



Wildflowers abound at Anderson County Prairie Preserve. © Helen Wayner; Inset photo of Mead's milkweed © Laura Rose Clawson/TNC

75 Acres Added to Anderson County Preserve

Eastern Kansas nature preserve protects rare plants and animals

Just east of the Flint Hills lies a special pocket of tallgrass prairie in Anderson County, Kansas. The area holds unique prairie plant communities that are typically more diverse than the more celebrated tallgrass prairie of the Flint Hills. This landscape abounds with prairie grasses—big bluestem, Indian grass, switchgrass—and wildflowers such as pale coneflower, leadplant, purple prairie clover, black-eyed Susan, prairie gentian and Ohio spiderwort. But the prairie found here is best known for hosting the largest reproducing population of Mead's milkweed on Earth. Mead's milkweed is a small green-flowered milkweed that used to be found in eastern Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and other midwestern states, but most of its historic range has been plowed and converted to row crop agriculture. The federal government listed it as a threatened species under

the Endangered Species Act in 1988. In the mid-1990s, The Nature Conservancy purchased 128 acres near the small township of Welda to protect this plant. Over time, the nature preserve grew as more land was purchased for protection, and—with the most recent 75-acre acquisition—the Anderson County Prairie Preserve now totals 1,218 acres.



The prairie mole cricket, once thought to be extinct, has been found in Anderson County, Kansas. © Going West Productions

With a changing climate and other mounting threats to natural areas, many places are degraded and losing species.

Still, there's time to act to protect high-quality habitat that supports an array of plants and animals. Conserving places like the pocket of prairie in Anderson County is vital to maintaining a diversity of species and natural processes in Kansas.

In addition to safeguarding rare plants and animals like the prairie mole cricket, the preserve functions as an outdoor laboratory for the Kansas Biological Survey & Center for Ecological Research at the University of Kansas. Research projects target plants like Mead's milkweed, grassland bird species, pollinators, fire in the prairie and the soil microbiome.

The Kansas Biological Survey & Center for Ecological Research manages the Anderson County Prairie Preserve in consultation with The Nature Conservancy. It is not open for visitation.

Beef Sustainability Goals Benefit Water, Land and Air



The U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (USRSB)—a multi-stakeholder initiative developed to advance sustainability in the U.S. beef industry—announced last month new sustainability goals for the nation's beef supply. Rob Manes, director of The Nature Conservancy in Kansas, is a member of the USRSB board of directors. Learn more at usrsb.org.

Ranchers and other key players throughout the beef supply chain have an enormous opportunity to address some of the greatest environmental challenges facing the world today: climate change, water supplies and biodiversity loss. For decades, The Nature Conservancy has worked to support the beef supply chain—from ranchers to food companies—in their efforts to work more sustainably, which is why we are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the development of the new sustainability goals released by the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainability Beef.

These goals deliver benefits for water and land resources, air and greenhouse gas emissions.

Rob Manes, Kansas Director

efficiency and yield, animal health and well-being, and employee safety and well-being.

These goals present a significant opportunity for industry-wide collaboration to achieve meaningful environmental, social and economic outcomes at every stage of the beef supply chain. Specifically, the goals are designed to deliver benefits for water and land resources, air and greenhouse gas emissions,

The beef industry has been moving steadily toward a sustainability framework for some time. These goals are voluntary but built on a foundation that is driven by the market. The security and continuity of our food supply chains depend on healthy soil, clean water and a stable climate—all factors that impact a producer's ability to raise livestock profitably. Businesses, from ranchers to some of the world's largest beef purchasers, are increasingly recognizing these connections and including environmental outcomes in their business models. The USRSB sustainability goals provide a crucial foundation for collaboration to build upon these ongoing efforts, with the added benefit of offering free access to science-based tools and resources to elevate the work of supply chain players.

Rob Manes, Director
The Nature Conservancy in Kansas

Welcome Tim Marshall!

Tim Marshall has joined The Nature Conservancy's staff as Sustainable Grazing Lands & Red Hills Initiative program manager in Kansas. He is a fourth generation rancher on a family farm in Medicine Lodge and previously worked as the Barber County Extension Agent.

"I want to help bridge the perceived gap between people involved in production agriculture and those in conservation," says Marshall. "Through honest conversation, we can realize we're allies working toward the same outcomes."



Photo courtesy Tim Marshall

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Joan Porsch Joins Board of Trustees

The Nature Conservancy's Kansas board of trustees is pleased to announce that Joan Porsch has joined the board.

Porsch is a retired principal-owner of K-COE ISOM, one of the largest accounting firms in the United States. She lives in Goodland, Kansas and is a long-time monthly donor to The Nature Conservancy.



Photo courtesy of Joan Porsch

"Growing up on a diversified farming and ranching operation in western Kansas instilled not only a love for animals and the land, but also a love for those that tend and care for them," says Porsch. "Supporting The Nature Conservancy is a way to give back and invest in something that I believe is important: the land. Today I have my own land where I can ride horses and enjoy working with cattle. One of my favorite things to do is to wander around our pastures, communing with nature."

She enjoys waterfowl and upland game bird hunting, along with fishing and working with her two dogs, Player and Sniper.

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