

2024
Oklahoma
IMPACT REPORT





Friends,

I AM DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S work and our mission to preserve Oklahoma's precious natural heritage. Because of your generosity, we have worked with private landowners to establish conservation easements on their land; established roads, housing and offices at preserves; and expanded our preserve's boundaries. Your commitment ensures a healthy and thriving environment for generations to come.

About one year ago, Andie and Bob Jackson completed their donation of their family ranch in Creek County, establishing the Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve. Since then, our stewardship team, Jeanine Lackey and Matt Hagy, have explored this place and are learning more every week. For example, researchers have confirmed trees over 340 years old. You can read more about their work starting on page 4.

This new preserve is an inspirational reminder of Oklahomans' longstanding legacy of donating land for conservation. In 1989, just a few years after TNC started working in Oklahoma, Buddy Smith made the very first land donation to the Oklahoma chapter. He left nearly 3,000 acres to TNC as a part of his estate plan, which would become the Pontotoc Ridge Preserve. His donation not only conserved critical habitat, but also opened the door to TNC's work in southeastern Oklahoma. And little did he know that his donation would have an impact far beyond this preserve.

As a young man, John Nickel explored and fell in love with the hills and bluffs of the Ozarks along the Illinois River. As he grew, so did his appreciation of his slice of paradise. Looking for a way to meet his conservation vision, he looked to TNC's success at Tallgrass Prairie Preserve and drew inspiration from Buddy's gift. Ultimately, John donated his 14,000-acre ranch, forming the J.T. Nickel Family Nature & Wildlife Preserve, now totaling more than 17,000 acres.

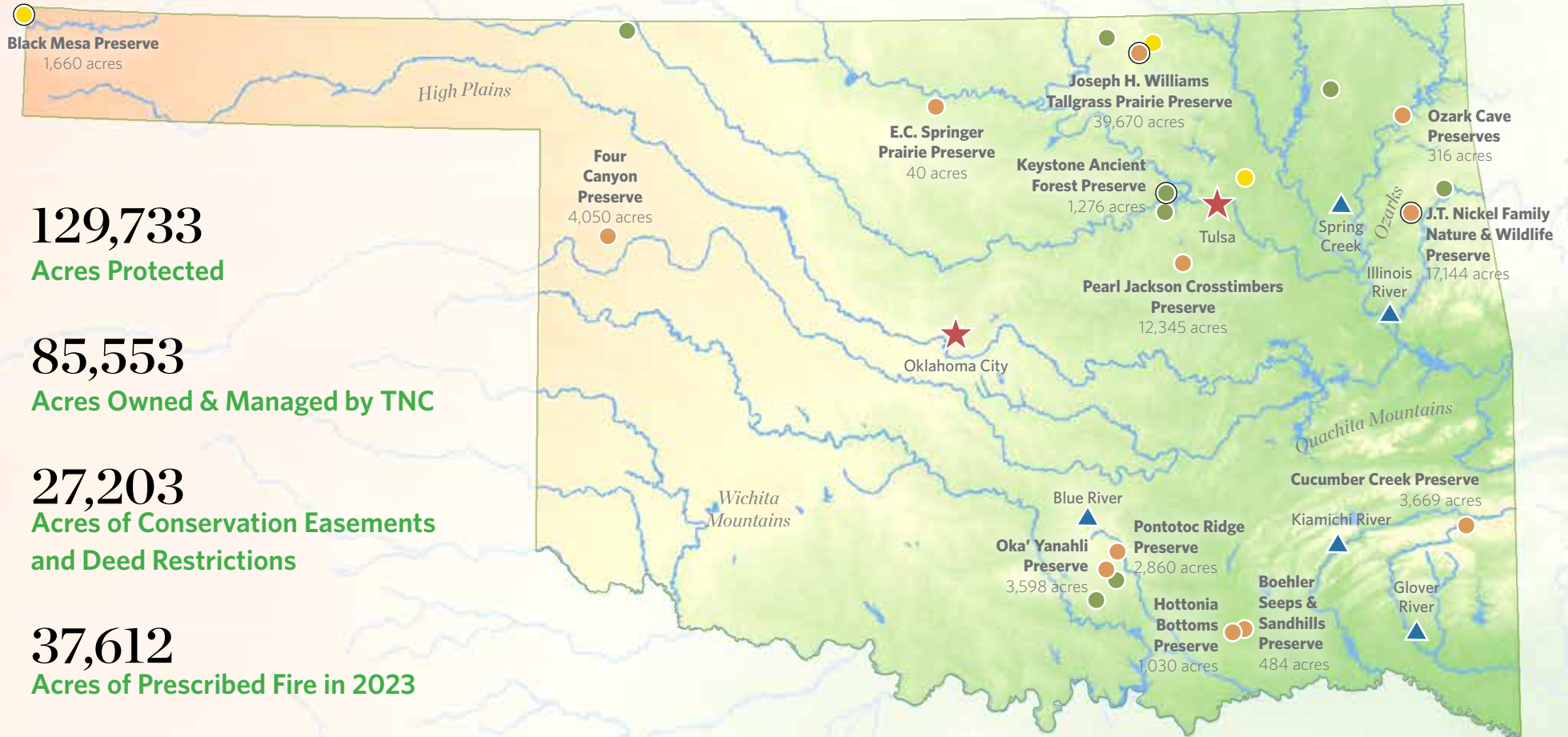
To date, 30,565 acres have been donated to TNC in Oklahoma. These contributions are more than just gifts of land—they are an investment in Oklahoma and the health of our planet. I am humbled that so many have entrusted their family land to our care, conserving critical habitat for wildlife, cleaning our air and water and providing exciting opportunities for conservation education and recreation.

