



Kansas State University Libraries  
New Prairie Press

---

Symphony in the Flint Hills Field Journal

2016 - Future of the Flint Hills (Larry Patton,  
editor)

---

## Dreaming Big

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/sfh>

---

### Recommended Citation

(2016). "Dreaming Big," *Symphony in the Flint Hills Field Journal*. <https://newprairiepress.org/sfh/2016/dream/1>

To order hard copies of the Field Journals, go to [shop.symphonyintheflinthills.org](http://shop.symphonyintheflinthills.org).

The Field Journals are made possible in part with funding from the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation.

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences at New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Symphony in the Flint Hills Field Journal by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact [cads@k-state.edu](mailto:cads@k-state.edu).



SEA WALL  
*Dave Leiker*

## DREAMING BIG

Ask Flint Hills ranchers about their secret to success and they'll tell you that they don't raise cattle, they raise grass. Raising grass is different from raising crops on tilled land; there's no irrigation and no fertilizer. And without these safety nets, ranchers rely on the same elements that grazing cultures have depended on for thousands of years: fire and water. "Take care of the grass," they say, "and it will take care of you." For centuries, adequate rainfall, shallow soils, hard work, and a little luck have been enough to take care of the grass and protect the prairie. But it's become a little more complicated. In today's environment, landowners must make ends meet by addressing global market demands in the face of mounting pressures to develop land in ways that offer short-term financial benefits. *The Future of the Flint Hills* relies on the commitment of many landowners to maintain a cohesive ecosystem that supports diverse plant/animal life, respects the beauty of this rare landscape, and makes economic sense.

In this section of the *Field Journal*, rancher Jane Koger reflects on thirty-five years of ranching and offers a proposal for meeting consumer demands while protecting the tallgrass prairie landscape. Brian Obermeyer with The Nature Conservancy discusses the importance of conserving contiguous habitat in order to sustain the species that rely on the Flint Hills. Ranchland Trust of Kansas Director Mike Beam explores a *Future of the Flint Hills* where easements connect a patchwork of protected properties into a permanently conserved landscape. Christy Davis considers the barns that tell a story of the Flint Hills and highlights some efforts to preserve them for the future. And Cindy Hoedel reports on one man's audacious efforts to rescue a Cedar Point landmark.