

Tools

Create **good process** for decision making and the formation of effective working groups - successfully working with people and agencies to develop and complete restoration projects.

- > Consult the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2.org) for its Core Values, Code of Ethics and Public Participation Spectrum.
- > Involve people with common goals - not necessarily ideologies.
- > Define stewardship issues, inventory challenges and assets to bear.
- > Create strategies which take advantage of each participant's strengths.
- > Strive for mutual satisfaction of all participants, rather than evaluating simply on acres impacted and dollars spent.

Board and staff must work together successfully.

Easement language can be a tool in stewardship and restoration, e.g., for a tract of land that has both native prairie and cropland, the Kansas Land Trust includes a provision to allow for restoration.

Education and volunteer opportunities are numerous in stewardship and restoration; training the next generation is a continuous challenge.

Field personnel must excel in: interpersonal communication, perception of ecological and cultural connections, natural history (i.e., be competent naturalists!), documentation and information organization, historical research, and GIS innovation and specific applications. They must also be flexible in dealing with the ambiguity which often accompanies opportunity and building new program structures.

Hot Issues

- biodiversity preservation
- exotic invasives
- monitoring and record keeping
- never enough time or money
- landscape conflicts
- global warming

Plant seeds, literally and figuratively; on the land, in relationships and with the young.





MISSION:
Maintaining and restoring Nebraska ecosystems -
Creating opportunities for education, research, stewardship and community development.

www.prairieplains.org



MISSION:
Protecting and preserving lands of ecological, scenic, historic, agricultural or recreational significance in Kansas.

www.klt.org

Land Stewardship and Ecological Restoration



Bill Whitney (left) is a founder and the Executive Director of Prairie Plains Resource Institute in Aurora, Nebraska. As a restoration ecologist he has advocated high diversity prairie and wetland restoration and stewardship,

and with a small staff has planted more than 6,000 acres of prairie across eastern Nebraska. Prairie Plains Resource Institute has also been active with educational programs on the land for all ages, and in developing community based conservation and education strategies.

Kelly Kindscher (right) is a founder, and current board member, of the Kansas Land Trust, and a plant ecologist for the Kansas Biological Survey where he conducts research on plant communities throughout Kansas and the Great Plains. In addition to his conservation activities and scientific research, he authored two important ethnobotanical books: *Edible Wild Plants of the Prairie* (1987) and *Medicinal Wild Plants of the Prairie* (1992).

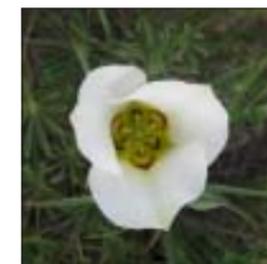


Workshop Objectives

To advocate stronger ecological stewardship and restoration capacity amongst land trusts, with an entrepreneurial approach.

To promote awareness of the necessity for stewardship and restoration strategies to deal with transitions in human land use and climate change.

To present successful - and not so successful - examples.



- Land trusts are primarily involved with protecting land.
- Most land is not pristine; some may deceptively appear to be.
- It is incumbent on land trusts to restore some land to a former natural condition; also to understand that present conditions never last. Land is changing as we speak, due to ecological, social, political and economic drivers, which may be acting in subtle or aggressive ways.
- All land needs restoration and stewardship.
- Farmlands offer special opportunities for restoration as there is funding for wetland and prairie restoration.

Core Points

1 Become aware of your bio-region. Knowing about local lands and watersheds and historical uses is very important. Think of your land as part of a larger landscape. Where do your rivers flow or come from? What influences your weather patterns? What is the regional economic hub (big cities?)

2 Know the human culture and learn how it is evolving. What was the human culture of the Native Americans - what did they eat and grow. What was the human culture of the settlers - what did they eat and grow? Just before the Great Depression in 1930 - what did the locals eat and grow? To what extent is traditional culture (farming/ranching/logging) still present?

3 Know the land's plants, soils, hydrology, historic vegetation and history of land use. For most baseline documentation reports, lists of plants are very important. Soils and map data can also help inform us as to whether lands were wetlands, forests, savannas, prairies, or never tilled. It is important to determine what the original vegetation of the area was. Public land survey records are very useful for telling where forests and prairies were located when the lands were surveyed in the 1800s. Records of agricultural uses, logging, taxes and historical accounts can also be useful.

4 Know the difference between degraded or altered lands versus natural lands. Plant species, especially conservative species, can be very useful in determining how natural lands (or restored areas) are changing (via Index of Conservatism and FQI monitoring). Keys for land alterations include terraces for farming; ponds for grazing, roads, stumps, age/size of the oldest trees.



Staff and volunteers - the ENPRT squad (Elite Native Plant Rescue Team!) - harvesting wetland sedges for Missouri River bottomland restoration.



5

Learn the trajectory over time of the hydrology and plant communities under present conditions of use and management. Are your fragments of the regional ecosystem static or dynamic, and what are the human or natural factors which affect their level of natural dynamism? Are river flows or groundwater levels changing? Is fire a common occurrence on the landscape? Suggest scenarios of change if certain restoration and stewardship actions are taken. Succession is fairly well understood for most plant communities - look at how many annuals and other weeds are present; how many exotics or invaders.



Ancestral stream channel restoration through a wet meadow.

6

Know your local, state and federal agencies and think about how to get them on board with your program. Someone at the USDA's NRCS or Forest Service or, Interior's BLM or US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, your State Department of Natural Resources, or local/county conservation agency may become a good contact for mutually useful information.

7

Think of your land trust as a service provider. Your land trust can provide many services, from consultation to activities like prescribed burning. Advice and resources for land management and restoration should be part of your mission because we want/need better management and additional habitats for organisms. You can provide the contacts to USDA, USFWS, COE, etc., agencies which have programs that can benefit the landowners whose land you protect.

8

Land trusts can be entrepreneurial, and synergy comes from being proactive about restoration and land stewardship. Your land trust can be innovative in ways that government can't be, but you have to have an appropriate attitude and the willingness to build programs from scratch, often working with other agencies, multiple agencies or other land trusts. Can you partner in projects? Can you and agency people decide to work together, and complement each other, even if you differ in ideology? Can you become friends with them despite company cultural differences? Can you create or change policy? Can you impact their interpretation of their mandates, or their practices?

9

Land trusts can take advantage of service learning; educational interaction with stewardship and restoration can be productive. By involving members, landowners and others in these educational programs, organizational action and community development will grow. Examples: SOAR and volunteers for tree clearing and seed collecting for prairie and wetland restoration.

Moonrise after combine harvesting prairie grasses.

