

# Mt. Mitchell Prairie Heritage Sanctuary Snapshot

Audubon of Kansas wildlife sanctuaries are designed to combine conservation of treasured natural areas and demonstration of management and stewardship, with opportunities for nature appreciation. The wildflowers, native grasses, birds and other wildlife provide a glimpse of the diversity of life that exists within pristine prairie plant communities. Although the sanctuary is only 47 acres, the 32 acres that were previously held by the Kansas Historic Society are viewed as one of the best examples of native prairie in the northern Flint Hills. AOK acquired the additional 15 acres to encompass the entire prominent hill and to provide better access.

Most other prairie remnants have been mowed annually, and tragically many have been sprayed with

herbicides to eliminate “weeds” from the hay. Everything except grasses are regarded by many people as weeds! The same approach is often taken with native rangelands. Livestock grazing often eliminates some of the species and changes the composition to those that best tolerate grazing.

Mt. Mitchell is located three miles south of Wamego and it is jointly managed with the Mt. Mitchell Prairie Guards. The Guards have provided leadership for interpretation of cultural history—especially relating to the struggle to make Kansas a Free State and the thread of the Underground Railroad through this area—and made major improvements to enhance the visitation experience.



Ron Klatske photos