

# State of the Prairie | 2018



# DEAR FRIENDS OF THE PRAIRIE,

You helped us accomplish so many things in 2018 toward our four primary goals: increase protected coastal prairie acreage, restore and enhance lands, help ensure a vibrant and resilient community, and enable public access to the prairie.

Thank you for the part you have played in helping the Katy Prairie Conservancy move closer to its vision of a vast, protected preserve that benefits wildlife and Texans. These lands play an important role in flood control, outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, improvements in water quality, local food production, and much more. As we work toward our many ambitious goals for the years ahead, we pause to express our gratitude for your help as advisors, volunteers, donors, and friends. We simply could not do the work we do without **YOU**.

Sincerely,



Mark Klein  
Chairman



Mary Anne Piacentini  
President and CEO





# VISION

Our vision for the future is simple: to protect the coastal prairie to help ensure healthy communities, safeguard wildlife, and connect people with nature.

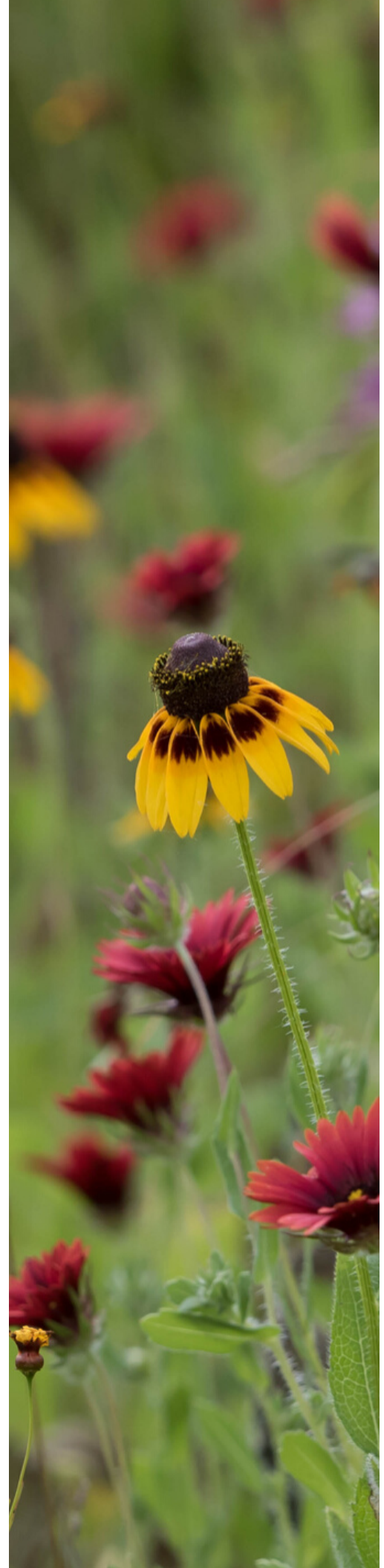
Since 1992, the Katy Prairie Conservancy (KPC) has been working to protect the prairie for people and wildlife while there is still time. We are a nationally accredited 501(c)3 non-profit organization located in Houston, Texas, and a trusted leader in local land conservation.

Over 20,000 acres of the Katy Prairie are now protected. On the Katy Prairie in Harris and Waller Counties, KPC owns nearly 13,500 acres and protects over 4,200 acres through conservation agreements with private landowners. In addition, KPC is now working to protect coastal prairie in other Texas counties and recently placed a conservation agreement on a 5,332-acre ranch in Matagorda County.

The prairie's proximity to the fourth largest city and one of the fastest growing regions in the United States makes it an attractive site for residential and commercial development. The Katy Prairie Conservancy is working to protect wide-open spaces on the coastal prairie while there is still time.

