

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

"One way to open your eyes is to ask yourself, What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew I would never see it again?"

– Rachel Carson

Audubon of Kansas A Voice for Wildlife An Advocate for Prairie Conservation



Dear Friend,

This is my first year serving as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Audubon of Kansas (AOK), and I am very enthused about our future because of the various accomplishments you will read about in this issue. With your help, we have been able to accomplish a lot; however, there is still much to be done.

I believe you will agree that our strength comes from the correctness of our cause.

Audubon of Kansas is unique among wildlife and conservation organizations because we are action-oriented, motivated by what needs to be done for wildlife, conservation of prairies, wetlands and other habitat rather than articulating "campaigns on paper" for the primary purpose of fundraising.

Prairie Wings brings you up-to-date on AOK's leadership across a broad spectrum of conservation issues. **Your annual investment in Audubon of Kansas makes a difference each day** as our voices and written communications provide an advocacy for those who cannot speak for themselves – the birds and other wildlife species that we all so deeply care about.

AOK has played a key role in the successful reintroduction of America's most endangered animal – the Black-footed Ferret on the Haverfield and Barnhardt properties.

During the 2013 legislative session, Audubon of Kansas led the efforts to oppose an attempt to eviscerate the Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1975. We also successfully raised alarms and testified when two members of a Senate committee began pushing a resolution to oppose creation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement program. That program is designed to allow landowners to work with the Service to conserve and manage prairie dog colonies to benefit Black-footed Ferrets. Fortunately, with the support of many people, conservation has been allowed to proceed and it will also benefit Golden Eagles, Ferruginous Hawks and Swift Foxes.

You'll also read about AOK's position on how best to manage the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge – actually keeping it as a safe haven for endangered Whooping Cranes, and possibly as another site for ferret reintroduction.

We are especially pleased to announce the story of Connie Achterberg's decision to provide a life estate for her Smoky Hills property, which will become another AOK wildlife sanctuary. It will feature special emphasis on the compatibility of active farming practices along with conservation practices that produce enhanced habitat for birds and other wildlife.

AOK works tirelessly to voice support for the initiative to enhance 150,000 acres of highway rights-of-way in Kansas, providing aesthetic appeal and wildlife habitat – while saving fuel and reducing emissions.

AOK is actively involved in ensuring that the USDA's Farm Bill conservation and environmental programs actually benefit wildlife and Kansas' landscapes through Ron Klataske's service on the State Technical Committee. It is a constant struggle to keep fish and wildlife considerations in the equations and to keep ecological considerations from being eclipsed by production-only demands.

We simply request that folks who share a dedication for the natural world and stewardship will support the work of Audubon of Kansas. As you undoubtedly know, the accomplishments of AOK are incredibly significant for the limited resources we have available.

We welcome your comments on the articles in this issue and hope that you will consider sending a much-needed and greatly appreciated contribution at this time.



Sincerely,
Randy Rathbun
Chairman, Board of Trustees