter Dodds
  - John Blair
  - Loretta Johnson

Description: The primary goals of LTER III were to understand how grazing influences biotic and ecosystem processes and patterns imposed by fire frequency over the landscape mosaic, all of which are subjected to a variable (and possibly directional) climatic regime. The additional research associated with large ungulate grazing and an expanded landscape perspective led to the establishment of several challenging studies, many of which are ongoing.

- LTER IV 1996 - 2002
  - Alan Knapp
  - John Blair
  - John Briggs
  - David Hartnett
  - Don Kaufman
  - Walter Dodds
  - Loretta Johnson

Description: LTER IV built on existing long-term studies of fire, grazing and climatic variability with a broadly-based research program encompassing studies from the organismic through population, community, and ecosystem levels. LTER research was expanded to include studies of climate change, net carbon exchange, restoration ecology and land use/land cover change.

- LTER V 2002 – 2008
  - John Blair
  - Alan Knapp
  - John Briggs
  - David Hartnett
  - Loretta Johnson
  - Walter Dodds
  - Don Kaufman

Description: LTER V emphasized global change and the responses of grassland ecosystems to global influences. Global change is defined broadly as human-induced alterations in climate, land-use, hydrologic and biogeochemical cycles, and species introductions. LTER studies were focused on aspects of global change most relevant to grasslands: changes in land use (especially fire and grazing regimes) and land cover (increases in woody cover); climate change; altered nutrient cycles (enhanced N deposition); and biological invasions.

- LTER VI 2008 – 2014
  - John Blair
  - Tony Joern
  - David Hartnett
  - Walter Dodds
  - Jesse Nippert

Description: LTER VI program continued to address fundamental ecological questions, but placed larger emphasis on understanding the consequences of global change for ecological dynamics in grasslands. Particular focus was placed on long-term responses to facets of global change most relevant to grasslands and grassland streams, including changes in land-use (fire and grazing regimes, grassland restoration), land-cover (particularly increases in woody plant cover), climate change and altered hydrology, and altered nutrient cycles (enhanced N deposition).

- LTER VII 2014 – 2020
  - John Blair
  - David Hartnett
  - Sara Baer
  - Jesse Nippert
  - Walter Dodds

Description: We are currently addressing new research themes and questions in LTER VII, but our long-term overarching goal remains to

further understand the interactive effects of key natural and altered drivers on grassland dynamics and to advance ecological theory through synthesis and integration of LTER data. As to be expected in a long-term ecological research program, many of the long-term experiments and datasets initiated in previous LTER funding cycles are being continued throughout the current funding period, while several new experiments and datasets are being initiated. The value of these long-term experiments and datasets continues to increase with time. In addition, results from these long-term studies have new relevance as we move towards evaluating the ecological impacts of a suite of global change phenomena occurring at KNZ.

- LTER VIII 2020 – 2026
  - Jesse Nippert
  - Sara Baer
  - Keith Gido
  - Melinda Smith
  - Lydia Zeglin

Description: The overarching goal of LTER VIII is to leverage manipulations of historical and global change drivers at KNZ, which have produced an array of ecosystem states, to evaluate the mechanisms that underlie sensitivity and resilience in tallgrass prairie. To accomplish this, our proposed research comprises four thematic areas: 1) watershed-level study of the long-term effects of historical drivers (fire and grazing), 2) experimental manipulations of global change drivers, 3) cessation or reversal of selected drivers, and 4) human intervention. Collectively, we will use ongoing and new activities under each theme to assess ecosystem sensitivity and resilience through the manipulation or restoration of drivers or ecosystem states.