

News and Notes

First Douglas County Water Festival

On October 2, 2009, 390 fourth graders from six Douglas County elementary schools gathered at the University of Kansas Field Station for an informative water festival, focusing on water pollution and water conservation. The students were involved in many hands-on activities, including games, demonstrations, and experiments that helped them understand the different components of the water cycle, water quality, and water conservation and management. The University of Kansas Field Station strives to encourage public education opportunities such as this water festival.

This event brought together facilitators from the university, as well as county, state, and federal agencies.



Matt Hiatt, an undergraduate student in Environmental Engineering, discusses his and Dr. Belinda Sturm's project to grow algae at KUFS for a KU Transportation Research Institute study exploring algae's potential use as a biofuel.



KU Environs Group Collects Seeds

On October 31, about 25 student members of KU Environs under the direction of Dr. Kelly Kindscher, KBS Senior Scientist, spent the afternoon collecting native grass and forb seeds from the Rockefeller Prairie. These seeds will be used for medicinal plant research, re-seeding along the new Rockefeller Prairie Trail, and on restoration areas on the McColl and Rockefeller tracts. The students will assemble again in the spring to plant the seeds.

KU Environs is a student environmental group working with KUFS to form a partnership that would permit them to participate in volunteer projects. KU Environs is in the process of "adopting" the trail system in order to help with maintenance and various projects.



KU students work under the direction of Dr. Kelly Kindscher during a seed collection event in October.



Photo courtesy
of KU
Endowment

Trailhead Structure Receives Award

The new trailhead structure at the KU Field Station has received a Design Excellence award from the American Institute of Architects, Kansas City chapter. The shelter, designed and built by KU architecture students under the direction of Associate Professor Nils Gore, competed with about 70 other projects designed and built by professionals from across the region. Located on the Rockefeller Experimental Tract at the head of the Rockefeller Prairie Trail leading to the Kaw Valley Overlook, the shelter will soon include display panels with information about the trail and surrounding area as well as a place to sit, rest and enjoy the landscape. This spring KU media design students under the direction of Dr. Greg Thomas will be working with KUFS staff to develop content for the panels.



A Note from the Director

The University of Kansas Field Station continues to make improvements to enrich public education and recreation experiences. The award-winning trailhead structure designed and built by KU architecture students has been completed. The nature/hiking trail system is being expanded by the addition of several new trails, including a new half-mile, concrete, handicapped-accessible trail from the trailhead to the Kaw Valley Overlook and the McColl Tract. Informational signage for the trails and trailhead structure is currently in preparation, and we are excited about another opportunity to involve KU students in developing our facilities. We welcome individuals and groups of all ages to explore the expanded trail system at KUFS.

We would like to thank our donors, sponsors, and volunteers without whom none of these new features and enhancements would be possible.

Edward A. Martinko, Director

For additional information, please contact Scott Campbell, Kansas Biological Survey, 2101 Constant Ave., Lawrence, KS
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Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Tour

On October 9, 32 participants from the KU Osher Institute for Lifelong Learning visited KUFS for a walking tour of the Rockefeller Prairie and Fitch Natural History Reservation. KBS staff members as well as KU faculty and graduate students served as naturalists as they led small groups through the prairie and along the trails. The tour concluded with refreshments and discussion at the Armitage Education Center. Many thanks to Scott Campbell, Jennifer Delisle, Dean Kettle and Stan Roth of KBS; Bob Hagen from the Environmental Studies Program; and EEB graduate students Quinn Long and Steve Roels for volunteering their time to make this an enjoyable and successful event. Thanks also to KUFS staff members Bruce Johanning, Galen Pittman and Vaughn Salisbury for their behind-the-scenes efforts. This tour marks the third consecutive year that the Osher Institute has offered this highly popular field trip to its members, and a fourth trip is being planned for 2010.



Scott Campbell, KBS Associate Director for Outreach and Public Service, addresses a group from KU Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the KUFS tour in October.

