



**GRASSLAND
GROUPIES**
Annual Report

2025





GG Turns 5:

Our Milestone Year



Our co-founders, Nicole Brown (L) and Rachel Roth (R).

“Knowing that you love the earth changes you, activates you to defend and protect and celebrate. But when you feel that the earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond.”

-Robin Wall Kimmerer

Five years ago, we started Grassland Groupies with the purpose of reaching out to the people who were most gravely at risk of losing their connection with their natural world.

Living in a city- especially a city that itself is built upon native grassland- creates a tragic distance between the individual and this beautiful place. Even in the rapidly-urbanizing states of the Great Plains, it is somehow possible to feel far away from the majesty of our diverse, open habitats. As every facet of modern life pushes us further and further away from nature, our environmental literacy is now in jeopardy.

For this reason, we set out to inspire a love for the landscapes of the world that look like home to us and billions of others. To restore a piece of our grasslands, and to restore some peace to our hearts and minds.

Five years on, we reflect upon the tens of thousands of people we’ve reached with tremendous gratitude. So many of you have connected with our mission, and we are deeply touched to see a community bind together around the things we all hold dear.

We are, frankly, at a loss for words. Suffice to say that we will keep doing this work, for you. Cheers to the next five years. May they bring you the same joy and hope you have brought us.

Nicole, Rachel, & Allan
The GG Team

Action:

300+

Volunteer Hours
in 2025

3

New Bee City
Wichita Gardens
planted in 2025

8

Certified Bee City
Gardens total
across Wichita

Busy Bees

Our Year in Numbers

Education:

9,759

Total People Reached
by in-person programs

44

Total Events and
Programs in 2025

4,122

New Podcast
Listeners in 2025

48%

Growth in
Podcast Traffic

The Third Annual ICT Bee Fest in September 2025 brought over **850 guests** to Wichita's largest native plant and pollinator celebration. A new record!

Art, music, activities, native plant sales, expert garden advice, insect netting & hands-on pollinator encounters were all part of the fun.

These eastern bumblebees, our VIP guests, retired to Riverside Community Garden after the event ended.





Bee City Wichita in 2025

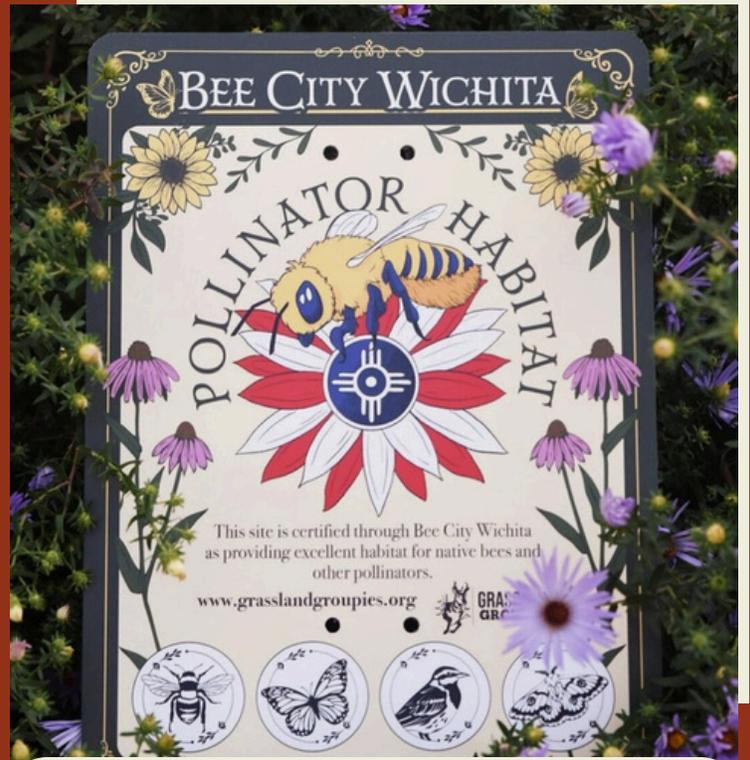
New Gardens, New Connections

Last year the **Bee City Wichita** initiative saw new gardens at Kansas Wildlife Exhibit and Evergreen Library, another great ICT Bee Fest, and even a feature in the **New York Times!**

The growing support around the initiative also spurred the planning committee to create a pollinator habitat certification program with requirements specifically aimed at helping pollinators by providing year-long food and nesting habitat.

Pollinator Habitat Certification Requirements:

1. Reduced or zero pesticide use
2. Five species of plants native to Kansas
3. Two species of pollinator larval host plants
4. Year-long blooms for nectar and pollen sources
5. Removal of invasive species (if applicable)



Designed by local artist Sara Earle, this sign lets you show off to your neighbors and support pollinators all in one.



Our wonderful volunteers and members of the public alike pitched in on planting day at Evergreen Library!

