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Land

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LAND

"I can no more get enough of a wide prairie than I can of a sunrise."

THE PRAIRIE AND THE SEA BY WILLIAM A. QUAYLE, 1905

Natural history is the heart and soul of the Flint Hills. The terraced landscape created by layers of limestone, flint, and shale; the seasonally changing colors of bluestem, Indian, and switch grasses; the wildlife and the streams and ponds are all evoked by the writers in this section. Elements that make the tallgrass prairie sustainable prompt Brian Obermeyer to reflect on the stewardship that results in the natural resiliency of bluestem grass. Rex Buchanan documents the role of geologic formations and the importance of oil discovery in Butler and Greenwood Counties, while Susan Stover of the Kansas Water Office tackles the ever-increasing importance of water in Kansas and the Flint Hills. The artful and informative maps created by artist Bill McBride contribute to the understanding of these topics. Julie Courtwright explains the essential role of fire in sustaining the prairie and suggests that prairie fires contribute to the identity of the people who live here. Larry Schwarm's photographs reveal the fierce beauty of pasture burning, just as Steven Hind's poem elicits the fascination of prairie fires. Virginia Winder highlights one of the most colorful and threatened birds on the prairie, the Greater Prairie-Chicken, illustrated by Lisa Grossman's whimsical but true portrait of this symbol of the tallgrass prairie.

OPPOSITE PAGE: KANSAS (DETAIL)
Judy Van Heyst