On behalf of the Oklahoma team, I am proud to share how your generosity has advanced our mission this past year. It is a privilege to partner with individuals like you who share our vision of a sustainable future for both people and nature. Thank you again for your extraordinary support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Fuhr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "F".

MIKE FUHR
State Director

Oklahoma at a Glance



129,733
Acres Protected

85,553
Acres Owned & Managed by TNC

27,203
Acres of Conservation Easements
and Deed Restrictions

37,612
Acres of Prescribed Fire in 2023

8
Ecoregions Where We Work

Our mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

From grasslands to forests, rivers to mesas, we envision an Oklahoma where our rich natural heritage is valued and protected, and people are inspired to conserve nature for future generations.

● Conservancy Preserve
 ○ Open to the Public
 ▲ Conservancy Priority Watershed
 ● Conservation Easement
 ● Cooperative Land Projects
 ★ Conservancy Office

What's New at the Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve

This year The Nature Conservancy in Oklahoma celebrates the first anniversary of the Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve.



“IT’S BEEN A WHIRLWIND,” SAYS JEANINE LACKEY, preserve manager. “Since we took ownership last November, it has been exciting to document the wildflowers blooming in spring; explore the unique geology and waterfalls; and assist with biological surveys—learning about the butterflies, bees, birds, frogs, toads, turtles and snakes that call this place home. I’m proud to say that our team has made great progress, and there’s so much more in store.”



Conserving a property of this scale and importance is a momentous undertaking for the Oklahoma chapter. The preserve lies within the crosstimbers ecoregion, which contains the Keystone Woodlands, a priority conservation area. These woodlands contain old-growth forests with oak trees over 340 years old, which are important habitat for iconic wildlife like Northern bobwhite and rare plant species like the hairy mountain mint.

“Our top priority was hiring a great team to steward this land—to assess the preserve and develop a long-term conservation plan,” says Katie Gillies, Oklahoma director of conservation. “I have no doubt we found the right people for the job.”

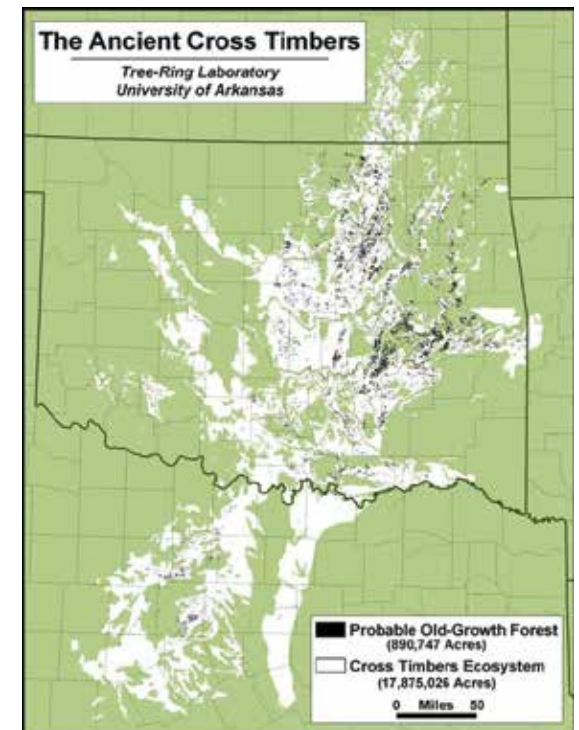
Lackey has worked in conservation for many years and started at TNC about six years ago at

our Blue Bogy Preserves, a collection of preserves in south-central Oklahoma. She brings not only stewardship experience, but also the outreach aptitude to facilitate future public access.

Matt Hagy joined TNC as land steward in February, with over 10 years of fire experience. Since then, he has hiked over 167 miles of the preserve, mapping unique features, restoration sites, fences and other infrastructure.

Lastly, Timmy Todd managed the ranching operations of the former Pearl Jackson Ranch for over 40 years and was hired to assist with the transition from working ranch to nature preserve.

The new team quickly upgraded one mile of road. With better access, workers could reach the headquarters site to drill a water well and build an office and workshop.





