



SMOKY HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 2936 Salina, Kansas 67402-2936

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Think globally...act locally!

September - October - November 2023



September 21st—our program will discuss the evolutionary changes at the Sanctuary



Pat Riese, Wildlife Biologist

Smoky Hills Audubon is pleased to present two speakers for our September program. The uniqueness of the sanctuary and changes currently taking place will be the focus. SHAS has enlisted the help of wildlife biologist Pat Riese and fisheries expert Travis Riley for professional management of the Sanctuary. The two have teamed up to advise the SHAS board on management of the sanctuary.

Wildlife biologist Pat Riese will discuss the needs, challenges, and opportunities related to wildlife habitat management. Fisheries expert Travis Riley will cover fisheries management of the pond through the use of fish population sampling. Both have acknowledged the complexity of the management of the Sanctuary. SHAS's initial goal was to restore the natural prairie. Past leaders of the Smoky Hills Audubon Society have repeatedly faced the complexity of restoring what once was, with what exists now. Similar to putting toothpaste back in the tube, some things cannot be easily undone. Native habitats and wildlife species can still be managed for and maintained successfully, but it requires more expertise - rather than good intentions. This meeting will be in room 229 in Kansas Wesleyan's Peters Science Hall. You may come early and meet the speakers at 7:00 with the program beginning at 7:30.



Travis Riley, fisheries biologist

Friends of the River approaching action time!



November 16th come and hear the latest updates about the Smoky Hill River Renewal from the Friends of the River Foundation. The restoration project has taken a long time, but the outcomes are beginning to become visible, and there is now a timeline for the river to flow once again. Executive Director Jane Anderson has been at the Friends of the River for over eight years. During this time the city sales tax support for the restoration was passed by the voters, the Corps of Engineers has a signed agreement for a study for a river project supported by the

Corps, and a \$22.1 million RAISE Grant was granted to the City of Salina for the Smoky Hill River Restoration.

Jane has a BA from Marymount College in Theatre and English Education, is married to Brad Anderson, has three children and six grandchildren. Jane considers her greatest achievement is that all three of her children love the outdoors, and now her grandchildren are following suit. This meeting will be in room 229 in Kansas Wesleyan's Peters Science Hall. You may come early and meet the speaker at 7:00 with the program beginning at 7:30. .





The View from My Perch By Cheryl Higgins



We've had a wonderful change at the sanctuary this year! Last year, being our second consecutive year with no bluebirds. This year we have had 3 nests with a total of 11 eggs. 10 hatched and 9 fledged successfully. Not sure if this is because we stopped checking the nesting boxes weekly or that 28 large cottonwood trees were removed from the middle of the prairie. Either way we're so pleased with these results.



We're checking into getting the Northwest prairie burned this fall. Research suggests burning every 3 years so it is time to do this section. The hope is this will help keep the woodies under control as well as help wildflower seeds germinate. The short vegetation will allow these wildflowers to get sun in the spring to help them get established.



I hope that you are getting excited about our programs this season. Many of them are ones we have never had before. I received a wonderful list from our collaborative chapter meetings with Dr Jackie Augustine. She is the director of Audubon of Kansas (AOK). You may have met her when doing a beginner's bird walk, birding by ear at Prairie Days or listening to her talk on Black Footed Ferrets. Not only is she a great resource for our chapter, she is a huge help with keeping the Audubon chapter boards inspired and educated on what's happening throughout the state. We have been meeting by zoom monthly and a yearly in person meeting with the other Audubon chapters in the state. I would recommend that you check them out on the internet.

11/3/23 - 11/5/23 AOK will be sponsoring Celebration of Cranes at the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in Stafford Ks. Registration will be at Sterling College with speakers and tours.



Kansas Lek Treks Prairie Chicken Festival in Hays will be 4/11/24-4/14/24. Registration for this fills up fast with visitors coming from throughout the Nation as well as internationally. AOK manages three Sanctuary's, they are Hutton Niobrara Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary near Bassett, NE, Connie Achterberg Wildlife-Friendly Demonstration Farm in Lincoln County and Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie 1/2 mile east of Wamego, Ks. Did I hear anyone say Road Trip!!

She is also working to get Nature Adventure packs in all the libraries in the state. These include a backpack with one adult pair of binoculars, two children's pairs of binoculars, guides for identifying birds and butterflies, and a map showing where to find wildlife in the library's county.

They will also get education to link to how to use binoculars and help with bird identification. We do not currently have any in our county, but it is definitely something to look forward to.

I also have a big favor to ask of you. We are in need of help for our clean up day at the sanctuary on September 30th 9am-noon. October 21st, we will be having our 3rd annual Halloween Party at the Sanctuary. This is a HUGE undertaking with setting up the picnic area and especially the Haunted Trail. We would greatly appreciate any assistance you could give with setting this up!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Please contact me at 785-577-2408



Rising postage and printing costs mandate that we must receive a paid membership to continue to receive a printed newsletter

Yearly newsletter support for a family is \$20 and support programs, educational activities and the newsletter.

☐ YES! I want to receive the printed Newsletter!

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Please make a check payable to Smoky Hills Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2936, Salina KS 67402
Suggested Family Membership \$20 - although any amount is welcomed!



Volunteers needed for Sanctuary work day September 30th 9 till noon

Calling all able bodied members: David and Steve would greatly appreciate if you could join us for a work day at the sanctuary on **September 30th 9 am to noon**. We are hoping to clean out all the small trees in the prairie—the taste of a shovel blade and they are gone! Long pants and long sleeves are recommended; Bring gloves, chainsaws for larger trees and/or clippers to get the trails trimmed up from the encroaching brush.



Saturday October 21st Halloween activities scheduled to return!

The public is welcome to join us for our 3rd Annual old fashioned outdoor Halloween party. This event was conceived to draw families out to the Smoky Hills Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary to experience old fashioned family fun. It was by far our best attended event of the year in 2022. Many parents remarked it was one of the favorites. This year we have lined up a fun truck so you can make a day of it. A hay rack will provide rides for families to get a look around the sanctuary in the daylight. After dark the hay rack will transport you to the woodland to see the scary things await their victims. Those that survive will be returned back to civilization. All the fun should end before 9:30. Please come dressed up in your Halloween costumes. Every one will be asked to march in a parade and just in case there will be winners for some great prizes. Don't have a costume? That's fine, don't worry, just be here because you're going to enjoy the costumes and the children having fun!

In our open picnic area we will be setting up games appropriate for small children and Halloween fun. Some pumpkins will be provided if you would like to carve a pumpkin. Leave the mess behind and take home your creation. Watch Facebook for details as we get closer!



DECEMBER 16th

122nd Christmas Bird Count



Teams will work 4 different quadrants of the city contact Byron Grauerholz blgrauerholz@yahoo.com

This year will mark the 122nd year of conducting the annual Christmas bird count by the National Audubon Society. Started on Christmas day in 1900 this activity has continued every year. The Smoky Hills Audubon Society has conducted an annual count since its local formation in 1976. This year the Christmas Bird Count will begin at 8:00 am at Lakewood Discovery Center with participants, and often members of the news media, reviewing the area to be covered. After the group breaks into 4 teams, they will head out to count every bird they can find. After birding all morning the teams will return to Lakewood Discovery Center to compare notes and head back out for the afternoon. This is a great opportunity to get out and explore every mile of every road in the county's designated 15 mile radius circle. It is a great opportunity to get some fresh air, make friends and see rural parts of the community never before seen. The Christmas bird count is for people of all ages and all experience levels.

If you would like to support...



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Salina KS 67401

Looking for us on the web? We invite you to explore www.smokyhillsaudubon.com If you have suggestions or contributions contact Mark at markneubrand@gmail.com

Look for us on Facebook <https://smokyhillsaudubon.com/>

This is your last free mailed newsletter. The line above your name lists why you are receiving the newsletter. Future copies will only be distributed by email. A paid \$20 membership will continue to allow you to receive a printed newsletter—See page 3!

Activities Calendar

September 21—Pat Riese and Travis Riley will talk about changes to the Sanctuary. Why and how does fishing benefit the sanctuary?

September 30—voluntary work day at the sanctuary 9 till noon

October 21st Saturday Halloween Event if we get enough volunteers—Would you like to be involved? Contact any board member listed below and let us know you would help!

November 16th—Jane Anderson will get us up to date on all the progress on the Smoky Hill River improvements

December 16th—Christmas bird count returns for the 122nd year

PRESIDENT	Cheryl Higgins dcjmhiggins@hotmail.com
VICE PRESIDENT	Neva Heikes nevaheikes@gmail.com
TREASURER	Mark Neubrand markneubrand@gmail.com 785-820-1271
SECRETARY	Kyndrah Van Riper linda@rlopalaw.net
SMOKY HILLS AUDUBON HAROLD LEAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY	David Higgins dcjmhiggins@hotmail.com 785-577-2409 The 67 acre Sanctuary located at 2800 West Stimmel Road is open to the public from dawn to dusk and has 2.5+ miles of hiking trails of prairie, woodlands and pond banks.
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SHAS WEB SITE	https://www.smokyhillsaudubon.com
AUDUBON OF KANSAS WEBSITE	http://www.audubonofkansas.org