

DYCK ARBORETUM OF THE PLAINS

# PRAIRIE WINDOW

*cultivating transformative relationships between people and the land*

Spring 2026 Vol. 36 No. 1

## The Irreplaceable Impact of Volunteers

*by Janelle Flory Schrock, Public Engagement Coordinator*

Have you ever wondered how a place like the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains keeps chugging along with a staff of four people? If we're honest, sometimes we wonder too!

Even with the amazing support we receive through our partnership with Hesston College and its infrastructure, managing thirty acres, three buildings, two greenhouses, and a very busy calendar of events certainly involves more than just Katie, Scott, Brad and myself.

Actually, we *do know how* - volunteers! Last fiscal year, from July 2024 through June 2025, 66 individual volunteers logged over 3,100 hours of their time and energy to this organization. That is equal to 1.5 full-time staff members.

From our steadfast grounds and greenhouse assistants who volunteer daily during the growing season, to the person who reliably signs up for a chilly shift in the Prairie Lights admission booth, to the sports teams and service groups who come to spread mulch one morning per year, EACH of you adds value to the Arboretum community in a unique way.

Are you looking for a place to learn a new skill, or perhaps share a skill that you think would further our mission? We invite you to join us at one of our monthly volunteer gatherings. We have snacks and share about various activities at the Arboretum each month.

The next gathering is on Wednesday, March 4 at 9:30 am. This will also be a spring garden bed clean up day, so bring your garden gloves and help us prep for spring!

To request to receive emails about volunteer gatherings and opportunities, email [arboretum@hesston.edu](mailto:arboretum@hesston.edu).



*Top to bottom: In spring and summer, volunteers spend many hours transplanting in the greenhouse. Volunteer leaders plan and host our monthly volunteer events. Scout Pack 450 came one morning to help clean up the greenhouse and nursery.*

# Protecting the Future of Water in Kansas

by Brad Guhr, Prairie Restoration Specialist and Education Coordinator

Water is the lifeblood of the Kansas economy and its ecosystems. And yet, this resource we rely on faces unprecedented challenges. On Saturday, March 7, the Arboretum will host the Kansas Water Symposium v2.0, a full-day intensive event dedicated to understanding and protecting our state's most valuable resource.

Building on the water symposium we hosted in 2015, this second Kansas water symposium brings together a panel of leading hydrogeologists, state water managers, and conservation experts to provide a comprehensive update on the state of the state regarding water.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Participants will move beyond the headlines to explore the complex realities of Kansas water management.

Key topics scheduled for discussion include:

**The Long View:** Understanding drought cycles and what the geological record says about our future.

**Supply & Infrastructure:** Updates on the Ogallala Aquifer and the increasing impact of sedimentation on our federal reservoirs.

**Conservation Solutions:** Practical strategies for municipalities, agricultural producers, and homeowners.

**State Vision:** A look at the current "Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas" and the policy tools being developed to ensure long-term stability.

For the full slate of speakers and presentations, visit [dyckarboretum.org](http://dyckarboretum.org)

## WHY ATTEND?

Water is a resource we take for granted until it becomes scarce. This symposium is designed to move the conversation from reactive crisis management to proactive stewardship. Whether you are a landowner, a concerned citizen, or a local official, this event offers the data and the community connections needed to help shape a sustainable water future for Kansas.

Registration: \$25 includes a full day of expert presentations, a continental breakfast, and lunch. Early registration is encouraged. Register no later than Wednesday, March 4, to be included in the meal count. Visit [dyckarboretum.org](http://dyckarboretum.org) or call 620-327-8127.

Join us as we learn to value every drop and work toward solutions that will keep Kansas' water flowing for generations to come.

## Leprechaun Run 2026 - Get Ready to GO GREEN!

Don your green gear and let's get moving!

On Saturday, March 14, 2026, the Arboretum will host its 14th Go Green Leprechaun Run. This community-focused event offers two chip-timed distances: a 2-Mile Fun Run/Walk and a challenging 10K Run, both of which showcase the Arboretum in early spring.

