

& Bluestem



Since 2015, the Friends of Konza Prairie (FOKP) has partnered with Buttonwood Art Space in Kansas City for the “Visions of the Flint Hills” annual art show benefit. All sales of artwork are split 50/50 between the artist and FOKP. Over 300 original works of art are displayed.

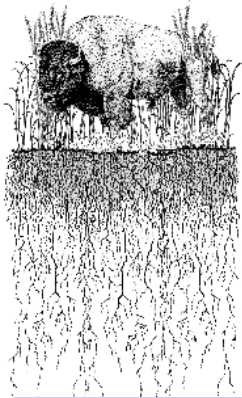
The First Friday, on Oct. 4, 2019 at 6-9 pm, opening reception is attended by over 500 visitors, and provides a high energy experience for the public to connect with artists, Konza leaders and volunteers and VIP guests.



Research

Education

Conservation



Sunday, Sept. 22 - **Konquer the Konza Race**
25k & 10k- Race Time: 7:30a- On-Site
Packet Pickup: 6:00am – 7:15am
Registration at Manhattanrunningco.com

FALL 2019



Sunday, Sept. 29

4:00 **Annual FOKP Meeting**

Election of new FOKP board members
Overview of KPBS from KPBS Director
Overview of KEEP from KEEP Director
Introduction of new KEEP docents

5:00 BBQ/Potluck- Stone House Patio (members are encouraged to bring a food item and their own plates/silverware).

Please RSVP at 587-0381 if you want a burger

6:00 Bison Loop Tour- leaves from Stone House patio area with guide



Friday, Oct. 4- **Visions of the Flint Hills,**
Annual Art Benefit Opening Reception
VIP 5-6pm, Public 6-9pm
Buttonwood Art Space 3013 Main St.,
Kansas City, MO www.ButtonwoodArtSpace.com

Bison



**KPBS Director
Dr. John Blair**

Dear members of the Friends of Konza

I'm writing this after returning from Louisville, Kentucky, where I was attending the annual meeting of the Ecological Society of America (ESA). It has been 34 years since I attended my first ESA meeting as a PhD student, and I've been thinking about how the discipline and practice of ecology have changed. There continue to be significant advances in ecological knowledge and theory, of course, but what I find most noteworthy is the increased focus on climate change and other anthropogenic (human-caused) environmental changes. Understanding how populations, communities, and ecosystems respond to environmental changes is critical for sustainably managing and conserving grasslands and other ecosystems in an ever-changing world. I'm happy to report that Konza Prairie research was well represented at the conference by faculty scientists and graduate students from K-State and by scientists and students from collaborating institutions. Konza research covered many topics, including:

- prairie responses to climate variability and climate change,
- ecological consequences of alternative prescribed fire regimes,
- role of fire and bison grazing on soil microbial communities,
- impacts of woody plant encroachment on soil nutrient pools and processes,
- long-term legacies of nitrogen enrichment on nutrient cycling, and
- grassland restoration ecology.

I can also report that planning is well underway for the next phase of the Konza Prairie Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) project. The Konza Prairie LTER project is funded by the US National Science Foundation and provides essential support for much of the ecological research done at Konza. The Konza LTER project was first funded in 1980 and must be renewed every six years through a competitive peer-review process. Our next Konza LTER renewal, due in March 2020, is being led by KSU biology professor Jesse Nippert in collaboration with numerous faculty members. Among the new research activities proposed for LTER VIII are a study of how woody plant expansion responds to climate change and a new experiment that aims to understand how herbivores of different sizes (from insects to bison) affect plant and soil processes in the prairie.

Funding from the LTER program also will continue to provide research experiences and training for numerous undergraduate and graduate students and provide partial funding for the K-12 Konza Schoolyard LTER program.

In May, we launched a new activity for FOKP members called "Hike with Researchers." This recurring event includes one-hour, easy hikes with Konza faculty and graduate student researchers who share information about prairie ecology and ongoing research at the Konza. The inaugural hike, led by myself and graduate student Caitlin Broderick, focused on the Belowground Plot Experiment and the long-term Irrigation Transect climate change experiment. Look for announcements about future hikes featuring different researchers and projects.

Finally, I want to provide an update on recent faculty changes. David Hartnett, a plant ecologist, KSU university distinguished professor, and former Konza Prairie director, recently retired. During his time as Konza director, Dave oversaw substantial growth in both the facilities and the research activities at Konza. We are excited that the Division of Biology will soon be joined by Allison Louthan and Zak Ratajczak, both of whom will conduct research on Konza.

