



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

## **Members and Friends of the Waconda Cultural Association**

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

## **Annual Report 2024**

### **Activities 2024**

#### **Annual Meeting: January 9, 2024**

The election of board members was held. Those elected are shown in bold. The names not in bold show continuation of existing terms.

Three Year Term – **Kent Miller, Steve Richardson, Linda Clover, Dave Stortz (new)**

Two Years remaining- Lucille Heller, Scott Jordan, Randy Dubbert, **Mick McGuire (new)**

One Years remaining- Sheila Paxson, John Cashatt, Sharon Sahlfeld, Annette **Ybarra(new)**

The Annual Report was distributed and discussed. There was no other business.

#### **Regular Meeting January 9, 2024**

The following individuals were elected as officers of the association:

President: Lucille Heller

Vice President: Shiela Paxton

Secretary: Linda Clover

Treasurer: John Cashatt

#### **Waconda Visitor & Education Center & Waconda Springs Replica, 2024**

WCA Board members presented programs for area 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders at the end of April. 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 Hotel, building the dam/flooding. The students also visited the Springs Replica with more history presented. Approximately 100 students participated.

The WCA board members also volunteer to host at the Education Center by appointment, and can be reached through the State Park Office. The Wildlife and Parks system could not fund a regular employee for the visitor center for 2024; however, staff were able to help on holiday weekends. WCA also helps with landscaping.

The Black Iron Arrow, near to the visitor center patio, continues to attract photo-ops. The 35 ft arrow is part of a future goal of “Art in the Park,” relating to Native American and prairie history.

Maintenance of the pool for the Waconda Springs Replica is shared by the WCA board members and the State Park staff, and is filled from April to the beginning of October.

## **April 24 Give to Grow Event**

Held at Beloit Municipal Building-Sponsored by Solomon Valley Community Foundation. Earlier in 2024, