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[Notifications & Requests](#)
[Project Reports](#)
[Award Functions](#)
[Manage Financials](#)
[Program Income Reporting](#)
[Grantee Cash Management Section Contacts](#)
[Administration](#)
[Look Up NSF ID](#)

Preview of Award 2025849 - Annual Project Report

[Cover](#) |
[Accomplishments](#) |
[Products](#) |
[Participants/Organizations](#) |
[Impacts](#) |
[Changes/Problems](#)

Cover

Federal Agency and Organization Element to Which Report is Submitted:	4900
Federal Grant or Other Identifying Number Assigned by Agency:	2025849
Project Title:	LTER: Manipulating drivers to assess grassland resilience
PD/PI Name:	Jesse B Nippert, Principal Investigator Sara G Baer, Co-Principal Investigator Keith B Gido, Co-Principal Investigator Melinda Smith, Co-Principal Investigator Lydia H Zeglin, Co-Principal Investigator
Recipient Organization:	Kansas State University
Project/Grant Period:	12/01/2020 - 11/30/2026
Reporting Period:	12/01/2020 - 11/30/2021
Submitting Official (if other than PD\PI):	Jesse B Nippert Principal Investigator
Submission Date:	11/08/2021
Signature of Submitting Official (signature shall be submitted in accordance with agency specific instructions)	Jesse B Nippert

Accomplishments

* What are the major goals of the project?

The Konza Prairie LTER program (KNZ) focuses on the ecological dynamics of tallgrass prairie - a historically widespread mesic grassland in the North American Great Plains. Our core research site is the Konza Prairie Biological Station (KPBS), a 3487 ha native tallgrass prairie located in the Flint Hills of northeast Kansas, USA. Since 1980, KNZ has investigated how key drivers of grasslands globally - fire, grazing, and climatic variability - interact to influence tallgrass prairie structure and function. The conceptual framework of KNZ LTER VIII builds on long-term studies, reflects the increasing complexity of

research questions developed over the history of this program, and explicitly recognizes that tallgrass prairie pattern and process results from human alteration of ecological drivers at local (e.g., land use and management), regional (e.g., nutrient inputs) and global (e.g., climate change) scales. KNZ LTER VIII will provide new information critical for understanding, managing, and conserving grasslands globally, while concurrently addressing fundamental ecological questions to explain grassland dynamics in a changing world.

KNZ utilizes long-term, watershed-scale manipulations of fire frequency and grazing by large ungulates, coupled with numerous plot-scale manipulations (i.e., nutrients and rainfall) to test ecological theory and address timely questions regarding grassland responses to multiple, interacting global changes. KNZ LTER VIII builds upon a legacy of long-term observations and experiments manipulating key drivers to assess changes in the structure and function of tallgrass prairie and associated dynamics in aquatic systems. A recurring theme from prior KNZ research is that grassland responses to variation in ecological drivers vary in magnitude and change dynamically over time. Long-term studies are required to improve our ability to forecast change in this ecosystem, identify the mechanisms that facilitate and reinforce these ecological changes, and determine if the ecological changes we have observed are reversible. LTER VII began our focus on mechanisms that underlie the sensitivity and resilience of ecosystem states in mesic grasslands. LTER VIII will utilize the array of ecosystem states that have emerged from these manipulations of historical and global change drivers to refine our understanding of sensitivity, resilience, and ecosystem state change in tallgrass prairie.

To accomplish the goals of KNZ LTER VIII, our proposed research comprises four thematic areas: 1) watershed-level study of the long-term effects of historical drivers (fire and grazing), 2) experimental manipulations of global change drivers, 3) cessation or reversal of selected drivers, and 4) human intervention. Collectively, we will use ongoing and new activities under each theme to assess ecosystem sensitivity and resilience through the manipulation or restoration of drivers or ecosystem states. We will: 1) conduct targeted investigations of mechanisms that underlie ecosystem sensitivity and state change as informed by results to date, 2) interpret experiments in the context of long-term observations at KNZ and in comparison to other grasslands and biomes, 3) advance general ecological theory and inform theoretical and process-based ecological models, and 4) maximize the broader impacts of our research by providing full open access to all core datasets, applying insights from KNZ research to management, conservation, and restoration of grasslands, while expanding KNZ education and public outreach programs.

*** What was accomplished under these goals and objectives (you must provide information for at least one of the 4 categories below)?**

Major Activities: KNZ has maintained robust collection of long-term data and productivity, despite the global pandemic. In the past year, we have continued core KNZ programs including watershed-level fire experiments, contrasts of grazed (bison and cattle) and ungrazed locations, and the associated data collection and synthesis that are central to our research program. This includes maintaining watershed-level manipulations of fire frequencies (1, 2, 4, 20-year fire return intervals), seasonal timing of fires (spring, summer, fall, winter), and the reversal of fire treatments over time to assess the potential for altered fire regimes to mitigate trajectories of land-cover change. Fire and grazing studies address multiple LTER core areas, including primary productivity, nutrient cycling, population and community dynamics (with core datasets on grasshoppers, small mammals, grassland birds, plant communities, and bison). These whole-watershed fire and grazing treatments are focal areas for a number of ongoing LTER data collection efforts, syntheses across networks (NutNet, Drought-net), groundwater and stream-water monitoring networks, as well as data validation and parameterization of GIS and remote-sensing analyses. This platform of research also provides unique research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students at KSU, as well as visiting students from many other institutions.

In the past year, we completed a 1-yr NCE from LTER VII and completed year 1 of LTER VIII. We are happy to report that we have initiated nearly all research projects proposed in our LTER VIII proposal (with plans to begin our assessment of nutrient biogeochemistry across various watershed combinations on site – Zeglin lab). In the 'Activities' section of this report, we have provided a brief, yet detailed assessment of each of the new projects proposed in KNZ LTER VIII. We would also like to point out the diverse breadth of leadership amongst our research activities – these projects

include faculty at multiple career stages with a large number of universities and agencies represented.

One focus of our site-based research program that clearly illustrates how local and global drivers influence the transition between alternate ecosystem states is woody encroachment. Woody encroachment—the expansion of shrubs and trees into grasslands—is an acute conservation threat to grasslands and has been a major focus of Konza LTER for four grant cycles. We are working to understand whether transitions from grassland to shrub, woodland, and riparian forest represent transitions to alternative states. Systems with alternative states have two key features. First, the transition between states is defined by a threshold, where small changes in external drivers, such as fire frequency. Second, these transitions show hysteresis, where bringing the driver variable back below the initial threshold fails to reverse transitions, for instance, from grassland to shrubland. We have made progress on both fronts.

The Ratajczak lab at KSU has been developing spatial models that can predict landscape scale changes in vegetation communities. Using ground-based approaches and remote sensing, we quantified the large-scale extent of woody plant expansion across different fire frequencies. In the absence of bison, we see clear evidence of a threshold; areas with a fire return interval (FRI, the average number of years between fires) of one- to three-years maintained shrub areas below 10% and negligible woody plant biomass, whereas areas with a slightly higher FRI of 3.5 years had a shrub area of 45% average shrub cover with similar increases in shrub density and biomass. Areas with bison also saw increases in shrub dominance with higher fire return intervals, but relationship between fire and woody plant expansion was linear. We attribute this change to a negative feedback between fire frequency and fire intensity when bison are present. These results suggest that reducing biological complexity—in this case removing a megagrazer—can result in ecological thresholds. As a next step, we are developing simulation models to explore how bison behavior might smooth out otherwise non-linear vegetation changes.

Nippert has completed his fourth year as the PI of the KNZ program. He has frequent meetings with other KSU PI's (Zeglin, Blair, Gido, Dodds) and Nippert and the KNZ staff have monthly meetings. We have an annual KNZ LTER meeting (over Labor Day weekend this year) as well as monthly ZOOM Konza LTER meetings to discuss research, DEI initiatives, network activities, new projects, and planning. In addition to monthly research meetings, we have stand-alone monthly DEI meetings to discuss new ways to broaden KNZ participation and create a more equitable environment for ecological research. We provide many avenues for potential engagement in research and outreach for students, staff, and faculty.

The infrastructure of KPBS and long-term data associated with KNZ were integral to the success of a new CZO-scale extramural awards funded during 2020-2021 (~ \$3M). Pam Sullivan (lead PI) and Jesse Nippert (KSU lead PI) received a FRES grant (*Frontier Research in Earth Sciences*) to understand how landscape bedrock versus vegetation regulates water and carbon storage and movement. This project will assess how below ground and vegetation properties influence climate conditions that, in turn, govern vegetation establishment and distribution. We call this the R3-C Frontier: Roots, Regolith, Rock and Climate. To achieve this goal requires synthesizing existing datasets, collecting new data, and training teams of people in the fields of water science, geochemistry, soil science, geophysics, ecology, and Earth system modeling. This project will include 28 undergraduate students, four graduate students, and three postdoc scholars across seven universities to collectively explore how the interaction of plant roots and bedrock have changed water and carbon movement between the land and atmosphere in the Anthropocene. To accomplish this work, we will leverage existing datasets and collect new data from the NSF Critical Zone Cluster Networks (CZCNs) and National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON). Our modeling framework

enhances our capacity to parameterize multiple relevant process models, upscales point-scale measurements to the continental scale, and provides a holistic understanding of factors that control Earth system processes from the terrestrial subsurface to the atmosphere.

Specific Objectives:

Significant Results:

Key outcomes or Other achievements:

*** What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?**

The Konza LTER program provides training and professional development opportunities at many levels, including K-12 teachers, undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral scientists from a number of different institutions, junior tenure-earning faculty members, and professional research staff. Below we summarize some of the recent and continuing opportunities provided by the KNZ program.

The Konza Prairie Schoolyard LTER (SLTER) program is in its 23rd year as a science education program for K-12 teachers and their students, built around the successful Konza Prairie LTER program. The Konza Prairie SLTER program aims to educate students about ecology and global change, with emphasis on regional grasslands, by engaging students and teachers in realistic and relevant science-based activities focused on long-term data collection at our LTER site. These activities were designed to give students an understanding of ecology, provide them the opportunity to collect and interpret their own data. K-12 teachers who wish to bring their classes to Konza Prairie and to experience the Schoolyard LTER activities must first participate in a Summer Teachers' Workshop. This week-long program introduces the teachers to each of the activities offered by the Konza Environmental Education Program (KEEP) and, at the completion of the workshop, allows them to tailor an educational experience specific to the needs of their students. The teachers who complete the program qualify to bring their classes to Konza for no charge and have their bus transportation costs paid. This agreement stands for the rest of the teachers' professional career. These educators have become important partners in KEEP and many return annually. We have trained 109 area teachers since our program began in 1998. The number of SLTER student participants in 2020 (most recent year with complete data) was 292. Due to the pandemic, few groups were able to participate. Additional 2020-2021 accomplishments are outlined in the "Findings" document.

KEEP has partnered with the Manhattan/Ogden KS School District 383 and Fort Riley/Junction City School District 475 to be a ready source of informal science education – specifically addressing core science concepts that are easily experienced during a Konza visit. To meet this need we train volunteer docents that assist in public education and outreach activities. New docents are added to the program annually and receive 40 hours of training on the history and ecology of the tallgrass prairie as well as an overview of research being conducted at Konza. Experienced docents regularly are apprised of new research programs and the progress of existing research and become ambassadors of science to the community. The KEEP program has trained over 300 docents (over 60 who are currently active). Additionally, we partner with the Flint Hills Discovery Center (Manhattan, KS) to co-host visiting school groups.

The Konza LTER program continues to emphasize quality graduate student training. During the 2020-2021 funding period, we provided stipends and other forms of non-financial support (vehicle use, site use, analytical laboratory use, attendance at regional/national meetings) for 20 graduate students, including both KSU and non-KSU graduate students. We continue to foster graduate research involving students attending Colorado State University, University of Kansas, Oklahoma State University, Johns Hopkins, Wyoming, UNC-Greensboro, Penn State, Oregon State, and New Mexico. In 2020-2021, 5 thesis/dissertations were completed that included research conducted and data acquired from the Konza Prairie.

KNZ also offers research experiences for a large number of undergraduate students. In the summer 2021, the Konza LTER program hosted 5 REU students. Details on their project and experience are provided in the supplementary "Findings" document. The Konza LTER program provides hands-on research opportunities for ~45-50 undergraduate research assistants each year. These undergraduates are employed by KNZ LTER directly (as part of field crews collecting core LTER datasets) or indirectly in the labs of Konza faculty researchers. KNZ also supports and provides professional development opportunities for our professional research staff members, including training in the use of field and laboratory equipment, training in health and safety protocols, training in prescribed fire practices, and other relevant professional development.

KNZ has a strong history of providing mentoring and research training for recent PhD's and junior faculty members. Several former PhD students that completed dissertation projects on Konza are now post-docs or junior faculty at other institutions but continue to participate in, and in many cases, lead KNZ research projects. The KNZ program also provides resources and mentoring to tenure-earning faculty members. In our current funding cycle, this includes assistant professors in Biology at KSU (Andrew Hope), Geography (Abby Langston), as well as support for Pam Sullivan (Geography at Oregon State University), Sally Koerner (UNC-Greensboro), Meghan Avolio (John Hopkins), Kevin Wilcox (University of Wyoming), and Kim Komatsu (Smithsonian Environmental Research Center).

*** Have the results been disseminated to communities of interest? If so, please provide details.**

Konza LTER results are disseminated to the scientific community via publications in peer-reviewed literature, through presentations at professional meetings and workshops, through seminars by KNZ scientists and students, through social media (Twitter, Facebook, Researchgate), and via the KNZ and KPBS websites. In addition, KNZ scientists have participated in a broad range of activities that go beyond the scientific community. For example, KNZ data and findings are used in a number of undergraduate and graduate courses at Kansas State University, the University of Kansas, University of Arizona, Colorado State University, and University of Oklahoma, among others.

Data and insight from the Konza LTER program is being used by resource managers for effective land stewardship. Currently, our research concerning the role of seasonal burning and fire intensity on woody encroachment is being used to inform the Great Plains Fire Science Exchange (www.gpfirescience.org) and the Tallgrass Prairie and Oak Savanna Fire Science Consortium (www.tposfirescience.org). Both of these non-profit groups focus on conservation issues and land management of Midwestern grasslands. In addition, many of the Konza investigators serve as scientific consultants for a regional cultural and natural history center, the 'Flint Hills Discovery Center' in Manhattan, KS.

In the interest of increasing the reach of our environmental education program to classrooms around the world, KEEP is working to develop online curriculum utilizing LTER data. The curriculum incorporates various ecological aspects that affect the prairie including precipitation, grazing, fire, and woody plant encroachment. The curriculum is divided into an 8-part series.

In 2020-2021, KNZ scientists and graduate students participated in numerous public outreach events designed to enhance the understanding of LTER science and dissemination of important findings. Due to COVID-19, several of these events occurred virtually. A few examples include: John Blair participated in an "Ask an Expert" Facebook live session, sponsored by the Flint Hills Discovery Center. Blair answered questions about Konza Prairie and our research. Zak Ratajczak discussed the future of prairie ecosystems during an online webinar hosted by the Beach Museum Prairie Studies Initiative. Bram Verheijen, a KNZ postdoc, led a public nature walk at KPBS featuring American Woodcock in Spring 2021. Ellen Welti's (former KNZ grad student) research was covered by NPR. Several other broader impacts and scientific extensions from Konza LTER program are discussed in further detail in the 'Broader Impacts' section of this annual report.

*** What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?**

We are entering year 2 of the LTER VIII. As you have seen from earlier in this report, we have a great start, and progress underway for each of the new projects proposed for this award. During year 2 we will: 1) continue our core-data collection, processing, and online data integration of the current year and previous years' samples; 2) continue to update and error-check the online data associated with KNZ LTER database and LTER network information management system; 3) continue to improve our data accessibility and search options within our online database; 4) continue to support the development of new research projects initiated by KNZ junior faculty including Pam Sullivan (OSU), Meghan Avolio (Johns Hopkins), Sally Koerner (UNC-Greensboro), Kim Komatsu (Smithsonian), Andrew Hope (KSU), Kevin Wilcox (Wyoming), Abby Langston (KSU), Zak Ratajczak (KSU) and Allison Louthan (KSU); 5) promote educational training and inclusion of undergraduate researchers within site science; 6) invest in the training and development of our graduate student researchers at KNZ, contribute towards their career advancement, and engage them in synthesis activities available within the broader LTER network; 7) continue to provide leadership and participation in LTER network level activities including the 2021 (Nov) and 2022 (May) Science Council, and the LTER Executive Board, Education and Information Management working groups.

Supporting Files

Filename	Description	Uploaded By	Uploaded On
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Filename	Description	Uploaded By	Uploaded On
2020-2021 KNZ LTER Findings.pdf	Please see the supporting .pdf files, which provide detailed information on the activities and findings of individual projects which have contributed to the overall progress of LTER VIII in 2020-2021.	Jesse Nippert	10/28/2021
2020-2021 KNZ LTER Activities.pdf	Please see the supporting .pdf files, which provide detailed information on the activities and findings of individual projects which have contributed to the overall progress of LTER VIII in 2020-2021.	Jesse Nippert	11/05/2021

Products

Books

Book Chapters

Inventions

Journals or Juried Conference Papers

View all journal publications currently available in the [NSF Public Access Repository](#) for this award.

The results in the NSF Public Access Repository will include a comprehensive listing of all journal publications recorded to date that are associated with this award.

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Licenses

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Other Products

Other Publications

Patent Applications

Technologies or Techniques

Thesis/Dissertations

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Robert Kenneth Connell. *Effects of plant-soil interactions on grassland carbon dynamics in a changing world.* (2020). Kansas State University. Acknowledgement of Federal Support = Yes

Katherine R. Andrews. *Fate of CO₂ in tallgrass prairie watershed underlain by merokarst bedrock, Konza Prairie, Kansas, USA.* (2021). Kansas State University. Acknowledgement of Federal Support = Yes

Websites or Other Internet Sites

Participants/Organizations

What individuals have worked on the project?

Name	Most Senior Project Role	Nearest Person Month Worked
Nippert, Jesse	PD/PI	4
Baer, Sara	Co PD/PI	2
Gido, Keith	Co PD/PI	2
Smith, Melinda	Co PD/PI	2
Zeglin, Lydia	Co PD/PI	2
Avolio, Meghan	Faculty	1
Blair, John	Faculty	1
Boyle, Alice	Faculty	1
Brunsell, Nathaniel	Faculty	1
Collins, Scott	Faculty	1

Name	Most Senior Project Role	Nearest Person Month Worked
Dodds, Walter	Faculty	1
Hefley, Trevor	Faculty	1
Hope, Andrew	Faculty	1
Horne, Eva	Faculty	1
Jensen, William	Faculty	1
Jumpponen, Ari	Faculty	1
Kirk, Matt	Faculty	1
Knapp, Alan	Faculty	1
Koerner, Sally	Faculty	1
Komatsu, Kimberly	Faculty	1
Langston, Abigail	Faculty	1
Louthan, Allison	Faculty	1
Ratajczak, Zak	Faculty	1
Rice, Charles	Faculty	1
Santos, Eduardo	Faculty	1
Sullivan, Pam	Faculty	1
Wilcox, Kevin	Faculty	1
Wilson, Gail	Faculty	1
Goodin, Douglas		1
Lee, Sonny		1
Mayfield, Mark		1
Moore, Trisha		1
Olson, KC		1
Patrignani, Andres		1

Name	Most Senior Project Role	Nearest Person Month Worked
Spencer, Joel		1
Temme, Arnaud		1
Tobler, Michi		1
Todd, Timothy		1
Whiles, Matt		1
Zolnerowich, Gregory		1
Bachle, Seton	Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)	1
Connell, Kent	Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)	1
de Oliveria, Gabriel	Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)	1
Griffin-Nolan, Robert	Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)	1
Hoffman, Ava	Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)	1
O'Keefe, Kim	Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)	1
Sutton, Alex	Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)	1
Verheijen, Bram	Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)	1
Welti, Ellen	Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)	1
Haukos, Jill	Other Professional	12
O'Connor, Rory	Other Professional	1
Rhodes, Jennifer	Other Professional	12
Xia, Yang	Other Professional	12
Ajowele, Joshua	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Bachle, Seton	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Bloodworth, Kathryn	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Bookout, Bess	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Broderick, Caitlin	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1

Name	Most Senior Project Role	Nearest Person Month Worked
Dea, Hannah	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Duell, Eric	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Eckhoff, Kathryn	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Fisher, Molly	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Galfano, Tommy	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Gora, Sarah	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Guinnip, James	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Hajek, Olivia	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Herrera, Tommy	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Herzog, Sarah	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Jones, Molly	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Keen, Rachel	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Linabury, Mary	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Lynch, Shannon	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
McDonald, Heath	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Mohammadi, Shahla	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Mohankumar, Narmadha	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Nieland, Matthew	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Noble, Sidney	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Pehim Limbu, Smriti	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Querns, Aleah	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Ritchey, Brynn	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Rodgers, Abbi	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1

Name	Most Senior Project Role	Nearest Person Month Worked
Ross, Maggie	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Santos, Marshall	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Shats, Anna	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Silber, Katy	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Slette, Ingrid	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Smith, Emma	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Storc, Zach	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Terry, Rose	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Tooley, Emmett	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Vilonen, Leena	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Wedel, Emily	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Wiekert, Nathaniel	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Wiens, Ben	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Wiggam-Ricketts, Shelly	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Wojciechowski, Ashley	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Zaricor, Marissa	Graduate Student (research assistant)	1
Kuhl, Amanda	Non-Student Research Assistant	12
Sandwick, Mark	Non-Student Research Assistant	11
Taylor, Jeff	Non-Student Research Assistant	12
Tobler, Courtney	Non-Student Research Assistant	12
Hubbard, Chester	Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Participant	1
Ivanow, Lily	Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Participant	1

Name	Most Senior Project Role	Nearest Person Month Worked
Johnson, Khyla	Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Participant	1
Seifried, Tessa	Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Participant	1
Siller, Maddy	Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Participant	1

Full details of individuals who have worked on the project:

Jesse B Nippert

Email: nippert@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: PD/PI

Nearest Person Month Worked: 4

Contribution to the Project: Dr. Nippert is the Konza Prairie LTER lead PI and project director. Provides overall LTER project leadership and coordination. He contributes expertise in plant ecology and ecophysiology, and plant responses to spatial variability in microclimate, and plant responses on core LTER watersheds at the Konza Prairie LTER site. He is responsible for woody plant encroachment studies, and also directs the KSU Stable Isotope Mass Spectroscopy Laboratory, and provides expertise on the application of stable isotopes to ecological studies.

Funding Support: NSF: Collaborative Research: How roots, regolith, and rock interact to control climate at meso-temporal scales, the R3-C Frontier.

Change in active other support: Yes

International Collaboration: Yes, South Africa

International Travel: No

Sara G Baer

Email: sgbaer@ku.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Co PD/PI

Nearest Person Month Worked: 2

Contribution to the Project: Dr. Baer is a project co-PI and provides expertise on grassland restoration, particularly with respect to plant community dynamics and long-term changes in ecosystem properties and processes. She is responsible for directing research on grassland restoration ecology at the Konza site, including recovery of ecosystem properties in restored grasslands. Dr. Baer oversees the Restoration Chronosequence study as part of the LTER VII project. Supported with a subcontract to University of Kansas.

Funding Support: USDA: Linking microbiome function and microbial processes to plant genetic diversity in a foundation forage grass across the Great Plains grassland climate gradient: a multi-omics approach

Change in active other support: No

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Keith B Gido

Email: kgido@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Co PD/PI

Nearest Person Month Worked: 2

Contribution to the Project: Provides expertise in aquatic ecology; stream communities and ecosystems; the effects of fish on stream ecosystem properties such as primary productivity, nutrient cycling, community structure (species richness and diversity), decomposition and transport of particulate organic matter (POM); impacts of altered hydrologic regimes on stream ecosystems. Oversees the LTER experimental stream facility. Coordinates regional assessments of stream fish communities.

Funding Support: US Bureau of Reclamation: Razorback suckers study in the San Juan River

Change in active other support: Yes

International Collaboration: Yes, Australia

International Travel: No

Melinda Smith

Email: melinda.smith@colostate.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Co PD/PI

Nearest Person Month Worked: 2

Contribution to the Project: Associate Professor at Colorado State University conducting research on plant population and community dynamics at Konza Prairie, and the impacts of climate change. Directs site-based activities related to the multi-site Nutrient Network (NutNet) project. Supported by a subcontract to Colorado State University.

Funding Support: USDA-NIFA: How do the soil microbiome and plant-soil feedbacks influence rangeland agro-ecosystem responses to drought?

Change in active other support: Yes

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Lydia H Zeglin

Email: lzeglin@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Co PD/PI

Nearest Person Month Worked: 2

Contribution to the Project: Provides expertise in molecular microbial ecology; taxonomic and functional diversity of soil and stream microbiota in the context of ecosystem N and C cycles.

Funding Support: NSF-DEB-ES CAREER: How do microorganisms and grazing mammals interact at local to regional scales to regulate grassland nitrogen cycling processes?

Change in active other support: Yes

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Meghan Avolio

Email: meghan.avolio@gmail.com

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Former Ph.D. student at Yale University (Advisor: Melinda Smith). Research on grassland plant communities, mycorrhizae, climate change, nitrogen deposition, and genetic structure of plant communities.

Currently an assistant professor at Johns Hopkins University.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

John Blair

Email: jblair@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Konza LTER investigator and Director of the Konza Prairie Biological Station (the primary research site for the Konza LTER program). Research expertise in ecosystem ecology and terrestrial biogeochemistry; soil ecology, including decomposition, soil nutrient cycling, litter/soil/plant nutrient dynamics; effects of climate change and other disturbances on ecosystem processes; ecology of soil invertebrates; and restoration ecology.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Alice Boyle

Email: aboyle@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in bird ecology and physiology; particular interest in reproduction, dispersal and energetics.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Nathaniel Brunsell

Email: brunsell@ku.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in ecosystem and global C and water flux measurement and modeling; coordinates collection and analysis of data from the Ameriflux towers located on Konza Prairie.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Scott Collins

Email: scollins@sevilleta.unm.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in grassland ecology and plant community ecology; ecological analyses of spatial and temporal dynamics; ecological responses to disturbance; analysis of species distribution and abundance; local

regional interactions; productivity-diversity relationships.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: Yes, South Africa

International Travel: No

Walter Dodds

Email: wkdodds@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Dr. Dodds provides leadership for the Konza LTER aquatic research group. Research expertise in aquatic ecology; phycology; nutrient cycling and retention in streams; groundwater chemistry; watershed-level hydrologic export; water quality. Dr. Dodds is also leading the riparian vegetation removal study as part of the LTER VII funding cycle. This study assess the impacts of riparian land-cover change on grassland streams.

Funding Support: NSF EPSCoR MAPS

International Collaboration: Yes, Brazil

International Travel: No

Trevor Hefley

Email: thefley@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Ecological statistics, hierarchical Bayesian models, spatial and spatio-temporal statistics, and wildlife ecology.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Andrew Hope

Email: ahope@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in mammalogy; particularly phylogeography, speciation and climate impacts on evolutionary mechanisms of community assembly.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Eva Horne

Email: ehorne@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Research in behavioral ecology of grassland reptiles; responses of reptile and amphibian populations to fire and grazing. Dr. Horne also assists with administration of the Konza Prairie Biological Station, and

coordination of research permits and projects at the site.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

William Jensen

Email: wjensen1@emporia.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Dr. Jensen is an Associate Professor at Emporia State University. He is studying the effects of patch-burn grazing on brood parasitism of Dickcissel nests in the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie, and is responsible for collecting data on avian consumer responses to the patch-burn grazing experiment.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Ari Jumpponen

Email: ari@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise on fungal ecology, particularly mycorrhizae and other endophytic fungi; diversity of soil microbial communities; application of molecular methods to characterize soil microbial communities.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Matt Kirk

Email: mfkirk@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: KSU professor in the Department of Geology. Dr. Kirk is continuing the research of Dr. Gwen Macpherson, who retired from the University of Kansas.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Alan Knapp

Email: alan.knapp@colostate.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Provides research expertise in grassland ecology, plant ecology, physiological ecology, global change studies, plants-herbivore interactions, invasive species ecology. Dr. Knapp also provides leadership for

ILTER studies of plant productivity and responses to climatic variability and climate change, and conducts multi-site research involving SGS and KNZ LTER sites. Supported by a subcontract to Colorado State University.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: Yes, South Africa

International Travel: No

Sally Koerner

Email: sally.koerner@uncg.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Dr. Koerner is an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina Greenboro. Her research interests include ecology (community, ecosystem and plant ecology); drivers of biodiversity across spatial scales and through time.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Kimberly Komatsu

Email: lapierrek@si.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Former PhD student from Yale University. Dr. La Pierre is currently a principal investigator, senior scientist at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. Her research areas consists of animal plant interactions, biodiversity, climate change, ecology, ecosystem function, ecosystem services, global change, herbivores, insects, invasive species, nutrient pollution, plant ecology, and terrestrial ecology.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Abigail Langston

Email: alangston@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Professor in the KSU Department of Geology. Dr. Langston's core areas of geographic research are in quantitative geomorphology and landscape evolution modeling.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Allison Louthan

Email: allisonmlouthan@gmail.com

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Dr. Louthan works at the intersection of population and community ecology, focusing on how species interactions and climate change jointly influence plant population dynamics and distribution patterns. She uses a combination of observational fieldwork, field- and greenhouse-based experiments, and modeling to explore how species interactions might impact future biodiversity patterns in a changing climate.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Zak Ratajczak

Email: zarata@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Research area involves woody encroachment. Former PhD student of Jesse Nippert.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Charles Rice

Email: cwrice@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in soil microbial ecology; responses of grassland microbial communities to fire, grazing climatic variability; soil C and N dynamics; denitrification in grasslands; effects of management on soil C sequestration. Contributor and author for IPCC AR4.

Funding Support: NSF EPSCoR MAPS

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Eduardo Santos

Email: esantos@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Micro-meteorology and measurements of carbon and water fluxes from grassland. Expertise in eddy flux techniques and stable isotope analyses.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Pam Sullivan

Email: pamela.sullivan@oregonstate.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: As an ecohydrologist, Dr. Sullivan is interested in investigating the interactions between climate, vegetation and geology on freshwater resources over different temporal and spatial scales. Supported on a subcontract to Oregon State University.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Kevin Wilcox

Email: wilcoxkr@gmail.com

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Professor at University of Wyoming. Research focuses on global change and land use impacts on plant community dynamics, primary productivity, and biogeochemical cycles.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Gail Wilson

Email: gail.wilson@okstate.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Faculty

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Gail Wilson provides expertise on the role of mycorrhizal fungi in grasslands, and is responsible for long-term studies of the impacts of of mycorrhizal fungi on plant community dynamics and on soil structure and C storage in grasslands.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Douglas Goodin

Email: dgoodin@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role:

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Provides expertise on remote sensing of ecological data, including patterns of plant productivity and spatial distributions of grazing and fire effects; research on climatology in the Central Plains; research on the impacts of burning on air quality.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Sonny Lee

Email: leet1@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role:

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Interest include: metagenomics, bioinformatics, microbial ecology, microbial diversity and cultivation.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Mark Mayfield

Email: markherb@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role:

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in plant systematics.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Trisha Moore

Email: tlcmoore@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role:

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in environmental engineering with a focus on ecohydrology and water and carbon cycling.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

KC Olson

Email: kcolson@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role:

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: KC Olson is a professor of animal science, who brings expertise on the physiology and management of cattle in mesic grasslands. Dr. Olson is an active participant in the new patch-burn grazing study, and will oversee assessment of animal performance as a management-related aspect of this LTER study.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Andres Patrignani

Email: andrespatrignani@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role:

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Dr. Patrignani is an assistant professor in the KSU Department of Agronomy. His interest is soil water management.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Joel Spencer

Email: joelspen@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role:

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: KSU professor of geology

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Arnaud Temme

Email: arnaudtemme@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role:

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in Geomorphology, soil mapping, soil and landscape evolution, complexity, mountain landscapes

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Michi Tobler

Email: tobler@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role:

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Dr. Tobler studies the adaptation and speciation, fish biology, and extreme environments.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Timothy Todd

Email: nema@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role:

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in nematode ecology; particularly plant-nematode interactions and soil food web dynamics.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Matt Whiles**Email:** mwhiles@ufl.edu**Most Senior Project Role:****Nearest Person Month Worked:** 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in invertebrate ecology; research focused on assessment of patterns and controls of secondary productivity in grassland streams; ecology of soil invertebrates in grasslands. Participant in new riparian vegetation removal experiment.

Funding Support: None**International Collaboration:** No**International Travel:** No**Gregory Zolnerowich****Email:** gregz@ksu.edu**Most Senior Project Role:****Nearest Person Month Worked:** 1

Contribution to the Project: Expertise in grassland insect biodiversity and insect systematics, particularly of parasitic wasps. Dr. Zolnerowich oversees the KSU Museum of Entomological and Prairie Arthropod Research, and provides expertise on electronic databasing of biological collections.

Funding Support: None**International Collaboration:** No**International Travel:** No**Seton Bachle****Email:** sbachle@ksu.edu**Most Senior Project Role:** Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)**Nearest Person Month Worked:** 1

Contribution to the Project: Postdoc at Colorado State University Former graduate student of Dr. Jesse Nippert

Funding Support: None**International Collaboration:** No**International Travel:** No**Kent Connell****Email:** rkco@umich.edu**Most Senior Project Role:** Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)**Nearest Person Month Worked:** 1

Contribution to the Project: Postdoc at University of Michigan Former graduate student of Dr. John Blair

Funding Support: None**International Collaboration:** No**International Travel:** No**Gabriel de Oliveria****Email:** gabrieloliveira@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Postdoc of Dr. Nate Brunsell, University of Kansas

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Robert Griffin-Nolan

Email: robertgn13@gmail.com

Most Senior Project Role: Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Former PhD student (Advisor, Alan Knapp) working on plant physiological responses to drought and ecosystem drought sensitivity. Received PhD in 2019. Now postdoc at Syracuse University.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Ava Hoffman

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Most Senior Project Role: Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Postdoc at Johns Hopkins University

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Kim O'Keefe

Email: okeefe.kim@gmail.com

Most Senior Project Role: Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Postdoc at University of Wyoming Former PhD student of Dr. Jesse Nippert

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Alex Sutton

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Most Senior Project Role: Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Postdoc at Kansas State University.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No
International Travel: No

Bram Verheijen

Email: bramverheijen@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Postdoc research associate with Dr. Dave Haukos at Kansas State University

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Ellen Welti

Email: ellen.welti@senckenberg.de

Most Senior Project Role: Postdoctoral (scholar, fellow or other postdoctoral position)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Former PhD student (Advisor, Tony Joern) working on mechanisms of food web stability. Currently a postdoc at the Senckenberg Research Institute.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Jill Haukos

Email: jhaukos@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Other Professional

Nearest Person Month Worked: 12

Contribution to the Project: Director of the Konza Education Program (KEEP). Jill directs the K-12 education program, including the Konza Prairie SLTER program and serves as the KNZ LTER education representative for LNO activities. Jill also oversees the Konza docent program and some of the public outreach activities.

Funding Support: Konza Prairie Biological Station

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Rory O'Connor

Email: rory.o'connor@usda.gov

Most Senior Project Role: Other Professional

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Former PhD student of Dr. Jesse Nippert. Currently works as a rangeland ecologist for the USDA-ARS in Burns, Oregon. Still conducts research at Konza Prairie.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Jennifer Rhodes**Email:** jenniferrhodes@ksu.edu**Most Senior Project Role:** Other Professional**Nearest Person Month Worked:** 12**Contribution to the Project:** Program coordinator and event planner.**Funding Support:** None**International Collaboration:** No**International Travel:** No**Yang Xia****Email:** yangx@ksu.edu**Most Senior Project Role:** Other Professional**Nearest Person Month Worked:** 12**Contribution to the Project:** LTER Information Manager. Responsibilities include data management, database design and implementation, and overseeing KNZ LTER computer network activities.**Funding Support:** None**International Collaboration:** No**International Travel:** No**Joshua Ajowele****Email:** joshuaajowele@gmail.com**Most Senior Project Role:** Graduate Student (research assistant)**Nearest Person Month Worked:** 1**Contribution to the Project:** Advisor: Kevin Wilcox**Funding Support:** None**International Collaboration:** No**International Travel:** No**Seton Bachle****Email:** sbachle@colostate.edu**Most Senior Project Role:** Graduate Student (research assistant)**Nearest Person Month Worked:** 1**Contribution to the Project:** PhD student in Dr. Jesse Nippert's lab. Presented his dissertation in 2021. Currently a postdoc at Colorado State University.**Funding Support:** None**International Collaboration:** No**International Travel:** No**Kathryn Bloodworth****Email:** kjbloodw@uncg.edu**Most Senior Project Role:** Graduate Student (research assistant)**Nearest Person Month Worked:** 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Meghan Avolio

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Bess Bookout

Email: bessbookout16@gmail.com

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Zak Rataczak

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Caitlin Broderick

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: John Blair

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Hannah Dea

Email: hidea@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Ari Jumpponen

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Eric Duell

Email: eric.duell@okstate.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Gail Wilson. Research focus: plant ecology, grassland ecology, global change ecology.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Kathryn Eckhoff

Email: keckhoff22@gmail.com

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Sara Baer

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Molly Fisher

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Walter Dodds

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Tommy Galfano

Email: tonaflag@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Andrew Hope

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Sarah Gora

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Sally Koerner

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

James Guinnip

Email: jguinnip@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Walter Dodds. Studies stream biogeochemistry.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Olivia Hajek

Email: olivia.hajek@colostate.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Melinda Smith

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Tommy Herrera

Email: tommy3@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Andrew Hope

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Sarah Herzog

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Allison Louthan

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Molly Jones

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Andrew Hope

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Rachel Keen

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Jesse Nippert

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Mary Linabury

Email: mary.linabury@gmail.com

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Melinda Smith

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Shannon Lynch

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Allison Louthan

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Heath McDonald

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Gail Wilson

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Shahla Mohammadi

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Jesse Nippert

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No
International Travel: No

Narmadha Mohankumar

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Trevor Hefley

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Matthew Nieland

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Lydia Zeglin

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Sidney Noble

Email: slnoble@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Zak Ratajczak

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Smriti Pehim Limbu

Email: slimbu2@jhu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Meghan Avolio

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Aleah Querns

Email: akquerns@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Allison Louthan

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Brynn Ritchey

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Zak Ratajczak

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Abbi Rodgers

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Kevin Wilcox

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Maggie Ross

Email: maggiel.ross@colostate.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Melinda Smith

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Marshall Santos

Email: marshallvictor@hotmail.com

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Eduardo Santos

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Anna Shats

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Jesse Nippert

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Katy Silber

Email: ksilber@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Alice Boyle

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Ingrid Slette

Email: ingrid.slette@gmail.com

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Alan Knapp. Working on historical effects of climate change on grassland carbon cycling.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Emma Smith

Email: dylansmith@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Graduate student in Dr. Alice Boyle's lab. Presented her thesis in 2021.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Zach Storc

Email: zjstorc@ku.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Dr. Sara Baer, University of Kansas

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Rose Terry

Email: rsterry@uncg.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Sally Koener

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Emmett Greg Tooley

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Jesse Nippert

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Leena Vilonen

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Melinda Smith

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Emily Wedel

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Jesse Nippert

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No
International Travel: No

Nathaniel Wiekert

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Sara Baer

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Ben Wiens

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Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Andrew Hope

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Shelly Wiggam-Ricketts

Email: wiggie@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Greg Zolnerowich

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Ashley Wojciechowski

Email: ashley.wojciechowski@ku.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Advisor: Sara Baer

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Marissa Zaricor

Email: mzaricor@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Graduate student of Dr. Jesse Nippert. Presented her thesis in 2021.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Amanda Kuhl

Email: akuhl@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Non-Student Research Assistant

Nearest Person Month Worked: 12

Contribution to the Project: Research assistant and field crew leader.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Mark Sandwick

Email: sandwick@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Non-Student Research Assistant

Nearest Person Month Worked: 11

Contribution to the Project: Field technician.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Jeff Taylor

Email: jht@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Non-Student Research Assistant

Nearest Person Month Worked: 12

Contribution to the Project: Field technician.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Courtney Tobler

Email: ctobler@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Non-Student Research Assistant

Nearest Person Month Worked: 12

Contribution to the Project: LTER analytical lab supervisor, research coordinator.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No
International Travel: No

Chester Hubbard

Email: pawteese96@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Participant

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Summer REU working with Dr. Arnaud Temme, KSU

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Year of schooling completed: Junior

Home Institution: Kansas State University

Government fiscal year(s) was this REU participant supported: 2021

Lily Ivanow

Email: li4@rice.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Participant

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Summer REU working with Dr. Allison Louthan, KSU

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Year of schooling completed: Junior

Home Institution: Rice University

Government fiscal year(s) was this REU participant supported: 2021

Khyla Johnson

Email: johnson1392@marshall.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Participant

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Summer REU working with Dr. Zak Rataczak, KSU.

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Year of schooling completed: Other

Home Institution: Marshall

Government fiscal year(s) was this REU participant supported: 2021

Tessa Seifried

Email: tessaseifried2023@u.northwestern.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Participant

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Summer REU working with Dr. Melinda Smith, Colorado State University

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Year of schooling completed: Sophomore

Home Institution: Northwestern University

Government fiscal year(s) was this REU participant supported: 2021

Maddy Siller

Email: mksiller@ksu.edu

Most Senior Project Role: Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Participant

Nearest Person Month Worked: 1

Contribution to the Project: Summer REU student of Dr. Keith Gido, KSU

Funding Support: None

International Collaboration: No

International Travel: No

Year of schooling completed: Junior

Home Institution: Kansas State University

Government fiscal year(s) was this REU participant supported: 2021

What other organizations have been involved as partners?

Name	Type of Partner Organization	Location
Colorado State University	Academic Institution	Fort Collins, CO
Department of Energy	Other Organizations (foreign or domestic)	USA
US EPA	Other Organizations (foreign or domestic)	USA
USGS	Other Organizations (foreign or domestic)	USA
University of Florida	Academic Institution	Gainesville, FL
University of Kansas	Academic Institution	Lawrence, KS
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	Academic Institution	Greensboro, NC
University of Wyoming	Academic Institution	Laramie, WY
Johns Hopkins University	Academic Institution	Baltimore, MD
Kansas State University	Academic Institution	Manhattan, KS
NOAA	Other Organizations (foreign or domestic)	USA
Oklahoma State University	Academic Institution	Stillwater, OK
Oregon State University	Academic Institution	Corvallis, OR

Name	Type of Partner Organization	Location
Smithsonian Environmental Research Center	Other Organizations (foreign or domestic)	Edgewater, MD
State of Kansas	State or Local Government	Kansas
The Nature Conservancy	Other Nonprofits	Kansas

Full details of organizations that have been involved as partners:

Colorado State University

Organization Type: Academic Institution

Organization Location: Fort Collins, CO

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: Dr. Alan Knapp (Biology Department, Colorado State University) collaborates on many aspects of the Konza LTER program. His research includes studies of grassland ecology, responses to climatic variability and climate change, and the ecology of plant invasions. Knapp's LTER research is supported by a subcontract to Colorado State University, which also provides support for students participating in cross-site research that utilizes the Konza Prairie LTER site and database. Dr. Melinda Smith is an LTER collaborator and participates in several aspects of Konza LTER research, including studies of plant community dynamics, the ecology of plant invasions, genomic responses of plants to climate change, and comparisons of the ecology of North American and South African grasslands. Dr. Smith and her students also oversee the NutNet project at Konza as apart of a multi-site study of the effects of nutrient amendments and herbivory on herbaceous community and ecosystem dynamics. The Konza LTER program provides a subcontract to CSU and logistical support for these studies.

Department of Energy

Organization Type: Other Organizations (foreign or domestic)

Organization Location: USA

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Financial support

In-Kind Support

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: The Konza LTER program provides partial support for two CO₂ flux towers, which are part of the Ameriflux network of net C exchange measurement sites. DOE provides some financial and logistical support for tower operations and data processing.

Johns Hopkins University

Organization Type: Academic Institution

Organization Location: Baltimore, MD

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: Konza LTER supports collaborative research with Johns Hopkins collaborator, Dr. Megan Avolio. Dr. Avolio's lab focuses on plants and their interactions with the environment and other organisms.

Kansas State University

Organization Type: Academic Institution

Organization Location: Manhattan, KS

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

In-Kind Support
Facilities

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: KSU owns a portion of the Konza Prairie Biological Station, and provides access and use of the field site and associated on-site facilities. KSU also provide campus lab facilities, and computer server and network support through a partnership between the KNZ LTER program and the KSU Physics Computer Support Center, where KNZ network servers are housed. KSU provides support for operation of the Environmental Chemistry Laboratory in Bushnell Hall, which is used for LTER water sample analyses. KSU also provides support in the form of available assistantships for graduate students conducting KNZ research.

NOAA

Organization Type: Other Organizations (foreign or domestic)

Organization Location: USA

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Facilities
Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: Konza Prairie is part of the U.S. Climate Reference Network (USCRN). USCRN is a network of climate stations developed as part of a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) initiative. Its primary goal is to provide future long-term homogeneous observations of temperature and precipitation that can be coupled to long-term historical observations for the detection and attribution of present and future climate change.

Oklahoma State University

Organization Type: Academic Institution

Organization Location: Stillwater, OK

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: The Konza LTER program supports collaborative research with Dr. Gail Wilson. Dr. Wilson's research focuses primarily on the role of mycorrhizae in grasslands, and the the ecology of *Bothriochloa bladhii* (Caucasian bluestem), an important invasive grass species.

Oregon State University

Organization Type: Academic Institution

Organization Location: Corvallis, OR

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: Collaborative Konza LTER research is supported by a subcontract to OSU collaborator, Dr. Pam Sullivan and students to conduct research on groundwater hydrology and chemistry. Dr. Sullivan is continuing work previously conducted by Dr. Gwen Macpherson (University of Kansas), who retired in 2020.

Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

Organization Type: Other Organizations (foreign or domestic)

Organization Location: Edgewater, MD

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: Konza LTER supports collaborative research with SERC's collaborator, Dr. Kim La Pierre. Dr. La Pierre investigates how ecosystem responses to global change drivers are mediated by biotic processes.

State of Kansas

Organization Type: State or Local Government

Organization Location: Kansas

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Financial support

Facilities

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: The state of Kansas provides an operating budget for Konza Prairie Biological Station personnel and general site maintenance.

The Nature Conservancy

Organization Type: Other Nonprofits

Organization Location: Kansas

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Facilities

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: Konza Prairie Biological Station is a Nature Conservancy site, established on land purchased by The Nature Conservancy and managed by the Division of Biology at KSU. Konza LTER scientists interact with TNC scientists and officers on a broad range of management-related issues, including grassland conservation, restoration ecology, and grazing management.

US EPA

Organization Type: Other Organizations (foreign or domestic)

Organization Location: USA

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Facilities

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: The US EPA jointly operates a CASTNet (Clean Air Standards and Trends Network) and AMoN (ammonia monitoring) site located at the Konza Prairie LTER site. The Konza Prairie LTER program provides site support and the EPA provides analytical services and compiles data on atmospheric nutrient concentrations and dry deposition rates, and tropospheric ozone concentrations. The EPA Region 7 office also supports a collaborative modeling project, which is using Konza LTER data to build linked models of hydrology and biogeochemistry that can be used to assess the effects of alternate land-use scenarios in the Flint Hills region. This project is led by Dr. Bob McKane (EPA) in collaboration with KNZ scientists.

USGS

Organization Type: Other Organizations (foreign or domestic)

Organization Location: USA

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Facilities

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: The USGS collects and provides data on the hydrology and chemistry of Kings Creek, a USGS benchmark stream located on the Konza Prairie LTER site, and the Konza LTER program facilitates the transfer of these data to the Hydro-DB database. The Konza LTER site is also a part of the USArray component of the USGS EarthScope project- a continental-scale seismic observatory.

University of Florida

Organization Type: Academic Institution

Organization Location: Gainesville, FL

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: Collaborative Konza LTER research is supported by a subcontract to University of Florida collaborator, Dr. Matt Whiles and students to support research on stream invertebrate ecology and soil macroinvertebrate ecology.

University of Kansas

Organization Type: Academic Institution

Organization Location: Lawrence, KS

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: We provide a subcontract and logistical/technical support to Dr. Nathaniel Brunsell (Dept of Geography), who oversees flux tower operations at the Konza site. Dr. Brunsell's research addresses the role of land-use/land-cover change land surface heterogeneity in vegetation, moisture, soil type, topography on water and energy fluxes from local to regional scales. This research uses a combination of field measurements, remote sensing and numerical modeling, and is integrated with flux tower studies at the Konza LTER site. We also provide a subcontract to Dr. Sara Baer and student to research grassland restoration ecology.

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Organization Type: Academic Institution

Organization Location: Greensboro, NC

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: Konza LTER supports collaborative research with UNCG's collaborator, Dr. Sally Koerner. Dr. Koerner's lab focuses on community ecology and biodiversity – what is biodiversity, how is it created and maintained, how does it influence ecosystem function, and how is global change altering it?

University of Wyoming

Organization Type: Academic Institution

Organization Location: Laramie, WY

Partner's Contribution to the Project:

Collaborative Research

More Detail on Partner and Contribution: Konza LTER supports collaborative research to University of Wyoming's, Dr. Kevin Wilcox. Dr. Wilcox's lab research focuses on linkages among plant community dynamics, primary productivity, and biogeochemical cycles, how these relationships are altered under global change, and how they vary across spatial scales.

Were other collaborators or contacts involved? If so, please provide details.

Nothing to report

Impacts

What is the impact on the development of the principal discipline(s) of the project?

The Konza Prairie LTER Program is a comprehensive, interdisciplinary research program designed to contribute to synthetic activities and conceptual and theoretical advances in ecology, and to further an understanding of ecological processes in grasslands. In the 2020-2021 funding period, the KNZ program produced or contributed to 56 publications: 51 refereed journal articles (including 10 currently in press) and 5 dissertations and theses. These publications cover topics ranging from rainfall event sizing and timing altering ecosystem dynamics to the increasing effects of nutrient enrichment on plant diversity loss to whether prescribed burns are sufficient to spread woody plants. Within the past year, Konza LTER scientists have continued to publish high-quality articles in disciplinary focused areas (e.g. *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*, *Fungal Ecology*, *Freshwater Biology*), general ecology (e.g. *Ecology and Evolution*, *Ecosphere*, *Ecosystems*, *Journal of Ecology*, *Ecology Letters*), and high-impact general science journals (e.g. , *Science*, *PNAS*, and *BioScience*).

In addition to site-based science, KNZ scientists made substantial contributions to multi-site, collaborative ecological research, and the widespread use of KNZ LTER data and resources by the broader ecology community. For example, KNZ LTER data were used in a novel synthetic *BioScience* article led by Walter Dodds. In this manuscript, Dodds and colleagues provide a conceptual framework towards integrating plant, soil, and aquatic microbiomes to develop a more detailed understanding of microbial ecological properties. Konza Prairie is also an active node in the Nutrient Network (NutNet) and DroughtNet programs. KNZ scientists continue to lead and contribute to publications in these networks.

What is the impact on other disciplines?

The Konza Prairie LTER program and our core research experiments attract numerous scientists from a broad spectrum of scientific disciplines beyond ecology. Our groundwater chemistry program (and well installation) began in the late 1980's by Gwen Macpherson (Geology, KU). Gwen retired in the winter of 2020, and her groundwater chemistry sampling is being continued by Dr. Matt Kirk, Geology, KSU. KNZ supports Dr. Pamela Sullivan (Earth, Oceans, and Atmo Sciences, Oregon State Univ.) who began additional subsurface geochemistry research at Konza in 2016 and is continuing to develop a site-based program on Konza. Sullivan's work focuses on the interface of freshwater resources – changing climate – vegetation dynamics, and she is collaborating with Nippert and Blair. Pam, Jesse, and Dr. Li Li (Penn State) have a NSF Hydrology grant to look at root macropore generation as a consequence of woody encroachment. New wells were installed on Konza for this project in the summer, 2021. Pam, Jesse, Li Li and 5 others (Dr. Kamini Singha - CO School of Mines, Dr. Dan Hirmas and Dr. Hoori Ajami – Call Riverside, Dr. Lejo Flores – Idaho State, and Dr. Sharon Billings – KU) received a NSF-GEO award to conduct Critical Zone research comparing Konza to 4 other sites. This research will begin in Summer, 2022. Dr. Eduardo Santos (Agronomy, KSU) focuses on land-atmosphere interactions. KNZ is supporting Santos's use of stable isotopes to partition C fluxes on grazed and ungrazed watershed. The work by Santos compares plot-based vegetation measurements with data from eddy covariance stations and satellite-derived estimates of surface energy fluxes. Two hydrologists from Biological and Agricultural Engineering (Dr. Stacy Hutchinson and Dr. Tricia Moore) maintain and contribute to the 'Irrigation Transect Experiment'. Contributions by Hutchinson and Moore have provided numerous training opportunities for Biological and Agricultural Engineering and Hydrology students. Dr. Abby Langston (KSU Geography) is a geomorphologist with research interests on landscape evolution and modeling. Dr. Langston is collaborating with Dr. Walter Dodds on projects

related to stream flow and stream corridor change. She provided a research overview during our annual Konza meeting (in Sept., 2021).

The KNZ LTER patch-burn grazing experiment is being done in collaboration with Dr. KC Olson, a grazing animal nutritionist (Animal Science and Industry - KSU) that is using the experiment to assess the impacts of alternative grassland management practices on animal nutrition and animal health. Other contributions to disciplines outside the traditional realm of ecology include the use of flux towers at the Konza site, which has provided data used by micrometeorologists, climatologists, remote sensing scientists and modelers. We also collaborate with atmospheric chemists and modelers with the EPA CASTNet program in sampling concentrations of selected airborne particles and use these to model dry deposition rates.

What is the impact on the development of human resources?

Our program has a long history of undergraduate training and exposure to scientific research for local KSU students. Amanda Kuhl (KNZ Research Assistant) mentors 15-25 students year-round that assist in collection and measurement of long-term productivity plots, as well as grass and grasshopper population data in the core KNZ datasets. Amanda is long-term Konza staff, and has great institutional memory and is a core asset to our team. In addition, training of undergraduates includes REU students supported each summer (typically 2/summer). We were very fortunate in 2021 to host 5 REU students, with projects focused on a variety of topics, including the movement of stream fish in Kings Creek, learning about how nitrogen addition affects plant characteristics, and examining the hybridization process of two different *Lespedeza* species native to Konza, *Lespedeza capitata* and *Lespedeza violacea*. These projects are showcased on the KNZ LTER website (<http://lter.konza.ksu.edu/konza-lter-research-experiences-undergraduates-program>). Indirectly, we support the development of undergraduates via the use of the Konza LTER data in ecology classes and text books. As documented elsewhere in this report, we also train numerous graduate students and provide valuable experience in interdisciplinary research and the synthetic use of long-term datasets. In addition to supporting KSU graduate students, the Konza Prairie LTER site is widely utilized by graduate students from other institutions. During the 2020-2021 funding period, the site was used by graduate students from the University of Kansas, Colorado State University, Oklahoma State University, Oregon State University, University of Wyoming, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Johns Hopkins University. We also hosted field trips for students from many regional colleges and universities. The Konza Environmental Education Program and the Konza Prairie Schoolyard LTER Program, provide formal and informal research experiences and science education to public groups, children and K-12 teachers. Finally, the Konza LTER site continues to be used in conjunction with the NSF-funded Girls Researching Our World (GROW) program (www.ksu.edu/grow), with several KSU scientists and students leading educational activities for 6th-12th grade girls.

What was the impact on teaching and educational experiences?

KNZ data and findings are used in a number of undergraduate and graduate courses at Kansas State University, the University of Kansas, University of Arizona, Colorado State University, University of Oklahoma, among others. In addition, KNZ findings are increasingly utilized in undergraduate ecology texts and supplementary teaching material. For example, KNZ long-term studies were used to demonstrate the role of fire and grazing in grasslands in 'General Ecology, 2nd edition' by D.T. Krohne, and as an example of the importance of long-term research in the 'Ecology' text by Cain et al. ('Life. The Science of Biology. 7th edition' by Purves, Sadava, Orians and Heller) and KNZ data and findings are highlighted in several upper-level and graduate texts including 'Freshwater Ecology' (W.K. Dodds), 'The Ecology of Plants' (Gurevitch, Scheiner and Fox), and 'Biogeochemistry. An Analysis of Global Change' (W.H. Schlesinger).

Additionally, KNZ is used as an "outdoor classroom" for many courses at KSU and regional colleges and universities. As an example, many of the lab portions of KSU Biology courses take the students to Konza for weekly lab exercises (focused on everything from small mammal trapping, avian ecology / sampling, measurements of plant physiology and productivity, soil microbiome measurements, and freshwater fish and biogeochemistry sampling. In 2020-2021, Konza once again hosted undergraduate students from Haskell Indian Nations (Lawrence, KS).

What is the impact on physical resources that form infrastructure?

The Konza LTER program provides a research platform for scientists and students from around the world. The 3,487-ha Konza Prairie Biological Station (KPBS), located in the Flint Hills of NE Kansas, is the core research site for the KNZ program. In addition to providing the watershed-level fire and grazing treatments, agricultural fields, restored prairie, stream networks and weirs, KPBS includes several buildings in the headquarters area that support LTER research. The on-site Ecology Laboratory (2,400 ft²) includes (1) a wet/dry lab with sinks, fume hood, refrigerators, balances, etc., (2) two large multi-purpose work rooms with bench space and sinks for processing samples, drying ovens, refrigerators and freezers, and

equipment storage, and (3) a large researchers' shop equipped with a variety of tools and field supplies. Other station buildings include a fire station and maintenance building, a large storage building for equipment, and a residence occupied by the site foreman year around. The 4,650-ft² Hulbert Center houses a library/conference room, administrative office, classroom and teaching laboratory (used primarily for K-12 activities), reference herbarium and animal collections, and a kitchen and dormitory-style housing for 15 visitors. Two small guest cottages (each with 2-bedrooms, living room, bath, kitchen, and laundry facilities), can accommodate up to 5 persons/cottage. A larger cottage, built in 2012, can accommodate up to 12 guests, expanding the capacity of on-site accommodations to 37 visiting researchers.

With funding from an NSF-FSML grant and additional support from KSU and a private donor, an historic limestone barn at the KPBS headquarters was transformed into a multipurpose meeting facility for on-site conferences, workshops, and educational programs. The historic stone barn was renovated in 2008 and has the Cortelyou Lecture Hall (1,750 ft²) with a seating capacity of ~100 persons fully equipped with A/V equipment and wireless internet. Additional large multi-purpose room (1,850 ft²) is designed as flexible space for varied uses including additional meeting space, workshops, scientific posters and other research displays, social gatherings, and education programs for large groups. All lab and office buildings have internet connectivity to the KSU campus. In addition, there is a wireless link to KPBS from campus with multiple wireless access points that provides coverage to >60% of the 3,487-ha site.

