A PROPOSED CONTENT OUTLINE FOR INTRODUCTION TO THE WILD IN KANSAS

A call for discussion, organization and commentary

In amongst civilized and organized outdoors in Kansas, underlying the daily activities of most of the individuals in the peopled environment in Kansas, nature and its diversity live quietly and un-noticed. The Wild cannot be taken for granted. The Wild is pockets of high-diversity and high quality, unique and scenic spots and places in the landscape. However people view the origin of the landscape and nature around them, The Wild means something to everyone today. The Wild is a series of natural, undisturbed, and pristine places where nature continues its parade. The Wild consists of wild islands. Some are heavily wooded areas along streams; some are rocky hill tops at the surprising number of places whose name relates to height ("mount", "peak", "hill" and so on). And, The Wild in Kansas consists of many river islands in public rivers. The Wild is where the best butterflies are seen and where they breed, and where the best birds may be seen or heard. The most interesting orchids, ferns, lilies, and other wildflowers, and unusual trees and grasses are found in The Wild. Some are already public places; some are private and remote. Whatever their status, they can be studied, appreciated and protected. Those tasks can be done from a number of approaches. The Wild in Kansas has to do with place names and places: the narrows and twin caves of the Republican; the Osage Indian crossing of the Walnut River; the edge of a great marsh like Cheyenne Bottoms; straddle forests and hanging gardens; the rimrock edge; wild strawberries under Osage orange trees; even life on a weathered fence post. We need The Wild. The Wild is about society and solitude. It is about exploring and emotional attachment to nature. Once gone, the Wild is not replacable.

Neighborhood, local, county, and state approaches to The Wild in Kansas are possible. Birdwatching, wildflower study, finding dark skies at night, and uses of Kansas' Natural Heritage Inventory data (Kansas Bio-Survey/Nature Conservancy project) are some. Ask why? where? who? when? how? and what?

Comments and suggestions welcomed

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