In closing, I would like to thank each of you for your continued support. Your membership supports the research, education and conservation mission of Konza, and helps raise awareness of the inherent value of tallgrass prairies and the need to conserve them for future generations. As always, please contact me (jblair@ksu.edu; 785-532-7065) if you have any questions or concerns about Konza as we continue to develop as one of the finest biological field stations in the world.

John



This newsletter marks the start of my second year as Director of the Konza Prairie Biological Station. It has been a busy first year and a bit of a learning curve for me (!), but a lot has happened that will contribute to the continued success and growth of Konza.

We made several improvements to support the research and conservation missions of the station. Modifications to the bison corral were completed prior to fall roundup, which greatly improved our ability to handle the bison efficiently and with less stress. We continue to make progress in replacing and upgrading the 11.5-mile bison perimeter fence and adding new access points to improve the safety of researchers working in the bison area.

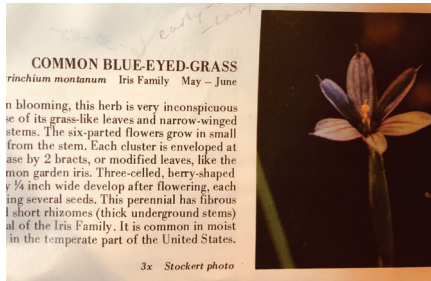
With funding from the US Fish and Wildlife program, we completed woody plant removal from a large area of watershed K20A and parts of White Pasture, which will improve habitat quality for grassland species. We also removed a concrete stream crossing that acted as a barrier to fish movement on Kings Creek and are monitoring the recovery of the natural stream course and the movement of fish upstream as they recolonize areas that dried out during the drought of 2018. Finally, we began the process of reroofing all of the headquarters' buildings, starting this fall with the historic barn and stone house and ecology lab, with the remainder of the buildings to be completed in the spring.

These infrastructure improvements will ensure that we can continue to support the many research and educational activities that are at the core of our mission as a biological field station.



There's Always Something New to Learn

Visitors to Konza Prairie often arrive with questions ready for the experts to answer. In my job, questions seem to be a common thread, whether it's among our student or adult visitors, new or experienced docents, members of the Friends of Konza Prairie, KPBS staff or graduate students or researchers. Finding the answers is often the hard part. We tend to value those who seem to have the answers. It takes time to find those answers, and often that time is measured in years, or even lifetimes.



I remember the first wildflower I ever learned. It was spring of 1985, and I was a 20 year-old junior at South Dakota State University. On the way to class, I saw a tiny blue flower on the edge of the sidewalk. I'm horrified to admit it now, but I picked it. It was blue-eyed grass, a wild type of lily. I had learned a lesson, that there were such things as tiny wild lilies and that they could be found growing in South Dakota lawns – who knew? The scales were dropping from my eyes.

In 1985, I seemed to be the only person interested in learning the wildflowers of eastern South Dakota. That is, with the exception of my plant taxonomy professor, Dr. Gary Larson, but he was way out of my league for acting as a casual advisor. As one of the editors of *Flora of the Great Plains*, it would be like asking Warren Buffet for a little help with investing. Nope, I was alone in my interest in wildflowers and, without having someone to bounce ideas off of, I realize now that I made a huge number of mistakes.

I purchased a wildflower identification book that was full color, and I immediately began to look for the flowers found inside. I didn't take the time to read the descriptions (still don't) because I was impatient and wanted quick answers (still do). I wanted to find that lily on the cover.

I never found the lily on the cover, but I did find most of the flowers inside. I also found other valuable resources, most of them being people. People who could verify what I was seeing. I could then pay it forward and become a source for someone else. Sometimes it takes years; be patient and use your resources and take your time.

If you're looking for places to go to find direction or verification, they're out there! The Kansas Native Plant Society is one of the best places to start. They have a wonderful [web page](#) and [Facebook page](#), both of which can help identify those pesky unknown plants.

You could also become a member of their organization and get to know people who are more than happy to share their knowledge. Mike Haddock's book, *Wildflowers & Grasses of Kansas*, is a wonderful resource. He also



has a gorgeous web site where flowers are searchable not only by color but also by time of flowering.

The Konza Prairie docents have regular walks every Monday at 9:00 am on the Nature Trail. If you would like to walk with the docents, make plans to come out to the trail on Monday mornings! The people who know what they're talking about are out there and they love to share not only their knowledge but also their love of nature.



FOKP Calendars on sale now for \$15!
Pick up your copy at Flint Hills Discovery Center, Claflin Books and at any FOKP event.

Docent Spotlight: Donna McCallum

Hallie Hatfield



Donna McCallum

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

I was motivated to become a Konza docent because I love the Flint Hills and to be able to share my knowledge with school children sounded like something I would enjoy. Also, I was raised on a farm in Chase County, the heart of the Flint Hills, so the Konza Prairie feels like home.

