



Friends of Hidden Valley, Inc.

The mission of the Friends of Hidden Valley is to provide support to the Lawrence Hidden Valley Committee, Inc., in programs, development, maintenance, and goals that promote and benefit Hidden Valley Camp.

Spring 2019

www.friendshv.org

Facebook.com:/friends-of-hidden-valley

Hidden Valley Receives Grant to Produce Biochar from Honeysuckle!

In the spirit of "making lemonade from lemons," Hidden Valley is turning the invasive honeysuckle plant into a resource that will help regenerate soils, clean up the creek water, reduce soil erosion, make s'mores and remove carbon from the atmosphere! How is that possible? Well let's back up a bit to tell you a little more of the story.

Honeysuckle is a beautiful but very aggressive non-native bush that has taken over many woods in our region including much of Hidden Valley Camp, to the detriment of woodland species diversity. It has been gradually beaten back in some areas by the intrepid Honeysuckle Warriors, who have clipped, piled up and burned literally thousands of these bushes in the many fire circles in our camp. But if you put out the fire with water when the honeysuckle sticks have burned down into embers before they turn to ash, you end up with homemade charcoal, which is also known as biochar. Biochar has many very positive uses and ecological benefits, so many that the Kansas Forest Service has paired up with the USDA and Nebraska Forest Services to create the Great Plains Biochar Initiative in order to spread its use. They created a competitive grant program and the grant-writing team of Durand Reiber, Gwen Macpherson, Margaret Townsend and Ken Lassman were able to successfully pull in \$5,000 by proposing using invasive honeysuckle as our base stock for creating biochar, using very low tech techniques that anyone can reproduce in their back yards.



**GREEN
IS
THE NEW
BLACK**



The grant has several parts to it, with the first part being to hire a professional tree trimming company, Shamrock Tree Service, to help out the Honeysuckle Warriors by clearing as much honeysuckle as possible in order to quickly get a stockpile of wood which we'll use to create biochar. We are organizing a series of demonstration workshops to educate to the larger community about the many benefits of biochar and how they can make it using low tech fire pits and water quenching techniques. We will also have access to the Kansas Forest Service biochar kiln to show another way to make it as well as showing folks how to make and use biochar stoves, which are relatively simple cooking stoves constructed of cans that are then filled with wood chips that are burned to cook with (hence making s'mores!) and ending up with small amounts of biochar when done.

Biochar is a very stable form of carbon that can keep it from returning to the atmosphere for centuries, which is an important reason for producing it (increased atmospheric carbon is what is driving climate change). We will be showing the many other benefits of biochar by using it in a number of ways around the camp, including 1) using it in wet sections of the trail to prevent muddy trails; 2) in "green terraces" designed to slow erosion and help re-establish ground cover in newly cleared areas; 3) mixing it in with mulch and in holes where new saplings are planted to aid in soil health and water retention; and 4) in biochar filter socks that will be laid into the creek to monitor how much it affects creek water quality. We will be collecting data on the effect biochar has in all of these settings and will share the techniques and results in our educational workshop/materials. Girl Scouts, KU students and interested parents/siblings will all have an opportunity to participate in the data collection and be a part of the "citizen science" aspects of the grant as well.

Our workshop is scheduled for the afternoon of Friday, April 5 (rain date April 12). Capacity is limited, so register now to participate in this exciting project! [See the enclosed flyer or check out our website/Facebook page to register]

FHV Receives Kriz Grant for Stone Fireplace and Grill!



The planning committee met to look at the Bromelsick fire place, which will be similar to ours. From left: Durand Reiber, Marcia West, Cindy Riling, Jeff Bandle

Friends of Hidden Valley received the best possible news in early December. Our grant request to Kriz Foundation has been approved awarding Friends of Hidden Valley \$40,000 for the construction of a fireplace with grill at Southern Shade Shelter, which will include an expansion of the shelter, new roof, water source, and a few other amenities. A large, outdoor fireplace at Southern Shade was identified as a long term goal many years ago, and was adopted as our next project for the ongoing Brick for Bricks (B4B) fundraiser. We've been raising money for this purpose for the last several years, and now have the funds to begin the project.

Kriz Charitable Fund, Inc. was begun with funds from the estate of Liubuse Kriz-Fiorito, known better as Libby from the Castle Tea Room. She established the fund to benefit youth, elders and animals. FHV is very grateful for this opportunity from Kriz to fulfill a much dreamed of fireplace. With the gratis help of Jackson Clark directing our planning committee, and Mike Myers as our architect, we expect to break ground by early fall.

Hidden Valley Trails Day Revamped for 2019

For over 20 years, FHV has been hosting the annual trail maintenance workday each June. Much of that time has been spent tackling the honeysuckle shrub that threatened to overtake the trails on an annual basis. However, thanks to the diligence of the workday crews, the Honeysuckle Warriors, and funding by Friends and our members, we have pretty much eliminated not only the honeysuckle along the trails, but the need for this annual trail maintenance event! *Wow! Now that's success!*

For this reason, we can now concentrate this day entirely on FUN— with our Hidden Valley Trails Day. We have moved it to a cooler morning time, and added all sorts of activities (see article to right).

Marcia West has been coordinating the workday since 2010! We thank Marcia for all her hard work in rounding up volunteers, sending out refreshments, and heaping us with encouragement, thanks and praise!

National Trails Day will be celebrated all over the country on June 1, 2019. The event is designed to attract new trail users and to help connect existing trail enthusiasts with local clubs and organizations with the hopes of creating advocates and stewards. Trails Day at Hidden Valley is on the first Saturday in June from 9 am to noon. Hidden Valley volunteers will accompany hikers and provide information about the camp history, animal and plant life, and conservation efforts. You will be guided through native tall grass prairie areas, pollinator gardens, and past the Wetlands. Visitors will trek around rocky hillsides, and next to unaltered streams. Special interest hikes lead by local experts will focus on wildflowers, bird watching, history and nature photography. A variety of hikes, educational displays, and activities will be available that appeal to individuals of all different ages, abilities, and interests. Come to Trails Day and enjoy exploring our beautiful natural environment!

A Waterfall of Seasons

The Friends of Hidden Valley Festival of Trees donation, titled a Waterfall of Seasons, showcased a plethora of natural items decorated by Girl Scouts during our November workday, along with seasonal photos taken by our hikers. Hidden Valley is a treasure trove of seasonal variety, enabling the Girl Scouts and other youth to experience their natural world year round.

Thanks to Margaret Townsend and Sara Kyriokos for once again spearheading this fun project for a good cause!



Eagles Day 2019 Finally Arrives!



Winter this year has been a little bit brutal! Snow, ice, freezing rain, sub-zero temperatures, school cancellations, more snow and more ice. Even Eagles Day was postponed due to bad weather. But another round of snow on Friday didn't prevent Eagles Day from finally happening on Saturday, February 16. Due to construction at Lawrence Free State High School, the event was held at Billy Mills Middle School. This is a free event open to the public and includes eagle-viewing field trips, live raptor presentations and activities for all ages.

Friends of Hidden Valley board members were on site to educate visitors about the importance of the camp for local youth and native wildlife, and to promote upcoming camp activities. Mystery boxes, photo albums and coloring pages were available as guests stopped by to chat.



The "Singing Tree", used for large GS gatherings, on a wintry day. Photo by hiker Liz Miller.

Three New Members Join the Hidden Valley Board

Melinda Blacks' love of Girl Scouting and love of nature led her to become a member of the Hiking Patrol. As a new member of the PR committee, she wants to use her professional skills to promote the wonder of Hidden Valley. For over 20 years, Melinda has provided user experience design, strategy, and usability research for the digital marketing and software industry.

Ken Lassman has gone to Hidden Valley since the early 1960s with his Mom who was a Girl Scout leader, and his 3 GS sisters. He has a lifelong love affair with the outdoors and this area, having written *Seasons and Cycles: Rhythms of Life in the Kansas River Basin* in 1985 and *Wild Douglas County* in 2007. His www.kawvalleyalmanac.com has weekly updates of natural observations and he is the 5th generation of family living on a small farmstead in Central Douglas County and is a practicing occupational therapist.