## *Our mission*

*is to protect a sustainable portion of the Katy Prairie for the benefit of its wildlife and all Texans forever.*





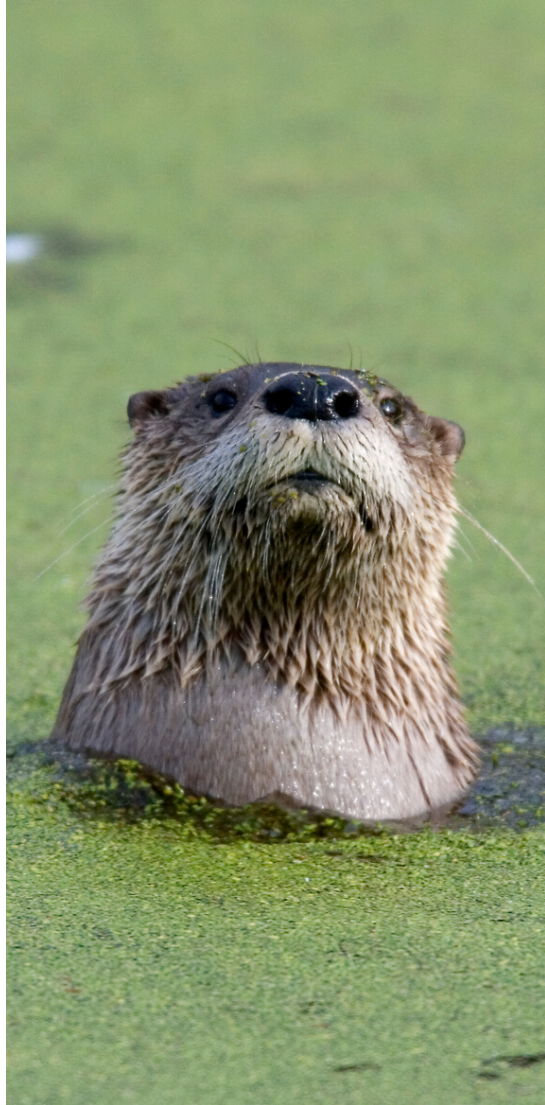
# PROTECT





*From conservation easements to fee acquisition, the protection of land is at the heart of our mission.*

KPC continued essential prospect development work, including the education of landowners, public officials, and attorneys regarding conservation easement and land protection options. This outreach aids KPC in securing additional fee acquisition and/or conservation easement lands.



A conservation easement was placed on the 479-acre Live Oaks Ranch on the Katy Prairie at the headwaters of Cypress Creek. This important piece of land is contiguous to other protected properties and safeguards wildlife connectivity across the Katy Prairie Preserve.



KPC began a Conservation Plan, to identify priority areas for protection. This process included feedback, conservation resources, and data from stakeholders. This Conservation Plan for the Katy Prairie will create a working plan for specific parcel acquisition in the years ahead.





# RESTORE





*Prairie restoration projects ensure that present and future generations have healthier land and healthier watersheds.*



The KPC Native Seed Nursery grew thousands of native plants that were planted at KPC's Indiangrass Preserve and Shrike Prairie by hundreds of volunteers throughout the year. Restoration efforts on the Indiangrass Preserve included planting 400 plants along the Ann Hamilton Trail and planting 1,200 plants at the front entrance of the property, in addition to extensive trail maintenance work .

Invasive species management remains a priority. KPC cleared 300 acres of tallow and yaupon on Nelson Farms and 100 acres of McCartney Rose on the Warren Ranch. Working for 5 days with the Student Conservation Association, Brazilian vervain and KR bluestem were removed and over 600 volunteer hours were devoted to clearing invasive species along the Ann Hamilton Trail. Approximately 300 tallow trees were also cleared along the entrance road to the Indiangrass Preserve. Finally, substantial work was completed by volunteers surrounding the Hebert Reservoir, where over 75 hours were spent removing 1,300 tallow trees, 3,000 cockle-bur plants, 50 Brazilian vervain plants, and 20 deeprooted sedge plants.

In May, a 45-acre wetlands restoration project began in Waller County, adding rich habitat for resident and migratory waterfowl. Just as important is what these wetlands projects do for people. The EPA estimates that one wetland can store between 1 and 1.5 million gallons of water, helping to hold or slow floodwaters during storms.

