

# Cross timber prairie restoration plan for Saxon Park

by Howard Baer

on behalf of Saxon Park Prairie restoration committee: HB, Amy Buthod,  
Priscilla Crawford, Adrienne Gautier, Vonceil Harmon, Adam Sarmiento  
and Heather Supine and Red Earth Group (REG), Sierra Club

in coordination with Norman Parks & Rec: Wade Thompson, James Briggs,  
Jason Olsen, Bethany Grissom and Colin Zink

# Prairie restoration has a long and distinguished history

- During dustbowl: move to protect national grasslands, stabilize soil
- starting 1934: 25 acre Curtis prairie restoration at UW-Madison arboretum begun by conservationists including Aldo Leopold, John Thomson and John Curtis
- movement is particularly strong in upper Midwest: IA, MN, WI, IL...
- also in parts of OK: Tallgrass prairie- Pawhuska, Wichita Mountain NWR,...
- Norman OK has some prime open grasslands: Saxon park, Sutton, but include many invasives
- why not make restored prairie at Saxon park a major theme/attraction for Norman Parks & Rec? Our own mini-nature reserve showing off Norman's heritage starting as a prairie community? Saxon can become Norman's Eco-park!







first meeting: Feb. 16, 2024 between prairie committee and Norman Parks & Rec.

- select first 1-2 acres for initial prairie restoration pilot project

easy access to road for work to begin





# Current plant inventory: Amy B. (done)

Scientific name	Common name	Plant family	Plant type	Nativity	Date seen
Ambrosia psilostachya	western ragweed	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Ambrosia trifida	giant ragweed	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Apocynum cannabinum	Indianhemp	Apocynaceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Artemisia ludoviciana	white sagebrush	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-03-15
Asclepias viridis	green milkweed	Apocynaceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Bromus tectorum	cheatgrass	Poaceae	Grami...	Exotic	2024-04-12
Capsella bursa-pastoris	shepherd's purse	Brassicaceae	Forb	Exotic	2024-03-15
Carex granularis	meadow sedge	Cyperaceae	Grami...	Native	2024-04-12
Carex microdonta	littletooth sedge	Cyperaceae	Grami...	Native	2024-04-12
Celtis laevigata	sugarberry	Cannabaceae	Tree	Native	2024-04-12
Cercis canadensis	eastern redbud	Fabaceae	Tree	Native	2024-05-16
Chaerophyllum tainturieri	chervil	Apiaceae	Forb	Native	2024-03-15
Cirsium undulatum	wavyleaf thistle	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-03-15
Croton monanthogynus	prairie tea	Euphorbiaceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Desmanthus illinoensis	Illinois bundleflower	Fabaceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Diaperia prolifica	bighead pygmycudweed	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Dichanthelium oligosanthes	Heller's rosettegrass	Poaceae	Grami...	Native	2024-05-16
Eleocharis sp.	spikerush	Cyperaceae	Grami...	Native	2024-04-12
Erigeron canadensis	Canada horseweed	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Erigeron strigosus	prairie fleabane	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Erodium cicutarium	common stork's bill	Geraniaceae	Forb	Exotic	2024-03-15
Euphorbia marginata	snow on the mountain	Euphorbiaceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Euphorbia sp.	mat spurge	Euphorbiaceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Fraxinus pennsylvanica	green ash	Oleaceae	Tree	Native	2024-05-16
Gleditsia triacanthos	honey locust	Fabaceae	Tree	Native	2024-04-12
Helianthus annuus	annual sunflower	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Helianthus maximiliani	Maximilian sunflower	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-03-15
Hordeum pusillum	little barley	Poaceae	Grami...	Native	2024-05-16
Juniperus virginiana	eastern red cedar	Cupressaceae	Tree	Native	2024-03-15
Lamium amplexiaule	henbit deadnettle	Lamiaceae	Forb	Exotic	2024-03-15
Lepidium oblongum	veiny pepperweed	Brassicaceae	Forb	Native	2024-03-15



Scientific name	Common name	Plant family	Plant type	Nativity	Date seen
Ligustrum sinense	Chinese privet	Oleaceae	Shrub	Exotic	2024-04-12
Lonicera japonica	Japanese honeysuckle	Caprifoliaceae	Vine	Exotic	2024-03-15
Medicago lupulina	black medick	Fabaceae	Forb	Exotic	2024-04-12
Mellilotus officinalis	sweetclover	Fabaceae	Forb	Exotic	2023-05-16
Mimosa nuttallii	catclaw sensitive briar	Fabaceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Monarda fistulosa	bergamont beeblam	Lamiaceae	Forb	Native	2024-03-15
Nothoscordum bivalve	crowpoison	Amaryllidaceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Oenothera glaucafolia	false gaura	Onagraceae	Forb	Native	2024-03-15
Opuntia humifusa	devil's tongue	Cactaceae	Shrub	Native	2024-03-15
Parietaria pensylvanica	Pennsylvania pellitory	Urticaceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Phoradendron leucarpum	oak mistletoe	Viscaceae	Shrub	Native	2024-03-15
Plantago virginica	Virginia plantain	Plantaginaceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Populus deltoides	eastern cottonwood	Salicaceae	Tree	Native	2024-04-12
Prunus mexicana	Mexican plum	Rosaceae	Tree	Native	2024-04-12
Psoraleum tenuiflorum	slimflower scurtpoa	Fabaceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Pyrus calleryana	Callery pear	Rosaceae	Tree	Exotic	2024-03-15
Rhus copallinum	shining sumac	Anacardiaceae	Shrub	Native	2024-05-16
Rhus glabra	smooth sumac	Anacardiaceae	Shrub	Native	2024-04-12
Rosa foliolosa	white prairie rose	Rosaceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Ruellia humilis	fringeleaf wild petunia	Acanthaceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Senecio vulgaris	old man in the spring	Asteraceae	Forb	Exotic	2024-03-15
Sherardia arvensis	blue fieldmadder	Rubiaceae	Forb	Exotic	2024-04-12
Solanum dimidiatum	western horsenettle	Solanaceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Solidago rigida	stiff goldenrod	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-03-15
Solidago sp.	goldenrod	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Sonchus asper	sow thistle	Asteraceae	Forb	Exotic	2024-03-15
Sorghastrum nutans	Indiangrass	Poaceae	Grami...	Native	2024-05-16
Nothoscordum bivalve	Johnsongrass	Poaceae	Grami...	Exotic	2024-04-12
Symphoricarpos orbiculatus	coralberry	Caprifoliaceae	Shrub	Native	2024-03-15
Tetaneuris linearifolia	fineleaf fournerved daisy	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12

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Teucrium canadense	Canada germander	Lamiaceae	Forb	Native	2024-05-16
Thelesperma filifolium	stiff greenthread	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Ulmus americana	American elm	Ulmaceae	Tree	Native	2024-03-15
Ulmus rubra	slippery elm	Ulmaceae	Tree	Native	2024-04-12
Vernonia baldwinii	western Ironweed	Asteraceae	Forb	Native	2024-04-12
Veronica arvensis	corn speedwell	Plantaginaceae	Forb	Exotic	2024-04-12

many natives, but plenty exotics esp.

## Johnson grass and cheat grass

- prefer minimal herbicide control due to effect on natives, insects, frogs etc.
- usual strategy is to implement a controlled burn
- Bethany: earliest possible spring 2025 by Parks&Rec in conjunction with experienced personnel
- may also control via strategic mowing: late fall/early spring to avoid interfering with pollinators
- weeding or mowing by hand for small pilot patches

# Reseeding

- Parks&Rec: small collection of native seeds
- Can also purchase from Native American Seed (TX) and/or Prairie Moon Nursery (MN): REG/SC can help...
- trial small pilot patch: can reseed via e.g. REG work party: fall or early spring
- have trial stakes/seeds but so far no action
- over time: would like to expand prairie restoration to most of Saxon park open grassland



# Long term maintenance

- watering on small patches?
- weeding (work party)
- burn every 3–5 years?
- strategic mowing?
- treatment with benign herbicides?
- further seeding

# Saxon dark sky initiative

- For Saxon park plan, would like to proceed with care with regard to lighting
- overzealous lighting affects migratory birds and can ruin public viewing of night sky/star gazing
- would like to minimize lights and when necessary, proceed with downward pointing lights to minimize light pollution or benign light colors: red/yellow instead of white



# moving forward- draft plan

- The Red Earth Group SC is committed to this prairie restoration and preservation project, and we would like to formalize this commitment by creating an Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Norman Parks and Recreation Department. This MoU would include the long term shared vision between Parks and Rec and the REG, as well as a list of next best steps for each organization. The next steps include:
- Determine spray schedule. When will the City be spraying, and how? Will the herbicides be targeted to individual plants with a backpack sprayer? (This is what we recommend.) Or will the area be more broadly sprayed? Has it been sprayed this year?
- Mowing: between July 1-20: mow to 4-6 inches. The relatively long length of the mowing will allow the milkweed to regenerate.
- Assess what invasives are there, including in the creek bed, that we can cut out now (including privet and honeysuckle,) Organize a work part for sometime in the next several weeks after we find out what the spray schedule is from the City. (REG)
- Stake out the area (REG)
- Design and purchase (temporary) signs that say something to the effect of “Cross Timber Prairie Restoration Project. Watch us Grow” with the City and Sierra Club logos (REG)
- Talk with Colin about removing some of the trees. Definitely the honey locusts, and also, some of the Red Cedar (We can leave some of the Red Cedar for migrating birds and for shade.)
- Mow again after October 15 (Parks and Rec)
- Buy seed; reseed around late November
- controlled burn, spring 2025