Alex Weston was the leader of a Lawrence girl scout troop and spent many days at Hidden Valley Day Camps over the years. He is the Technical Director at KU's Department of Theatre and Dance and occasionally moonlights as a rigger in the Lawrence/Topeka/Kansas City area.

Welcome New Members!

The Friends of Hidden Valley welcome these new members as of mid-February, 2019: Lauralyn Bodle, Lily and Philip Gao, Gina Halsey, Linda Lang, Ken Lassman, Jodi Moore, Mary Miller Ross, and Alex Weston. Annual memberships are valid until December 31, 2019. If you know of a friend, neighbor, or colleague who might be interested in joining FHV, please refer them to our website, or contact Brigid Murphy, Membership Chair, by email at brigid@sunflower.com. Gift memberships are also available.

The Friends of Hidden Valley

extend their heartfelt thanks to the family of Alice Wells for designating Hidden Valley for memorial donations. Alice was a Girl Scout leader with a fondness for nature, as evidenced in the passing of her passion to her children. We thank the following individuals for their donations:

Calvin & Sue Adams
Jill & Timothy Bemis
Lynne Bodle
Mike & Brenda Day
Joy deMaranville & Frank Norman
Ms. May Kay Eul
Sally Fessler
John & Joyce Hawkins
Patricia Hughes

In Memory of Alice Elizabeth Wells

Karen Lassman-Eul
Keith, Helen & Claudine Lassman
Edna, Russ, Doug, Deanne & Jan Lassman
Mr. and Mrs. George Lauppe
Sheree Miller
Carolyn Nolte
Nomi & Larry Redding
Durand Reiber
Robin Robertson

Please enjoy our 50th edition!

Calendar of events...

April 5th, 12-3:30 pm: Biochar Burn Demonstration; registration required

April 20th: Earth Day Parade and Celebration in South Park...come visit our table!

April 27th, 1-4 pm: Spring Workday: Come for any amount of time! See enclosed flyer

For more information or to RSVP: durandi@sunflower.com

June 1st, 9am to noon: Hidden Valley Trails Day! See details inside



We are saying good bye to Sandy Beverly, our most wonderful Hiking Patrol Coordinator for the past nine years! After taking the helm in 2010, Sandy transformed the patrol into a smooth functioning and valuable part of our tool kit to help monitor and keep Hidden Valley safe. She incorporated Ken Lassman's descriptions of seasons and cycles from *"Wild Douglas County"* of what hikers could observe in nature during their visits, adding interest and education to the fun of hiking. We wish Sandy well in her always exciting and new adventures!

We are equally pleased to welcome Jill Giele as our new Hiking Patrol Coordinator! Jill is a former GS leader and served on the Friends Board of Directors, helping with numerous large events and celebrations, newsletters and fund-raising. If you would like to sign up for the Hiking Patrol, let us know!

And now...wintry reports from the trails!

"It was a cold day at Hidden Valley: 20 degrees and windy in the open areas...there was very little movement except for dozens of robins and no sounds except for the crunching staccato underfoot of crusted snow, frozen leaves and frost-heaved soil signaling my progress down the trails.." ~Jim

"The composting toilet was unlocked when we tried the door. I locked it using the inside knob lock. Also, the middle outhouse stall door blew open. We secured that as well....We saw coyote, fox, and rabbit tracks galore. Very peaceful. Several owls were disturbed by our tramping in the snow." ~Melinda

"...I'd like to say I was a good friend and checked buildings but I was not. We walked a number of trails and enjoyed the silence and the beauty... please do not be upset with our token snow man near the pond. We could not resist the great packing snow." ~Margaret

"I, too, couldn't resist tromping into HV to absorb the feel of a lacy winter wonderland. I admired Margaret's happy snowman, brushed a snow dusting off an eye, and added a tuft of "hair." All was quiet and so peaceful. Even the crows weren't cawing while I was there." ~Ellie

**Friends of Hidden Valley, Inc.
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