Important restoration work continues on the Warren Ranch, including efforts to promote sustainable grazing practices and the continued enhancement of nearly 80,000 linear feet of stream. The stream project creates a more sinuous stream, allowing for better water holding capacity, improved water quality, and enhanced native vegetation while also earning income to further KPC's land acquisition efforts. And the continued use of winter food plots and grazing mix allow for the successful grazing of grass-fed calves.





# SUSTAIN





*We continue to study the impact of the Katy Prairie on flood risk reduction to the region, while enhancing the quality of life and desirability of our communities.*



The newly formed Conservation Flood Mitigation Group is a working coalition dedicated to protecting the region's natural resources and showing that natural solutions to flood control are cost-effective.

A soon-to-be-published study provides a more in-depth look at the water-holding capacity of the wetlands and tallgrass prairie found on the Katy Prairie.

A study developed with the Trust for Public Land on the economic benefits of the Katy Prairie Conservancy lands demonstrates its value to the greater community.

KPC received a three year Healthy Watersheds Consortium grant to accelerate land acquisition to help protect five watersheds and increase resiliency.





# CONNECT





*Whether hiking, bird watching, seed collecting, or planting - the Katy Prairie is your prairie.*



KPC's annual planting event *Putting Down Roots* drew volunteers of all ages for a restoration day on the prairie. This year, thousands of native grasses were planted near the entrance of Indiangrass Preserve.

Over 100 volunteers spent just under 300 hours at 9 locations collecting native plant seeds to be used for KPC's great grow out program, KPC's prairie builder schools & parks program, and local prairie restoration projects. At least 25 different species of seeds were collected in 2018.



In addition to the distribution of Prairie Discovery Boxes to area schools, new field trips with Virtually Wild Texas, and two new pocket prairies, KPC hosted another successful year of the TWA/KPC Youth Waterfowl Hunt, which helps teach the next generation of hunters about the value of the prairie for wildlife.

KPC launched a 9 Natives initiative that encourages Houstonians to incorporate native plants in yards and gardens to help support pollinators and learn about the historic coastal prairie landscape.





## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

KPC and its staff received the following awards and recognitions in 2018:

Katy Prairie Conservancy was awarded Honor of Recognition for its Buller Wetlands Project by Keep Houston Beautiful at the Mayor's Proud Partner Awards.

Katy Prairie Conservancy was awarded the Parks and Natural Areas Award for projects under \$500,000 for its work on the MD Anderson Prairie by the Houston-Galveston Area Council.