“We couldn’t purchase the equipment we needed, like ATVs and a tractor, because we didn’t have a place to securely store them,” says Lackey. “Now we’re equipped to initiate our stewardship activities—increasing biodiversity and improving ecosystem resiliency. Plus, it’s nice to have running water and a cool place to escape the summer heat.”

The preserve lies within the Muskogee (Creek) Nation, whose mission is to enhance the quality of life for the Muskogee people. And with the Conservancy’s mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends, the two entered into a partnership. They will collaborate to conserve the natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources at the Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve.

“With their help, we can manage native and non-native wildlife populations with Tribal hunting, graze the land, conduct biological surveys and so much more,” says Lackey. “In fact, they’ve already implemented a wild turkey study to document breeding success.”

All these milestones are made possible through the vision and generosity of Bob and Andie Jackson, who donated their family ranch to TNC. In addition to conserving the land they loved, they had a vision to inspire people for nature through discovery. TNC’s planning embraces the interconnectedness of human and ecological needs—integrating conservation equity into all aspects of our work.

“The preserve is closer to any major city than other TNC preserves in Oklahoma,” says Lackey. “When a portion of the property is open to the public, we’re expecting it to be a popular place for families, school field trips, hikers and nature enthusiasts of all backgrounds, ages and abilities to explore and learn about TNC’s important conservation work.”

The public use concepts were developed with Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates Inc., a consulting group specializing in the design of natural spaces for public enjoyment. Additionally, the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program team offered their expertise in consulting with neighbors, potential user groups, the Muskogee (Creek) Nation and conservation partners. Over the next year, the National Park Service will assist TNC with community engagement and implementation.





After listening to neighbors, stakeholders, consultants and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, TNC developed a conceptual plan to create a first-rate destination where all visitors feel welcome and included. When visitors arrive, they'll first experience a state-of-the-art, eco-friendly visitor center that represents TNC's commitment to environmental sustainability. Here, visitors will learn about the ecosystem, our stewardship practices and the power of biodiversity and resiliency.

From there, visitors will discover more nature experiences on an accessible boardwalk and trails of varying distance and difficulty. Features such as an outdoor classroom, wildlife observation areas and a sensory trail for people of all abilities are also being considered. A new

stewardship building and grounds will showcase TNC's science-based conservation and restoration programs like prescribed fire and invasive species management.

"This is a huge but important undertaking, not only for biodiversity conservation, but for public engagement through visitation, volunteerism, citizen science and exploration," says Lackey. "Although the concepts for buildings and trails will take years to come to fruition, it will benefit people and nature for generations. I'm so very humbled that the Jacksons trusted TNC to make their vision a reality. Like the Jacksons, I've come to love this place. And I can't wait for the public to explore these woods and come to appreciate them just as the Jacksons did."

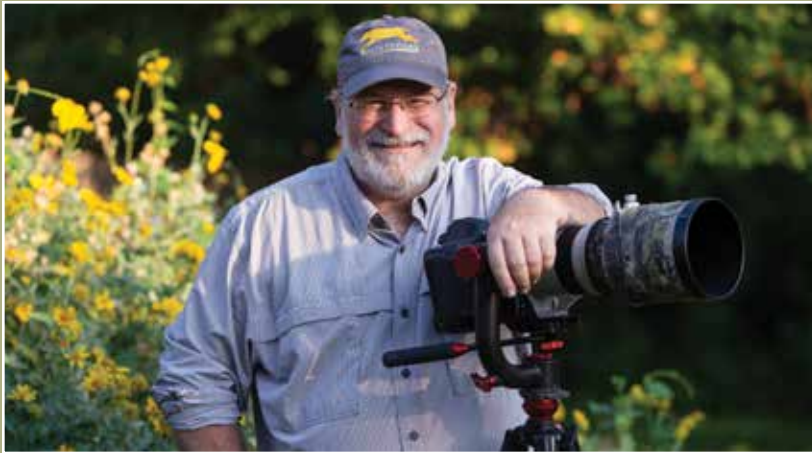
We've documented...

426
plant species

109
bird species

49
native bee species

21
mammal species



2024 Conservation Champions

A CONSERVATION CHAMPION IS AN INDIVIDUAL OR organization whose passion for nature translates to action. Champions commit their time, resources and energy to a cause larger than any one entity. This year, TNC in Oklahoma is proud to announce Kelly Bostian, Andie and Bob Jackson and Dr. Jim Puckette as our 2024 Conservation Champions.

Kelly Bostian (top) is a freelance outdoors writer and senior editor of *Oklahoma Ecology Project*. Previously, he covered the outdoors and nature for 12 years at *Tulsa World*. In addition to covering TNC and our projects, he has spent his career educating and informing Oklahomans about the importance of conservation, biodiversity and climate change. Keep up with his work at medium.com/oklahoma-ecology-project.

Instead of selling their 12,000-acre family ranch for millions, Andie and Bob Jackson (middle) donated the land—establishing the Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve. In addition, they placed a conservation easement on the property to ensure that it would never be developed. Now TNC's third largest preserve in Oklahoma, the land will be a place for people of all backgrounds and abilities to connect with nature.

This past year, Dr. Jim Puckette (bottom) volunteered his time and expertise by preparing reports for easements and land acquisitions. As a retired professor of geology at Oklahoma State University, he has contributed mineral evaluations that inform possibilities and challenges at potential conservation sites. Since 2011, Jim has contributed 20 reports, including six this year.

Many thanks to all our Conservation Champions for their selfless dedication to conservation in Oklahoma.

Black Bear | *Ursus americanus*

BB (yo na)

The black bear was a staple in Cherokee culture and cuisine. Their fat was important and used as a fuel source, traded and to add flavor to meat.

Read the Cherokee Story of Bear Man

TNC has been working with researchers from OSU and Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to learn about bears in the area. We have found that the high quality habitat at the J.T. Nickel Preserve is used by bears year-round. Since research began, two bears have hibernated on the preserve and at least one bear has had twin cubs.

If you encounter a bear, remain calm and **do not run away or try to climb a tree**. If you can, make sure the bear has an escape route and **back away slowly when possible**. Fighting back should be a last resort. And, of course, never feed bears.

Males, called boars, weigh 125-300 pounds. Females, called sows, weigh 90-200 pounds.

Cubs are born in **January or February** during hibernation and weigh only one pound!

Despite their name, their color ranges from black to brown, to cinnamon, to blond

Black bears are omnivores—eating nuts, berries, grasses, insects, eggs, honey and small mammals

They usually dig a burrow for their den, but they sometimes use caves and tree hollows



Mammals of the Cherokee Nation

Cottontail Rabbit

Sylvilagus floridanus
IroQS (tsi-s-du)

A female's range is 5-15 acres while a male may roam up to 100 acres

Cottontail rabbits were a primary food source for the Cherokee

They are also an essential link in the food chain for predators like bobcats, coyotes, and black bears

Woodchuck

Marmota monax
o-ga-niv (o-ga-niv)

Woodchucks, also called groundhogs, were so common to Cherokee life that they are a part of the tribe's lore

Read "The Origin of the Groundhog Dance"

When hibernating during winter, its heart rate slows from 75 to 4 beats per minute to conserve energy

One of Oklahoma's largest rodents, they weigh 6-10 pounds and grow up to 2 feet long

White-tail Deer

Odocoileus virginianus
De (a-w)

Little deer, their antlers shed and re-grow every year

They can reach speeds up to 40 miles per hour and are surprisingly good swimmers

In the 1920s, fewer than 500 animals remained in Oklahoma due to over-hunting, but the population rebounded after intensive conservation efforts

Fawns are born with white spots to help camouflage in ground cover which disappear in early summer

WHITE-TAIL DEER

The Deer Clan is one of the 7 Cherokee Clans, making the white-tailed deer a sacred animal. Cherokee from this clan were the keepers, butchers and traders of deer, as well as keepers of the deer medicine. And, like the animal, members of the clan were swift runners—emulating their the messenger of the tribe.

Throughout the history of the Cherokee Nation, white-tailed deer provided valuable resources. In addition to being a major food source, their antlers were used to shape and sharpen tools into arrowheads, spearheads and knives before steel was available. Their skins were used to make clothing and other personal items.

The Spirit of Little Deer
Little Deer was the protector of the deer. Cherokee hunters were knowledgeable in the ways of hunting the deer and passed to the Deer Spirit kind of reverence when deer were killed for food. If a hunter killed a deer needlessly and without asking the Deer Spirit's pardon, Little Deer would track down the hunter and give him rheumatism so that he could hunt no more.

J.T. Nickel Family Nature & Wildlife Preserve

“Collaboration like this is a win for both people and nature.”

— Jeremy Tubbs, preserve manager

THE J.T. NICKEL FAMILY NATURE & WILDLIFE PRESERVE IS one of the best places to explore Oklahoma’s pristine Ozark ecosystem. It is a place where hikers can unplug, experience nature and see first-hand the value of biodiversity. Now, hikers can enjoy wider, more stable trails with educational displays featuring plants and animals found on the preserve.

“This is monumental in the history of the preserve,” says Jeremy Tubbs, preserve manager. “With the investment from the Oklahoma Recreational Trails Program, we were able to make physical, ecological and educational improvements. These new features help people learn about and appreciate the preserve, and we also improved its ecology with forestry mulching along the trail corridor.”

The new trail system is more accessible to people who use mobility aids. Not only were the previous trails improved, but chunky gravel areas were

replaced with smaller, compacted, smooth gravel and a disabled parking spot was paved. Now in accordance with ADA guidelines, the preserve is accessible for more nature enthusiasts to enjoy.

Just as the trails were improved, so were the displays. These educate visitors about the mission of TNC, the ecology of the preserve, safety and the importance of biodiversity. On-trail displays highlight plant and animal species hikers may see and feature species that are culturally relevant to members of the Cherokee Nation. For example, Ozark chinquapin oaks produce a reliable crop of nutrient-dense nuts that both people and animals have enjoyed.

