

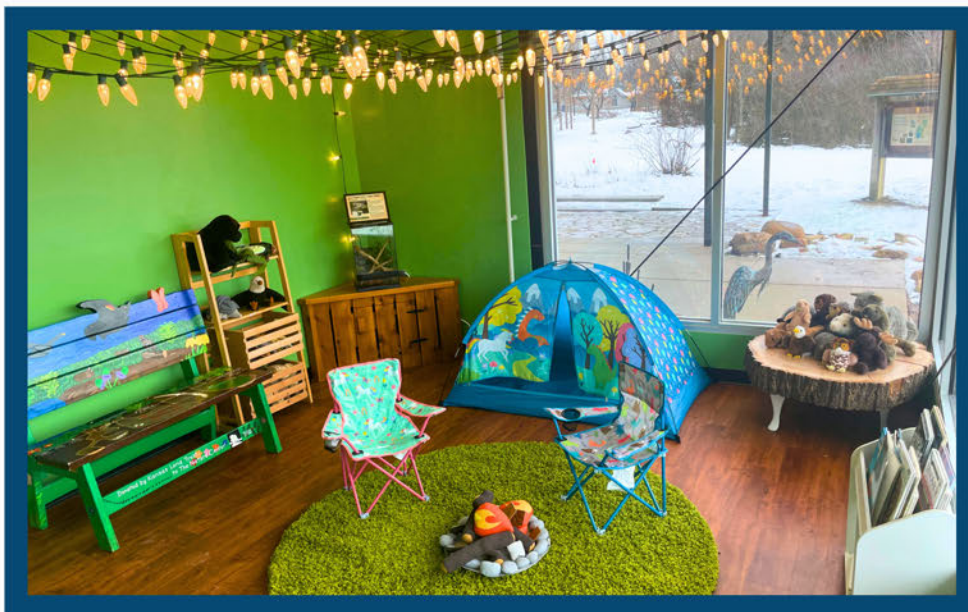
VOL. 1 ISSUE 2 • SPRING 2023

THE PRAIRIE PARK POST

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CITY OF LAWRENCE'S
PRAIRIE PARK NATURE CENTER



New at the Nature Center



Pre-school Room Makeover: Let your kiddos enjoy the experience of camping from the comfort of our updated pre-school room. It's a cozy oasis that's sure to get their imaginations going! Our camping theme features a dinosaur tent as well as kids' camping chairs around a make-believe campfire. We've got beautiful new flooring and a bright wash of green on the walls that will soon feature a woodland-themed mural.



Bison & the Great Plains People:

Discover the wonders of our state animal and come check out our new bison mount! This is a key component of our ongoing prairie exhibit renovation. Additionally, staff member and Haskell student Jasmine Newton has been working on a completely new exhibit. Titled "Bison & the Great Plains People", it highlights the near extinction of the American Bison, as well as its essential role in native lifeways. Come learn the history of this magnificent mammal and how its systematic removal affected the indigenous peoples of the Great Plains.

THE MISSION of the Prairie Park Nature Center is to promote the preservation of the natural world through hands-on environmental and conservation education.

Get involved!

Interested in volunteering with us? We can always use additional help caring for our animals, facilitating educational programs, and maintaining our preserve. Call 785-832-7980 for more information.

Our education building is located on a 100-acre nature preserve featuring wetland, woodland, and prairie environments. The building features educational exhibits including live Kansas animals and a bird of prey collection. We offer many environmental education programs for a variety of ages. Visit us soon!

OPEN TUES-SAT 9-5
FREE ADMISSION



2730 HARPER ST, LAWRENCE, KS 66046
(785) 832-7980 | www.lawrenceks.org/lprd/ppnc

Don't Miss These: Programs & Events this Season

SNAKES AND SCONES!

St. Patrick's Day Event

Saturday, March 16
6 pm - 8 pm
All Ages
\$10 For 3 Ages & Up

Gluten Free
Available!



Celebrate St. Patrick's Day at the nature center! Come meet our friendly snakes and enjoy some classic British scones. There will be giveaways too! Find a gold coin in the nature center for a small prize or find a miniature leprechaun for a gift card to a restaurant in downtown Lawrence. It's a guarantee you won't find a celebration like this anywhere else.

NATURE CENTER EGG HUNT with pancake breakfast!

Gluten Free Available!

