



Waconda Cultural Association
2131 180 Rd
Glen Elder, KS 67446
(785) 545-3345
wacondaca@gmail.com

*Dedicated to preserving the rich history of
Waconda in the Solomon Valley*

Members and Friends of the Waconda Cultural Association

Annual Report for 2023

Activities

Elementary School Children Tours:

WCA Board members presented programs for area 4th and 6th graders on April 25 and May 1st and 2nd. The program involved a half hour in the Visitors Center talking about the 4 points of history of the Valley: Native Americans, settlers, the Waconda Springs and the dam and flooding. The students also visited the Springs Replica with more history presented. Approximately 100 students participated.

Kansas Road Trip Visitors

The Kansas Sampler Foundation sponsored its "Big Kansas Road Trip on May 5, 6 and 7. This annual event highlights destination locations of historical interest in certain areas of the State. This year, the area included Jewell County. Board members manned the Visitors Center for a few hours each day to catch travelers passing through.

Lakefest

Lakefest was held on July 1. Weather dominated the event. On the Friday night before, wind blew down the big performer's tent owned by WCA. It was damaged beyond repair. Blake and crew removed all materials and cleared the area. The tent canvas was used to cover the performers stage area and Beckers brought approximately 20 small 10x 10 tents for guests. In the afternoon, two storms hit, destroying the canvas on the salvaged stage area and most of the small tents. With many thanks to Blake and Lydia, the event was moved to their place.

At past Lakefest events, funds were raised by selling 25- \$100 tickets with the winner receiving \$10,000. This year, funds were raised mainly through a 50-50 raffle and an auction. Major items were donated by Normans, Stortzs, the Marina, Waconda Boats, Becker's Auto and Trailers, and Dental Designs. WCA hired chainsaw artists to create sculptures, which were auctioned for the fundraiser. In the end, we cleared \$6400.

Prior to the storms Henry Tice & Chey Knoll provided entertainment. After moving to Lazy H Lakeview RV Park, Back2Back opened for the main event DJ Bridwell & donated items were auctioned for the fundraiser.

Indian Festival:

The WCA co-sponsored an Indian festival on October 7. Greg Victors (The Wichita War Dancer) along with his brother and sister demonstrated several styles of dancing. Greg has opened the program for the last 4 years. Ron Brave, from Mayetta, brought two drummers and five dancers. As with Greg, he provided information about the dances. Both men also provided historical information. The program lasted from 10:00 to about 4:30 with a break for lunch. The WCA served around 100 guests to a lunch of Indian Tacos and Fry Bread. Breakfast burritos prepared by the Banner were available for early commers.

The WCA erected a tipi in a children's activity area. Linda Clover and Lucille Heller told Native American legends to children in the tipi. The Solomon Valley Community Foundation awarded the WCA \$1200, and local

donations totaled about \$400. \$1270 was earned from the lunch meals and the WCA donated \$3300. The Board will look at either cutting the costs or finding additional revenue and sponsors in the future.

Ghostly Storytelling Event

The Glen Elder State Park, under the direction of Scott Jordan, Park Manager, hosted an evening for families on October 21. The warm autumn evening started out with Blake Housh providing wagon rides on roads around the Park. At dark, the Park furnished ingredients for smores as well as sticks to roast them over small fire rings. Hot cider and hot chocolate were also available. The evening was topped off with spooky stories provided by local storytellers; and the legend and history of the Waconda Mineral Springs. Approximately 120 people attended.

New Attraction at the Park

Just in time for the Waconda Indian Festival, a 30 ft. black iron arrow was added just south of the Waconda Visitor and Education Building. Materials were sponsored by the WCA with Blake Housh, Dale Housh, and Doug Devore donating the skills to build the arrow. The arrow appears to have landed diagonally inserting itself into the ground. It is available for photo-ops at the State Park year round.

Waconda Springs Replica:

The Replica is filled with water around April 1 and emptied following the Indian Festival in October. WCA Board members maintain the water with weekly visits and maintenance materials. The Waconda Springs Replica is an outdoor, walking museum, open 24/7 just south of the Glen Elder State Park Office, and west of Hopewell Church. A 360 view of the State Park can be enjoyed from the top, while reading signs describing the history of the Mineral Springs.

Future Plans

The Board committed \$50,000 toward a new, larger shelter house at the Osage Campground, since this is the location of both Lakefest and the Indian Festival. Additional funding will be furnished by the State Wildlife and Parks and the Bureau of Reclamation. The smaller shelter house there, now, would be moved to Kanza Playground area.

Plants at the Visitors Center:

Kent Miller, Board Member, planted a variety of plants around the Visitors Center. Scott Jordan and crew brought in soil to fill the void along the front side and plumbed an exterior faucet to make it easier to water.

WCA History: The WCA was organized in 2018. A summary of events and improvements to Glen Elder State Park since that time are as follows:

2018-2019:

Rehabilitate the Waconda Springs Replica (grant)	\$20,000
View Finder	\$3,170

2020:

Shrubs around and improvements to the Visitors Center (grant)	\$870
Kiosks and signs at the Replica	\$4,700
Original 3- and 5-gallon Waconda Springs jugs for display at Center:	\$935

2021:

Big Tent (partial grant)	\$2853
Lumber and hardware for picnic table repairs	\$1890
Large sign for placement on wall of Visitor's Center	\$710

2022:

Concrete slab for the new basketball court in the playground at the Kanza campsite:	\$7308
New lumber and hardware for picnic table repairs	\$1900
Quart size original Waconda Springs glass bottle	\$200
New TV and stand for display of visual displays at Visitor's Center	\$453

Past sponsored activities include:

2018:

Grand opening of Visitors Center
Ghostly Story evening at Lake

2019:

July 4 Lakefest
Ghostly Story evening at Lake

2020:

Dedication of the Replica Restoration
Waconda Indian Festival (The virus cancelled other events that year.)

2021:

First Day hike
Lakefest
Waconda Indian Festival
Ghostly Story evening at Lake

2022:

Lakefest, 2022
Indian Festival rained out.
Ghostly Storytelling evening at Lake

For more information about any WCA activities, please check our Facebook page at Waconda Cultural Association, or the website at www.waconda.com. The Waconda Cultural Association e-mail is wacondaca@gmail.com. For phone calls, try Lucille Heller, Chairman 785-564-2118 or Scott Jordan at the State Park Office 785-545-3345.

The Board of Directors thanks all who have supported the Association through the various fund-raising venues.

We invite you to become a member. Dues are \$25 per year.

In addition, we are looking for individuals to be on our Advisory Committee. If you have interest in helping preserve the history of the Solomon Valley, please contact any one of the individuals listed herein. The Board meets monthly, except December.

Thank You

WCA Directors, 2023 – Lucille Heller (Pres), Sheila Paxton (VP), Linda Clover (Sec), John Cashatt (Treas), Randy Dubbert, Sharon Sahlfeld, Kent Miller, Blake Housh, Jay Rowh.

WACONDA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

Membership Drive, 2024

MEMBERSHIP / DONATIONS

I / We want to join WACONDA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION as a Member and/or give a donation to the WACONDA CULTURAL ASSOC. \$_____ MEMBERSHIP (\$25 per calendar year

\$_____DONATION \$_____TOTAL ENCLOSED

Donations tax deductible. WCA is a Non-Profit, Section 501(c)(3) Organization.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-MAIL _____

Mail this Membership/Donation Form to: John Cashatt: 212 N. Logan: Beloit, KS 67420