Packet pickup will occur on Friday, March 13 (3–6 pm), or on race morning starting at 8:30 a.m. Both races kick off simultaneously at 9:30 am, followed by an awards ceremony at 10:45 am to celebrate our top finishers.

Leprechaun Run does more than just get your heart rate up—proceeds from the run directly support the Arboretum's educational programming and mission. Early bird registration runs through March 4, offering a \$5 discount, but you must

register by February 20 to guarantee your preferred Leprechaun Run race swag sock size. Whether you're a serious runner or just looking for a fun morning stroll with friends and family, we look forward seeing you on Saturday, March 14!



# From the Director's Desk...

After years of planning, the construction of the propagation greenhouse is almost complete. I have to be honest and say that the construction process has taken longer than I anticipated. Retrofitting the frame of an older greenhouse, originally constructed in the early 1980s, with new upgraded components has been interesting, not to mention time consuming. Not all of the pieces fit together like they once did, but we made it work with a little ingenuity.

This new greenhouse will be perfect for starting plants from seed since it is much smaller than our current greenhouse and less costly to heat. By utilizing a smaller greenhouse, we can start our own seeds and offer species not available from other suppliers. Many native wildflowers, grasses and shrubs need to be started early in the season and are slow growing. A propagation greenhouse will give us a head start, allowing the Arboretum to produce more of our own inventory on-site, as well as rare plants that can't be sourced elsewhere.

Beyond production, the greenhouse will provide a teaching opportunity, demystifying native gardening for the public. Through observation, guided tours, and

hands-on activities, visitors will experience the entire lifecycle of locally-grown plants—from seed stratification and germination to seedling and young transplant, ready to survive on its own. By showcasing the beauty and diversity of these plants in a controlled setting, the Arboretum hopes to inspire more people to create habitat gardens for pollinators and other wildlife.

We were excited to be able to upcycle this greenhouse from Hesston College. Looking ahead, the new greenhouse will be an integral part of the Arboretum's stewardship and education initiatives. From workshops to hands-on horticulture activities with children, this greenhouse is more than just a place to grow plants. It's a chance to impact the future of conservation and the vision we have to connect more people to the land.

From the many donors who helped fund this new greenhouse to the volunteers who've helped put it together, a special thanks goes to everyone who made this project possible.



*Left: Rosie spots Zach Vogt while he reaches for a tool on the greenhouse scaffolding. Mounting and fitting the roof pieces of Lexan were some of the most challenging tasks on this project. Above: Volunteer Jim Regier and Scott Vogt work to solve a piece of the greenhouse puzzle.*



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

February 24 @ 7 pm WINTER LECTURE SERIES

Travis Heying - Kansas Storytelling Through a Camera Lens

March 14 @ 9 am LEPRECHAUN RUN/WALK 2Mi & 10K

March 15 @ 4 pm PRAIRIE WINDOW CONCERT SERIES

Cyrille Aimee Duo

March 21, 8:30 am to 5 pm, and March 22, 12 to 5 pm

HARVEY COUNTY HOME AND GARDEN SHOW

March 29 @ 4 pm PRAIRIE WINDOW CONCERT SERIES

House of Hamill

March 31 @ 7 pm WINTER LECTURE SERIES Matt Peek -

Mountain Lions in Kansas

April 12 @ 4 pm PRAIRIE WINDOW CONCERT SERIES

Rachel Sumner & Traveling Light

April 23 - Arboretum Members | April 24-27 - General Public

FLORAKANSAS NATIVE PLANT DAYS

**SUMMER MUSIC NIGHTS** Starts at 7 pm | Ice cream at break

Thursday, May 28: Prairie Bronze Handbell Ensemble

Thursday, June 4: Color Green

Wednesday, June 17: Tallgrass Express String Band

## 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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Established in 1981, the Dyck Arboretum of the  
Plains operates under the auspices of

**HESSTON  
COLLEGE**