

Nortonite graduates from program

The Kansas Environmental Leadership Program reports that 23 Kansans have graduated as the KELP Class of 2008.

The graduates include: Keith VanSlike of Norton; Angela Beavers of Junction City; Peggy Blackman, Marion; Scott Bowen, Wichita; Constance Buckner, Topeka; Julie Coleman, Lawrence; Jeff Conley, Cheney; Ann D'Alfonso, Ottawa; Evelyn Davis, Topeka; Kay Drennen, Wichita; Trevor Flynn, Lawrence; Keri Harris, Ottawa; Brian Lindley, Wamego; Sondra Megrail, Topeka; Cheri Miller, Kansas City; Connie Pantle, Effingham; Cameron Peirce, Hutchinson; Renda Robertson, North Newton; Leon Staab, Olathe; Wallace Weber, Dorrance; Dan Wells, Hays; Michael Wilson, Derby; and Travis Zwenger, Wichita.

"KELP has a way of bringing into focus the real issues related to water quality," said graduate Cameron Peirce.

Class members participate in five training sessions over a 10-month period in communities

throughout the state, said KELP coordinator Judy Willingham. The sessions help members hone their leadership skills, as well as learn about the environment and water resources of Kansas. The program is administered through Kansas State University's Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering.

Each year, the groups produce several projects designed to bring environmental awareness to Kansans, Willingham said. For example, a team in the 2008 class developed and implemented a public educational campaign to make Kansans aware of and/or help them better enjoy recreation on the Arkansas River near Wichita and Derby. The team members collaborated with university students to design informational materials for an annual river festival in the area.

Another team put together a radio contest on environmental trivia. Listeners were given a chance to win prizes by correctly answering questions based on informative segments previously aired. Several radio stations in

northwest Kansas broadcast the contest on Earth Day.

As in previous classes, this year's participants came from many professions, Willingham said. They included farmers, ranchers, conservation service employees, extension agents, state water quality specialists, educators and environmental scientists.

"The availability of high-quality water is fundamental for a community to attract new residents, industry and tourism," Willingham said. "Plus, farmers and rural citizens know the importance of high-quality water for livestock and healthy crop growth."

"To ensure the future of high-quality water, it is vital that citizens take a leadership role in protecting their water resources."

More information about the Kansas Environmental Leadership Program is available by accessing <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/kelp/> on the Web or contacting Willingham by phone at 785-532-5813 or e-mail at judywmw@ksu.edu.

A snip here



Janie Lowry, left, Quilting Instructor, and Marty Roberts, right, worked on Mrs. Roberts's quilt during the quilting class at the Hansen Museum.

— Courtesy Photo

Hospice Tree up and ready

Special to The Telegram

The holiday season is a time of joy and gladness, but for some it can be painful as they remember loved ones who are no longer living. This year, turn those memories into a gift by placing an ornament on the Hospice Memory Christmas Tree.

The Hospice Memory Christmas Tree provides families and friends with an opportunity to remember loved ones or to honor special people during the holiday season. You can give this gift in honor or memory of a loved one — the person doesn't have to be

a Hospice patient. This gift can be any amount.

In Norton, the Hospice Memory Christmas Tree is displayed at the Norton Public Library.

"These thoughtful donations allow us to better serve our patients by providing services not covered under the hospice benefit. These gifts also help defray the costs for patients in the Hospice program who do not have a hospice benefit. All proceeds truly benefit our hospice," said Sandy Kuhlman, Executive Director of Hospice Services.

According to Ms. Kuhlman,

"Hospice is care and support as well as a philosophy that encourages the continuation of a meaningful life in the presence of a terminal illness."

"Care is provided not only to the patients, but to their loved ones as well. We provide care in an interdisciplinary team approach to meet their physical, emotional and spiritual needs."

Hospice Services also has bereavement material available for the communities. Please contact 800-315-5122 for additional information or if you have any questions, Director Kuhlman said.

Two new additions to endangered list

The United States Fish and Wildlife Services released its Candidate Notice of Review, a yearly appraisal of the current status of plants and animals that are candidates for protection under the Endangered Species Act. Two species have been removed from candidate status, one has been added, and 11 have changed priority from the last review in December 2007. There are now 251 species recognized by the service as candidates for the Endangered Species Act.

As part of this review, the service is soliciting additional information on these candidate species, as well as information on species that may be eligible for addition to future candidate updates. This information will be valuable in preparing listing documents and future revisions or supplements to the notice of review.

"We strongly encourage collaborative conservation efforts for all candidate species from federal agencies, Tribes and private organizations," said H. Dale Hall, Service Director. "The service will continue to offer technical and financial assistance to support those efforts."

Candidate species to not receive protection under the Endangered Species Act, although the service works to conserve them. Identification of candidate species provides resource managers with advance notice of species in need of conservation, allowing them to address threats before the species is listed.

The two species removed from candidate status are the Ogden mountain snail, a mollusk species found in Utah, and the Florida indigo, a plant species native to tropical regions. The service removed these species after new scientific information led to changes in taxonomy. As a result, both species have been found to be more widespread than once believed.

Today's notice also identifies one new candidate species, the Gierisch mallow, a plant species found in Arizona and Utah. Gierisch mallow is a recently described perennial, orange-flowered plant that grows up to 3.4 feet tall. It is found only on gypsum outcrops in northern Mohave County, Arizona and populations on Bureau of

Land Management and one on Arizona State Land Department administered land in Arizona, and 2.5 acres of Bureau of Land Management land in Utah.

Primary threats to the mallow include gypsum mining, which has occurred at the location of the two largest populations in Arizona, and off-road vehicle use.

The service previously announced candidate status for the Gunnison's prairie dog in a finding published on Feb. 5, 2008. Gunnison's prairie dog populations in the montane portion of its range, located in central and south-central Colorado and north-central New Mexico were determined to be warranted for listing under the Endangered Species Act, but listed at this time is precluded by higher priority listing actions.

All candidates for addition to the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants are assigned a listing priority number based on the magnitude and imminence of the threats they face. When discretionary funding becomes available, the service addresses species with the highest listing priority numbers first. The 11 changes in listing priority announced in

the notice are based on new information in the updated assessments of continuing candidates. Four species have had their priority increased while seven species have had their priority lowered. The net result of these changes is the new number of candidates assigned to the top priority category for listing (i.e., full species facing threats of high magnitude that are imminent) will change from the current number, 100, to 99.

The service has several tools for protecting candidate species and their habitat, including a grants program that funds conservation projects by private landowners, states and territories. In addition, the service can enter into Candidate Conservation Agreements, formal agreements between the service and one or more parties to address the conservation needs of proposed or candidate species, or species likely to become candidates, before they become listed as endangered or threatened. The agreement participants voluntarily commit to implementing specific actions that will remove or reduce the threats to these species, thereby contributing to stabilizing or restoring the species.

Group aims to protect watershed

Prairie Dog Creek Water Restoration and Protection Strategy Leadership Team met recently at the Town & Country Kitchen in Norton. The organization's project for the Prairie Dog Creek is being sponsored by the Norton County Conservation District.

The organization is a planning process to identify all the water quality protection and restoration needs of a watershed. They serve to integrate TMDL implementation, water quality restoration, water quality protection, source water protection, and wellhead protection activities required under the Safe Drinking Water Act and habitat restoration and protection activities.

The group is a locally-driven process of engaging watershed residents to determine the condition of water and other natural resources; identify sources impacting these resources; estab-

lish restoration and protection goals; identify restoration and protection measures (BMP's and other actions); and to develop an action plan to implement selected measures.

A watershed is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream or lake. Everyone lives in a watershed. The Prairie Dog Creek watershed flows from Thomas County through Phillips County to the edge of Nebraska.

Keith Sebelius Lake is a part of this watershed. The water in this watershed is an important natural resource for a great number of people who depend on it for many different purposes. The protection of this watershed is crucial to meet the needs for today as well as for the generations to follow.

The WRAPS Leadership Team is made up of local citizens from different walks of

life. This Team is working to put together a list of concerns from the Norton community to be able to look at what conservation practices if put in place will help protect our water.

WRAPS would welcome any concern that you would like to bring up to the team. This project will need the work and cooperation of the community to be able to make a difference.

The Team will be holding demonstrations projects in the future. Currently the team is looking for producers who might be interested in providing areas for us to apply a rock crossing or a solar pump project. This would be a cost share project.

If interested in helping with a demonstration project, or if you have any suggestions or concerns, please contact the Norton County Conservation District at 877-2623.



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