You can find out more about the certification program and the application form on **our website**. Habitats big and small are eligible, and for our overachievers, we have multiple merit badges with special requirements you can add to your sign in recognition of your efforts.

If you haven't been to **ICT Bee Fest** yet, be sure to join us **September 5th 2026** at the Mid-America All-Indian Museum!

Nature Journal Club

Inspiring Conservation through Observation

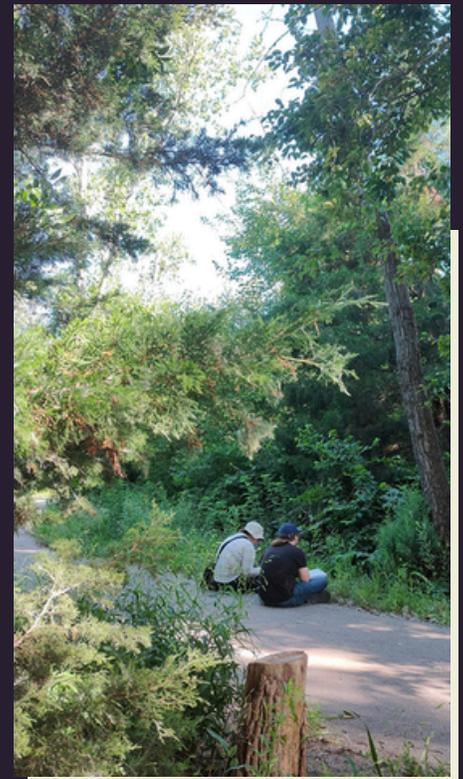
A **Nature Journal Club** has been at the top of our wish list for years, and in 2025 this club became a reality! After several popular standalone nature journaling programs, GG launched a Nature Journal Club that joined the **growing map of clubs worldwide.**



The Wichita Nature Journal Club is a community-led, curiosity-focused group of nature lovers that intersects artists, scientists, and nature enthusiasts of all sorts. This welcoming, inclusive community gets together at least once a month to explore nature and journal our findings. Rain or shine (or even negative wind chills), people always show up to engage deeply with our immense world and find new ways to connect with our landscapes and community members.

There is no right or wrong way to nature journal. Already we've been joined by watercolor artists, journalers, birdwatchers, poets, fountain pen enthusiasts, professional artists, and people who have no experience with art at all. We've welcomed outdoor enthusiasts of all ages and all backgrounds to take part in this wonderful experience.

Come on out, tell a friend, and **sign up for updates** on future workshops and other community partnerships this next year!



Grassland U Returns to Friends

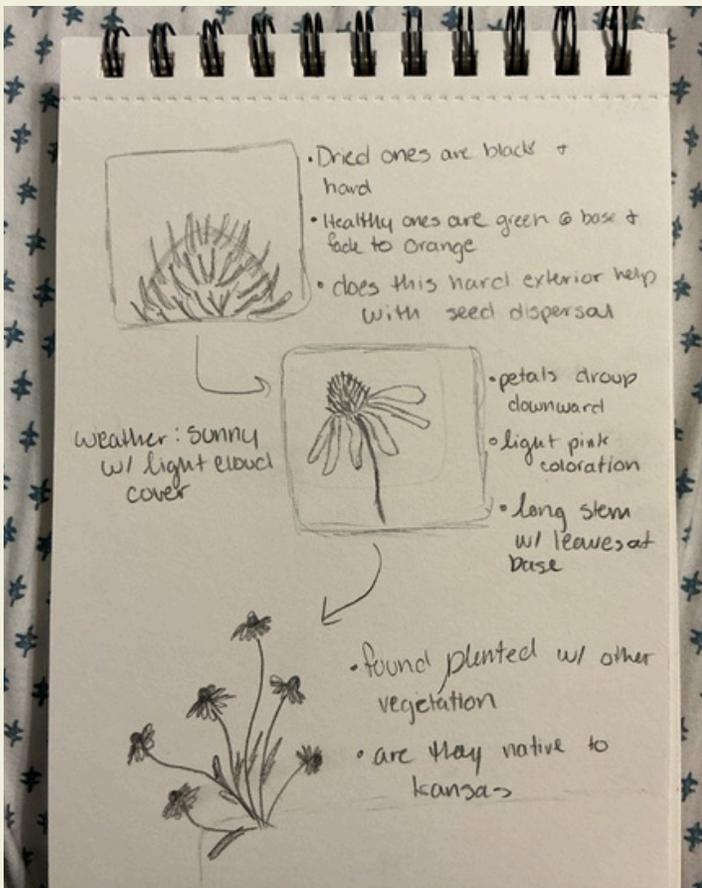
This fall, GG held a Grasslands Ecosystems Course at Friends University for the second time.

This 3-credit-hour undergraduate course, developed and taught by Rachel and Nicole, gives conservation students a meaningful deep dive into grasslands, ecosystem function, conservation methods, and policy.

