

# News and Notes

## Suzanne Ecke McColl Nature Reserve



Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Robert and Suzanne Ecke McColl and many other donors, the University of Kansas Field Station and Ecological Reserves (KSR) has completed the purchase of 160 acres of land adjacent to the field station.

A dedication ceremony was held on September 29, 2007, where Chancellor Robert Hemenway and others spoke about the importance of

this property in conservation, research, public education, and habitat restoration.

The McColl Nature Reserve protects the 10-acre Rockefeller Prairie, a remnant of tallgrass prairie that has remained undisturbed since this area was settled 150 years ago. Over 200 species of plants can be found on this prairie, including the federally threatened Mead's

Milkweed (*Asclepias meadii*) and the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*).

The new property also will be used in the development of several new outreach and public education enhancements, including gardens, educational kiosks, research demonstrations, and nature/hiking trails.



Looking northwest over the McColl Nature Reserve

## Kenneth and Katie Armitage Education Center

A portion of the newly constructed addition to the headquarters building at KSR was dedicated on April 19, 2008, as the Kenneth and Katie Armitage Education Center.

Ken Armitage, Baumgartner Professor Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, served as the Director of the Field Station for more than 20 years. Under his leadership the Field Station was expanded both in terms of land acquisition and in the amount and diversity of research there.

Katie Armitage is a well-known local historian and consultant. She has studied and written about both KU and Lawrence history and co-authored two books and several articles for the Journal of the Kansas State Historical Society. The Education Center was dedicated in honor of



Ken and Katie and their longstanding commitment to quality biological and environmental education.

The Armitage Education Center includes a large classroom/meeting room, two laboratories, a lobby/great room, full kitchen, offices, and shower and laundry facilities.

The new addition was funded through a grant from the National Science Foundation, as was the original headquarters building constructed in 1994.

## A Note from the Director

Our local community and our nation are faced with a series of environmental challenges including species extinctions, habitat loss, and global climate change, that require us to develop a greater understanding of our environment and its ecological processes. We are most fortunate to have available within 20 minutes of our campus an exceptional outdoor laboratory at The University of Kansas Field Station and Ecological Reserves (KSR). Our ecological reserves consist of various habitat types, including forests, prairies, wetlands, and streams, that are dedicated to research and education.

The major tracts of land were made available through the generosity of many donors whose names are familiar: Maurice L. Breidenthal, Hub Hall, Robert and Suzanne Ecke McColl, John H. Nelson, Tensie Oldfather, Raymond F. Rice, Charles Robinson, John D. Rockefeller, and Roy and Eleanor Wall. Of equal importance are the numerous other donors who have provided the funds necessary for developing the facilities and programs associated with these tracts. To all of our benefactors and friends we wish to extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude for your many contributions!

This newsletter is the first in a series of periodic communications to the "Friends of KSR," a new program that will be highlighted in the Late Summer/Fall 2008. We are excited about this new program to keep our friends informed about KSR events and activities and hope that you will consider joining us as a "Friend of KSR."

Edward A. Martinko, Director

For additional information, please contact Scott Campbell, Kansas Biological Survey, 2101 Constant Ave., Lawrence, KS [swcamp@ku.edu](mailto:swcamp@ku.edu), 785-864-1502

## Updates from the Fitch Natural History Reservation

- By early July 2008, a wheelchair-accessible (ADA-compliant) composting restroom and water fountain will be installed near the Virginia Fitch shelter for use by visitors to the Fitch Nature Trail and the Suzanne Ecke McColl Nature Reserve.

- For security reasons, the driveway to the Fitch Natural History Reservation is closed to vehicular traffic.

However, pedestrians are encouraged to use the gate bypass and walk the short distance to the Virginia Fitch Shelter and the trailhead.

- Three new trails are in the design phase that will wind through the forest on the FNHR. The **Old Quarry Trail** will lead from the trailhead to the Rockefeller Tract. The **Sugarloaf Ridge Trail** will lead from the trailhead to Botany Bluff where more than 70 years ago KU botanists met to enjoy the view when the FNHR was less forested. An **ADA-compliant nature trail** is planned for a relatively flat area near the Virginia Fitch Shelter.



## New Garden at the Field Station



On April 26, Sharon Ashworth and Jennifer Delisle of the Kansas Biological Survey hosted a workshop on planting a butterfly garden at KSR. Fifteen people gathered at

the entrance to the Rockefeller Experimental Tract to learn about the types of plants native to this area that attract pollinators such as butterflies, bees, and moths. As a part of the workshop, participants planted almost 200 prairie wildflowers, including wild bergamot, prairie blazing star, lead plant, purple prairie clover, yellow coneflower, and butterfly milkweed. Additional gardens will be planted in other areas in the near future.



Wild bergamot



Butterfly milkweed

## Coming Soon to KSR...

- A wheelchair-accessible (ADA-compliant) trail from the Rockefeller parking area, near the south side of the Rockefeller native prairie, to the Kaw Valley Overlook



View of Lawrence from overlook

- A new, bus-accessible circular drive and parking area at the entrance to the McColl Nature Reserve

- A new bridge, similar to the bridge at the Fitch Natural History Reservation (right), over an intermittent stream on the McColl Nature Reserve. The bridge will be constructed by the Westar Energy Green Team, with help from the KSR staff, during Summer 2008



Bridge on FNHR built in 2006 by Westar Energy Green Team