“Many thanks to the Oklahoma Recreational Trails Program for helping make this dream a reality,” says Tubbs. “Collaboration like this is a win for both people and nature. And I’m happy to see that more people are able to appreciate the preserve and all this ecosystem has to offer.”

Beyond Oklahoma's Borders

Nature doesn't know boundaries on a map. People everywhere face the same needs: clean air and water, dependable food sources and a stable climate. As the world's largest conservation organization, we work with teams near and far to think globally and act locally. By applying our resources and effort strategically, we are enhancing conservation beyond our state borders.



In the Region

THE INTERIOR HIGHLANDS ARE MADE UP OF THE Ozark Plateau and Ouachita Mountain ecoregions that span Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and a slice of Illinois and Kansas. Most know this area for its rolling hills covered in pines and oaks. However, the Interior Highlands are home to a wide variety of endemic species found nowhere else in the world. The Ozarks are also known for an extensive maze of karst, connected subterranean waterways that form caves, streams and springs we see above ground.

TNC conservation teams have known the Interior Highlands are home to critical habitat for many species, like the endemic state-endangered Oklahoma cave crayfish. Now, armed with the Freshwater Resilient and Connected Network (FRCN) tool, they have data to identify and



prioritize freshwater sites for conservation. The FRCN has mapped every stream system in the U.S. and rigorously analyzed their ability to sustain biodiversity and natural services in the face of climate change, unseasonable temperatures and

erratic precipitation. As a result, 133 priority karst areas have been identified for conservation—22 of which are in Oklahoma.

“It’s no wonder that so many sites have been identified in the Interior Highlands,” says Emily Moyer, resilient waters program manager in Oklahoma. “This is one of the most biodiverse areas in the country. With this newly completed analysis, we now know exactly where to focus our effort to maximize our impact. I’d like to extend my thanks to Mike Slay, who led TNC’s work in identifying some of the most vulnerable karst sites in the region.”

The J.T. Nickel Family Nature & Wildlife Preserve is a shining example of conservation of the Interior Highlands. At 17,144 acres, it is the largest privately owned conserved area in the Ozarks. Nestled along the Illinois River, the preserve is home to the type of karst, caves, streams and springs identified in the FRCN. To expand freshwater conservation in the region, TNC is seeking \$8 million in federal funding to collaborate with landowners to improve priority karst habitats. Together, we can conserve this highly sensitive ecosystem and ensure people have reliable sources of clean drinking water.



YOUR REAL ESTATE CAN BE A GIFT FOR NATURE.

An asset you've had for generations can be a gift for generations to come. By donating all or part of your property to TNC, you may be able to reduce your capital gains tax, receive an income tax deduction, and receive income for life—and you may even be able to continue to use or live on your property. *Best of all, your gift will support vital conservation work.*

To learn more about how you can use your real estate to protect nature, contact TNC in Oklahoma today:

☎ (918) 585-1117

✉ oklahoma@tnc.org

🖱 nature.org/realestate





20 Years of Conservation at Four Canyon Preserve

IN THE OPEN EXPANSES OF WESTERN OKLAHOMA LIES

a stretch of rugged canyons, rolling prairie and steep bluffs overlooking the Canadian River. “Four Canyon Preserve has been shaped over millennia by a harsh climate, grazing by wildlife like bison and periodic fire,” says Chris Hise, preserve manager and Oklahoma associate director of conservation. “Although the landscape is unforgiving, this place is inherently and undeniably beautiful. There is nothing better than hiking across the prairie and listening to nighthawks boom on a warm summer evening.”

This year, The Nature Conservancy in Oklahoma celebrates 20 years of stewardship at Four Canyon Preserve. Located in Ellis County, this is a biodiverse, topographically unique and relatively untouched property. It features essential habitat for grassland birds like Cassin’s sparrow and northern bobwhite, valuable cover for mule deer and varied terrain in which hundreds of native plant species thrive. Since it was established in 2004, Hise has cared for and meticulously restored this land.





Hise calls western Oklahoma home. He grew up in the town of Sayre, about 50 miles away from what would become the preserve. His relationship with TNC began the summer before his senior year of high school, when he entered a statewide environmental essay contest. Along with a dozen fellow young nature enthusiasts, he was invited to tour natural sites across Colorado and Oklahoma, including the Conservancy's recently established Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve near Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

While touring the preserve, Hise had the opportunity to hear from Bob Hamilton, preserve manager at the time. The rest is history. "Until then, I didn't realize this was something I could pursue as a career. That day, I had an 'aha' moment that sparked my journey towards TNC. Now, I have the pleasure of calling Bob a friend and colleague." Hise joined the team in the summer of 2000, with conservation in western Oklahoma top of mind.

