



2021

ANNUAL REPORT



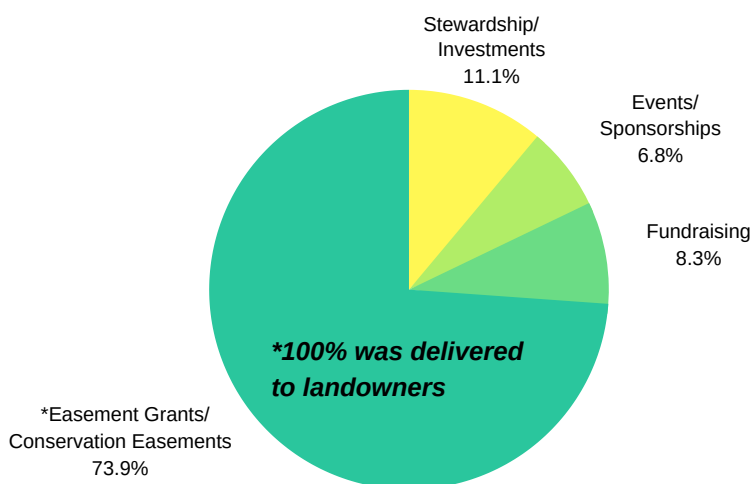
Photo by Rachael Sebastian

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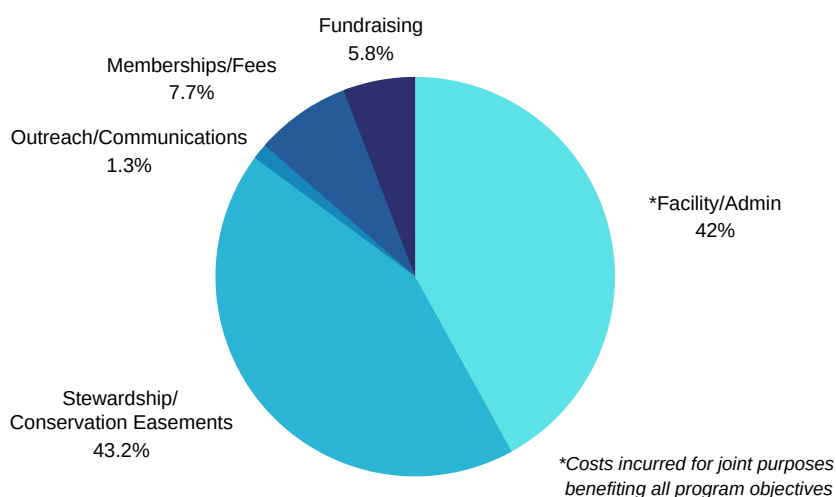
2021



INCOME \$921,807.65



EXPENSE \$294,913.94



Dear Friends,

You may have heard before, "Plan to work and work the plan." RTK is working to protect our grasslands. Three years ago, RTK kicked off a new strategic plan. This included an action plan with measurable outcomes and accountability for everyone from staff to the board of directors. The plan is working.

Fundraising is up 96% from 2018. The number of donations is up 87%. Donor retention reached an all-time high of 79% in 2021. A recent study placed the national average at 46%. RTK will continue to navigate the financial challenges and shortfalls still present. The plan is working.

In the past 12 months RTK partnered with the true conservationists, the Kansas landowners, to help facilitate their vision of protecting 2,746 acres of limited, native grassland. Another 5,060 acres are pending. The plan is working.

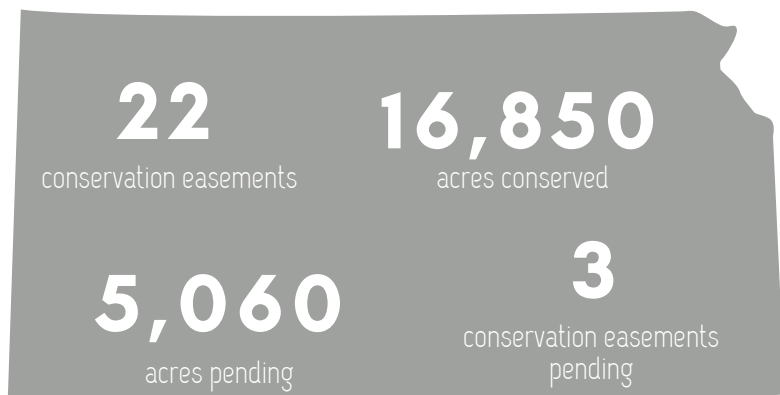
Public education and outreach have increased by 194%. RTK communications through website, digital and print media made 367,000 impressions in 2021. This is an increase from 125,000 in 2018. The plan is working.

