

2022 Natural and Cultural Grant Program Awardees

Grassland Heritage Foundation, Kansas Association for Conservation & Environmental Education, Haskell Indian Nations University, City of Lawrence Parks & Recreation Department

Project Title: Restoring the Prairie in Prairie Park: Education & Community Driven Restoration to Protect the Historic Landscapes of Douglas County, KS

Amount Requested: \$49,921

Recommended Award: \$49,921

Project Description: This project will provide a valuable prairie restoration within city limits, creating an important resource for wildlife, a useful outdoor classroom for students, and an example of large landscape management for city and county staff and residents. Project partners will collaborate to restore a native landscape within Prairie Park. The community will be involved every step of the way, from removal of invasive species to planting of a diverse ecosystem. In partnership with Haskell Indian Nations University (Haskell) and Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE) the project will provide opportunities for deeper exploration into the history of prairie, stewardship of this ecosystem, and conservation education. The experiences we share with our partners and the community will be preserved online for long-term use in classrooms and non-traditional learning spaces.

Kansas Biological Survey & Center for Ecological Research

Project Title: The Inventory of Native Pastures in Douglas County

Amount Requested: \$38, 731

Recommended Award: \$38, 731

Project Description: The prairie landscape is central to the ecological and historical identity of Douglas County, as was recognized by County residents and officials when native prairie was added as a class of “Sensitive Land” in the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2019. Prairies primarily used for livestock grazing have not met the definition of ‘high-quality’ and have not been mapped, leading to a gap in the data that is essential to land-use decisions and open space planning. With this project we will fill this data gap and bring attention to prairie pastures and the people who work them by 1) conducting an inventory of the largest parcels of prairie pasture in the County; 2) hosting two public events to facilitate discussions about the importance of prairie pastures to the ecology and history of the County; and 3) telling the stories of a few families with strong ties to the grazing history of the County through an ArcGIS story-map.

Ascending Stars Consulting

Project Title: Ascending the Voice of Haskell’s First Students (Phase I): A 1884-1890 Letters Project

Amount Requested: \$74,000

Recommended Award: \$35,000

Project Description: Over the course of a century, hundreds of thousands of Tribal children were taken under duress or coerced away from their communities and forced to attend government sanctioned Native American boarding schools. These schools were used as tools of assimilation to create a cultural genocide resulting in the eradication of many Tribal languages, severely impeding their ability to function as a culture, and often leading to the permanent separation of children from their families. To date, there has never been a full or accurate accounting of the number of Tribal children who were forced to attend these schools, the number of Tribal children who were abused, died, or went missing while under the care of these schools, nor has any study been conducted on the long-term impacts suffered by these children and their families. Ascending Stars Consulting will document, scan, study, edit and transcribe a sample of Letters between the first Haskell students, their parents and Indian agents

who controlled their newly established reservations that have remained deeply embedded in the Charles Robinson collection and make them publicly accessible. These one-of-a-kind student letters provide firsthand accounts of the experiences of some of the most vulnerable and inhumanely-treated children in this nation's dark history and provide the world a unique opportunity to experience the perspectives of peoples who suffered cultural genocide in the name of education. The cultural significance of the project is of great importance for Douglas County. The history of Haskell when it functioned as a boarding school is interwoven and an integral part of Douglas County history, and yet very little is known to the public about Haskell Institute during the late 1890s. This project has great importance at the national level as well, in regards to the work that is being done by organizations, Tribes, and the U.S. federal government.

Holy Family Church Preservation Committee

Project Title: Restoration and Protection of Stained-Glass Windows in Original Holy Family Catholic Church

Amount Requested: \$74,000

Recommended Award: \$29,000

Project Description: Holy Family Catholic located in Eudora, Kansas, is the oldest extant Catholic Church in the state of Kansas and is one of the few nineteenth century stone buildings still existing in Douglas County. Built with limestone quarried at John Kellerman's quarry east of the current city limits and mortar mixed with sand from the Kansas River, the church was built with a vernacular building style. The goal of this project is to maintain the building's original envelope, stabilize the enclosure to protect interior and provide a weather-tight secure structure. To achieve this goal, our plan is to remove, clean, repair, restore each window and transom. Successful completion will assure a weather-tight secure structure and restore the aesthetic beauty. This project will help assure this structure continues to stand strong for future generations.

Clinton Store

Project Title: Restoration of the Heartbeat of a Rural Community in Douglas County

Amount Requested: \$32,500

Recommended Award: \$16,348

Project Description: The Clinton Store has been the center of the community since its founding in 1857. In the early years of this community, it served as a grocery and farm supply store for the communities of Clinton and the freed slave community of Bloomington which was displaced by the construction of Clinton Lake. Over time, the building has seen natural disasters and a number of additions. While many things have changed in the Clinton community, the building still serves as a meeting place for residents to stop by chat, hold meetings, or simply stop and get a cold pop and ice cream on a hot summer day. The Property was purchased by the Baldwin family in February of 2022 and is in need of many improvements. Immediately after taking ownership of the Clinton Store, the Baldwin family met with Douglas County Zoning & Codes staff to identify priority repairs. This project seeks funding is to rebuild the roof, the highest priority item. "The Store," as the locals call it, has been a gathering point for as long as it has existed. It is a part of the Clinton community heritage and renovations are urgently needed to maintain its existence and accessibility into the future.

Friends of Oak Hill

Project Title: Oak Hill Potters Field Community Remembrance

Amount Requested: \$26,000

Recommended Award: \$13,000

Project Description: This project will document and create a permanent memory of those buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery Potters Field. The goal of this project is to create on-site interpretive signs and public presentations that will tell the stories of the individuals interred at the site. On-site interpretive signs will highlight the results of the community geophysical survey project at Oak Hill and the names and stories of the individuals interred. These signs will have QR codes that visitors can scan and interact with narrated stories and descriptions. The public presentations will be held at multiple institutions, including KU, KSHS, NAACP, and Watkins in order to have a broad reach across the community. The information presented will highlight the stories and lives of those who were buried in the Potters Field, the purpose and use of the space, and how this all reflects the history and development of Lawrence from the 1860s through the early 1900s. These stories are significant because they represent the lives of individuals who were disenfranchised, overlooked, and whose stories are often ignored and untold throughout history.

Black Jack Battlefield & Nature Park

Project Title: Restoring the Black Jack Battlefield

Amount Requested: \$19,863

Recommended Award: \$8,000

Project Description: The goal of this project is ecological restoration of the historic Black Jack Battlefield. In 1856, Abolitionist John Brown led Free-State forces against pro-slavery militiamen in the Battle of Black Jack, characterized as the first real battle of the Civil War. Today, the battlefield would be unrecognizable to the soldiers who fought there. The original site was nearly treeless, but in the more than century and a half since, the site has been invaded by trees and non-native plants that obscure the view, making it difficult for visitors to appreciate the scope of the battlefield or get a sense of how close the opposing forces were to one another. This project will restore the battlefield as closely as possible to its historic aesthetic, to more accurately represent the mid-1800s setting of America's first battle of the Civil War, and to help share its story. The restoration work will be driven by community volunteer days incorporating education about the site's natural and cultural history. The community will engage with the project at each stage, from seed collection to invasive species management to wildflower plantings. Each aspect of the restoration will consider the historic landscape, long-term management responsibilities, and public engagement.

Ballard Community Center & Somos Lawrence

Project Title: We Are Lawrence: Celebrations of Remembrance and Growth

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Recommended Award: \$5,000

Project Description: The Ballard Center provides affordable high-quality early education and services to help families maintain a stable environment for their children. In April 2021, Ballard partnered with 'Somos Lawrence', a community initiative that advocates for effective and culturally informed grassroots outreach to non-English residents of Douglas County, and with specific attention to Spanish speakers. Ballard and 'Somos Lawrence' have collaborated towards building community and fostering new leadership amongst first generation Spanish speaking families residing in Douglas County. To this end, Ballard Center & Somos Lawrence are requesting funds for two specific community celebrations. Departing from an understanding of heritage as the means to work from our present towards collective futures, the Ballard Center, Somos Lawrence, and members of the Common Ground Community Garden in John Taylor Park seek funding for two community celebrations, both stemming

from traditional festivities in Mexico and Central America: Day of the Dead, a collective ritual of remembrance tied to the harvest; and Day of Spring, a celebration of the planting season. While the former is a community experience of remembrance, the spring celebration brings all the vitality of the growing season.

Wakarusa River Valley Heritage Museum

Project Title: Outdoor Interpretive Signage

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Recommended Award: \$5,000

Project Description: The location of the WRVHM within Bloomington Park grounds allows visitors to walk through gardens and around the grounds when the museum is closed. The public encounter a building with little information of what is contained within and a sculpture whose meaning is lost without background information. Without access to the exhibits inside the museum, the public misses the opportunity to learn about the vibrant communities that were in or around the Wakarusa Valley and their unique history in the Bleeding Kansas era. Better interpretive panels identifying the heritage of the area would easily solve this problem.

The WRVHM will use this funding to place two large interpretive panels designed in-house and fabricated by Fossil Graphics. This will give a consistent look for Douglas County heritage and destination sites. This style is approved by the Corps of Engineers for use in Bloomington Park. An additional single-post wayfinding sign will direct visitors from the lower parking lot up the walkway to the museum.