Four years later, the Oklahoma Chapter identified an opportunity to expand its reach and improve thousands of acres in western Oklahoma. As the state's grasslands diminished and its prairies faced development, TNC and its supporters took decisive action to conserve 3,410 acres in Ellis County. This was its first acquisition in the Southern High Plains of western Oklahoma. Since that initial purchase, the preserve has grown to a total of 4,050 acres, making it the Conservancy's fourth largest in the state.

Much like the topography of the preserve, the journey to Four Canyon had its ups and downs. Staff and trustees did their due diligence, made inroads and laid out a clear case for prioritizing the region to key stakeholders. With Hise on board and the deed in hand, the monumental task of establishing a conservation plan began. Conserving the property meant establishing best practices that continue to this day, including the regular treatment of invasive species. Additionally, implementing beneficial land management practices—like reinstating regular burns—was and remains a key priority.



Among the many accomplishments of his tenure, Hise has cleared over 2,000 acres of invasive Eastern redcedar trees. He's seen fire encourage native plant growth, remove invasive species and improve soil quality across 90% of the preserve. "We still have much to learn. A few years ago, researchers discovered two insect species on the preserve previously unknown to science. This speaks to the conservation potential of this area," he says.



The wealth of biodiversity found on the property has been further explored through surveys, studies and monitoring in partnership with Oklahoma's top universities. From archaeological analysis to butterfly surveys and plant counts, the work to document

species at Four Canyon is robust and ongoing. "The variety of plants and animals found here is striking. And, the preserve is an example of what's possible for expanding conservation in this region," says Hise.



Plants on the property include dense clusters of chinquapin oak in the steep canyon valleys and a variety of native grasses and wildflowers throughout the mixed-grass prairie above. These grasses are some of nature's most efficient carbon storage facilities, sequestering carbon underground when left undisturbed. A variety of grassland birds call this place home. Migrating sandhill cranes are often observed in and around the Canadian River, which forms the preserve's southern border. Texas horned lizards and mountain boomers can be seen skittering across the preserve's signature red dirt, soaking up the sun, searching for insects or taking cover from the occasional thunderstorm.

Twenty years is only the beginning. Hise says he's optimistic and eager to expand. "We have opportunities to conserve land on a larger scale here than some other parts the state," he says. "We're looking for new prospects, collaborating with landowners and partners to explore new grassland conservation strategies."

There's a bright future ahead for western Oklahoma and Four Canyon Preserve. "No doubt we've made great progress, but Four Canyon is just a postage stamp in the expanse of the Southern High Plains," says Hise. This region spans the prairies where Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico and Texas converge. Known as a valuable area for grazing cattle, it also holds great significance for nature.

"If we don't act fast, we could lose the plants and animals that call this place home. Plus, the benefits to people are bountiful. There's a reason this region is often referred to as one of the world's 'breadbaskets,' with many millions relying on food produced in the Great Plains for their next meal."

To learn more, visit [nature.org/fourcanyon](https://www.nature.org/fourcanyon)



The Legacy Club

Gary and I each grew up camping, canoeing and exploring national parks, so our love of nature took hold very early. It also sparked our love for each other—we met on a nine-day white water rafting trip down the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. When planning our free time, our first choice is always an adventure that takes us out into nature at home and abroad, with the occasional exception for sports or exploring interesting cities.

We have always supported various conservation efforts but have decided it is time to be even more intentional with our giving. The Legacy Club is a perfect choice for us. We want to help ensure that our grandkids, and future generations to come, have the opportunities to feed their souls with the natural world the way we have. We believe a relationship with nature is the key to a balanced and productive life. It is imperative that we expand appreciation for the importance of a healthy environment and work to protect and preserve the last great places as well as our local landscapes.

The Nature Conservancy has a proven record of pragmatic approaches to preservation and conservation through strategic partnerships. Witnessing the passion, expertise and commitment of the staff of the Oklahoma Chapter convinced us that joining the Legacy Club would meet our goals and maximize our contribution to protecting our natural world.

Lisa Riggs and Gary Meek
Sand Springs, Oklahoma

Preserving Nature's Balance

The Nature Conservancy in Oklahoma routinely conducts controlled burns to restore health and biodiversity to the places we protect. Prescribed fire is a vital tool in our conservation toolbox, and we're proud to partner with government agencies, Tribal Nations and others for regular burns on our preserves and beyond.

8,688

Acres Burned at Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

666

Acres Burned at Pontotoc Ridge Preserve

24,361

Partner Acres Burned Near Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

1,100

Partner Acres Burned Near Four Canyon Preserve

300

Acres Burned at Oka' Yanahli Preserve

2,397

Acres Burned at J.T. Nickel Preserve

A photograph of a sunrise over a field. The sun is a bright yellow circle in the upper left, with a soft glow. The sky transitions from yellow to orange and then to a dark purple at the horizon. The foreground is a dark, flat field.

