

VOL. 1 ISSUE 3 • SUMMER 2024

# THE PRAIRIE PARK POST

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



## New at the Nature Center



**Prairie Park Pavilion:** Keep an eye out for the "Prairie Park Pavilion" being designed and constructed by KU Architecture's 509 Designbuild Studio with support from organizations including the City of Lawrence, Evergy, Douglas County Public Works, and various local contractors. This new outdoor venue space will be approximately 1,500 square feet with seating for approximately 100 people. It will be used for environmental education programs and will also function as a rental space for weddings and other exciting events. While the image above is only a preliminary rendering, the actual pavilion will be unveiled by the end of June.



**New Archery Range:** Come check out the new archery range just north of our garage! This archery range has a strong "wilderness" feel, being nestled among a grove of eastern red cedar trees. Whether you'd like to learn just for fun or to build basic bow-hunting skills, sign up for one of our archery classes today!

**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](http://www.lawrenceks.org/lprd/ppnc)

# Don't Miss These: Programs & Events this Season



**Wag Dash at Prairie Park**

Join Wag Dash event to bond with your dog and overcome obstacles on a 1-mile course. Your furry friend will receive treats and pet-friendly swag.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8TH  
10 AM - 12 PM  
\$25 PER DOG

REGISTER NOW

OR CALL  
(785) 832-7980

CITY OF LAWRENCE KANSAS

Logos for 'WAG DASH' and 'CITY OF LAWRENCE KANSAS' are visible.

Come and participate in the Prairie Park Wag Dash Obstacle Course and have fun while running or walking with your furry friend! Strengthen your bond with your dog by overcoming obstacles on a 1-mile course around Prairie Park Nature Preserve. You and your dog will earn pet-friendly swag and dog treats for your hard work!



**NOCTURNAL EXPEDITION**

Hop on our shuttle for a wild night time adventure!

SATURDAY, JULY 6  
8:00 - 10:00PM  
\$40 PER PERSON  
AGES 7+

Lawrence KANSAS

Logos for 'Lawrence KANSAS' and 'NOCTURNAL EXPEDITION' are visible.

Experience the thrill of the night as you ride with our expert guides to spot some of eastern Kansas' most captivating nocturnal creatures. From beavers and muskrats to raccoons, coyotes, foxes, and bats, witness these majestic animals in their natural habitats. Book your adventure now and don't forget your hiking boots!

## Join us for our other summer programs!

- Prairie Park Nature Camp
- Wild Adventures for Preschoolers
- Wilderness Survivors
- Leave No Trace Camping Guide
- Archery
- Canoeing
- Turtle Yoga
- Float Trips 101
- Wild Nocturnal Hike at the Nature Center
- Breakfast for Dinner with the Animals
- Night Canoeing and Kayaking
- Animal House Game Night

Use QR code at right for 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



Monarch butterfly  
*Danaus plexippus*

Keep your eyes peeled this summer for monarch butterflies returning to their breeding grounds right here in Lawrence, Kansas. These butterflies spend their winters ~1,500 miles south of Lawrence in the Oyamel fir forests of central Mexico before beginning their extraordinary journeys back north in March.

The butterflies encounter many difficulties on their migration pathways, and certain anthropogenic influences have caused this species to become threatened. Population declines in monarchs are the result of various stressors including climate change, the over-usage of herbicides and insecticides, and especially habitat loss caused by agricultural and urban development. The forests in which they overwinter have been particularly impacted by the logging industry. These multi-faceted threats have led scientists to classify this species as a candidate for federal protection under the Endangered Species Act. If you'd like to participate in protection efforts, Monarch Watch is a great resource right here in town!

One of the best ways you can help conserve monarchs is by planting milkweed in your yard. Milkweed is the crucial host plant on which butterflies lay their eggs. After hatching, monarch caterpillars spend around two weeks munching on milkweed to grow and obtain enough energy to fuel the metamorphosis transformation.



Viceroy butterfly  
*Limenitis archippus*

Consuming milkweed, which contains a toxic milky sap, also allows monarch butterflies to become poisonous, a crucial defense mechanism against predators. The bright orange and black coloration on monarchs serve as a warning of this butterfly's toxic qualities. Another species of butterfly, the harmless Viceroy, has evolved to imitate this warning signal with its near identical coloration pattern. This makes the Viceroy a great example of Batesian mimicry, in which a harmless species mimics the appearance of a dangerous one to trick predators into avoiding them.



## Featured Friend Tino the Scarlet Macaw

Miss Tino may be our most well-known ambassador animal, as her colorful plumage and piercing squawk make her impossible to miss! This loud squawk allows scarlet macaws to communicate across far distances in their native habitat, the tropical rainforest. Their vocalizations are not only loud, but very complex. They are adept at mimicking human speech, with some birds learning up to 300 words!

Scarlet macaws are social birds that mate for life. They are often found in small families or even flocks of up to 30 birds. They can form strong bonds with humans, but they make tricky pets, being a very long time-commitment. They usually live around 50 years in the wild, but can live to be 90 years old in captivity. Tino is in the prime of her middle age years, being around 35 years old. Say hi to Tino next time you're at the nature center!

## Summer Sustainability Tips



Save water this summer! Install a rain barrel to more efficiently utilize this precious resource. If you live in an apartment, there are simple rain catchments systems that can hang off balconies and be used for watering your indoor or outdoor plants. If you have a yard, be mindful about sprinkler usage. Once per week should be enough to maintain most lawns. To really be a water-saving superstar, incorporate more native plants into your yard that require less water than lawn grasses like fescue.

## DONATE HERE:



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

[RB.GY/DTXQN](https://rb.gy/dtxqn)