

Approved: 4-8-10
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pete Brungardt at 10:30 a.m. on March 9, 2010, in Room 144-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:
Senator Steve Morris- excused

Committee staff present:
Jason Long, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Julian Efir, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Dennis Hodgins, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Connie Burns, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:
Representative Kay Wolf,
Representative Sharon Schwartz,
Dr. Valerie Wright, Konza Environmental Education Program
Dr. Nancy Goulden, Vice President, Kansas Native Plant Society

Others attending:
See attached list.

HB 2649 - Designating little bluestem (schizachyrium scoparium) as the state grass of Kansas

Chairman Brungardt opened the hearing on **HB 2649**.

Representative Kay Wolf appeared in favor of the bill. (Attachment 1) This initiative was started several years back by the students from Shawnee Mission South in Overland Park in 2005, and became involved after being contacted by a constituent assisting with the junior master gardener program at Cornith Elementary in Prairie Village. The children explained why they had chosen Little Bluestem:

- Kansas is an Agriculture State with a large cattle industry
- Kansas is a Prairie State
- Little Bluestem is native and grows in every county (the only one according to the Kansas Native Plant Society)
- It is found in all three prairie types, tall, short and mixed
- It is nutritious for cattle and bison
- It is drought resistant and grows in even rocky or salty soil
- It is easily recognizable and an attractive grass year round

Representative Wolf stated that the prairie is part of our heritage and by naming Little Bluestem as the State grass, children across the state can learn more about the importance of the grasslands and the cattle industry.

Representative Sharon Schwartz spoke in favor of the bill. (Attachment 2) Representative Schwartz stated she was contacted last summer by volunteers at Konza State Park who asked for assistance in furthering the efforts to designate the "Little Blue Stem" as the Kansas State Grass.

Dr. Valerie Wright, Konza Environmental Education Program, spoke as proponent of the bill. (Attachment 3) The bill requires no funding but is a major step in the education of all Kansas school children concerning our prairie heritage, the value of the grasslands to the economy of this state and the importance of conservation of the prairie ecosystem.

Dr. Nancy Goulden, Vice President, Kansas Native Plant Society, appeared in favor of the bill. (Attachment 4) The purpose of the bill is not to proclaim which of our attractive and useful native grasses is the most popular, but to name an icon that is representative of the entire state and serve as an instant signal of "Kansas." Little Bluestem would be the first new icon since 1994, and the first of the new century.

Written testimony received in favor of the bill:

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee at 10:30 a.m. on March 9, 2010, in Room 144-S of the Capitol.

Alan Pollom, State Director, The Nature Conservancy, (Attachment 5)
Jim Smith, Director, Dillon Nature Center, (Attachment 6)
Larry Dee Scherich, Merrill Ranch, Comanche County, (Attachment 7)
John Strickler, Educator, Conservationist, (Attachment 8)
Mike Haddock, Assistant Dean, Research, Education and Engagement, K-State Libraries, (Attachment 9)
Jim Hoy, director, Center for Great Plains Studies, (Attachment 10)
Karen Hibbard, Director, Manhattan Convention and Visitors Bureau, (Attachment 11)
Marcy Penner, Director, Kansas Sampler Foundation, (Attachment 12)
Sammy Jo Peterson, Chase County Middle School student, (Attachment 13)
Cael Budke, Chase County Elementary student, (Attachment 14)
Joseph Stout, Chase County Elementary student, (Attachment 15)
Leah Heathcote, high school freshman, Shawnee Mission South, (Attachment 16)
Elizabeth Willer, high school freshman, Shawnee Mission South, (Attachment 17)

Chairman Brungardt closed the hearing on **HB 2649**.

Senator Ostmeyer moved to pass **HB 2649** out favorably and being non controversial be placed on the Consent Calendar. Senator Pyle seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2010. The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

SENATE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

GUEST LIST

DATE 3-9-10

NAME	REPRESENTING
John Donley	KS Lusk Ass'n
Jeff Bottoms	Palsicelli Skynet
George Winger	Redfish Company
Nancy Cosmbe	K.N.P.S.
Fred Cosmbe	K.N.P.S.
Nancy Paulsen	KNPS
Valerie Wright	Kongu Prairie
Jackie Wagner	shadowing senators
Ariana Haag	shadowing senators
TED Henkel	CAPITOL STATEERS

State of Kansas
House of Representatives

State Capitol
Topeka, Kansas 66612
(785) 296-7663
kay.wolf@house.ks.gov



Kay Wolf
Representative, 21st District

8339 Roe Avenue
Prairie Village, Kansas 66207
(913) 649-0699

HB 2649

Testimony for Senate Federal and State Affairs

March 9, 2010

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity of addressing you today in support of HB 2649; naming of Little Bluestem as the state grass. I have also attached testimony given to the House Fed and State Affairs Committee last week.

This bill is not about the kind of grass we choose for our state icon. Rather it is about having an icon that represents the prairies of Kansas as stated so eloquently by Valerie Wright, from the Konza Prairie Biological Station. Although the heritage of the prairies is strong in Kansas, many children and adults who live in the cities do not really know the value of the prairies. And today we all know the majority of our population is in the urban areas of the state. By establishing a state grass icon it will aid each of us in learning more about our state and the importance of the prairie.

This initiative was started several years back by the students from Shawnee Mission South in Overland Park in 2005. I became involved when I received a call from a constituent assisting with the junior master gardener program at Cornith Elementary in Prairie Village. This program encourages 3rd, 4th and 5th graders to learn about native plants, their eco system and their importance to Kansas

Sn Fed & State
Attachment |

3-09-10

history, society and our environment. They meet once a month and have 29 students enrolled. They were learning about Little Bluestem and the important role it plays within Kansas. They knew Little Bluestem had been considered once before as the State grass and asked if I would help. I agreed and went to visit with the children about why they had chosen Little Bluestem: They explained:

- 1) Kansas is an Agriculture State with a large cattle industry)
- 2) Kansas is a Prairie State
- 3) Little Bluestem is native and grows in every county (the only one according to the KS Native Plant Society)
- 4) It is found in all three prairie types, tall, short and mixed
- 5) It is nutritious for cattle and bison
- 6) It is drought resistant and grows in even rocky or salty soil
- 7) It is easily recognizable and an attractive grass year round

These children were excited and engaged about being a part of the legislative process to name a state grass. They were excited and engaged. Testimony from other children across the state was heard in Committee: Two quotes from Chase County children I thought summed it up:

“If kids learn the Kansas symbols, they will respect and want to take care of them. I want my friends to care about our grasslands. If they learned about little bluestem they might feel the same way I do about the Kansas Prairie” SammyJo, Chase County Middle School

“When I am riding with my dad to school I look out the window and I see grass. Little Bluestem is easy to find in the winter because it is a copper colored bunch of

grass. When you see it you know what it is. In the fall it looks like it has fuzzy white seeds on the stems. In the summer time it is green and the cows like to eat it. I think every kid should know what Little Bluestem is because it is important to Kansas. – Cael, 2nd grade, Chase Elementary.

Already our surrounding states have selected a state grass:

Oklahoma: Indiangrass 1972

Colorado: Blue Gama 1987

Missouri: Big Bluestem 2007

These children from all across the state took the time and made the effort to bring an idea they believed in to us. The prairie is a part of our heritage. Let's aid these children in their effort to name Little Bluestem as our State grass. By doing so, Kansas Children all across our state can learn more about the importance of the grasslands and our cattle industry.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to stand for questions.

STUDENT SIGNATURES

Lincoln Wham 4 Leaders
 Brianna Currie 4 Norem
~~Venus~~ ~~Gutierrez~~ ~~Venus~~ ~~Gutierrez~~ 4. Norem
~~Brian~~
~~Isiah~~ 5-Wendt schmitt
 Patrick 4 Norem
 Allie Eicher
 Beck Bennett
 Jack Phillips Chloe Stinson
 Ryan Staehr
 Kade Lida
 Maggie Schutt
 William p casateri
 Gabby Buch
 Katherine Odell
 Vivien Viveros
 Jack Reeves
 Addison Crawford
 Allison Benson

Dear Members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee:

Enclosed please find a copy of the signatures of 291 students at Corinth Grade School in Leawood, Kansas who are in favor of Little Bluestem as the State Grass of Kansas. Names were obtained before and after school on February 18 and 19, 2010. Our Rep., Kay Wolf, has the original 15 pages of signatures.

Thank you for your consideration.