2. What are some of your hobbies & interests?

My hobbies include gardening, mostly flowers and herbs. In addition, I enjoy attending Kansas State athletic events and I usher at McCain and delivering meals to shut-ins each week.

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

The best part of being a volunteer at Konza Prairie is taking school children on walks and showing them the beauty and awesomeness of the Prairie. To be able to show and tell the children things they have never seen or known is such an amazing thing. One of my best days as a docent occurred when a little girl told me she learned more on our walk than she had learned in her life. WOW!

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

What brings me the most joy in life of course is family and to volunteer in my retirement. Giving back to the community is important to me.



Jean Elizabeth Hulbert 1924-2019

Konza will miss Jean Elizabeth Hulbert, a dedicated, generous and cherished supporter who passed away on Feb. 25, 2019, at the age of 94. The widow of Konza founder Dr. Lloyd C. Hulbert (1918-1986) witnessed our beloved prairie grow from a dream in the 1950s to become the world's premier tallgrass prairie research site.

She shared a desire to establish a tallgrass research site near Kansas State University to support ecological science efforts. In 1971, The Nature Conservancy acquired 916 acres in Geary County north of I-70 which was named Konza Prairie Research Natural Area. Initial research on Konza Prairie focused on the role of fire.

To accommodate a research goal of studying the effect of native grazers on the natural tallgrass prairie ecosystem, adjoining land purchases by The Nature Conservancy in 1977 increased the size of Konza to 8,616 acres. The growing tallgrass prairie ecological research activity increased public interest in educational programs, which led to the establishment of the Konza Prairie Docent program in 1992, Friends of Konza Prairie (FOKP) in 1994, and the Konza Environmental Education Program (KEEP) in 1996.

Jean was a FOKP charter member, an annual contributor and a participant in many of its educational and social activities. For several years, she was an active member of the FOKP Hospitality Committee. She rarely missed an annual meeting and relished visiting with her many friends while keeping warm at winter social events. In addition to her involvement with all things Konza Prairie, she was also involved in the activities of the Manhattan Friends (Quaker) Meeting, the League of Women Voters, the Kiwanis Club, Habitat for Humanity, the Domestic Science Club and World Friendship.

Jean is survived by her four sons, Steve (Louise), Mark (Meredith), Tom (Nancy), and John (Pam), ten grandchildren, and numerous nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews. Her memorial service was held in the Konza Prairie Biological Station Meeting Hall on June 29.

Jim Koelliker

I am retired ten years from K-State Engineering and spend much of my time as a community volunteer, including being a master docent for the Konza Environmental Education Program (KEEP). I have been involved for more than 40 years when I first visited Konza to help the LTER program in water resources aspects. From that moment, I have enjoyed working, learning and volunteering ever since!

Previously, I served on the FOKP Board from 2009-15. Since then my wife, Susan, passed away recently and I have completed my service on the Riley County Senior Service Center Board of Directors, I now have accepted this opportunity to again serve on the FOKP Board should I be elected.

KEEP is a bright star among similar programs at Long-term Ecological Research sites and a great program locally. I want to help the FOKP Board to keep the KEEP vibrant and growing by helping it to provide more support.



Jeff Watson

I retired from a career in educational administration in Ohio and moved to Kansas five years ago to be close to family. Soon after settling in Wamego, my wife, Patti, and I joined the docent class of 2015 and have been active docents at Konza Prairie since then.

After spending my entire life exploring the hardwood forests of the East, it has been an exciting change for me to embrace the prairie in the Flint Hills.

It is a joyful and rewarding experience introducing students of all ages and some adults to the wonders the Konza Prairie holds.



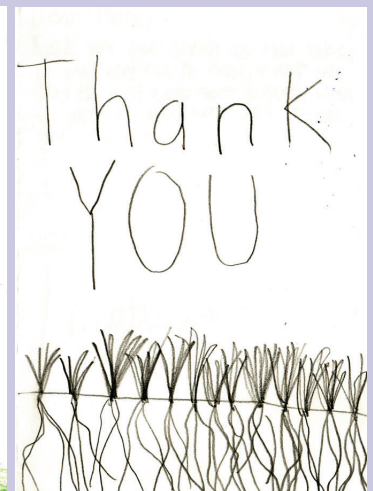
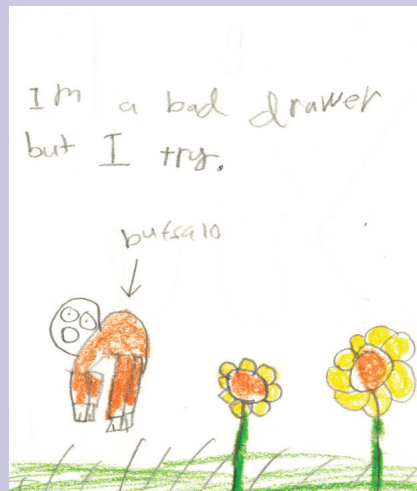
President: Ken Stafford
President-elect: Open (needs to be filled)
Treasurer: Noah Busch
Secretary: Allie Lousch
Historian: Joe Gelroth

