

# NATURE

**KANSAS**

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## Reflecting on 30 Years of Conservation in Kansas

In 2019, The Nature Conservancy celebrates 30 years of conserving Kansas's lands and waters. It was a generation ago, in 1989, that dedicated volunteers came together from across Kansas to establish a statewide chapter of TNC. As we celebrate this anniversary, I contemplate all we've accomplished and also where we must go in the next 30 years. What makes Kansas strong—our economy, our culture, our way of life—ultimately depends on nature. Nature provides clean air, drinking water, food, places to work and play and, for many of us, our livelihoods. Together, we create can create an even stronger and more resilient Kansas—a Kansas that meets the needs of both people and nature.

Rob Manes, Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rob Manes".

### DONATIONS:

Go to [nature.org/donatekansas](http://nature.org/donatekansas) to donate. Or you can email [donate@tnc.org](mailto:donate@tnc.org) for more information.



Rock outcrops on the rolling hills of tallgrass prairie in the Flint Hills of eastern Kansas © Mark Godfrey

## New Protection in Flint Hills

### Two new easements permanently protect 1,037 acres

Ever contemplated how much tallgrass prairie remains in the world? Lovers of the Flint Hills can be quick with the answer.

“Less than four percent of the world’s tallgrass prairie remains,” says Brian Obermeyer, The Nature Conservancy’s major landscapes manager. “And almost all of that is found in the Flint Hills. This is our last chance to save tallgrass prairie at a meaningful scale.”

What once sprawled 170 million acres has been concentrated into a 250-mile stretch from Tulsa, Oklahoma, north through eastern Kansas. TNC owns five nature preserves in the Flint Hills, and Obermeyer spent the 17 years helping landowners preserve their own land to weave a large, connected web of protected prairie. Two families recently granted conservation easements on a

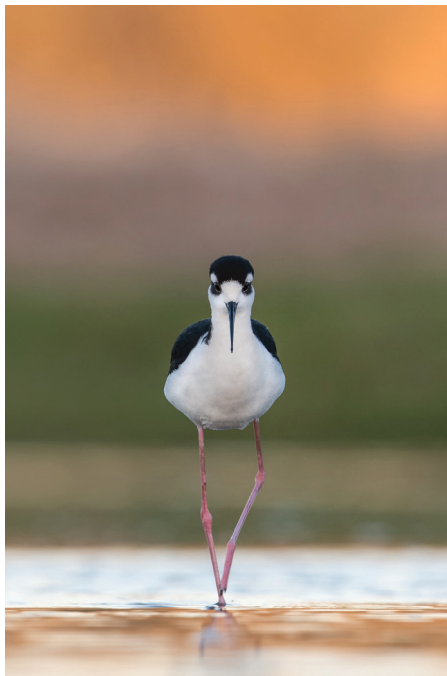
total of 1,037 acres so that their pieces of the Flint Hills will always remain unbroken tallgrass prairie.

**I am at peace knowing that my exuberant prairie will keep its beauty forever.**

*Valerie Wright, Flint Hills landowner and easement grantor*

Each of the easements is close to another protected area, creating important passageways for migratory wildlife. The connectivity to a larger landscape also provides greater resilience to climate change.

“I am happy and at peace knowing that my exuberant prairie will keep its beauty forever,” says Valerie Wright, who granted her second easement with husband Simon Malo on land within sight of Konza Prairie Biological Station.



American avocet and black-necked stilt could be Wings & Wetlands mascots. They've been documented every year of the festival. Photos clockwise © Tom Blandford, © Peter Brannon/TNC Photo Contest 2018, © Karine Aigner

# Wings and Wetlands Festival

## Improve your shorebird ID skills at Midwest hotspots

Conservation of wetlands and grasslands in Kansas plays a critical role protecting migrating shorebirds. Located in the heart of the Central Flyway—the bird migration route through the Great Plains—places like Cheyenne Bottoms provide a predictable place to stop and replenish fat stores of these birds that travel as much 15,000 each year. If you're a birdwatcher, that means some of the best shorebird sightings in the Midwest.

This May, the Wings & Wetlands Festival will team experienced guides with beginning and intermediate birdwatchers who want to improve their shorebird identification skills. You can take a Shorebird ID class and go with local experts on field trips to Cheyenne Bottoms, Quivira National Wildlife Refuge and other birding hotspots during peak migration. Even experienced birdwatchers will enjoy the festival where more than 150 species of birds are typically documented during the festival.



### Wings & Wetlands Festival

May 3-4, 2019  
Great Bend, Kansas

Early bird pricing ends April 4.  
Register today at [nature.org/wingsandwetlands](http://nature.org/wingsandwetlands)

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# 43%

Increase in shorebird species documented at TNC's Cheyenne Bottoms Preserve in 2018 over 2017.

TNC Kansas Avian Monitoring Program

### Support for Landowners in Key Kansas Landscapes



© Harland Schuster

Landowners in the Flint Hills of eastern Kansas and Red Hills (also called Gypsum Hills) of south-central Kansas can apply for financial assistance to improve the health of some of the last native prairie in Kansas.

"We are proud to participate in the Regional Conservation Partnership Program and help landowners steward the land they love," says Kris Knight, TNC director of conservation. "This funding offers support to those who wish to voluntarily complete conservation practices on their grasslands or grazing lands."

The next sign-up deadline is March 15, 2019. Property owners should contact their local NRCS office and inquire about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

**For more information, visit**  
[www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs)