

2023 Natural and Cultural Grant Program Awardees

Native Lands Restoration Collaborative, Kansas Land Trust, Kansas City WildLands

Project Title: Seeds of Change: Strengthening Regional Environmental Partnerships through Collaborative Seed Collection & Restoration Efforts

Amount Requested: \$68,430.50

Recommended Award: \$68,430

Project Description: The Seed Team will be the collaborative effort of community organizations and volunteers focused on sustainable collection of seeds from remnant landscapes, to increase the efficacy of ecological restoration work in Douglas County. As modeled by Kansas City Wildlands (KCWL) in the KC Metro area, this endeavor will create and strengthen partnerships centered on protecting natural areas and restoring native vegetation to publicly accessible spaces. Locally collected seeds are best adapted to growing conditions in their regions, making them more likely to thrive under stress when compared to seeds purchased from other regions. KCWL will lead Native Lands Restoration Collaborative (NLRC), Kansas Land Trust, and several other organizations in establishing a successful Seed Team in our community. Further, the funding will create a position at NLRC, Native Seed Collection Specialist, to be filled by PhD candidate Robert Hicks Jr. Events will be planned each year of the grant with the sole purpose of expanding these partnerships and supporting the community's land stewardship efforts. This collaborative partnership will strengthen the Douglas County environmental organization network, lead to partners identifying future funding to maintain the Seed Team, and support Douglas County as it develops an Open Space Plan.

Friends of the Kaw

Project Title: Protecting the Rivers of Douglas County - Riverbank Restoration Update and Maintenance

Amount Requested: \$31,604.11

Recommended Award: \$31,600

Project Description: Since 2018 Friends of the Kaw and Native Lands Restoration Collaborative, along with a variety of partners, have worked to restore and repair the Kansas River riverbank and riparian zone in Douglas County. The riparian buffer is the last line of defense to filter out pollutants before they reach the Kansas River, it provides habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, and its condition tells a story of how humans value and care for the land and waters that sustain them. Through this project we will revisit two previous riparian restoration sites funded by the Natural and Cultural Heritage grant program - the Lawrence East Riverfront Park/8th Street Boat Ramp and Eudora Wakarusa River boat ramp, Main St., Eudora in Eudora township. Program funding will be used to support three significant activities: continued invasive species control at both sites, ecosystem management education for both Eudora and Lawrence Parks and Recreation staff, and a robust community engagement program. By revisiting these sites, we will protect the investments previously made by Douglas County and ensure the continued protection of valuable natural areas along the banks of the Kansas River.

Lawson Brothers Farm Partnership

Project Title: Rehabilitation & Restoration of the Knud Anderson Farmstead, Phase 1 - Planning

Amount Requested: \$23,000

Recommended Award: \$23,000

Project Description: Earlier this year, the Knud Anderson Farmstead near Vinland was added to the National Register of Historic Places, through support of the Heritage Conservation Council of Douglas County. The next phase in maintaining this unspoiled glimpse of Douglas County's early rural heritage is to partner with an architectural firm specializing in historic preservation. These professionals will assess the buildings and help create actionable rehabilitation and restoration plans and envision adaptive reuse

purposes to ensure the buildings' longevity. Working toward an overall master plan for the farmstead, this will be a first step toward rehabilitating and restoring as many buildings as possible, enabling us to celebrate the built heritage of the farmstead while adapting it to current-day usage. This groundwork will also help us pursue grants, tax credits, loans, and other sources of funding. While preserving the past, we also want to be future-focused. The long-range sustainability of this property is our key objective. We want to work toward a plan that leaves the farmstead in a condition that ensures it can be viably maintained and appreciated by future generations.

Lecompton Historical Society, Maple Grove Cemetery District

Project Title: Maple Grove Cemetery Restoration

Amount Requested: \$21,000

Recommended Award: \$21,000

Project Description: The Maple Grove Cemetery is the first town cemetery started by early settlers who came to Lecompton in 1854. As requests for genealogical information increase, the preservation of grave markers at Maple Grove contributes to our family histories and helps support these requests. The goal of the Maple Grove Cemetery Restoration is the preservation of approximately 120 grave markers located in the southeast section of the cemetery, which is the original part of the cemetery established by the George Zinn family. The restoration of these grave markers ranges from cleaning only to more involved restoration work such as pinning, patching, and resetting. Our proposal will help to maintain the identity of some of the oldest grave sites in Douglas County that are most at risk of destruction due to age.

Black Jack Battlefield Trust

Project Title: Black Jack Battlefield Restoration

Amount Requested: \$16,000

Recommended Award: \$16,000

Project Description: The goal of this project is ecological restoration of the historic Black Jack Battlefield. We are currently working with Native Lands Restoration Collaborative to complete portions of the battlefield prairie restoration, which was partially funded by an HCC grant in 2022. Last year, Black Jack Battlefield Trust paid for the removal of half of the trees on our battlefield. This year, we are requesting funding to remove the remainder of the trees to continue and complete the restoration. Prairie plants need full sun to thrive, so we cannot complete the restoration of prairie in our battlefield without removing the trees. Once the trees are taken down, we plan to continue working with Native Lands, who will provide guidance and help with educational volunteer workdays. 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.

University of Kansas Center for Research, Kansas Biological Survey and Center for Ecological Research, KU Field Station, KU Indigenous Studies Program, Spencer Museum of Art, KU School of Architecture and Design

Project Title: "Here-ing" cultural and natural heritage: Regenerating Indigenous cultural fire in Douglas County

Amount Requested: \$39,202.28

Recommended Award: \$10,600

Project Description: This project seeks support for the second and third years of a multi-year art and science collaboration at the KU Field Station that directly engages the public in natural and cultural preservation activities. Artist Janine Antoni is embedding a labyrinth shaped like the human ear into the landscape at the Suzanne Ecke McColl Nature Reserve. Antoni's 10-acre environmental artwork, titled

“here-ing”, encourages visitors to listen to the land and its stories. It also serves as a catalyst for the restoration of 40 acres of prairie grassland through shared approaches of Indigenous and contemporary land management practices, led by Indigenous cultural fire practitioner Dr. Melinda Adams and Field Station Manager Sheena Parsons. This commission is the first significant public engagement project at the KU Field Station since the construction of public hiking trails in 2008 and the expansion of the Roth Trailhead in 2012. Specific goals of the project include bridging the gap between natural and cultural heritage through imaginative programming and creating a space for a community restoration effort that can be experienced firsthand by diverse audiences in Douglas County and beyond. Project programming to date has included KU faculty, staff, and students; Haskell Indian Nations University students; community members; and Tribal representatives. HCC support will enable even broader inclusivity as this project transitions from the creation phase to the sustainability phase.

K-State Research and Extension - Douglas County

Project Title: Douglas County Land Stewardship Assistance Program

Amount Requested: \$24,989.25

Recommended Award: \$10,500

Project Description: While Douglas County Extension strives to provide landowners with information on best practices to sustainably care for their land, the resources available are scattered across different program areas within Extension and among our partnership organizations. Existing resources are often ill-defined or outdated. Some requested resources are non-existent. The goal of the Land Stewardship Assistance Program is to provide contemporary land stewardship services and resources to the residents of Douglas County. We aim to connect rural landowners and agricultural producers in Douglas County with financial and technical resources, partner organizations, and each other in the common goal of maintaining and improving land stewardship while maintaining the rural character of the county.

Firefly Farm

Project Title: Dolby Barn Restoration

Amount Requested: \$15,000.00

Recommended Award: \$5,370

Project Description: We want to re-establish Firefly Farm as a major flower producing farm for both retail sales at farmers’ markets and wholesale sales to florist shops, returning to the productivity and visibility it had when it was the renowned Wild Onion Farm. We also want to use the site for education and training, developing it to be a venue for social gatherings and celebrations. The barn itself will be central to the operation of the farm. These ambitions are far from what the site is now, as the farmstead fell into disuse in the years before we bought it, but what we know for sure is that the first step in this direction is the renovation of the barn. The historic barn has very immediate needs if it is going to be salvaged. Of those needs, the first is replacing the roof in order to end any further depreciation of the structure. Firefly Farm will use this funding to repair and replace the roof of our historic barn. This barn was a previous grant recipient of HCC’s Barn Assessment program.

Baker University

Project Title: Interpretive Signs Celebrating 150 years of Trees at Baker University's Ivan L. Boyd Arboretum

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Recommended Award: \$5,000

Project Description: This project is designed to commemorate the 150th year since the first trees were planted on the campus of Baker University in what would become the Ivan L. Boyd Arboretum. The project will primarily focus on producing interpretive signage that will raise awareness and knowledge of

the historical and contemporary importance of the Arboretum to a much wider audience of Baker University, Baldwin City, and Douglas County residents. Currently there is limited access to information that shares the story of the Arboretum with the public and we expect this project broaden the accessibility of the Arboretum to a wider audience and to share a fascinating and important part of the history of southern Douglas County with people who visit the Baldwin City Campus of Baker University from across the United States and beyond.

Somos Lawrence, Ballard Center

Project Title: Somos Lawrence/We are Lawrence: Latinx Heritage as Past, Present and Future

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 to advocate for effective and culturally informed grassroots outreach to non-English residents of Douglas County, 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, we are requesting funds to continue building the infrastructure necessary to enhance opportunities for cultural outreach. We work from a more dynamic and expanded definition of "heritage" to include communities' daily, and often invisible, practices as the true cornerstones of our collective heritage. The Ballard Center and Somos Lawrence, in collaboration with our new partner, the Percolator Arts Collective, and members of the Common Ground Community Garden in John Taylor Park, seek funding to solidify two main pillars of our community-outreach infrastructure. The proposed events stem 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.

Limestone Community School

Project Title: Curriculum Development for Indigenous Culture

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Recommended Award: \$5,000

Project Description: This project's goal is to amplify native voices, affirm the indigenous identities of our students, and be an active participant in the movement to preserve endangered languages of North America. This will be accomplished through building curriculum in partnership with tribes who our students have a formal affiliation with as well as tribes who were original stewards of the land we are on. We seek to include a diverse range of indigenous perspectives into all aspects of curriculum including the arts, history, science, language, and ecology/conservation. The project has been started in modest ways with indigenous language instruction, Lakota, being held weekly at the school. Lakota was chosen because of the desire of some of our students wanting to learn the language of their tribal affiliation. In time, we would like this program to grow so that we can become an incubator for indigenous language instructors.

Winter School

Project Title: Douglas County Heritage Plant Guide

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Recommended Award: \$5,000

Project Description: The Winter School is a historic one-room schoolhouse outside of Lecompton in Douglas County. Through conservancy and innovative programming, we want to use our heritage to better understand the origins and evolutions of knowledge. In this most recent project, we propose to

create a Douglas County Heritage Plant Guide by leveraging the experience we have in historical research, community building, and art/design. The guide will include some basic information about plants (edible, flowering, and grasses) important to the people of Douglas County. It will be unique in its scope as it will include not just a catalog of plants native to the ecosystem or currently popular in gardens – but will seek to include plants of people who have been displaced or have migrated to the region. At its heart, it is a cultural history project that culminates into a tidy publication with visual appeal and education through the written word.

City of Eudora

Project Title: Reviving Southwest City Cemetery's History

Amount Requested: \$3,500

Recommended Award: \$3,500

Project Description: This project will aid in the preservation of a historic, primarily African American cemetery in Eudora. The goal of the project is to create on-site interpretive signs, a small exhibit in the Eudora Community Museum, and a virtual interactive map available to the public. The project is ultimately split into two parts: geophysical survey and historical research analysis. For the geophysics portion of the project, FDEM (also known as electrical conductivity) and Ground-penetrating Radar (GPR) will be used as non-invasive methodologies to help identify the locations of any possible unmarked burials. The geophysics equipment and software to process the data will be provided by the Kansas Geological Survey. For the historical research analysis portion of the project, information collected from census records and the Douglas County Register will aid in further identification of known burials (as indicated by tombstones) in addition to locating possible burials through obituaries and burial records. Additionally, the project team will seek information from a variety of sources including neighbors, volunteer researchers, and community members. The results of this project will greatly benefit the community of Eudora by shining light on a group of historically excluded people who have represented a strong percentage of Eudora citizens.