

PLEASE HELP US MAINTAIN THIS
UNIQUE HISTORIC SITE

THE MOUNT MITCHELL HERITAGE PRAIRIE PARK was originally part of the farm of Captain William Mitchell, an Underground Railroad participant and leader of the Wabunsee Prairie Guards, the local Free-state militia. In 1953, his youngest son, W.L. Mitchell, gave the property to the people of Kansas. His gift stipulated that the hilltop prairie would permanently become a public park named "Mount Mitchell" dedicated to the memory of his father and the Beecher Bible and Rifle Colony. Through the work of the Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards, a dedicated group of local residents, his wish has been realized. Thanks to the continuing efforts of the Prairie Guards, Mount Mitchell has been recognized as a National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Site and a Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area Star Attraction. The Prairie Guards maintain the park and its prairie and create educational activities for students, visitors and the community.



Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards, Inc.
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Wamego, Kansas 66547
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All donations to the Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards, Inc.
are 100% tax-deductible

PRAIRIE GUARDS LEARN TRAIL BUILDING



PHOTOGRAPHY: Bob Gress, Brad Neff, Scott Bean, David Gebel, Michael Stubbs. IMAGES: George Catlin, Kansas State Historical Society, Moctezuma Dragon, Hugh Brown, National Park Service, John Charles Fremont, Thomas Hicks, ©Courtesy of the The Huntington Art Collection, San Marino, California, The Underground Railroad, Charles T. Webber, Cincinnati Art Museum. MAP: Alice Fuhrmann, Ag Data Map. ©2017 Mount Mitchell Prairie Guards. All rights reserved.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:



MOUNT MITCHELL HERITAGE PRAIRIE PARK

WABAUNSEE COUNTY, KANSAS



CHIEF WABAUNSEE



CAPTAIN MITCHELL

Walk in the ruts and swales
of a trail used by Native Americans, explorers,
immigrants, and slaves seeking their freedom
on the Underground Railroad.

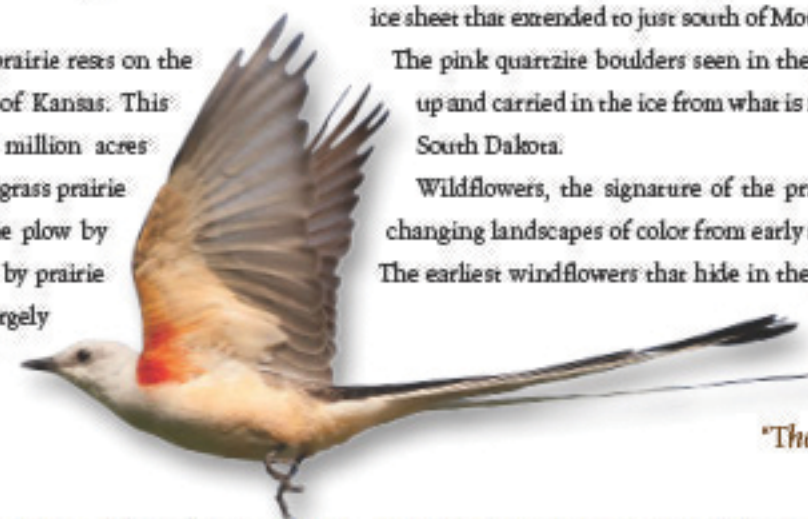


Grassland scientists and visitors from around the world come to this special place in the heart of North America where white limestone rock, grasses, and wildflowers merge with a blue prairie sky. Today the tallgrass prairie stands as the world's best remaining example of a diminished ecosystem that is more endangered than the Amazon rainforest.

The largest remnant of tallgrass prairie rests on the rolling landscape of the Flint Hills of Kansas. This precious vestige of approximately 5 million acres represents only 3% of the once vast tallgrass prairie in North America. Protected from the plow by outcrops of limestone and maintained by prairie fires, this treasure of tallgrass remains largely unaltered. It offers the finest forage on

earth for grazing livestock, a last sanctuary for prairie plants and animals, and an unspoiled landscape of serene natural beauty. The prairie grasses and wildflowers that embrace the Flint Hills today began to assemble ten thousand years ago following the retreat of the ice sheet that extended to just south of Mount Mitchell.

The pink quartzite boulders seen in the park were scooped up and carried in the ice from what is now Wisconsin and South Dakota. Wildflowers, the signature of the prairie, produce ever-changing landscapes of color from early spring through fall. The earliest wildflowers that hide in the grass give way to a



summer of colorful penstemon, purple coneflowers, and black-eyed Susans. The procession ends with the autumn goldenrod swaying in the wind.

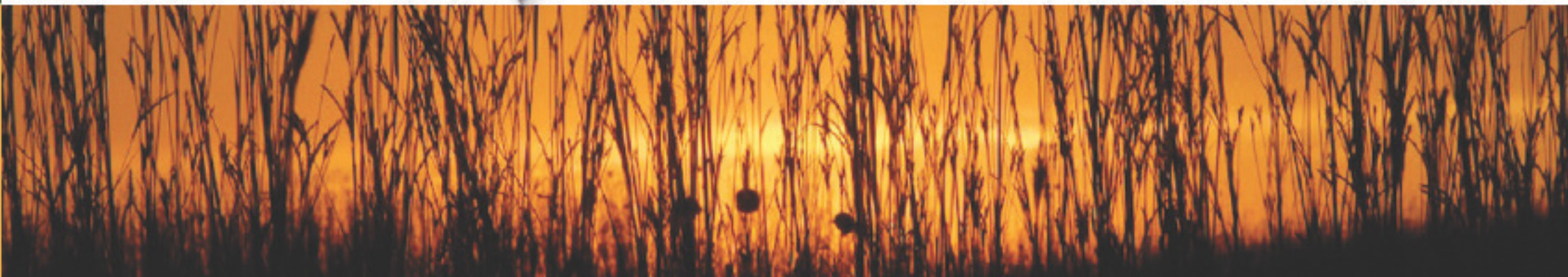
In the spring, when fires again sweep across the prairie, wildflowers come to life and renew the cycle.

Survival of the tallgrass prairie along the edge of the encroaching eastern forest is due to the destructive, but renewing, element of fire that removes last year's plant growth and destroys young trees and shrubs that struggle to invade the prairie.

Ignited by Indians or lightning during historic times, fire, in the form of controlled burns, continues to be a tool used by the managers of the Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Park to maintain the prairie's health.

—TOM EDDY, PROFESSOR OF BOTANY, EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

"The 50-acre Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie Park has the most diverse flora of any prairie that we have visited in the Flint Hills." —ED & SIL PEMBLETON, ST. PAUL MN.



ENJOY THE SIGHTS & SOUNDS OF THE FLINT HILLS TALLGRASS PRAIRIE