

Mission of the Wichita State University Biological Field Station

The mission of the WSU Biological Field Station encompasses four central focal areas: Research, Teaching, Conservation and Public Outreach. Each are equally important in today's complex, and growing, society which continues to demand more from our natural resources. More specifically defined, these focal areas are as follows:

RESEARCH:

A place to conduct original, environmentally-based research in a natural setting. Current and past research projects explore various facets of avian ecology, plant community and population ecology, prairie restoration, species diversity of microbes in extreme environments, long-term monitoring of fish and herptile populations, and dynamics of stream sedimentation.

TEACHING:

A place for teaching at all levels through field-oriented courses by taking advantage of the species diversity of the reserves. Instructors can take advantage of the field station through offering field laboratory exercises and hands-on experiences of the natural sciences. Current onsite instruction focuses on topics such as plant taxonomy and ecology, the biology and ecology of vertebrate and invertebrate species, as well as geology.

CONSERVATION:

A place of natural habitats common to the areas in which they are situated. Ever-expanding human populations coupled with declining populations of the numerous species of plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and insects (particularly those associated with grassland habitats, both terrestrial *and* aquatic) have created the need for areas that are protected from future development and can serve as a site for natural communities with minimal human influence. Natural environments require various forms of disturbance, therefore, active management of these habitats is essential to their continued existence. Scientifically incorporated monitoring and management methods will be implemented to restore, conserve and preserve the ecological integrity of these areas.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

A place where the public can be informed in the natural history, ecology and geology of the environments which the station's reserves provide, through scheduled events. These activities include, but are not limited to, tours and hikes, Bio-Blitz activities, organized birding opportunities, restoration and management sessions and workshops.