For some, like one of our students from Nebraska, grasslands were a familiar piece of the conservation landscape that she was eager to explore. **For most, however, grasslands were an unexplored ecosystem.**



The lab portion of the course took students into the field at sites like WSU's Ninnescah Biological Station.



Nature Journals were employed as both a technique for data collection and personal reflection!

“I was surprised to learn that elephants are a grassland animal,” one student wrote on a midterm extra credit question. “I didn’t know that savannahs are a grassland ecosystem.” And that’s exactly why Grassland Groupies does this work!

The conservation challenges of grasslands are unique, and to impart their importance and beauty as an ecosystem to young conservation professionals was incredibly meaningful. For us, every single “wow” moment we had the privilege to witness in our future peers makes this work worthwhile.

The semester kept our two co-founders busy all Fall, but the learning and experiences we facilitated with these ten students felt like one of the highlights of our year.



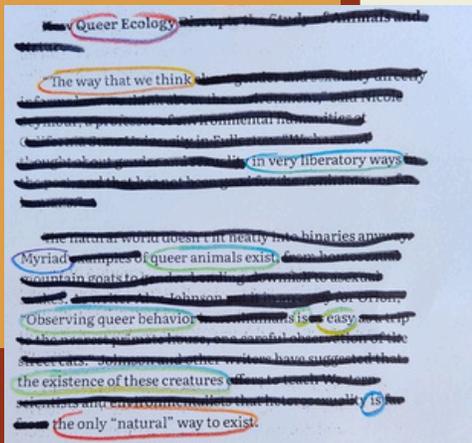
2026 Preview

PRIDE OUTSIDE

Last June, we piloted **a new slate of programs** designed to create a safe outdoor space for members of the LGBT+ community and allies to engage with nature and one another. We're very excited to bring this programming back in 2026!

Activities last year included art, hiking, bug catching and more. We even had a booth where our guests crafted blackout poetry from actual scientific articles on the inherent queerness of nature at Riverside Park's Big Gay Market.

Keep an eye out for updates on this year's calendar!

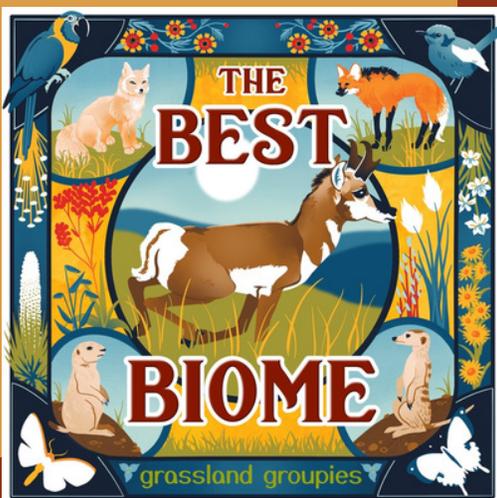


CHANGES COMING TO THE BEST BIOME

As we look ahead to a busy year full of projects and programs, your Grasslands PR Team is retooling our flagship grassland education podcast for the time being.

Instead of a full season of monthly episodes, **Best Biome** will be released on a quarterly basis beginning in March 2026. Each episode will be jam-packed with environmental news, discussion of conservation issues, and the same deep-dives into grassland flora and fauna that you've come to enjoy.

We'll also be releasing a Best Biome newsletter this year through our Substack, containing research and advocacy updates on our global grasslands. **Be sure to subscribe so you don't miss out!**





Showing up for Grasslands, Together

We are incredibly fortunate to be surrounded by so many warm and wonderful humans who share our passion for nature and conservation. Grassland Groupies has, since its inception, only consisted of three employees.

Without volunteers putting in the hours year-round, this org would accomplish a mere fraction of its goals. You are making Wichita a greater, greener place, and we are all in your debt.

Everything we've done, we've done together. At last year's ICT Bee Fest alone, we had over 100 volunteer hours logged from everyone pictured above. We absolutely adore our volunteer corps, and we hope it continues to thrive! Our work will continue to create the need for volunteers, so we'll keep you posted on how you can help.

Complete a [Volunteer Interest Form](#) to get started in 2026!

2025 Volunteer of the Year: *Tina Chawla*

Tina is a volunteer you're unlikely to see around town in Wichita, but she's done incredible work for Grassland Groupies! She lives in New York and has been volunteering remotely to help transcribe our podcast, *The Best Biome*, to make the episodes more accessible.

Tina has also been providing grant research to find funds to support our mission. Her work in the background has allowed us to focus on other activities, and that capacity building is invaluable.

When not volunteering or working, Tina enjoys pottery, watching an epic sci-fi, or experimenting with plant-based recipes.

Thank you, Tina!





2025

Contact Us

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GRASSLAND GROUPIES

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conservation of grasslands.*

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