Saturday, March 30
9 am - 11 am
\$15 For 3 Ages & Up



Join us for a yummy pancake breakfast and an exciting egg hunt in the nature center! Enjoy an up-close encounter with some Easter chicks and our adorable Netherland dwarf rabbit, Benjy! Don't miss out on all the fun activities we have planned, including games, crafts, and face painting. Bring your friends and family along to enjoy a hoppy good time!

Prairie Park Nature Center New Outdoor Classroom & Prairie Restoration Project

Community Open House
February 5 Noon to 2 p.m.

The team is anxious to hear your feedback and your ideas about the preliminary designs at a public review and open house on Monday, Feb. 5 from Noon to 2 p.m. at the nature center. Come and go as fits your schedule and share your insights, chat with other eco-minded folks, and enjoy refreshments provided by the Parks and Recreation.

Please email suzanhampton@ku.edu with any questions or for more info. Thanks and we look forward to seeing you there!

Join us for our Spring Programs!

- Wild Adventures for Preschoolers and Parents
- Exploring Nature for Homeschool Students
- Birds & the Bees: Love in the Animal Kingdom
- Nighttime at the Nature Center
- Breakfast with the Animals
- Spring Break Camp
- Snakes and Scones!
- Nature Center Easter Egg Hunt and Breakfast
- Mushroom Field Trip with a Fun-Guy
- Archery
- Canoeing
- Turtle Yoga
- Campfire Jam: S'mores, Stories, and Songs
- Crochet with a Critter
- Hike for Health with a Naturalist
- Mindfulness Monday Walk with a Naturalist
- Enchanted Tea Party with the Animals

**Use QR code at right for
further details**



Enroll Here or Call
785-832-7980

Want to reserve an exciting 1-hour animal program, 2-hour field trip, or birthday party? Call us to learn more!

Seasonal Sightings



As you start getting back outside, keep an eye out for spring ephemerals! These beauties are one of the first signs of spring. Start looking for these wildflowers in March, and observe how the different flower species come and go throughout the season.

Spring ephemerals are wildflowers that complete their life cycles within a relatively short time frame. They sprout, flower, and seed out in just a few weeks. This must occur right in the sweet spot when it's warm enough that the flowers won't freeze, but early enough that trees and shrubs haven't shaded out the forest floor. Spring ephemerals can be found just as certain pollinator species become active, and they are the only sources of nectar and pollen for those early butterflies, bees, beetles, and moths. Some ephemerals bloom for just a few days, so keep your eyes peeled!

One of these short-lived wildflowers is known as bloodroot (A). Named for its blood red sap, these white flowers grow in colonies, with just one flower arising from a single leaf. Jack in the Pulpit (B) is a unique looking plant that smells like fungi in order to attract its pollinators, fungus gnats. Another species to look for is affectionately known as Dutchman's Breeches (C). These flowers grow in patches, bearing fern-like foliage and white flowers that resemble pantaloons. Trout lily (D) is named for its mottled leaves, which resemble the coloration of a brook trout. Mayapple (E) is a groundcover species with large, lobed leaves and a showy white flower hidden just under the leaves. See how many spring ephemeral species you can find this season!



FEATURED FRIEND

Phoebe the Virginia Opossum

Miss Phoebe is one of our most controversial nature center residents-- people either love Opossums or find them creepy. Opossums are definitely quirky critters, but these quirks are what make them so special! Known for rifling through our garbage, hissing, and playing dead, opossums are highly unique mammals. They are exceptional climbers, having semi-opposable thumbs and pre-hensile tails that can wrap around branches and help them balance in the treetops. Opossums are also North America's only marsupial! Like kangaroos, mother opossums carry their young in a pouch on their bellies. Babies remain in their mother's pouch, being nourished by her milk, for the first 2-3 months of their lives. After spending another couple of months riding around on the mama's back, these nocturnal critters spend their nights scavenging for food as independent adults. Opossums are nature's clean-up crew, feeding upon carrion and decaying plant matter. Their varied diets also include rodents, insects, and even ticks, making them effective pest control. Thank your local opossum next time you see one around the neighborhood!

Spring Sustainability Tips

Plant a garden this spring! Growing your own food is one of the best ways to reduce your carbon footprint. By eating food that doesn't require long-distance transportation, wasteful packaging, or the use of harmful pesticides, you're giving Mother Nature a much-needed break. Also, plant some native wildflowers while you're at it to support pollinators and boost our local biodiversity.



DONATE HERE:



Support our conservation efforts and help us feed our resident animals by donating at the link.

rb.gy/dtxqn