

YOUR LAND, YOUR LEGACY

Conservation Options with Audubon of Kansas





Protecting wildlife, habitat, and the stories rooted in the Great Plains.

No matter how much we love our land or cherish the memories tied to it, we know we cannot take it with us. Without thoughtful planning, the trees we admired may be cut, native plants treated as weeds, prairies plowed, and land subdivided—erasing both its natural beauty and its story.

Audubon of Kansas (AOK) is proud to partner with landowners who want the assurance that their land will be protected, cared for, and respected indefinitely for the benefit of wildlife, habitat, and future generations of conservationists.

“The more I became involved with AOK, the more obvious it became that AOK was the best destination for our land.”

~Gary Haden



Far West Wildlife-Friendly Farm

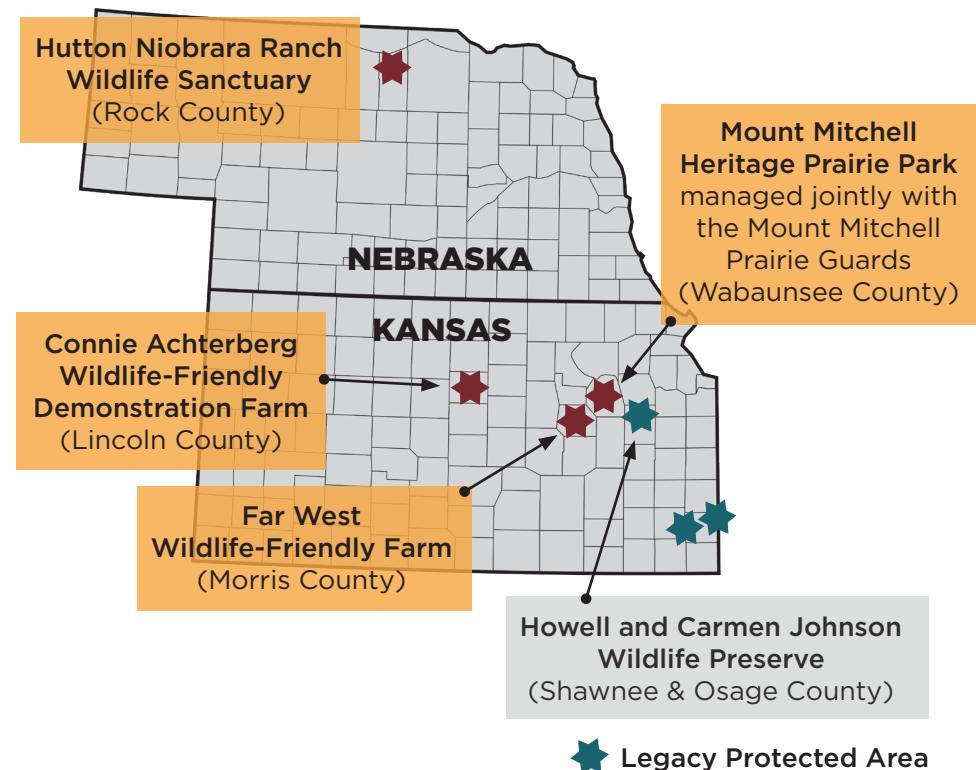
THE VISION

AOK envisions a future where

every Kansan can easily connect with high-quality habitat

made possible through a growing, multi-state system of Protected Areas. This vision is supported through land donations and legacy gifts.

★ CURRENT PROTECTED AREAS



These places protect prairies, wetlands, woodlands, riparian areas, and working lands that support native wildlife while offering opportunities for education and responsible public access.

SHARED PRINCIPLES

- Management that prioritizes native wildlife and ecological health
- Public benefit through nature education and appreciation
- Adaptive, science-informed conservation practices

If these principles reflect your hopes for your land's future, AOK welcomes a conversation.

Salina attorney Connie Achterberg chose a land transfer with a life estate when she donated her 240-acre childhood farm in Lincoln County to AOK. While ownership transferred to AOK, she retained the right to live on, manage, and earn income from the land for the rest of her life—continuing to make management decisions and pay property taxes, while also receiving a charitable tax deduction based on the value of the land minus the life estate.

Image of Connie Achterberg



CONSERVATION OPTIONS

OUTRIGHT DONATION OF LAND

Transfer ownership to AOK, allowing AOK to manage and protect the land indefinitely.

DONATION WITH A LIFE ESTATE

Donate your land while retaining the right to live on or manage it during your lifetime.

BEQUEST THROUGH A WILL OR TRUST

Retain ownership during your lifetime while clearly directing the land's future conservation.