Big Wins in the Flint Hills

“WHEN WE LAUNCHED THE FLINT HILLS INITIATIVE in 2021, we set the goal to conserve 165,000 acres of tallgrass prairie across Oklahoma and Kansas,” says Bob Hamilton, Oklahoma tallgrass initiative director. “From the outset, we knew we’d need the help of landowners to achieve this. I am overjoyed, proud and humbled to share news of our conservation progress in the Flint Hills of Oklahoma. This is largely due to Oklahomans who have stepped up to save this ecosystem. In 2024, over 8,500 acres have been conserved on private land with conservation easements.”

Conservation easements allow landowners to place certain use restrictions on their land for the benefit of nature, selling or donating the land use rights to a land trust like TNC. The land trust holds the easement and ensures the terms are upheld, regardless of who may own it in the future. These terms may vary, but generally prioritize conserving the land's natural value—minimizing development and encouraging biodiversity.

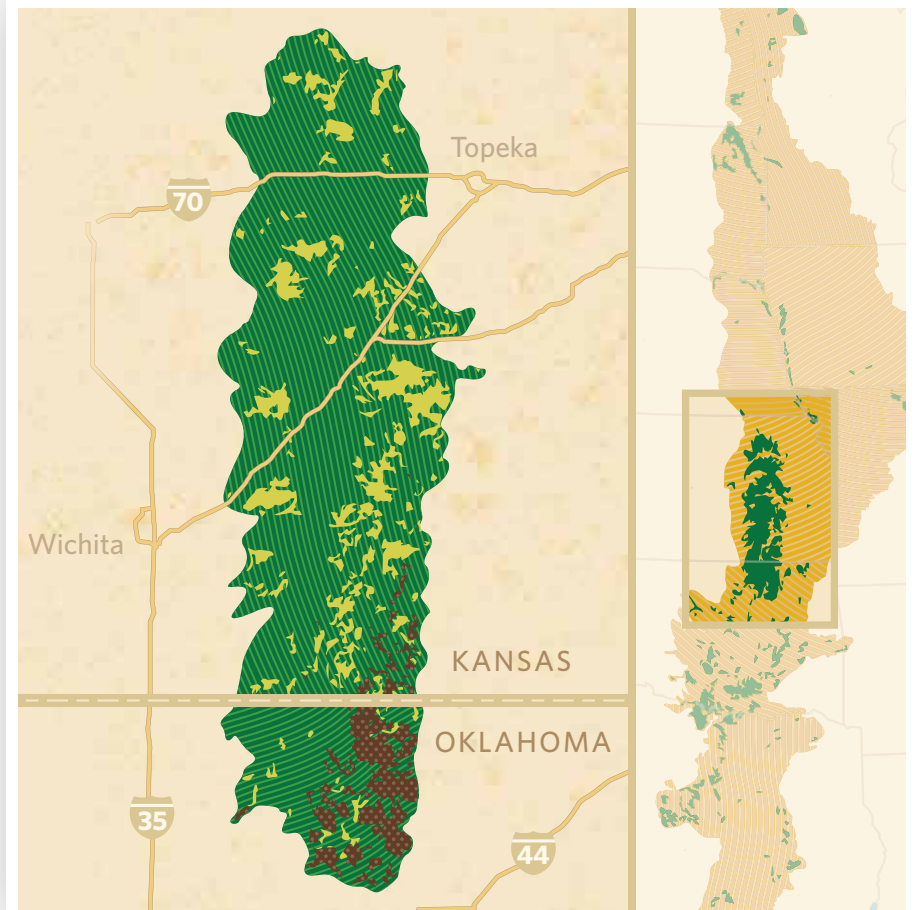
In the Flint Hills, that means protecting habitat for species like the greater prairie chicken, the American golden plover and the monarch butterfly by maintaining the over 600 native plants that occur here. Further, the landowners of these Flint Hills conservation easements continue to graze cattle on their native tallgrass prairie ranchland—a win for people and nature.



One of the easements completed in 2024 was an agricultural land easement made possible through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ALE-ACEP) funded by the Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). When landowners and their

ranch property meet certain criteria, TNC and NRCS work together to purchase the easement.

Most importantly, conservation easements keep working lands in working hands—bringing economic benefits to landowners, families and communities.



Over 8,500 acres of private land have been conserved this year in the Flint Hills with conservation easements.

Learn more about conservation easements in Oklahoma.





Donors and Legacy Club Members

We are honored to recognize the following donors who made contributions of \$500 or more from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. Everyone listed here has ties to Oklahoma. Some live here, and others live elsewhere and prefer their gifts be used for projects in Oklahoma. We deeply appreciate every gift and regret that space constraints prevent us from listing all donors.

LEGACY CLUB MEMBERS (names in green) have made a lasting commitment by naming The Nature Conservancy in their will or making a life-income gift.

Anonymous (11)

Anonymous (3)
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 Christine Arlotta
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Meet the New Staff



Lane Birmingham

Livestock Technician, Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

"Being in the outdoors has always been a part of me, and I've always loved taking care of nature. Being part of The Nature Conservancy is an amazing career because I get to do everything I love. Joining the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve team is a dream come true. I want to conserve and protect nature for our future generations to enjoy."



Emily Moyer

Resilient Waters Program Manager

"It is very refreshing to have an opportunity to work with people as passionate about their careers as I am. I grew up here in Oklahoma, where I spent much of my life exploring the outdoors. I am thrilled to work in a field that allows me to protect and restore these valued places and precious resources for future generations."



Justin Currie

Conservation Practitioner, Blue Boggy Preserves

"I am excited to be a conservation practitioner for The Nature Conservancy, which has been my top organization to work for since I was an undergrad. For my new role, I will be involved in habitat restoration projects at the Blue Boggy Preserve, including invasive species management and prescribed fire management. When I am not working, I enjoy reading and hiking."



Wyatt Severson

Livestock Technician, Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to join TNC. Growing up near the preserve, I always thought being a part of Tallgrass Prairie Preserve would be a dream. I'm excited to be outdoors and manage the bison, while learning more about conservation through prescribed fire."



Matt Hagy

Conservation Practitioner, Pearl Jackson Crosstimbers Preserve

"Being born and raised in Oklahoma, it gives me a great sense of pride to contribute to preserving nature at home. The team here is great and I can't wait to see what we can accomplish together. I have always enjoyed being outdoors, and that is what led me to start a career wildland firefighting. I'm lucky to have found a place where I can use the skills I acquired during that time to further the goals of TNC in Oklahoma."



Charlie Thurber

Equipment Operator and Mechanic, J.T. Nickel Preserve

"Growing up on a ranch in Oklahoma as well as working for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, I have gained an appreciation for all things in nature and preserving wildlife habitat. I'm looking forward to learning new things and growing professionally. My hobbies include spending time with my family, hunting, fishing and running a cow/calf operation."

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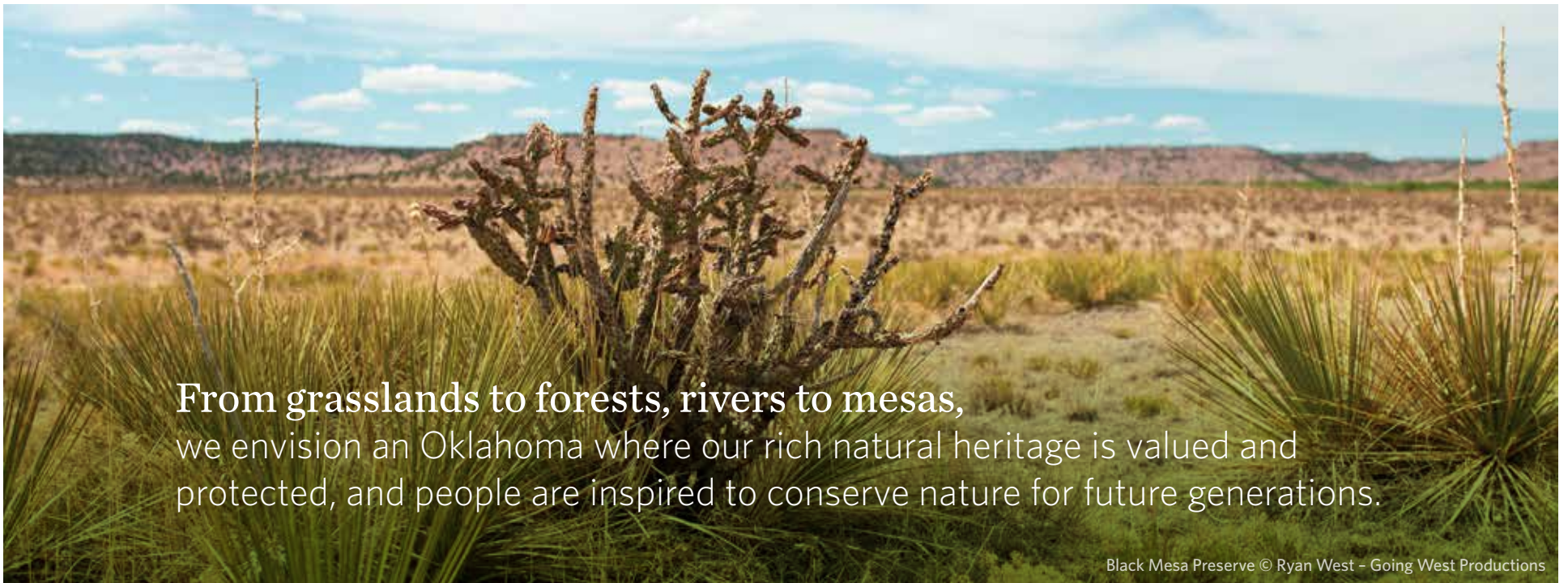
Joseph H. Williams

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From grasslands to forests, rivers to mesas,
we envision an Oklahoma where our rich natural heritage is valued and
protected, and people are inspired to conserve nature for future generations.

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