You, the friends of RTK, have made this work possible. Unlike many of our neighboring states, Kansas does not have a designated conservation fund for easements, which is unfortunate. These funds could pay for RTK staff to complete conservation easements that are on hold and apply for hundreds of thousands of dollars in available federal grants to pay the landowner for their easement. Your financial support is what makes our work possible. Whether you recognize it or not, you are a part of the plan and an invaluable team member. This plan cannot exist without you. Thanks to you, the plan is working.

Yet with this recent success, it is still not enough. Ranchland has major hurdles from capacity to finances to overcome. Thank you for your continued trust and support of RTK as we do the mission that is important to you, protecting Kansas grassland.

Thank you. Together, the plan is working.

Lynn Gentine, Executive Director



RTK Conservation Easement efforts to date

2021 CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

JUSTIN & MARY JANSSEN

243 acres in Ellsworth Co.

Closed on June 22, 2021

Justin and Mary Janssen reside in Wabaunsee County near Alma. In June 2021, the family conserved 243 acres in Ellsworth County. Janssen grew up in the southern part of Ellsworth County, and his family operated a mostly cow-calf operation utilizing grass in the area. Their daughter and her husband and children operate a cow-calf business utilizing the same grass in the Smoky Hills.

"We are interested in conservation and leaving the land better in the future. We hope many future generations will continue to value and care for this land," Janssen said.

The Janssen conservation easement is adjacent to the Peterson family conservation easement, which increases the footprint of conservation.

Janssen said, "The Smoky Hills area is more productive and prettier than most people appreciate, and we are pleased that RTK has invested time, effort and finances to encourage and identify these conservation easements in this area."



RTK has 11 board members. As an affiliate of the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA), a majority of RTK board members are ranchers or landowners. RTK's affiliation with KLA is important to the Janssen family.

"I hope ranching landowners continue to make up the majority of RTK board members who guide the organization. We have faith that RTK will adhere to minimal impact on the landowners' day-to-day management decisions and respect the rights of individual landowners," Janssen said.

EDP Renewables and the Natural Resources Conservation Service were key funding partners on the closing of this conservation easement. This is the second conservation easement the Justin and Mary Janssen family has completed with RTK. The first was in 2016, also in Ellsworth County.

Janssen said, "We feel relieved and satisfied. The process takes much longer than anticipated. We are satisfied that the productivity and beauty of these grassland hills will be enjoyed by many generations."

By Samantha Weishaar, Associate Director



**"THE PRODUCTIVITY &
BEAUTY OF THESE
GRASSLAND HILLS WILL
BE ENJOYED BY MANY
GENERATIONS."**

- Justin Janssen



2021 CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

GREGG & DEBBIE STEWART

2,504 acres in Lincoln Co.

Closed on November 4, 2021



Gregg and Debbie Stewart are residents of Washington County. The Stewart family recently conserved the 2,500-acre Woody Ranch in Lincoln County.

Stories were passed down in Gregg's family about how the native grass grew to the river's edge with little to no trees. Hearing these stories that were passed down for generations is what made Gregg and the Stewart family so passionate about conservation.

"If a cattleman like myself could go back in time it would be as close to paradise as I can imagine," Stewart said.

Much of the topography, and many of the species living in the Tallgrass Prairie in the Smoky and Flint Hills have been unaltered for millions of years.

Stewart said, "There are several leks of prairie chicken that are absolutely breathtaking at the top of the hills during their mating season. This area of the country and the beauty of these hills would turn anyone into a conservationist."

The Stewarts chose RTK because the conservation goals of the family aligned with the organization.

"THIS AREA OF THE COUNTRY & THE BEAUTY OF THESE HILLS WOULD TURN ANYONE INTO A CONSERVATIONIST."

- Gregg Stewart



"RTK understands that cattle grazing plays a part in the sustainability of the species in this area, and it is important for the maintenance and survival of the native grass prairie. RTK's alliance with KLA played an important part, too," Stewart said.

Gregg and Debbie's grandson is the seventh generation to reside in Washington County. Their three sons are pivotal in the family operation. Garrett is a practicing veterinarian; Brigham runs the ranch, and Tucker is an attorney who works as Senator Dr. Roger Marshall's ag policy advisor in Washington, D.C.

Stewart said, "The early mornings and late nights of working with cattle and replacement heifers at the Woody with my sons and our guys are among my fondest memories. There will be many more good memories to come! We couldn't operate without the help and professional guidance of our partners and crew on a ranch this size. Several of the guys have been with us for over ten years and they often tell stories of events on the Woody Ranch themselves."

Gregg's brother Kent and his wife reside in Texas and raise cattle. Kent has two children, all of which occasionally help with the family ranch. It truly is a family operation.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helped provide funding for this project. Stewart said they were great to work with and very helpful.

"It feels great to have completed this process. The fact that this land won't change is comforting to me and my family. The professionalism and attention to detail RTK provided was amazing. The board of directors and staff have a real understanding of a working ranch and how it interacts with the land in a positive way," Stewart said.

By Samantha Weishaar, Associate Director