

DYCK ARBORETUM OF THE PLAINS

PRAIRIE

WINDOW

cultivating transformative relationships between people and the land

Spring 2023 Vol. 33 No. 1

Rural and urban Kansas schools love prairie!

by Brad Guhr, Ecological Restoration Specialist and Education Coordinator

The Dyck Arboretum of the Plains is in its 16th year of hosting the Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) Program. To date, we've had the distinct pleasure of working with 333 educators from 98 K-12 schools/education entities in Kansas. In turn, these educators have influenced some 70,000 students with the hands-on and minds-on EPS curriculum and rich process of planning, planting and tending native plant gardens on school grounds. I'll give a brief update on some exciting developments at a handful of our many EPS schools.

Goessel Elementary School students are enhancing their 32-year old prairie planting - the first Outdoor Wildlife Laboratory Site (the OWLS Program sponsored by Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks is still a thriving program supporting school native plant gardens) in Kansas. With the help of the Goessel High School Horticulture Club, K-3 students recently added many new species of wildflowers to attract pollinators, acted out the Rain Shadow Play, developed a prairie roots art installation, and planned/presented a planting celebration including songs and readings.

Coleman Middle School is becoming the first new Wichita magnet school in twenty years and EPS is helping guide their environmental focus. Coleman

will eventually receive the students from the other wildly popular Wichita environmental magnet school, Earhart Elementary School (another active EPS school), where prairie plantings, natural area field trips and studies, tent campouts, bee-keeping activities and outdoor project-based learning lessons are commonplace in the curriculum. A centerpiece of the Coleman activities this year focused on the first student-conducted planting of a diverse 45 species prairie reconstruction on their grounds. *(Continued on page 3)*

Right: Goessel Elementary students proudly show the results of their hard work after doing some path maintenance.

Below: Coleman Middle School students scatter seed mix on land adjacent to the school for its prairie reconstruction.



From the Director's Desk...

by Scott Vogt, Executive Director and Horticulturist



The most exciting time of the year for Kansas gardeners, late winter and early spring, is here once again. We have had enough winter and are ready for some garden work and blooming plants.

Here at the Arboretum, we are gearing up for our FloraKansas Native Plant Days, which is both a fundraiser and a form of sustainable horticulture outreach. We hope you will join us to find the best plants for drought tolerant and regionally-appropriate gardens. To give you some inspiration, please utilize the information in the Native Plant Guide. Katie Schmidt, Horticulturist has put together a diverse list of plants with 68% of the plants on the list being native to Kansas and its neighboring states.

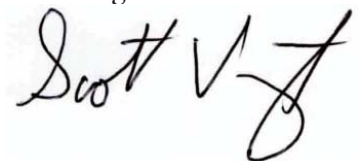
We had a fantastic end of the year appeal with a focus on children's educational programming and specifically, the Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) program. Together with your support, we reached \$17,500 in donations. THANK YOU for giving to this important program.

The landscape in the bird-watch area in the southwest corner of the Arboretum will have a different look this coming season. A group of volunteers dismantled the rustic arbor, to be replaced with a new, structurally-sound one. This original arbor was made out of cedar logs cut down from trees in Steve Schmidt's pasture near Lehigh. The arbor had decayed to the point that it was a safety hazard. A Sunday school class has volunteered to build the new

arbor this spring. I want to thank them for their personal dedication to this important garden component. If you want to support this project either with time or with a donation, contact the Arboretum, send in a contribution or scan the QR code below.

Another project that will improve the bird-watch area is the spillway clean-up. Over the years, erosion has carved out the creek channel to the point that it needs to be addressed. With the help of a generous donation, we will be removing some unsightly rubble, stabilizing the banks and bottom of the creek and installing tiered drainage slabs to direct flow, control vegetation and improve aesthetics. Stay tuned for

more exciting work to come. I hope to see you out in the gardens.



Arboretum PAVE Committee Partners with The Kansas African American Museum

Following our Prairie Lights event in December, members of the the Arboretum's Programming and Volunteer Engagement (PAVE) committee donated KWANZAA signage and artifacts curated for the event to the Kansas African American Museum. TKAAM was then able to utilize the resources during its annual celebration of this cultural holiday, which runs each year from December 26 to January 1. Pictured from left to right: Lorna Harder, Kim Witt, Dr Michelle Vann (African American Council of Elders), LeAnn Clark and Diane Gjerstad.



EPS Schools continued...

Conway Springs High School is tackling a big campus restoration project including a 55 species seeded prairie planting, groves of native shrubs and trees, a new wetlands slough, and an education amphitheater. Preliminary studies in botany, ecology, math, and English have already helped students contribute to this new project. Their biology teacher, a team of administrators, and community volunteers are pulling together resources and investing time to make sure that this project engages students in hands-on natural area stewardship for many years to come.

We couldn't be happier with how EPS continues to help Dyck Arboretum connect students and teachers to our mission of cultivating transformative relationships between people and the land. Thank you for your support of this important mission and program!

Right: Approximately 150 students at Conway Spring High School seed a wetland slough and upland prairie as a part of the school's 6,500 square foot campus restoration project.



Summer Music Nights

@ DYCK ARBORETUM OF THE PLAINS

FREE TO THE PUBLIC
DONATIONS WELCOME

BRING YOUR OWN
LAWN CHAIR

FOOD SERVED 6 TO 7 PM
BY SCOUT PACK 112

MUSIC BEGINS 7 PM



177 W HICKORY
HESSTON, KS



THURSDAY, MAY 25
THOR BONNER



THURSDAY, JUNE 8
WICHITA CHORUS
SWEET ADELINES



THURSDAY, JUNE 22
SOMETIMES ON SUNDAY



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UPCOMING EVENTS (* = via Zoom)

Feb 28 @ 7 p.m. WINTER LECTURE SERIES
McPherson Valley Wetlands: Past, Present and Future
with Jason Black

March 4, 9:30 am to 3 pm, Volunteer Brunch and Work Day

March 9 @ 7 p.m. NATIVE PLANT SCHOOL*
Ancient Plants, Modern Design with Katie Schmidt

March 11 @ 9 a.m. LEPRECHAUN RUN/WALK 2Mi & 10K

March 23 @ 7 p.m. NATIVE PLANT SCHOOL*
Liberating the Prairie with Brad Guhr

March 25, 8:30 am to 5 pm, and March 26, 12 to 5 pm
HARVEY COUNTY HOME AND GARDEN SHOW

March 28 @ 7 p.m. WINTER LECTURE SERIES
Home on the Range: Breeding Biology of Prairie Chickens
with Dr Jackie Augustine

April 20, 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. Member Day
FLORAKANSAS NATIVE PLANT DAYS

April 21 to 24 Public Days
FLORAKANSAS NATIVE PLANT DAYS

**VOLUNTEER SNACK BREAK - 1st Wed of the month
at 10 am in the PRAIRIE DISCOVERY LAB! JOIN US!**

Staff

Scott Vogt, Executive Director/Horticulturist
Brad Guhr, Education/Prairie Restoration/
Concert Series Coordinator
Janelle Flory Schrock, Public Engagement
Coordinator
Katie Schmidt, Horticulturist/ Grounds Manager

Board of Trustees

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John Torline - North Newton
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Kim Witt - Canton
Mike Zucconi - Newton

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the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains is owned by