Other LTER infrastructure, maintained by KPBS, includes the outside perimeter fence (29.8 km), the interior bison management area closed by 16.4 km of "New Zealand" fence, 98 small (25 m²) grazing enclosures, 11.7 km of fence for cattle research, 26.4 km of access roads and 61 km of fireguards separating the experimental watershed units. KPBS maintains several general-purpose vehicles on-site, as well as specialized equipment (tractors, fire trucks, mowers, soil augers, etc.). KPBS makes staff and equipment available to assist with KNZ research activities, including mowing fireguards, installing equipment, soil coring, etc. KPBS staff also coordinates the fire management of bison and cattle herds for KNZ grazing treatments. The headquarters area includes a corral and handling facilities for managing the bison herd (hydraulic chute, electronic scales, etc.), which is essential for LTER grazing studies. In late 2017, then KPBS director, Briggs received an NSF award to upgrade the corral area. In 2018, KPBS and KNZ staff redesigned and improved the bison handling facility. The changes provide a safer working environment for staff, reduce stress on bison, and allow greater ease and flexibility in conducting bison-related research. In 2018, we constructed a 900 ft² walk-in drying oven using a modified shipping container. Temperatures within the large drying oven are regulated by a small home furnace powered using propane. In 2020, 20 km of fencing was replaced to improve the safety and security of the bison inclosure. This process of fence replacement required months of effort. Other field equipment and instrumentation on-site includes the main KNZ weather station, a network of 11 rain gauges, two eddy flux towers for quantifying ecosystem-level C and water vapor flux, four weirs and associated stream gauging equipment, 46 wells for measuring groundwater levels and chemistry, numerous TDR probes, neutron access tubes and tension lysimeters for soil water measurements. Related equipment co-supported by other programs includes USGS stream monitoring station, 2 seismometers (USGS), an aerosol and ozone monitoring facility (CASTNet), and a NOAA Climate Reference Network (CRN) weather station. These facilities add significantly to data for LTER research and education programs, and for regional cross-site studies. KPBS is also a core site for National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON). NEON provides additional unique measurement capabilities and data at KBPS, which will complement many KNZ LTER studies.

In addition to facilities at KPBS, a wide-range of modern laboratory facilities are available on the nearby KSU campus, approximately 15 km from KPBS (e.g., Analytical Chemistry Labs, Stable Isotope Lab, Ecological Genomics Institute, Core Sequencing and Genotyping Facility). The majority of core LTER laboratory space and analytical equipment are located in Bushnell Hall (Biology), including space and equipment for preparing plant, soil and water samples for analysis (drying ovens, grinders, shaker tables, block digesters, vacuum filtration systems). Bushnell Hall also houses an extensive collection of prairie plant specimens in the KSU Herbarium, and these specimens are electronically databased and georeferenced. Some specific equipment and facilities available for LTER research are located within other Departments (Agronomy, Biological and Agricultural Engineering, Plant Pathology, Geography), reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of our research. Some major analytical instruments available for KNZ investigators include: 2 Alpkem autoanalyzers (FlowSolution IV) for liquid samples, Carlo-Erba 1500 automated C/N analyzer for solid samples, Shimadzu TOC 500 analyzer for dissolved C, a Hitachi U2900 automated dual-beam spectrophotometer, 4 LiCor 6400 Portable Photosynthetic Systems, 2 LiCor 8100 systems dedicated for soil CO₂ flux measurements, a LiCor 1600 null-balance porometer for stomatal conductance, and 3 pressure chambers (PMS model 1000) for measuring plant water potential, 4 Tektronix cable testers (model 1502B) coupled to Campbell CR10 data loggers for TDR soil moisture measurements, 2 Troxler (model 3221) neutron probe gauges for soil moisture determinations, and several Trimble GPS units. Eight multi-parameter sondes (YSI 6000) are used for monitoring oxygen and temperature for 3 watersheds.

What is the impact on institutional resources that form infrastructure?

Nothing to report.

What is the impact on information resources that form infrastructure?

KNZ resources are used to support the hardware and software associated with the KNZ website and data portal, which provide a wide array of information resources to the larger scientific community, LTER network, Environmental Data Initiative (EDI), and Data One.

Our website provides access to all KNZ data, publications, research activities, and products, including 145 research projects. All online data are searchable by KNZ data categories, LTER controlled vocabulary keywords, LTER core areas, KNZ watersheds, and data owner. We maintain an updated list of all KNZ LTER-supported/related publications (total of 1959 publications currently online). Website usage is tracked by Google Analytics, and indicates approximately 1300 visits and 1000 page views per month in the past year (77% new visitors).

The past year has seen a number of improvements in the functionality of the KNZ Information System. We enhanced the usability of many KNZ datasets by revisiting our datasets and metadata, organizing and integrating long-term data, standardized attribute codes, keywords and units with KNZ and LTER Network standards where applicable, and provided more detailed metadata. We focused on developing a new spatial data portal to improve geospatial data visualization and integration. Finally, we are working to determine the best path forward and prepare a plan to migrate our current website to a new version.

What is the impact on technology transfer?

Nothing to report.

What is the impact on society beyond science and technology?

The KNZ LTER program contributes to increased public awareness of ecological and environmental issues (e.g., biodiversity conservation, habitat loss, ecosystem services, restoration ecology, etc.) through outreach and public education activities. Our research concerning the role of seasonal burning and fire intensity on woody encroachment is being used to inform the Great Plains Fire Science Exchange (www.gpfirescience.org) and the Tallgrass Prairie and Oak Savanna Fire Science Consortium (www.tposfirescience.org). Both of these are non-profit groups focusing on conservation issues and land management of Midwestern grasslands. Konza investigators have a strong working and advisory relationship with the Kansas chapter of The Nature Conservancy. We work closely with Brian Obermeyer, the Director of Protection and Stewardship for KS TNC.

In addition, the Konza Prairie LTER Program is increasingly called upon to provide data relevant to resource management and regulatory policy. Dr. John Blair (KPBS director) and Dr. Jesse Nippert (KNZ LTER lead-PI) regularly provide outreach and tours to state and national policy-makers and law-makers. Because of the widespread use of prescribed fire for both grassland conservation and agricultural tours, KNZ research on ecological responses to contrasting long-term fire regimes and different seasons of fire has taken on new importance. At the regional level, KNZ scientists advised (summer, 2021) the EPA Region 7 staff and scientists on the ecological benefits of fire in maintaining native tallgrass prairie habitat and diversity and contribute long-term data to guide the development of the Flint Hills regional smoke and management plan. The issue of smoke management coupled with concerns about woody plant expansion have provided KNZ investigators an opportunity to interact with land managers, producers, and private organizations in linking basic research with management goals. The KNZ Season of Fire Experiment provides 22-years of data from watersheds burned at different times of the year (Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter). Most prescribed burning in the Flint Hills takes place during a small window in April. We now have data showing that burning can be done other times of the year in ungrazed watersheds with little adverse effect on plant productivity or desirable species. KNZ investigators have interacted with and advised groups, including the EPA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Kansas Farm Bureau, The Nature Conservancy Grassland Community, and others.

Locally, Konza scientists continue to serve as consultants for the Flint Hills Discovery Center, and we participate in Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station public education events by providing information on the ecological consequences of various grassland management practices (e.g., fire frequency and grazing). The Konza Prairie LTER database is also being used to address other issues relevant to regulatory policy. Long-term data on Konza Prairie stream water quality provides a baseline for regional water quality in the absence of agricultural practices or other disturbances. LTER data on soil chemistry is also being incorporated into ongoing studies to evaluate the potential of grassland management practices to increase soil C sequestration to offset atmospheric CO₂ loading.

In 2020-2021, KNZ scientists and graduate students participated in numerous public outreach events to enhance understanding of LTER science and dissemination of important findings. A few examples include: John Blair participated in an "Ask the Expert" Facebook live session, sponsored by the Flint Hills Discovery Center. Blair answered questions about Konza Prairie and our research. Zak Ratajczak discussed the future of prairie ecosystems during an online webinar hosted by the Beach Museum Prairie Studies Initiative. Bram Verheijen, a KNZ postdoc, led a public nature walk at KPBS featuring American Woodcock in Spring 2021. Ellen Welti's (former KNZ grad student) research was covered by NPR (<https://www.kmuw.org/energy-and-environment/2021-04-19/climate-change-has-turned-the-kansas-prairie-into-junk-food-thats-killing-grasshoppers?nopop=1>).

Konza Prairie hosts numerous artists annually. A featured Konza artist, Erin Wiersma, has gained prominence for her works created at Konza Prairie. Wiersma's Konza artwork is currently on display at the Chicago Museum of Modern Art. In 2021, Wiersma participated in a virtual panel discussion with two other artists focusing on the prairie as art inspiration. The Missouri Prairie Foundation sponsored the panel.

What percentage of the award's budget was spent in a foreign country?

None of this award's budget was spent in a foreign country.

Changes/Problems

Changes in approach and reason for change

Nothing to report.

Actual or Anticipated problems or delays and actions or plans to resolve them

Nothing to report.

Changes that have a significant impact on expenditures

Nothing to report.

Significant changes in use or care of human subjects

Nothing to report.

Significant changes in use or care of vertebrate animals

Nothing to report.

Significant changes in use or care of biohazards

Nothing to report.

Change in primary performance site location

Nothing to report.