The FOKP board consists of:

Cydney Alexis (re-election for 3 years Dec. 2019)
Chris Bailey (re-election for 3 years Dec. 2020)
Josh Brewer (re-election for 3 years Dec. 2021)
Noah Busch (re-election for 3 years Dec. 2020)
Kelly Carmody (re-election for 3 years Dec. 2021)
Kelly Yarbrough Frasier (re-election for 3 years Dec. 2020)
Joe Gelroth (term expires Dec. 2019)
Allie Lousch (re-election for 3 years Dec. 2019)
Courtney Masterson (re-election for 3 years Dec. 2021)
Donna McCallum (term expires Dec. 2019)
Lucas Shivers (term expires Dec. 2021)
Ken Stafford (term expires Dec. 2020)

If elected - the following will join the board on January 1, 2020:

Jim Koelliker - 3 year term expiring Dec. 31, 2023
Jeff Watson - 3 year term expiring Dec. 31, 2023



Friends of Konza Prairie
Kansas State University
Division of Biology,
116 Ackert Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506-4901
785-587-0441
#308



MISSION

Konza Prairie Biological Station (KPBS) is a native tallgrass prairie preserve owned by The Nature Conservancy and Kansas State University and operated as a research station by the Division of Biology. The Friends of Konza Prairie (FOKP) promotes the interests of KPBS as they pertain to its mission of research, education and conservation.

Bison & Bluestem is published by the Friends of Konza Prairie

New and Renewing FOKP Members

Thank you all for your support of the Friends of Konza Prairie!

Members who have newly joined or renewed their membership since the last issue of the Bison & Bluestem include:

Student

Dr. Brian T. Hazlett
Logan Payne

Little Bluestem

Greg & Jan Adams
Theresa Albrecht
Mary Barkley
John Blocher & Kui Yang
Mary Breneman
Bill Cutler & Elisabeth Suter
Michael Donnelly & Jackie Macdonald
Larry & Laurel Erickson
David & Connie Farmer
Jack & Peggy Flouer
Kelly & Kevin Frasier
Richard Gardner
Daniel Gross
Brian Hardeman & Jayme Morris-Hardeman
Dan & Carolyn Harden
Dave & Jill Haukos
John Hill
Kathleen Hoss-Cruz
Britton Horton
Christa Jahnke
Mary & Matt Johnson
Erica Leicht
Mary McInteer
Donn & Jennifer Merriman
Meghan Nemechek
Yvonne Norby
Ed Olson

Janet Pippin
Jane Powell & Jonalu Johnstone
Barbara L. Roberts
Paul Rosell
Scott Seirer
Bob & Mary Shoop
Sarah Siders
John Spangler
Mrs. Gladys W. Treichel
Angela Varvel
Stacey & Jim Warner
Mary & John Weigel

Big Bluestem

Diane Barker
Richard Boydston
Mr. & Mrs. Lonnie G Clark
Greater Manhattan Community
Stacy & Lowell Kohlmeier
Palmer & Marti Meek
Lois Merriman
Gary Mignano
Charles Pearce
Carl & Marty Reed
Susan K. Reimer
Georgina R. Schwartz
Ken & Kris Stafford
Marianne D Wallace
Sue White

Flint Hills

Dan & Beth Bird
John & Retta Kramer
Jan McNeil

Brian & Stephanie Peterson
Dave & Betsy Weigel
Jay Wight

Prairie Chicken

The Bluemont Hotel
Mike & Connie Butler
Forrest Chumley & Barbara Valent
Community First National Bank
Duane & Cindi Dunn
Ladybird Diner
John & Ingelin Leslie
Bruce & Lia Lowrie
Sue Maes
Native Lands LLC
The Pathfinder
Tom & Barb Van Slyke
Ken & Nina Warren
WTC

Bison

Allan Foster & Mary Galligan
Joseph & Sarah Janzen
Konza Veterinary Clinic
Meadowlark Hills
Northern Flint Hills Audubon
Phil Howe
Dianne Shumaker & Bob Southard
Sigle Photography
The Trust Company

