

# 2020 Cure for Cabin Fever

Sunday, January 26, 2020

2:00 pm – Konza Prairie HQ Stone Barn

Come and join us for a truly unique experience this year! Mt. Mitchell and Music from KSU! The Cure for Cabin Fever will be hosting a concert with ticket sales for public admission, with the proceeds of the sales going to KEEP! Sigma Alpha Iota- a music fraternity at KSU- received a distinguished national grant to support this endeavor, and they will be publicizing the event with posters and radio announcements, and the concert will be showcasing various musical ensembles playing music inspired by the prairie. FOKP members will still have free admission to the event.

**2:00 pm Seminar: Michael Stubbs from Mt. Mitchell Heritage Prairie** - a hilltop prairie south of Wamego that is an important historical site in the underground railroad- will be here to share the story of the site and news on plans for the future of this amazing prairie.

**Educational Activities:** Stone House basement (Hulbert Center)

- Grasshopper viewing
- Limestone and flint testing
- Graduate student demonstrations
- Musical instrument petting zoo

**3:00 pm Feast:** on some of the many homemade soups available in the soup buffet and listen to beautiful music from the KSU musical ensembles. Please take a minute and welcome our guests and, if you get a chance, share with them what you know and love about the prairie and Konza and encourage them to become members of FOKP!

NOTE: We'll need **LOTS of soups** if we have so many guests this year! Please consider bringing a soup this year! If you can bring a soup – please contact: Jeff & Patti Watson [Jpwatson40763@gmail.com](mailto:Jpwatson40763@gmail.com)- (740) 502-3749

Research

Education

Conservation



Winter 2019-20

## Fall 2019 Updates

“Friends help fund dynamic ways to communicate with kids in about four hour field trips with a lot of metaphors and stories.”

“Our day to day is like hosting a dinner party for more than 50 people. We bring in chefs to feed them from a variety of menu selections. Somehow, you get it done. Then, the next day, you do it again. The next day, it’s a whole new group. That’s what we do.”

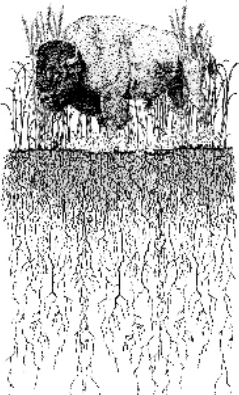
“Everything is different each day- with the kids, the docents, adventures and more. Our pantry is the prairie- all locally sourced. The boom crops are grass, hoppers and Kings Creek. If you want stories and drama, look at Kings Creek, that was scoured with a 9-foot flash flood. Then we add data, after we have their attention. They can now see it. It’s a recolonization of the creek. We get to do it everyday!”

Jill Haukos

On a cool and cloudy over-cast day on Sept. 22, 2019, the Konzer the Konza 10K and 25K race raised \$5,600 to fund school buses for field trips.

“We’re connecting local kids to Konza- hopefully for life!”

In FY19, we raised \$48,000 to invest in KEEP



**FOKP Calendars on sale for \$15!**

Pick up your copy at Cure for Cabin Fever, Flint Hills Discovery Center, or Claflin Books.



## KPBS Director's Report John Blair

Dear Friends of Konza Prairie,

I'm writing to you from my office on the K-State campus. Students are gone for Thanksgiving break, and campus is fairly quiet now. It's hard to believe that the semester will be over in just a few weeks! Seasonal research activity at Konza is also winding down, though a number of projects will continue to collect new data throughout the winter. As we near the end of 2019 and look forward to 2020, I'd like to highlight the research mission of the Konza Prairie Biological Station and provide a few metrics that demonstrate how Konza Prairie is contributing to grassland research and outreach.

Konza Prairie Biological Station continues to grow as a world-class research station for the study of grassland ecology. Research at Konza involves K-State faculty and students from 5 colleges and 12 departments, as well as researchers from more than 12 other universities and 4 government agencies. We host ~60 visiting researchers and students annually from other US and international institutions. Since 1980, Konza Prairie has been funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) as a Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) site, and more recently Konza was designated as a core site for the NSF National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON).

As of November 2019, research at Konza has been featured in over 1860 scientific publications! More than 290 graduate students from over 20 institutions have conducted their research projects on Konza. Collectively, the scientific discoveries and knowledge generated by research at Konza are advancing our understanding of grassland ecology. This understanding will be increasingly important for effectively conserving tallgrass prairies and other grasslands in a changing world. Of course, it's also essential that this knowledge be made available to the agencies and practitioners responsible for managing grasslands.

The partnership between K-State and The Nature Conservancy provides many unique opportunities to share Konza research with the broader community. For example, in 2019, Konza hosted visits from several professional groups, including the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the National Soil Moisture Workshop, and CREA Ameghino (ranchers from Argentina). In 2019, Konza researchers also gave public lectures at local and national venues, provided interviews for local and national media, and participated in other outreach events. Many Konza graduate students are also active participants in local and national science communication efforts.

As we look forward to 2020, I want to thank you for your continued support through membership in Friends of Konza Prairie. Your membership is important to us as we work to fulfill our mission of research, education, and conservation, all centered on the tallgrass prairies of North America. As always, please feel free to contact me ([jblair@ksu.edu](mailto:jblair@ksu.edu); 785-532-7065) with any questions or concerns about Konza.

## FOKP President Ken Stafford



Here we are the end of another year. I moved from Colorado to Kansas in time for the 2010 Konza Open House and took the bison tour led by Chod Hedinger. I had fallen under the spell of the wide-open prairie and the Flint Hills, a startling change from my ranching days on the high deserts of Idaho. We need to care for this jewel that is preserved here for research, education, science, and the future.

You, Friends of Konza Prairie, provide time, expertise, and funding that help sustain the Konza Environmental Education Program (KEEP)- something so needed in our area school systems. There is a great satisfaction in listening to a student who is excited as they waded in a creek for the first time, touched their first grasshopper, saw a bison, or discovered all the organisms living in clear water of Kings Creek! This year we added on-site presentations with the scientists themselves discussing their projects and long-term effects of global changes.

We are but a part, a very important part, of the remnants of the largest biomass that once was the Tallgrass Prairie. I want to thank all of you for your support of the KEEP program and the Konza Prairie Biological Station and hope that more of you can come visit, enjoy, and learn from the prairie.



## A Little Rain

What difference does 12 inches of rain make? It's just a foot of rain. On the tallgrass prairie, 33" of precipitation is what we can expect to receive during a "normal" year; 45" is a highly unusual year, and it's what we experienced this year.

January	1.35"
February	1.53"
March	2.64"
April	2.28"
May	12.02"
June	6.05"
July	3.76"
August	10.65"
September	2.24"
October	2.74"
November	
December	
<b>Year to date:</b>	<b>45.26"</b>

Take a look at the table and see that the rain presented itself primarily during the months of May and August. Turns out, a foot of precipitation, regardless of when it comes, is a big deal.

The prairie has noticed! The C4 tallgrass species (big bluestem, Indiangrass, switchgrass, little bluestem) are reaching for the sky, even in the uplands – even at the top of the Nature Trail. The timing of the rain was also particularly beneficial for the annual forbs like wedge-leaf draba and whorled milkwort. Many people were able to see these hard-to-find tiny plants that had not been seen in past years.

The downside of all of this water, was simply, all of the water. On August 24th, a very short but intense rain shower arrived at 12:30 am and dumped 3 inches of rain on an already saturated prairie and rapidly filled Kings Creek to a level of about 10' high. It's estimated that a water level of 8' is necessary to take out the bridge, so needless to say, with water at 10', the bridge was a goner.

Thanks to Joe Gelroth, Patrick O'Neal, Jim Larkins, and the Caroline Peine Foundation, the trail and bridge were rapidly repaired and back open for public use 2 weeks after the flood. Great work team!

Now we wait and see how the prairie changes as it moves into the winter. What is interesting is seeing how the bison respond to a prairie with abundant grass. When grass has plenty of water it puts resources into growing tall, spreading its nutrition out, rather than concentrating it into a shorter plant. That really doesn't help the bison.

The bison seem to benefit from grass that is shorter; grass that concentrates its nutrition into a smaller plant. Time will tell, if we have fewer bison calves next year (May 2020), that may indicate that they did not get as much nutrition from the tall grass (2019). One thing is certain, if a prairie plant could talk and you were to ask it for the one thing it wanted above all other things, it would always answer...RAIN. Our prairie is very happy this year.

## Calling New Docents!

Have you ever wanted to volunteer at Konza Prairie and help with the education program? Now is the time! New docent training begins – Tuesday, February 25th @ 9:00 am. Training costs \$40 and includes all of the training materials you'll need. Training sessions occur Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm February 25th through March 6th.

Contact Jill Haukos @ (785) 587-0381 or [konzaed@ksu.edu](mailto:konzaed@ksu.edu) for more information.



## A Big Thanks

to all of the donors of the coats, hats, mittens/gloves, and scarves to the KEEP collection of warm things that have successfully kept a whole bunch of folks warm already. We know that there are lots of appreciative and warmer visitors out there!



# Docent Spotlight: ML Stahl

Hallie Hatfield



## 1. What motivated you to become a Konza Prairie Docent?

I was invited to provide music with some friends at the 2018 Cure for Cabin Fever at Konza Prairie. There were some former colleagues of mine- Retta Kramer and the Gundersons- from my teaching days in USD 475 and they suggested I might look into the upcoming training. They introduced me to Jill Haukus on the spot and she literally flew to bring me all the paperwork! Being welcomed so enthusiastically sealed the deal. It seemed right, being a retired teacher with the Konza practically in my own back yard.

I'm a teacher- once and always a teacher- so this seemed a natural [fit] for me. I described myself to the staff as a "kid wrangler," and hoped I could learn the scientific details to go with that unique skill!

## 2. What are some of your hobbies and interests?

I make music- that's the biggie! I make music with groups of people. Folk, theater, classical- I even brought my mandolin, banjo, and kazoo to Konquer the Konza to cheer folks on.

Travel is another way my husband and I fill our days- seeing and knowing as much of the world as possible. As I write this, we are exploring the White Mountains in New Hampshire and just visited our 50th state capitol building.

Of course, the Konza is now a major hobby of mine. I love stream chemistry and hiking the Nature Trail. One of my favorite stories was when a couple visiting the Konza Nature Trail asked me if I had seen the emus. I was surprised until they pointed them out to me – wild turkeys! I didn't laugh at them but it was pretty funny!

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

The most amazing thing has been learning about the grasses and wildflowers that have been right under my feet and I never looked down. "Take care to wonder at the world through which you wander..." is a line from a favorite song of mine. The school groups are great but just as wonderful is walking with the other docents. And then there are the bison . . . I just can't pick one thing!

One of the simplest things I've learned is: It's B.L.I.S.S. to live on the prairie. How else would I ever have remembered?

**B**ig blue, **L**ittle blue, **I**ndian grass, **S**witch grass, **S**ide Oats Gramma

## 4. What brings the most joy in your life?:

People! Walking, talking, singing and doing projects with other people is the top of the heap!



## New FOKP Board Member

**Marcia Rozell** is an avid outdoors adventure seeker who loves promoting Manhattan and the Flint Hills. She utilizes her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Missouri and her Master of Science degree from the University of Idaho in Animal Science to connect visitors to the importance of agriculture.

Marcia has been with Visit Manhattan, a division of the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce, for over 12 years. She is an avid paddler and currently serves on the board of directors for two organizations, Friends of the Kaw and the Kansas Canoe and Kayak Association. She recently served 4.5 years on the USD 383 School Board and led the search for the current superintendent. Marcia and her husband, Tim, have lived in Manhattan for 22 years and have two grown children and a border collie.

# Konza Rock Star Award



Jill Haukos, **Donna McCullum**, Ken Stafford



Jill Haukos, **Valerie Wright**, Ken Stafford



Jill Haukos, **Joe Gelroth**, Ken Stafford

The Konza Prairie Rock Star Award was established in 2018 as the highest award provided for EXEMPLARY service to the Friends of Konza Prairie. Qualifiers for this award are:

A. LEADERSHIP: Recipients will have served two terms on the Friends of Konza Prairie Board of Directors AND served as President for at least one term; OR served two terms on the Friends of Konza Prairie Board of Directors and served in a decisive leadership role.

B. SERVICE: Significantly contributed years of service to the Friends of Konza Prairie.

Awardees receive a piece of Konza Prairie itself – a unique piece of limestone from the bison area that is engraved and painted with the Konza Prairie Biological Station logo. No one piece is the same.



FOKP Annual Meeting- 2019



2019 Docent Class- Annual Meeting Graduation

Jill Haukos, Carol Williamson, Bill Smriga, Molly Sanderson, Kelly Landes, Roger Kinderknecht, Susan Kamphaus, and Christine Curtis.

Not pictured: Jeanette Bosch, Jim Gaidos, Shelby Lolley, and Travis Smith

## The KPBS Staff:

**Director** John Blair, Ph.D.  
**Assistant Director** Eva Horne, Ph.D.  
**Administrative Asst.** Barb Van Slyke  
**Director of Education** Jill Haukos  
**KPBS Project Manager** Jim Larkins  
**KPBS Burn Coordinator** Patrick O’Neal  
**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.

## The FOKP Executive Board:

**President** Ken Stafford  
**Treasurer** Noah Busch  
**Historian** Joe Gelroth

### The FOKP board consists of:

#### The FOKP board members:

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)

#### Joining the board on January 1, 2020:

Jim Koelliker - 3 year term expiring Dec. 31, 2022  
 Jeff Watson - 3 year term expiring Dec. 31, 2022  
 Marcia Rozell - 3 year term expiring Dec. 31, 2022



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.

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Bison & Bluestem is published by the Friends of Konza Prairie

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## 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

Stephen Lauer

#### Little Bluestem

Jane and Randall Cobb  
Tom and Ronnie Whalen  
Larry and Barbara O'Neill  
Stormy and George Kennedy  
Rachel and Daniel Andresen  
Chuck and Sandy Bussing  
Katherine Hummels  
Elisabeth and Richard Vanderlip  
Tony Crawford  
Gabrielle Thompson and Larry Weaver  
Dan and Bev Rogers  
Mark and Terry Healy  
Kelly Carmody and Troy Henningson  
Barbara and Ernest Peck  
Dennis and Elaine Lang  
Steve and Marcia Stockham  
Lisa J. Grossman  
Jim and Nada Schroeder  
Brad and Carol Williamson  
Lucas Shivers  
Bradley and Susie Shaw  
Jessica Bilgrad  
Cynthia Rhodes and Brian Martin  
Amanda P. Gaulke  
Carolyn Roberts  
Tom and Jody Boeding  
Donna McCallum  
Dustin and Hallie Hatfield  
Bonnie Brewer  
David and Alicia Stott

Jen Spearie  
Marcia and Tim Rozell  
Steve Henry  
Peggy Coleman  
Stephanie Reeck  
Jane Bowers  
Mary Ann Fleming  
Sue Carolyn Hunt  
Kathleen Bower  
Bob Lewis  
Kathy Phelan  
Robert Phillips  
Fred and Judy Works  
The Hugo Family  
Carol and David Pacey  
Steve Coulson  
Chris Bailey

#### Big Bluestem

John and Mary Beth Reese  
Verlyn Richards  
Stanley and Letha Mae Glum  
Myron and Nancy Calhoun  
Bayer Construction Co., Inc.  
Michael Stubbs  
Burnett Automotive  
Megan Kennelly and Kris Silver  
Keith and Sue Ann Wright  
John and Joan Strickler  
Mitch and Susan Adams  
Bobbie and Dave Kromm  
Rob and Toni Gunderson  
Christen Skaer and Luke Carter

#### Flint Hills

Mike Purdon Family  
Phil and Irene Jeffries  
David A. Clements  
Barbara Bonhotal  
Michael W. and Linda D. Jones  
Haines Family LLC  
Jacque Staats and Dick Oberst  
Ben and Marilyn Tilghman  
Terry and Ginny Arthur  
John Purdon

#### Prairie Chicken

Sue Maes and D. Hemmendinger  
Anderson Bed & Breakfast  
Flint Hills Discovery Center  
Twin River Agronomics Inc.  
Joe and Anne Jezak  
Bill and Doris Burnett  
Bill and Linda Richter

#### Bison

Joe and Janette Gelroth  
Bill Baack  
Meritrust Credit Union  
Mary Vanier  
Earl Allen  
Karen Hummel