SIGNATURES

~~BOB~~
 BOB Bogart
 SCIM HUNTLEY
 Grace Cross
 Catherine Erickson
 Ava Stechschulte
 Hannah Stern
 Nicholas Stuart
 Henry Mahobby
 William Schmidt
 Kira
 Bryn
 Radie Rosenthal
 Claire Kovzan
 Max Dalton
 Elise Baker
 Daisy BARDITT
 Shelia
 David DiPietro

STUDENT SIGNATURES

~~Jess Smith~~
 Lucy Smith
 Lucy Holman
 Kathleen Stanley
 Michael
 Gaby Traup
 Kenzie Mullane
 Sophie Newmyer
 Cate Newmyer
 Emily Copper
 Quinn Copper
 Kyrak Underwood
 Enrique Castillo
 Tommy Tietjen
 Casey Vincent
 Calvin Ball
 Jake Stone
 Brett Freeman
 Kallie Kleebe

STUDENT SIGNATURES

Michael Perry
 Mackenzie Rouman
 Emily Jarverick
 Ellie Boston
 Anna Dierks
 Madeline Gray
 Skylar Barratt
~~Brandon Schick~~
~~Ben Galvin~~
 Grant Calvin
 Hope Hess
 Ryan Hess
 Hannah Eldred
 Abby Johnson
 Ryan Hess
 William
 Angela Wang
 Munk

Will Burrus

Antoine Hoile
 Lillian Bulby
~~Jake Simpson~~
 Emerson
 Anna Boneja
 Allie Stockwell
 Emma Cannova
 Ellie Mitchell
 Susan Haenisch
 Merritt Vaughn
 Kagan Kapp
 Callie Eldred
~~Sammy Japp~~
~~Sarah D...~~
~~...~~
 Grant Hanaway
 Ben Knutson
 Jack Felton
 Bonnie Langan

STUDENT SIGNATURES

Hi

Isabel Miller 4-L
 Madeline Debusseam
 Campbell ~~...~~ 4B
 Madeline Smith
 Cole Conderman
 Elie Wilson 5-5
 Erin Stoehr
 Cruz Mendoza
 Chindog
 Lenny Langer Bob
 Person
 John Jason
 Lucy Crum
 Lillie Johnston
 Jack Kost
 Chloe Kowalski
 Cole Chue
~~Stacy Wells~~
 Annie Rener
 Ellen Swanson
 Daniel Goldstein

STUDENT SIGNATURES

Sarena Hirsch
 Ava Deschaine
 Matthew Erdner
 Alex Como
 Abeline
 Kylan Vanorden
~~...~~ Ashby Costner
 Caitlyn Costner
 Madison Costner
 Ben Costner
 Wyatt Brandon
 Janie Mahaffy
 Hannah Biggerstaff Kim
 Will Kost
 Lauren Dierks
 Griffin
 Gade Eldred

STUDENT SIGNATURES

Brian Foley

Camille Moore

Cosmina Backs

Dylan Green

Kennedy Krumm Kennedy Krumm

Dylan Green

Evan Burnam

Taylor Vincent

Harper Mundy

Madison Smiley

Max Smiley

Julia Hager

Grace McElroy

Austin Fry

Cameron Fitz

Madison

Matter Saughan

Zoe Brown

John Bibik

Salvador Bui z

Claire Fritz

Jack Muller

Sarah Wilox

Chloe Krause

Allison Wilcox

Kay Kay Winn

Renton Winn

Callie McPhail

Mikha Hirsch

Katie Kissick

Audrey Dickens

Julie Swift

Kathryn Jones

Maura Kate Mitchelson

Jen Black

Kenna Kyles

Eva Roberts

Sophia Li

STUDENT SIGNATURES

Jonathan Perry

David Goldstein

Katie Garverick

Scout Barratt

Ashley Garverick Zach

Jill Foley

Mary Boston

Bridget McGuire

Andrew Schmitt

Colson Whalen

Joseph Steinbacher

Tristan Burnum

Isabelle Cunningham

Emily Coston

Brooke Crickson

Sasra Wimmer

Henry Ahn

Charlie Kiedler

Pierce Giffin

STUDENT SIGNATURES

Molly G. Keefe

Cade Eldred

Charles

Kate

Frank Schudy

Andy Allen

MIKEY MCFARLIN

Ethan Anderson

Ella Higgins

Henry Stanton

Ally Tieger

Ileana Arruda

Justin Polofsky

Will Brooker

Blake H.

Ethan Rosenthal

Sam Thomas

Mitchell Steady

Sam McFarlin

Davis Vaughn

Lydia Davis

Kate Higgins

STUDENT SIGNATURES

Lily Mendoza
 Kaitlin Dervin
 Libby O'Connor 4-B
 Naha Iwateni
 Olivia Seabaugh
 George Fischer
 Anna Mitchell
 Olivia
 Madeline Stinson
~~Stacy~~ Johnstone
 Jop Krausz
~~Stacy~~ Jordan Patton
 Dillian Bobbitt
 Gibson Hoefen
 Sophia Duane
 Lindsey Staehr
 Gracie Kost
 Austin
 Venus Stutierrez
 Parker Blinnis

STUDENT SIGNATURES

Lisa Hamrick
~~Carlyn Simpson~~ stuti Dalal
 chloe swingert
~~Elly Rapp~~ Rebecca Oeffner
 Jack Edwards
~~Blaine Murphy~~
 Cameron Paddock
 Blaine Murphy
 Juan Hernandez / alex washburn
 Merly Pitt
 Madison Casper
 Arxanna Oeffner
 Nacolle Burke
 Namh Bvenda
 Elizabeth Timmos
 Mikki Wilkins
 Melissa Maffione
 matt SIMPSON
~~Samuel~~
~~Patrick~~ Sean Paddock
 Pete Stanton
 Claire Tipton

SIGNATURES

Hayden Talge
~~Emmanuel Gallag~~
 Alex Schmitt (Ciscool)
 Maya Stirkowicz
 Henry Sullivan
 Charlie Sosen
 Kenna Shelton 3-C
 Gretchen Ternus
 Jaey Albano
 Maggie Brophy
 Tammy Salinas
 Diego Oliva
 Annie Bogart
~~Bernadette~~
 Ellie Tagtalixanidis
 Jack Lischer

Ryan Freeman

Claire Whittaker
 Zachary Bell

Arjun Banerjee
 Bennett Lawrence

Aidan B

Nicholas Stuart

Madeline Stuart

Susani Stuart

Chad Stuart

Lisa Tipton

ABBY JOHNSON 4-B

Harold Hot dog -?

Chimy Chan

Augustine le forte

bryce van Orden

Lucas van Orden

CORINTH GRADE SCHOOL
SHAWNEE MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT
LEAWOOD, KANSAS

February 18, 2010

Re: HB 2649

Dear Rep. Bowers

The Junior Master Gardeners and other students at Corinth Elementary School located in Leawood, Kansas have been learning about the symbols of our state. We noticed that we have a state flower, bird, tree, animal, amphibian, insect, reptile, soil and fish. Since Kansas is a grassland state, we have been talking about why we should have a state grass.

We think Kansas should have a state grass because it is a prairie state dominated by grass and is the home of the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve which is a unit of the National Park System.

We would like to nominate Little Bluestem as our state grass because it is a native perennial found in every county and in all three prairie types (tallgrass, mixed grass and shortgrass). It was once the most abundant grass in the Great Plains. Little Bluestem has very deep roots and doesn't need a lot of water. It grows in all types of soils – deep, shallow or rocky, and is drought resistant. It is a good match for our climate. Cattle and bison like eating it. It is especially nutritious after a spring burn. Little Bluestem grows in clumps and is not invasive. It is also very beautiful especially in the fall and winter with reddish stems and white seed heads. Little Bluestem also provides food and habitat for other wildlife – insects, birds, mammals.

Please vote for Little Bluestem as the State Grass of Kansas. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Corinth Grade School Students

To: Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee, Melvin Neufeld, Chair

From: Jim Hoy, Director of the Center for Great Plains Studies at Emporia State University

As a student of ranching folklife (my books include *Cowboys and Kansas*, *Flint Hills Cowboys*, and *Riding Point: A Centennial History of the Kansas Livestock Association*), as well as from my upbringing on a ranch near Cassoday, I have had a lifetime of experience with grass, from looking after cattle to raking prairie hay with a team of mules. Thus I am pleased that the legislature is considering the naming of a state grass.

Kansas lies in the center of a great North American grassland that, before settlement and plowing, reached from Indiana and Kentucky to the Rocky Mountains, from the Rio Grande into Canada. Even today grasses dominate Kansas, although much of that grass is now fescue and brome, wheat and corn. Of the hundreds of varieties of native grasses here, it seems to me that two dominate in the popular mind: buffalo grass and bluestem.

When I first learned of the movement to name Little Bluestem as the state grass, I thought that a good case could be made for buffalo grass. I also thought, why not Big Bluestem, the redwood of grasses with its nine-foot stems topped by its distinctive turkey foot seed pods? Upon reflection, however, I realized that not only is Little Bluestem a major grass on the ridges and valleys of the Flint Hills, but also in the Smoky Hills and the Gypsum Hills. In fact Little Bluestem can be found from the Little Balkans in southeast Kansas to the Cimarron National Grassland in the southwest, from the Arikaree Breaks in the northwest to the glaciated hills of northeast Kansas. In every county in the state Little Bluestem helps to put pounds on the beef that makes Kansas famous throughout the country and the world.

As a native Kansan and a lifelong resident of the Flint Hills, the world's premier tallgrass prairie, I urge the Kansas Legislature to name Little Bluestem as the state grass, thus joining it with those other proud symbols of our prairie heritage: the Sunflower, the Cottonwood Tree, the Bison, the Western Meadowlark, and *Home on the Range.* It was, after all, the sea of Little Bluestem outside his cabin door that inspired Brewster Higley to write his beautiful anthem to the prairie.

Little Bluestem Testimony
From Judy Stanton
February 23, 2010

To whom it may concern,

I have been a Johnson County Master Gardener since 2004. After a year of classes and training at the Kansas State Extension in Olathe, all members are required to do at least 60 hours of volunteer participation (the average is well over 100 hours). One choice I made was to be a part of a Junior Master Gardener Program – first at Prairie Elementary in Prairie Village and then at Corinth Elementary in Leawood. The Corinth program was started in the Fall of 2007 where our group is limited to 25 students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. (We actually have 29 enrolled.) We meet once a month after school for 1 ½ hours. There are 6 Master Gardeners assisting. A main resource that we use for the classes is an extensive Junior Master Gardener Guide put out by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service from Texas A&M University. In the summer our committee outlines the programs for the year – this year, one being on the subject of native plants in Kansas.

After reading Nancy Goulden's article in the April 2009 edition of the Kansas City Gardener Magazine, I became really interested in following up on the process for determining a state icon since in the past it had to be nominated by school children of the state. With the JMGs we studied all the icons and where they were found in Kansas and why it seemed logical to have a state grass since Kansas is a Prairie State. Other states around us also have a state grass.

I followed up with Nancy's article and accessed the website and found that Jan Alderson's 9th graders at SM South had studied this and had determined that a good candidate for a state grass would be Little Bluestem – mainly because it is native to every county in Kansas. Other grasses are more spectacular, but Little Bluestem has its own beauty in all seasons – especially in Fall and Winter when there is little else to enjoy. The JMGs thought it was cool that they could play a significant part in suggesting a state icon. We planted Little Bluestem in the garden at Corinth. We made 5 models of Little Bluestem using the actual stems and then cut sisal cord into 5 to 8 foot lengths to get a real feel for the importance of roots that could reach between rocks and obtain water at great depths during drought conditions. We took samples of Little Bluestem home to show others and get their support. Our Representative, Kay Wolf came and spoke and answered questions on how a bill is passed. We obtained 291 student signatures in a period of two, 20 minute time slots before and after school on two days and wrote letters to the House Federal and State Affairs Committee Members.

To: Chairman Melvin Neufeld and the Committee For Federal and State Affairs

Native Grass of Kansas

Visitors and folks who call Kansas home daily dash across this great state of Kansas. Many are oblivious to the native beauty that surrounds them. Quietly waiving in the wind, dancing and casting beautiful colors across the landscape, the Little Blue Stem grass carpets the prairie.

Little Blue Stem is found in every county in Kansas. The deep roots of the grass take hold in shallow or rocky soil. This grass is rejuvenated by spring burns, which make the grass even more nutritious for grazing cattle and bison. The grass is known to be the greatest grazing pasture in the world.

In 2012, Manhattan will open the doors of The Flint Hills Discovery Center. This attraction will educate the visitor and the general public alike to the wonders of the prairie. Of the many exhibits planned, one exhibit will tell the story of the grasslands. Attendees will be fascinated to learn the story of the prairie, observe the length of the blue stem grass roots and see the illustrations which focus on the prairie ecosystem. The Flint Hills Discovery Center will aid in the visitors seeing Kansas through knowledgeable eyes.

The prairie is vital to our rich history, our present day and our bright future. The Little Blue Stem, if cared for will raise the spirits and nourish the soul.

It is appropriate for Kansas to designate a State Grass. The Little Blue Stem, with its native roots, is the natural choice for this title.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Hibbard, Director
Manhattan Convention & Visitors Bureau



Testimony in support of **H.B. 2649**

Alan Pollom

Vice President/State Director

Kansas Chapter, The Nature Conservancy

700 SW Jackson, Suite 804

Topeka, KS 66603

apollom@tnc.org

On behalf of the Kansas Chapter of The Nature Conservancy

February 24, 2010

Before the Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Dear Chairman Neufeld and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony in support of HB 2649.

The Nature Conservancy is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to the conservation of our wildlife and native lands. The Nature Conservancy and its 7,000 members in Kansas have been responsible for the direct conservation of more than 88,000 acres in our state over the past 40 years. The 8,616-acre Konza Prairie and the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve are examples of this success story. It goes without saying; however, that our work stands little chance of enduring without the support of an informed and supportive public.

My wife teaches 4th grade at Pleasant Hill Elementary here in Shawnee County. Each spring she teaches a unit on wildlife and their habitats. As part of the curriculum it is common practice to look to our state symbols as a starting point for lesson plans. The lack of a designated state grass leaves an obvious gap in the teaching discussions. Native grass is the matrix habitat that has defined our state's history and sustained the array of abundant wildlife our immigrant ancestors first encountered.

Young students respond with tremendous enthusiasm when first learning about the many intricacies inherent in the web of life. Each spring my wife's students take an all day field trip to our farm to experience firsthand many elements of their wildlife habitat unit. You would find it very rewarding to hear the amazement in their voices and the moving words they write in their journals.

The goal is to develop more aware and well rounded citizens. We should facilitate that learning process by officially recognizing Little Bluestem, one of our most ubiquitous and adaptable grasses, as the state grass of Kansas.

February 22, 2010

To: Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee
Melvin Neufeld, Chair

I would like to express my strong support for House Bill 2649, which proposes to establish little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) as the State Grass of Kansas. Grasses are a significant component of our global vegetation. Native grasses provide forage and feed for our livestock, are a food resource for wildlife and birds and provide them with environmental habitat, and are used to prevent erosion of the soil by wind and water. Native and cultivated crop grasses are the dominant type of vegetation found in Kansas and serve as the state's primary natural resource. Grasses have a major economic importance to the state through the critical role that they play for our livestock industry.

Since the publication of my book, *Wildflowers and Grasses of Kansas* in 2005, I have given nearly sixty presentations on our Kansas flora to audiences in all parts of the state. A question that I have been asked on numerous occasions is: "Why doesn't Kansas have a state grass"? It is a bit embarrassing to tell audiences that Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) is the state grass for Oklahoma, side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) the state grass of Texas, and big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) the state grass of Missouri, but that Kansas has no officially designated state grass. The proposal to make little bluestem our state grass would honor the significant position that Kansas native grasses occupy, both historically and present day.

As a member of the Kansas Native Plant Society and the Kansas Section of the Society for Range Management, I urge the committee to please give positive consideration to House Bill 2649.

Thank you sincerely for your time!

Warm regards,

Michael Haddock
Assistant Dean
Research, Education and Engagement Division
K-State Libraries
504D Hale Library
Manhattan, KS 66506

Wildflowers and Grasses of Kansas: A Field Guide, University Press of Kansas, 2005. Selected as a 2006 Kansas Notable Book by the State Library of Kansas and Kansas Center for the Book.

JOHN K. STRICKLER

**1523 University Drive
Manhattan, KS 66502-3447
Phone: 785/565-9731
Fax: 785/532-3305
jstrickl@ksu.edu**

February 24, 2010

TO: House Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Representative Melvin Neufeld, Chair

SUBJECT: Support of House Bill No. 2649

I am writing in support of HB 2649 which would designate Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) as the Kansas State Grass.

I have worked in the area of natural resources management for nearly 50 years in Kansas and currently serve on the Board of Trustees of the Kansas Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. I also served as Vice Chair of the Kansas Natural Resources Legacy Alliance created by the 2002 Kansas Legislature "to create a vision for the using the state's natural resources." In its final report to the Governor and Legislature in December of 2003, the Alliance stated that "If there was one consistent theme throughout the public comment period and the expert testimony received the regular meetings of the Alliance, it has been the broad support for education about natural resources and environmental issues."

While being a forester by profession, I have developed a deep appreciation for the native grasslands of Kansas and the need for proper management and protection of these prairies. I strongly support the need for education about our state's prairies as well as its other natural resources.

I believe passage of HB 2649 would provide opportunities to educate and increase awareness and appreciation for our unique Kansas prairie resources. I respectfully urge your support of HB 2649.

Committee Chair Neufeld and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee,

My name is Joseph Stout and I am a student at Chase County Elementary School.

I first learned the four major grasses of the prairie when I was eight.

Grass is important to me because I someday hope to be a fifth-generation rancher.

When I am out checking cattle on horseback, I sometimes look at the grass and try to name the ones I recognize.

I hope there will always be grassland for our cattle. If kids learn about little bluestem, they will learn to appreciate the prairie more. After learning about little bluestem, it made me want to learn more. I've learned little bluestem is a nutritious forage for cattle. It also is good winter feed. It can be found in pastures with rocky soil or dry hills. It is a native perennial that is drought resistant. All of these make it important to a rancher.

In school we learn about our state flower, the sunflower, the state reptile, the box turtle, and the state amphibian, the tiger salamander. I think all kids should learn about the all-important little bluestem.

Being the state grass will make this happen.

Committee Chair Neufeld and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee. My name is Cael Budke and I am a student at Chase county Elementary School.

I first learned about Kansas symbols when I was in Kindergarten. I learned the honey bee was the state insect. I learned the cottonwood was our state tree and the meadowlark the state bird. I also learned that the box turtle was the state reptile.

When I am riding with my dad to school I look out the window and I see grass. I like to know the names of the birds, the kinds of rocks, and the grasses I see in the pastures. Little bluestem is easy to find in the winter because it is a copper colored bunch of grass. When you see it you know what it is. In the fall it looks like it has fuzzy white seeds on the ends of the stems. In the summer time it is green and the cows like to eat it.

When my brothers and I go outside, I show them bunny droppings, deer tracks and where the deer bed down. Now because I know what little bluestem looks like I can show them this grass. I think every kid should know what little bluestem is because it is important to Kansas.

2nd grade

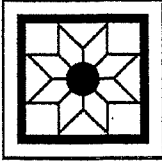
Committee Chair Neufeld and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee, my name is SammyJo Peterson and I am a student at Chase County Middle School.

Grassland is important to me because I help my dad raise cattle. Where I live in the Flint Hills we have the best grass for raising beef cattle. I know that little bluestem is a good grass for cattle to gain weight on. My dad and I ride the pasture on horseback and I show him the grasses I know. He teaches me about how they are important for cattle.

We learn about the symbols of Kansas in school so that we know what Kansas is all about. If kids learn the Kansas symbols, they will respect and want to take care of them. I want my friends to care about our grasslands. If they learned about the little bluestem in school, they might feel the same way I do about the Kansas Prairie.

Little Blue Stem grows in every county in Kansas. Kids all across Kansas could find it near their home. I think it is important to know all the grasses and how they are important to Kansas. Little bluestem would be a good place to start learning.

My mom is a librarian and it is important to her that I know how to read books. When my mom and I go walking the trail at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, my mom tries to name the grasses. I always need to help her. Like reading books, when kids learn about little bluestem, they can begin to read the grasses of the prairie.



Kansas Sampler Foundation
978 Arapaho Road
Inman, KS 67546
www.kansassampler.org

**Testimony in support of HB 2649 to the House Committee
on Federal and State Affairs
February 24, 2010
By Marci Penner, Director, Kansas Sampler Foundation**

Committee Chair Rep. Neufeld and members of the House Federal and State Affairs. My name is Marci Penner, director of the Kansas Sampler Foundation. The mission of the non-profit Kansas Sampler Foundation is to preserve and sustain rural culture.

I'm proud to submit testimony in support of naming the Little Bluestem the state grass. Little Bluestem is abundant in Kansas, produces rich nutrients, and, like the Kansas people, is deeply rooted.

Our state symbols and when they were adopted:

- ❖ Kansas state flower: Common Sunflower, 1903.
- ❖ Kansas state bird: Western meadowlark, 1925.
- ❖ Kansas state march: *The Kansas March*, 1935 and *Here's Kansas*, 1992
- ❖ Kansas state tree: Plains Cottonwood, 1937.
- ❖ Kansas state song: *Home on the Range*, 1947.
- ❖ Kansas state animal: American Bison, 1955.
- ❖ Kansas state insect: Honeybee, 1976.
- ❖ Kansas state turtle: Ornate Box Turtle, 1986.
- ❖ Kansas state loam: Harney Silt Loam, 1990.
- ❖ Kansas state amphibian: Barred Tiger Salamander. 1994

State symbols are used as a designation to tell the public about that particular state. To read the list of symbols helps a person get to know the state and know what is common and what is valued.

Surrounding states have already selected a state grass.

- ❖ Nebraska: Little Bluestem, 1969
- ❖ Oklahoma: Indiangrass, 1972
- ❖ Colorado: Blue grama, 1987
- ❖ Missouri: Big Bluestem, 2007

Eighteen states have a state grass.

State symbols are used in promotional and educational materials. Designations are informative and fun! To showcase the point about how designations can help educate people here is the list of cities or counties that have gone through a legislative process, or less official steps through the Kansas Sampler Foundation, to become capitals of Kansas.

Air Capital, Wichita
Allis Chalmers Capital, Washington
Art Treasures Capital, Oswego

Spinach Capital, Lenexa
Stained Glass Capital, Cloud County
Stock Trailer Capital, Waterville
Stone Bridge Capital, Cowley County
Storytelling Capital, Downs
Sunflower Capital, Goodland
Sunshine Capital, WaKeeney
Terra Cotta Capital, Salina
The Capital, Topeka
Threshing Show Capital, Jefferson County
Trails Capital, Marshall County
Water Sports Capital, Osage County
Watermelon Capital, Clyde & Thayer
Wheat Capital, Sumner County
White Tail Deer Capital, Longton
Wind Farm Capital, Montezuma
Wiper Fish Capital, Norton County

A person can't help but learn some things about Kansas as they read this list. The designation gives them a tag and instant recognition. The designation refers to that town's story and enhances local pride and often results in more visitors. You'll see these designations in countless ads and publications. The same is true with state symbols.

Like "capitals of Kansas", our state symbols have been chosen because of either remarkable features or common. Little bluestem is like the sunflower and cottonwood -- common but prevalent. Little bluestem is found in every county and that includes Gray, Johnson, Cloud, Sedgwick, Pottawatomie, Jackson, Lyon, Stafford, Leavenworth, Cherokee, Wyandotte, Wilson, Shawnee, and 92 others. Perhaps Big Bluestem is more impressive but then buffalo grass has served as a steady life force in a different manner. But it was Little Bluestem that got the call from a group of people that know Kansas's grasses. They gave other grasses every due consideration and decided that Little Bluestem would best represent Kansas.

On behalf of this beautiful grass that is found in every county, I'd like to add my voice to the request that Little Bluestem be named the Kansas state grass.



3002 East 30th
Hutchinson, Kansas 67502
Phone: (620) 663-7411
Fax: (620) 663-7498
Website: www.dillonnaturecenter.com
E-mail: jsmith@hutchrec.com

Office of the Living Land Foundation

February 22, 2010

To: The Kansas House of Representatives
From: Jim Smith, Director of Dillon Nature Center

I am writing to support the passage of HB2649, which will officially designate Little Bluestem Grass as the Kansas State Grass. Little Bluestem is really the perfect grass for such a designation. It is probably our most beautiful native grass that reaches its peak of beauty in fall and winter.

Every year the Dillon Nature Center works with over 20,000 children from all over Kansas. Part of almost every program that we conduct has something to do with prairies and native plants. The children of Kansas do not seem to have much knowledge of our state's natural history. We feel that it is vitally important for children to have an appreciation for and understanding of the world around them and how it has changed through the years. The other state plants (i.e. sunflower, cottonwood tree, etc.) and state animals (i.e. bison, meadowlark, box turtle, etc.) have all been great educational tools that students have been able to connect with and understand a little better. Having a native prairie grass such as Little Bluestem as the State Grass will help them understand our state's prairie heritage even more.

I hope you will vote for HB2649 and make Little Bluestem the official Kansas State Grass. Thank you for considering this request.

Chairman, Melvin Neufeld and members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of Kansas:

I was raised on a large ranch in Comanche County which my dad managed from 1944 to 1976. I went to college and received a bachelor's and a master's degree in biology, taught high school science for 14 years, then came back and have managed this ranch from 1976 to the present. I understand first-hand the importance of our native grasses to the cattle industry and the economic importance of the cattle industry to the entire economy of Kansas. Because grass is the most important element of the cattle industry, ranchers are interested in good grass-management techniques so there will be grass available for ensuing years. To do this we must know which grasses are nutritious and how to manage for them under varying circumstances.

The book, *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv, demonstrates that "Today's kids are well aware of the global threats to the environment, but their physical contact, their intimacy with nature on a day-to-day basis, is fading." Most of us in our generation had close contact with rural Kansas either because we lived on a farm or ranch, or our grandparents, or other relatives did. We watched the cows and calves eat the native grass and thrive on it. This is not true for many of the current generation of children.

If we do not introduce our children to our native grasses and the importance of these grasses, what respect for and knowledge of them will they have as adults? Where will our ranchers, and supportive specialists, for the next generation come from? Will our children just view pastures as wasted space? Will our grasslands disappear to development?

Can your children or grandchildren identify several kinds of grass? Have they ever been challenged to?

Naming a state grass will give teachers a greater opportunity to introduce students to the prairie grasses and help them understand their importance, not only to the cattle industry, but also to help them understand how vegetation, including grasses, helps store carbon, thus reducing the greenhouse gases.

There are several other grasses that could have been selected to be the state grass including big bluestem, Indian grass and buffalo grass. This initiative is not so much about which grass is named the state grass, but that a state grass is designated.

The students in Jan Alderson's class, after studying the prairie grasses, selected Little Bluestem because of its occurrence and importance in every county in Kansas. It is in response to their initiative that the Kansas Native Plant Society have assisted them in their endeavor. **I respect the students' research and their initiative, and endorse their selection.**

Thank you for listening. Please vote "yes" and send this bill on to the legislature, and help your constituents understand why it is important. **In a time of tight budget restraints this bill does not require funding.**

Respectfully submitted,

Larry "Dee" Scherich, Merrill Ranch, Comanche County, Kansas

To: Chairman Melvin Neufeld, Federal and State Affairs Committee
From: Leah Heathcote, Freshman at SMSD South High School, Honors Biology 1
RE: Testifying about having Little Blue Stem as the Kansas State Grass
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2010

My name is Leah Heathcote, a freshman at South High in the Shawnee Mission School District. The Honors Biology 1 classes initiated this effort to name Little Blue Stem as the State Grass of Kansas five years ago. Because most other grassland states have state grasses, it is important for Kansas to have a state grass as well.

We feel that the Little Blue Stem would be the logical choice since it is one of the most common roadside grasses in Kansas, the public would find it familiar. It is also so hardy, is a NATIVE grass which grows throughout all of Kansas and is the only one to do so.

Wildlife and domesticated herbivores use it for food and as habitat. Trampling, drought, and strange soil types do not deter it from growing and thriving. We should therefore be proud to name Little Blue Stem as our Kansas State Grass.

To: Chairman Melvin Neufield, Federal and Stat Affairs Committee
From: Elizabeth Willer, freshman at SMSD South High School, Honors Biology 1
RE: Testifying about having the Little Blue Stem as the Kansas State Grass
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2010

My name is Elizabeth Willer, a freshman at South High in the Shawnee Mission School District. The Honors Biology 1 classes initiated this effort to name Little Blue Stem as the State Grass of Kansas five years ago. I feel that the Little Blue Stem would be an amazing grass because it grows even in "salty" soil, and it grows everywhere in Kansas!!!

And I love the fall color of the Little Blue stem which turns a red orange and I would love to plant it in my yard now that I know that!! Thank you greatly for your consideration and time.

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SHARON J. SCHWARTZ
2051 20th Road
Washington, Kansas 66968
(785) 325-2568
sharon.schwartz@house.ks.gov



State Representative
106th District
State Capitol, Room 149-S
Topeka, Kansas 66612
(785) 296-7637

CHAIR
Local Government Committee
Select KPERs Committee
HB 2649

Testimony for the Federal and State Committee

March 9, 2010

Chairman Brungardt and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB2649 which would designate "Little Bluestem" as the Kansas State Grass. While many like to joke about taking the time to designate a state grass, I have several reasons to support this measure.

For those who have not taken time to stop and enjoy the a few minutes at the Konza Prairie south of Manhattan, you have missed out on a wonderful experience; the view, the serenity, and beauty of the our native grasses. The deep roots of "Little Blue Stem" sustain the semi-dry climate and hold the soil in place, securing the beautiful landscape. Kansas is still primarily an Agricultural State with a large cattle industry dependent on native grasses. It is important to highlight the value and importance of the native grasses to this industry. "Little Bluestem is found in all three prairie types and grows in every county in Kansas.

Background I was contacted last summer by volunteers at Konza State Park who asked if I would assist them in furthering their efforts to designate the "Little Blue Stem" as the Kansas State Grass. I know they will outline their reasons in more detail for this request.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have regarding HB2649.

Sn Fed & State
Attachment 2

3-09-10

March 9, 2010

To: Chairman Pete Brungardt and Members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

My name is Valerie Wright and I am co-chair of the Kansas Native Plant Society committee to support the state grass initiative and a past president of KNPS. I am also the Education Director of the Konza Prairie Environmental Education Program. I would like to speak from my role as a prairie naturalist and educator.

The mission of the Konza Environmental Education Program has been to inform the public, especially school children, about the prairie ecosystem. This is called place-based education, where children learn first about where they live. **Although the heritage of the prairies is strong in Kansas, many children and adults who live in our cities and towns do not know the value of the prairies as a renewable natural resource and agricultural base.**

Children in this electronic age need help in connecting to the natural world. Governor Sebelius' executive order of last April formed the Kansas Coalition for Children in Nature, based on the premise that it is of prime importance to create opportunities for Kansas children to interact with the natural world. At Konza Prairie we provide such opportunities for about 5000 visitors each year. We offer special hikes, bison tours and ecological activities for students. My firsthand experience with children learning about the prairie matches the written testimony before you of Alan Pollom, State Director of The Nature Conservancy and Jim Smith, Director of the Dillon Nature Center in Hutchinson. Children respond to grasslands like "going home." They are amazed to be in and surrounded by grass, wildflowers, sky and horizon. They show how the experience moves them in journals and poems.

And the experience stays with them. One of the teachers I work with at the alternative high school in Junction City uses the memory of the outdoor experience at Konza Prairie to bring her students to all kinds of learning throughout the year. Science, math, language arts, and social studies all can be taught through an understanding of grasslands. With your help, we can offer this enduring experience to ALL the children of Kansas by passing this bill. For no cost, the naming of a state grass will impact EVERY child in Kansas. Little Bluestem will become the symbol of our prairie state, like the bison, sunflower and cottonwood tree. These are fundamental icons that represent "natural" Kansas to students, residents and visitors.

This bill requires no funding but is a major step in the education of all Kansas school children concerning our prairie heritage, the value of our grasslands to the economy of this state and the importance of conservation of the prairie ecosystem. Kansas is fortunate to have major tracts of native prairie for grazing, for hay, for its amazing beauty and aesthetic value. A state like Iowa has lost 99.9% of its original prairie and is now attempting to reconstruct prairies at great cost.

We have the opportunity to keep our tallgrass prairie in the Flint Hills, the mixed grass prairies of central Kansas and the short grass prairies of the western counties by acting to educate our population, whether urban or rural, about the grasslands. If we do not, the gradual loss of prairie ecosystems will surely change our state.

Dee Scherich of Merrill Ranch in Comanche County, says it so well: **"Where will the public support for ranching come in the next generation? Will our children view pastures as wasted space? Will our grasslands disappear to development?"**

The students in Jan Alderson's biology class began the process to name a state grass in 2005. Since then thousands of children have practiced writing letters of persuasion to their legislators as part of this process. They are the next generation of voters. After studying the prairie grasses, they chose Little Bluestem because of its attributes and its occurrence and importance in every county in Kansas. **Let's respect the students' research and their initiative, send them a positive message and endorse their selection for state grass.**

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

Sn Fed & State
Attachment 3

3-09-10

(11)

Chairperson Brungardt; Members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee.

My name is Nancy Goulden. I am a board member the Kansas Native Plant Society, and am currently serving as Vice-president and co-chair of the KNPS Committee to Support Little Bluestem for Kansas State Grass.

Kansas Native Plant Society is a statewide organization of more than 500 members. Our mission is to promote interest in, appreciation of, and education about Kansas native plants and their ecosystems. For the last five years, KNPS has supported and encouraged Kansas school students in their campaign to name Little Bluestem as the Kansas State Grass.

The purpose of HB 2649 is not to proclaim which of our attractive and useful native grasses is the most popular, but to name an icon that is representative of the entire state and serve as an instant signal of "Kansas." Little Bluestem was chosen by a class at Shawnee Mission South High over other native grass as the grass to best represents the entire state since it is found in every Kansas county, and grows in all three prairie types: short, tall, and mixed grass prairies.

We are asking the committee today to take another step in the process of naming a new state icon because of three reasons. (1) Learning about a State Grass would help our children reconnect with nature, especially in the prairie ecosystem; (2) a State Grass directs attention to our agricultural economy and heritage; (3) A state grass is an excellent icon for promoting the state and encouraging tourism. Valerie Wright has introduced the first two benefits of naming a state grass. Let's look now at the third.

Little Bluestem would be the first new icon since 1994, the first of the new century. Marci Penner, the director of the Kansas Sampler Foundation and a supporter of naming Little Bluestem as our state grass reminds us in a 2005 interview, "Our state symbols link us to our heritage." There is something about an image of prairie grass blowing in the wind that sends the memories of both Kansas natives and those from other areas back to stories of homesteading, cattle drives, cowboys, and one-room country schools.

This proposal for such a symbol comes along at a very apt time. Kansans and visitors both seem to have rediscovered and find new value in our prairies. Both in-state and out-of-state visitors are eagerly coming in large numbers to such events as the Symphony in the Flint Hills and Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Wildflower Weekend to enjoy the wonder of the grasslands.

Last fall at the Tallgrass Wildflower Weekend, I talked with visitors from both the east and west coasts who deliberately made Tallgrass a special stop on their trips, in order to see the grass. They stood mesmerized, looking out from the upper level of the barn at the panorama of rust-colored grass on the hills, moving in waves by the wind.

No other present or proposed icon has as close a connection with the prairie as Little Bluestem. In addition, it is aesthetically pleasing. As Jim Smith, Director of the Dillion Nature Center, said in his written testimony. "Little Bluestem is really the perfect grass for such a designation. It is probably our most beautiful native grass that reaches its peak of beauty in fall and winter."

Let's name Little Blue the State Grass to help us share our Kansas Prairie with our children, citizens, and visitors.



Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

Kansas Chapter
700 SW Jackson Street, Ste. 804
Topeka, KS 66603

tel 785-233-4100
fax 785-233-2022
nature.org/kansas

Testimony in support of H.B. 2649

Alan Pollom

Vice President/State Director
Kansas Chapter, The Nature Conservancy
700 SW Jackson, Suite 804
Topeka, KS 66603
apollom@tnc.org

On behalf of the Kansas Chapter of The Nature Conservancy

March 9, 2010

Before the Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Dear Chairman Brungardt and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony in support of HB 2649.

The Nature Conservancy is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to the conservation of our wildlife and native lands. The Nature Conservancy and its 7,000 members in Kansas have been responsible for the direct conservation of more than 88,000 acres in our state over the past 40 years. The 8,616-acre Konza Prairie and the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve are examples of this success story. It goes without saying; however, that our work stands little chance of enduring without the support of an informed and supportive public.

My wife teaches 4th grade at Pleasant Hill Elementary here in Shawnee County. Each spring she teaches a unit on wildlife and their habitats. As part of the curriculum it is common practice to look to our state symbols as a starting point for lesson plans. The lack of a designated state grass leaves an obvious gap in the teaching discussions. Native grass is the matrix habitat that has defined our state's history and sustained the array of abundant wildlife our immigrant ancestors first encountered.

Young students respond with tremendous enthusiasm when first learning about the many intricacies inherent in the web of life. Each spring my wife's students take an all day field trip to our farm to experience firsthand many elements of their wildlife habitat unit. You would find it very rewarding to hear the amazement in their voices and the moving words they write in their journals.

The goal is to develop more aware and well rounded citizens. We should facilitate that learning process by officially recognizing Little Bluestem, one of our most ubiquitous and adaptable grasses, as the state grass of Kansas.

Sn Fed & State
Attachment 5

3-09-10

Dillon
NATURE/CENTER
HUTCHREC&COMMISSION

3002 East 30th
Hutchinson, Kansas 67502
Phone: (620) 663-7411
Fax: (620) 663-7498
Website: www.dillonnaturecenter.com
E-mail: jsmith@hutchrec.com

Office of the Living Land Foundation

March 9, 2010

To: The Kansas Senate
From: Jim Smith, Director of Dillon Nature Center

I am writing to support the passage of HB2649, which will officially designate Little Bluestem Grass as the Kansas State Grass. Little Bluestem is really the perfect grass for such a designation. I think it is the only native grass to naturally occur in every county in Kansas and it is an extremely valuable plant for our economy as a forage plant for cattle. Besides that, it is probably our most beautiful native grass that reaches its peak of beauty in fall and winter with its copper-colored stalks and silvery seed heads dancing in the Kansas wind.

Every year the Dillon Nature Center works with over 20,000 children from all over Kansas. Part of almost every program that we conduct has something to do with prairies and native plants. The children of Kansas do not seem to have much knowledge of our state's natural history. We feel that it is vitally important for children to have an appreciation for and understanding of the world around them and how it has changed through the years. The other state plants (i.e. sunflower, cottonwood tree, etc.) and state animals (i.e. bison, meadowlark, box turtle, etc.) have all been great educational tools that students have been able to connect with and understand a little better. Having a native prairie grass such as Little Bluestem as the State Grass will help them understand our state's prairie heritage even more.

I hope you will vote for HB2649 and make Little Bluestem the official Kansas State Grass. Thank you for considering this request.

Sn Fed & State
Attachment 6

3-09-10

Chairman, Pete Brungardt and members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee of the Senate of Kansas:

I was raised on a large ranch in Comanche County which my dad managed from 1944 to 1976. I went to college and received a bachelor's and a master's degree in biology, taught high school science for 14 years, then came back and have managed this ranch from 1976 to the present. I understand first-hand the importance of our native grasses to the cattle industry and the economic importance of the cattle industry to the entire economy of Kansas. Because grass is the most important element of the cattle industry, ranchers are interested in good grass-management techniques so there will be grass available for ensuing years. To do this we must know which grasses are nutritious and how to manage for them under varying circumstances.

The book, *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv, demonstrates that "Today's kids are well aware of the global threats to the environment, but their physical contact, their intimacy with nature on a day-to-day basis, is fading." Most of us in our generation had close contact with rural Kansas either because we lived on a farm or ranch, or our grandparents, or other relatives did. We watched the cows and calves eat the native grass and thrive on it. This is not true for many of the current generation of children.

If we do not introduce our children to our native grasses and the importance of these grasses, what respect for and knowledge of them will they have as adults? Where will our ranchers, and supportive specialists, for the next generation come from? Will our children just view pastures as wasted space? Will our grasslands disappear to development?

Can your children or grandchildren identify several kinds of grass? Have they ever been challenged to?

Naming a state grass will give teachers a greater opportunity to introduce students to the prairie grasses and help them understand their importance, not only to the cattle industry, but also to help them understand how vegetation, including grasses, helps store carbon, thus reducing the greenhouse gases.

There are several other grasses that could have been selected to be the state grass including big bluestem, Indian grass and buffalo grass. This initiative is not so much about which grass is named the state grass, but that a state grass is designated.

The students in Jan Alderson's class, after studying the prairie grasses, selected Little Bluestem because of its occurrence and importance in every county in Kansas. It is in response to their initiative that the Kansas Native Plant Society have assisted them in their endeavor. **I respect the students' research and their initiative, and endorse their selection.**

Thank you for listening. Please vote "yes" and send this bill on to the Senate, and help your constituents understand why it is important. **In a time of tight budget restraints this bill does not require funding.**

Respectfully submitted,

Larry "Dee" Scherich, Merrill Ranch, Comanche County, Kansas

JOHN K. STRICKLER
1523 University Drive
Manhattan, KS 66502-3447
Phone: 785/565-9731
Fax: 785/532-3305
jstrickl@ksu.edu

March 9, 2010

TO: Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Pete Brungardt, Chair

SUBJECT: Support of HB No. 2649

I am writing in support of HB 2649 which would designate Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) as the Kansas State Grass.

I have worked in the area of natural resources management for nearly 50 years in Kansas and currently serve on the Board of Trustees of the Kansas Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. I also served as Vice Chair of the Kansas Natural Resources Legacy Alliance created by the 2002 Kansas Legislature "to create a vision for the using the state's natural resources." In its final report to the Governor and Legislature in December of 2003, the Alliance stated that "If there was one consistent theme throughout the public comment period and the expert testimony received the regular meetings of the Alliance, it has been the broad support for education about natural resources and environmental issues."

While being a forester by profession, I have developed a deep appreciation for the native grasslands of Kansas and the need for proper management and protection of these prairies. I strongly support the need for education about our state's prairies as well as its other natural resources.

I believe passage of HB 2649 would provide opportunities to educate and increase awareness and appreciation for our unique Kansas prairie resources. I respectfully urge your support of HB 2649.

Sn Fed & State
Attachment 8

3-09-10

March 9, 2010

To: Kansas Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
Pete Brungardt, Chair

I would like to express my strong support for House Bill 2649, which proposes to establish little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) as the State Grass of Kansas. Grasses are a significant component of our global vegetation. Native grasses provide forage and feed for our livestock, are a food resource for wildlife and birds and provide them with environmental habitat, and are used to prevent erosion of the soil by wind and water. Native and cultivated crop grasses are the dominant type of vegetation found in Kansas and serve as the state's primary natural resource. Grasses have a major economic importance to the state through the critical role that they play for our livestock industry.

Since the publication of my book, *Wildflowers and Grasses of Kansas* in 2005, I have given nearly sixty presentations on our Kansas flora to audiences in all parts of the state. A question that I have been asked on numerous occasions is: "Why doesn't Kansas have a state grass"? It is a bit embarrassing to tell audiences that Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) is the state grass for Oklahoma, side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) the state grass of Texas, and big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) the state grass of Missouri, but that Kansas has no officially designated state grass. The proposal to make little bluestem our state grass would honor the significant position that Kansas native grasses occupy, both historically and present day.

As a member of the Kansas Native Plant Society and the Kansas Section of the Society for Range Management, I urge the committee to please give positive consideration to House Bill 2649.

Thank you sincerely for your time!

Warm regards,

Michael Haddock
Assistant Dean
Research, Education and Engagement Division
K-State Libraries
504D Hale Library
Manhattan, KS 66506

Wildflowers and Grasses of Kansas: A Field Guide, University Press of Kansas, 2005. Selected as a 2006 Kansas Notable Book by the State Library of Kansas and Kansas Center for the Book.

To: Kansas Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee, Pete Brungardt, Chair

From: Jim Hoy, Director of the Center for Great Plains Studies at Emporia State University

As a student of ranching folklife (my books include *Cowboys and Kansas*, *Flint Hills Cowboys*, and *Riding Point: A Centennial History of the Kansas Livestock Association*), as well as from my upbringing on a ranch near Cassoday, I have had a lifetime of experience with grass, from looking after cattle to raking prairie hay with a team of mules. Thus I am pleased that the legislature is considering the naming of a state grass.

Kansas lies in the center of a great North American grassland that, before settlement and plowing, reached from Indiana and Kentucky to the Rocky Mountains, from the Rio Grande into Canada. Even today grasses dominate Kansas, although much of that grass is now fescue and brome, wheat and corn. Of the hundreds of varieties of native grasses here, it seems to me that two dominate in the popular mind: buffalo grass and bluestem.

When I first learned of the movement to name Little Bluestem as the state grass, I thought that a good case could be made for buffalo grass. I also thought, why not Big Bluestem, the redwood of grasses with its nine-foot stems topped by its distinctive turkey foot seed pods? Upon reflection, however, I realized that not only is Little Bluestem a major grass on the ridges and valleys of the Flint Hills, but also in the Smoky Hills and the Gypsum Hills. In fact Little Bluestem can be found from the Little Balkans in southeast Kansas to the Cimarron National Grassland in the southwest, from the Arikaree Breaks in the northwest to the glaciated hills of northeast Kansas. In every county in the state Little Bluestem helps to put pounds on the beef that makes Kansas famous throughout the country and the world.

As a native Kansan and a lifelong resident of the Flint Hills, the world's premier tallgrass prairie, I urge the Kansas Legislature to name Little Bluestem as the state grass, thus joining it with those other proud symbols of our prairie heritage: the Sunflower, the Cottonwood Tree, the Bison, the Western Meadowlark, and *Home on the Range.* It was, after all, the sea of Little Bluestem outside his cabin door that inspired Brewster Higley to write his beautiful anthem to the prairie.

March 9, 2010

To the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee, Chair, Pete Brungardt

Native Grass of Kansas

Visitors and folks who call Kansas home daily dash across this great state of Kansas. Many are oblivious to the native beauty that surrounds them. Quietly waiving in the wind, dancing and casting beautiful colors across the landscape, the Little Blue Stem grass carpets the prairie.

Little Blue Stem is found in every county in Kansas. The deep roots of the grass take hold in shallow or rocky soil. This grass is rejuvenated by spring burns, which make the grass even more nutritious for grazing cattle and bison. The grass is known to be the greatest grazing pasture in the world.

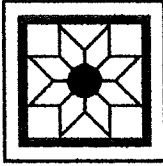
In 2012, Manhattan will open the doors of The Flint Hills Discovery Center. This attraction will educate the visitor and the general public alike to the wonders of the prairie. Of the many exhibits planned, one exhibit will tell the story of the grasslands. Attendees will be fascinated to learn the story of the prairie, observe the length of the blue stem grass roots and see the illustrations which focus on the prairie ecosystem. The Flint Hills Discovery Center will aid in the visitors seeing Kansas through knowledgeable eyes.

The prairie is vital to our rich history, our present day and our bright future. The Little Blue Stem, if cared for will raise the spirits and nourish the soul.

It is appropriate for Kansas to designate a State Grass. The Little Blue Stem, with its native roots, is the natural choice for this title.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Hibbard, Director
Manhattan Convention & Visitors Bureau



Kansas Sampler Foundation
978 Arapaho Road
Inman, KS 67546
www.kansassampler.org

**Testimony in support of HB 2649 to the Senate Committee
on Federal and State Affairs
March 9, 2010
By Marci Penner, Director, Kansas Sampler Foundation**

Committee Chair Pete Brungardt and members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs. My name is Marci Penner, director of the Kansas Sampler Foundation. The mission of the non-profit Kansas Sampler Foundation is to preserve and sustain rural culture.

I'm proud to submit testimony in support of naming the Little Bluestem the state grass. Little Bluestem is abundant in Kansas, produces rich nutrients, and, like the Kansas people, is deeply rooted.

Our state symbols and when they were adopted:

- ❖ Kansas state flower: Common Sunflower, 1903.
- ❖ Kansas state bird: Western meadowlark, 1925.
- ❖ Kansas state march: *The Kansas March*, 1935 and *Here's Kansas*, 1992
- ❖ Kansas state tree: Plains Cottonwood, 1937.
- ❖ Kansas state song: *Home on the Range*, 1947.
- ❖ Kansas state animal: American Bison, 1955.
- ❖ Kansas state insect: Honeybee, 1976.
- ❖ Kansas state turtle: Ornate Box Turtle, 1986.
- ❖ Kansas state loam: Harney Silt Loam, 1990.
- ❖ Kansas state amphibian: Barred Tiger Salamander. 1994

State symbols are used as a designation to tell the public about that particular state. To read the list of symbols helps a person get to know the state and know what is common and what is valued.

Surrounding states have already selected a state grass.

- ❖ Nebraska: Little Bluestem, 1969
- ❖ Oklahoma: Indiangrass, 1972
- ❖ Colorado: Blue grama, 1987
- ❖ Missouri: Big Bluestem, 2007

Eighteen states have a state grass.

State symbols are used in promotional and educational materials. Designations are informative and fun! To showcase the point about how designations can help educate people here is the list of cities or counties that have gone through a legislative process, or less official steps through the Kansas Sampler Foundation, to become capitals of Kansas.

Air Capital, Wichita
Allis Chalmers Capital, Washington

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Art Treasures Capital, Oswego
Barbed Wire Capital, LaCrosse
Bass Fishing Capital, WaKeeney
Bean Feed Capital, Erie
Black Squirrel Capital, Marysville
Bluebird Capital, Johnson County
Brome Grass Capital, Holton
Carnival Heritage Capital, Kinsley
Catfish Capital, Chetopa and Coffey County
Comic Book Capital, Morland
Covered Dish Capital, Windom
Cow Chip Capital, Russell Springs
Cowboy Boot Capital, Olathe
Cowboy Capital, Dodge City
Cutting Horse Capital, Garden City
Czech Capital, Wilson
Drovers Capital, Ellsworth County
Earthquake Capital, Palco
Fishing Capital, Geary County
Fossil Capital, Oakley
Fried Chicken Capital, Pittsburg
German Capital, Ellis County
Goose Capital, Kirwin
Grassroots Art Capital, Lucas
Greyhound Capital, Abilene
Halloween Capital, Hiawatha
Hamburger Capital, Phillips County
Historic Barn Capital, Doniphan County
Homestead Literature Capital, Osborne County
Horse Racing Capital, Eureka
Light Capital, McPherson
Lustron Home Capital, Great Bend
Milo Capital, Beattie
Mural Capital, Winfield
Museum Capital, Abilene
Natural Gas Capital, Hugoton
Original Jayhawker Capital, Mound City
Ornate Box Turtle Capital, Caldwell
Outhouse Capital, Elk Falls
Pancake Capital, Liberal
Peach Capital, Haysville
Pecan Capital, Chetopa
Pheasant Capital, Norton
Pie Capital, Washington
Pinto Bean Capital, Leoti
Plow Capital, Kingman
Post Rock Capital, Lincoln County
Prairie Chicken Capital, Cassoday
Prairie Hay Capital, Yates Center
Printing Capital, Girard
Purple Martin Capital, Parsons

Rocking Chair Capital, Cuba
Spinach Capital, Lenexa
Stained Glass Capital, Cloud County
Stock Trailer Capital, Waterville
Stone Bridge Capital, Cowley County
Storytelling Capital, Downs
Sunflower Capital, Goodland
Sunshine Capital, WaKeeney
Terra Cotta Capital, Salina
The Capital, Topeka
Threshing Show Capital, Jefferson County
Trails Capital, Marshall County
Water Sports Capital, Osage County
Watermelon Capital, Clyde & Thayer
Wheat Capital, Sumner County
White Tail Deer Capital, Longton
Wind Farm Capital, Montezuma
Wiper Fish Capital, Norton County

A person can't help but learn some things about Kansas as they read this list. The designation gives them a tag and instant recognition. The designation refers to that town's story and enhances local pride and often results in more visitors. You'll see these designations in countless ads and publications. The same is true with state symbols.

Like "capitals of Kansas", our state symbols have been chosen because of either remarkable features or common. Little bluestem is like the sunflower and cottonwood – common but prevalent. Little bluestem is found in every county and that includes Gray, Johnson, Cloud, Sedgwick, Pottawatomie, Jackson, Lyon, Stafford, Leavenworth, Cherokee, Wyandotte, Wilson, Shawnee, and 92 others. Perhaps Big Bluestem is more impressive but then buffalo grass has served as a steady life force in a different manner. But it was Little Bluestem that got the call from a group of people that know Kansas's grasses. They gave other grasses every due consideration and decided that Little Bluestem would best represent Kansas.

On behalf of this beautiful grass that is found in every county, I'd like to add my voice to the request that Little Bluestem be named the Kansas state grass.

March 9, 2010

Committee Chair Brungardt and members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee, my name is SammyJo Peterson and I am a student at Chase County Middle School.

Grassland is important to me because I help my dad raise cattle. Where I live in the Flint Hills we have the best grass for raising beef cattle. I know that little bluestem is a good grass for cattle to gain weight on. My dad and I ride the pasture on horseback and I show him the grasses I know. He teaches me about how they are important for cattle.

We learn about the symbols of Kansas in school so that we know what Kansas is all about. If kids learn the Kansas symbols, they will respect and want to take care of them. I want my friends to care about our grasslands. If they learned about the little bluestem in school, they might feel the same way I do about the Kansas Prairie.

Little Blue Stem grows in every county in Kansas. Kids all across Kansas could find it near their home. I think it is important to know all the grasses and how they are important to Kansas. Little bluestem would be a good place to start learning.

My mom is a librarian and it is important to her that I know how to read books. When my mom and I go walking the trail at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, my mom tries to name the grasses. I always need to help her. Like reading books, when kids learn about little bluestem, they can begin to read the grasses of the prairie.

March 9, 2010

Committee Chair Brungardt and members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee.
My name is Cael Budke and I am a student at Chase county Elementary School.

I first learned about Kansas symbols when I was in Kindergarten. I learned the honey bee was the state insect. I learned the cottonwood was our state tree and the meadowlark the state bird. I also learned that the box turtle was the state reptile.

When I am riding with my dad to school I look out the window and I see grass. I like to know the names of the birds, the kinds of rocks, and the grasses I see in the pastures. Little bluestem is easy to find in the winter because it is a copper colored bunch of grass. When you see it you know what it is. In the fall it looks like it has fuzzy white seeds on the ends of the stems. In the summer time it is green and the cows like to eat it.

When my brothers and I go outside, I show them bunny droppings, deer tracks and where the deer bed down. Now because I know what little bluestem looks like I can show them this grass. I think every kid should know what little bluestem is because it is important to Kansas.

Committee Chair Brungardt and members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee,

My name is Joseph Stout and I am a student at Chase County Elementary School.

I first learned the four major grasses of the prairie when I was eight.

Grass is important to me because I someday hope to be a fifth-generation rancher.

When I am out checking cattle on horseback, I sometimes look at the grass and try to name the ones I recognize.

I hope there will always be grassland for our cattle. If kids learn about little bluestem, they will learn to appreciate the prairie more. After learning about little bluestem, it made me want to learn more. I've learned little bluestem is a nutritious forage for cattle. It also is good winter feed. It can be found in pastures with rocky soil or dry hills. It is a native perennial that is drought resistant. All of these make it important to a rancher.

In school we learn about our state flower, the sunflower, the state reptile, the box turtle, and the state amphibian, the tiger salamander. I think all kids should learn about the all-important little bluestem.

Being the state grass will make this happen.

To: Chairman Pete Brubgardt, Federal and State Affairs Committee
From: Leah Heathcote, Freshman at SMSD South High School, Honors Biology 1
RE: Testifying about having Little Blue Stem as the Kansas State Grass
Date: Tuesday, March 09, 2010

My name is Leah Heathcote, a freshman at South High in the Shawnee Mission School District. The Honors Biology 1 classes initiated this effort to name Little Blue Stem as the State Grass of Kansas five years ago. Because most other grassland states have state grasses, it is important for Kansas to have a state grass as well.

We feel that the Little Blue Stem would be the logical choice since it is one of the most common roadside grasses in Kansas, the public would find it familiar. It is also so hardy, is a NATIVE grass which grows throughout all of Kansas.

Wildlife and domesticated herbivores use it for food and as habitat. Trampling, drought, and strange soil types do not deter it from growing and thriving. We should therefore be proud to name Little Blue Stem as our Kansas State Grass.

To: Chairman Pete Brungardt, Federal and Stat Affairs Committee
 From: Elizabeth Willer, freshman at SMSD South High School, Honors Biology 1
 RE: Testifying about having the Little Blue Stem as the Kansas State Grass
 Date: Tuesday, March 9, 2010

My name is Elizabeth Willer, a freshman at South High in the Shawnee Mission School District. The Honors Biology 1 classes initiated this effort to name Little Blue Stem as the State Grass of Kansas five years ago. I feel that the Little Blue Stem would be an amazing grass because it grows even in "salty" soil, and it grows everywhere in Kansas!!!

And I love the fall color of the Little Blue stem which turns a red orange and I would love to plant it in my yard now that I know that!! Thank you greatly for your consideration and time.