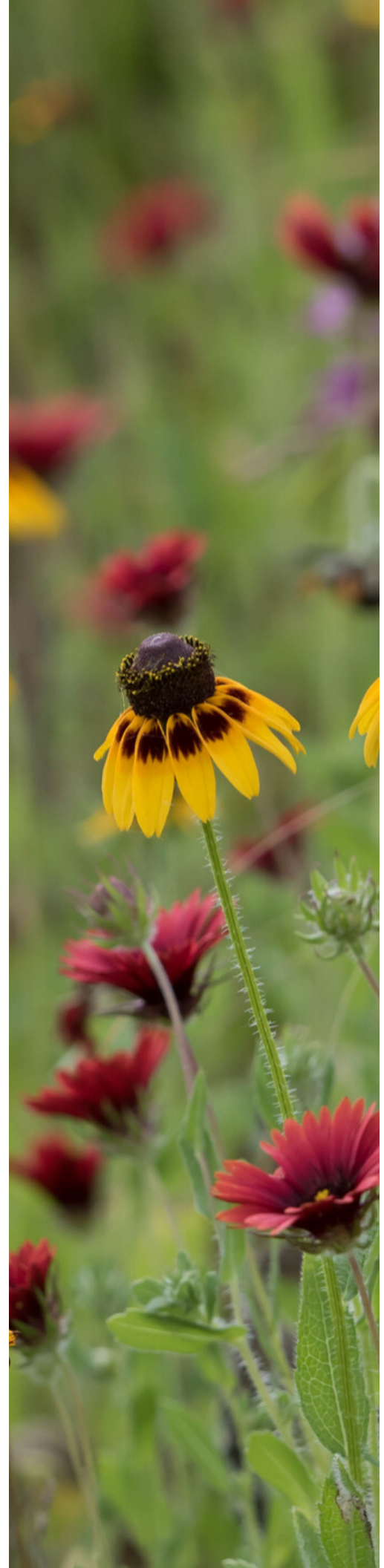
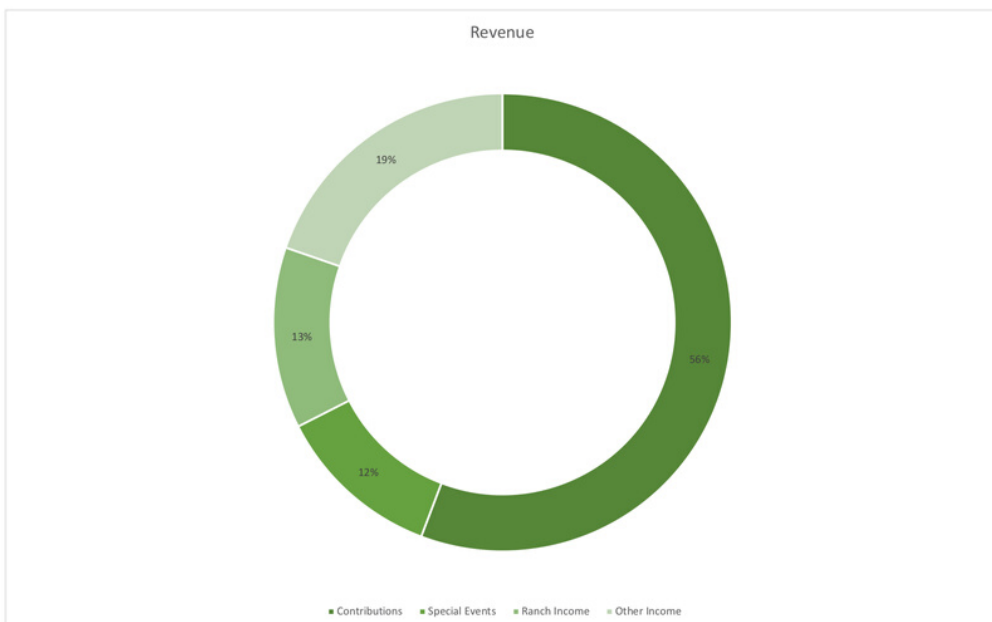
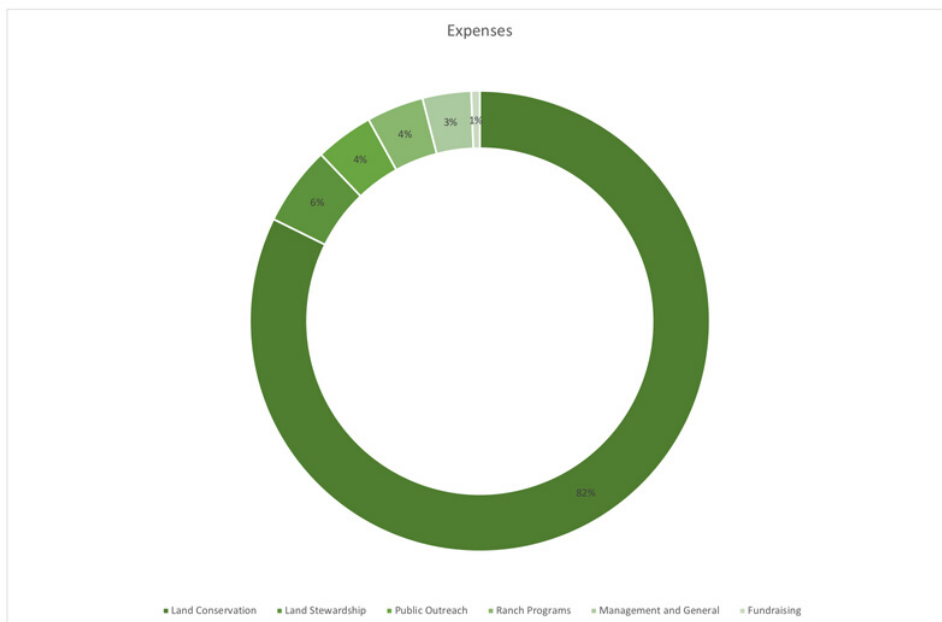
Mary Anne Piacentini, KPC's President and Chief Executive Officer, was awarded the Flo Hannah Lifetime Achievement Award by the Coastal Prairie Partnership and the Terry Hershey Bayou Stewardship Award by the Bayou Preservation Association.





# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

For over 25 years, generous donors like you have made it possible for us to protect land, restore the prairie, and connect people to nature. Thank you for your continued support.





# 2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# WHAT YOU CAN DO

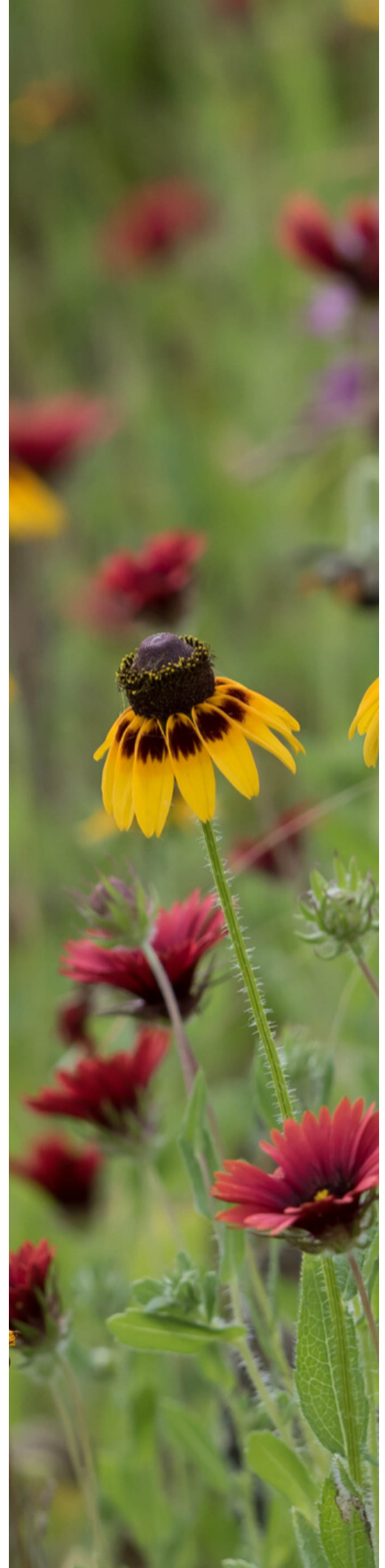
We need your help to accomplish our vision. Your generous financial gifts, your steadfast volunteer efforts, and your enthusiastic sharing of our story bring us success. Thank you.

**VOLUNTEER.** Come out to the Indiagrass Preserve to lend a hand and help us with the native seed nursery. Or join us for a stewardship workday the first Saturday of each month. More information on our website at [katyprairie.org](http://katyprairie.org)

**GIVE A GIFT.** Your generous contributions can help KPC protect and enhance land and provide outdoor programming for children and adults

**HELP US TELL OUR STORY.** Share your favorite prairie adventures. Find us on Facebook and YouTube, or use the hashtag [#katyprairie](#) on Twitter or Instagram [@katyprairie](#)

**LEARN MORE.** Visit [katyprairie.org](http://katyprairie.org) or contact a member of our team (713.523.6135) to learn about volunteer opportunities, upcoming events, and planned giving opportunities.





# STAFF

Mary Anne Piacentini, President & CEO  
Elisa Donovan, Vice President and Legal Counsel  
Wesley Newman, Land Conservation Director  
Ali Dodson, Advancement Director  
Lan Shen, Seed Collection Manager & Great Grow  
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