Diverse prairie at the Achterberg Farm

During her lifetime, Connie worked closely with AOK to restore wildlife habitat on her working farm, establishing native plant buffers, pollinator habitat, and wildlife-friendly field edges. Saddened by the decline of quail and other wildlife, she was able to witness their return as these conservation practices took effect. Today, her property lives on as the Connie Achterberg Wildlife-Friendly Demonstration Farm, reflecting her vision for land that supports both people and wildlife.

STEWARDSHIP

Protecting land forever requires more than good intentions—it requires resources.

Routine stewardship includes prescribed burning, invasive species management, habitat restoration, fence maintenance, trail establishment and maintenance, insurance, and taxes. At times, extraordinary action may also be required to defend or restore a property.

For this reason, AOK generally accepts land only when adequate resources exist to uphold our promise of perpetual care.

Stewardship support may include:

- Income generated by the land (pasture rent, crops, haying)
- Cash gifts or bequests
- Endowment contributions



(left) Snapping Turtle at Far West Farm
(right) Sandhill Cranes at Hutton Ranch



LAND MANAGEMENT



(left) prescribed burn at Johnson Wildlife Preserve
(right) invasive species treatment at Achterberg Farm

Thoughtful, Adaptive Stewardship

Protected Areas are managed using best practices for native wildlife and habitat conservation. Depending on the site, management tools may include:

- Prescribed fire
- Conservation grazing
- Habitat restoration and native plant establishment
- Invasive species control
- Carefully managed hunting, fishing, or trapping when appropriate

Public activities such as birdwatching, hiking, and environmental education are encouraged when compatible with conservation goals.

OUR PROMISE

Audubon of Kansas intends to own and manage its Protected Areas forever. Strong governance practices, financial oversight, and endowment protections support this commitment.

In the unlikely event that AOK is ever unable to continue stewardship of a property, we will first seek to transfer it to another nonprofit with a similar mission. If that is not possible, the property may be sold, with proceeds distributed according to donor instructions established in advance.

This transparency ensures donors' intentions remain central—no matter the future.



Niobrara River overlook at Hutton Ranch

STEPS TO EXPECT



GETTING TO KNOW THE PROPERTY

- AOK representatives conduct multiple site visits
- You complete the Protected Areas application



DEVELOPING THE VISION

- You share your vision for the property
- Together, we align your goals with AOK's mission and priorities and determine the resources needed to enact that vision



DUE DILIGENCE

- Financial plan developed
- Title search, boundary survey, and appraisal completed as needed



MUTUAL COMMITMENT

- You engage independent counsel to draft legal transfer documents
- AOK becomes your partner in long-term land management

Steps may take up to two years to complete.



***Every legacy begins with a
CONVERSATION.***



Whether you are exploring options or ready to donate, AOK is ready to listen.

Consult with your Estate Planner, CPA, Attorney, or Professional Advisor when making planned gifts.

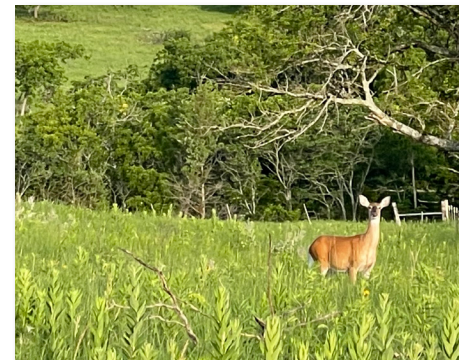
HOWELL AND CARMEN'S STORY

Written by Howell Johnson

In September 2025, AOK became the owner of our 340-acre property near Auburn. It is now called the Howell and Carmen Johnson Wildlife Preserve. We made this donation through a process called a sustained life estate, by which AOK became the owner upon transfer of the deed, but we continue to manage and use the property as if it were ours as long as we are willing and able; then AOK assumes full control. In addition to that benefit, we are allowed to take a significant tax deduction, spread over 6 years, for the appraised value of the property minus the value of the life estate.

When we purchased this land with a house and two outbuildings 23 years ago, it was mostly in its natural state, and we have worked to maintain and restore it.

It gives Carmen and me great peace of mind to know that this piece of what's left of the natural world will be permanently preserved by Audubon of Kansas.



The value of the property lies in the variety of natural ecosystems and habitats. These include riparian woodlands along the upper Wakarusa River and its tributary streams, tallgrass native prairie with patches of buffalo grass, limestone bluffs, lowland meadows, wetlands, buffalo wallows, and oak savannas. It lies within the Osage Cuestas physiographic region, and a variety of animals, including birds, are attracted to these habitats. We are confident that Audubon of Kansas will ensure that this land will be preserved.

Images shown from the Johnson Wildlife Preserve



Audubon of Kansas
PO Box 1106
Manhattan, KS 66505
785.537.4385

giving@audubonofkansas.org
www.audubonofkansas.org

Audubon of Kansas is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Tax ID (EIN): 48-0849282

*Cover Image: Rocky Mountain Beeplant at the
Hutton Niobrara Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary*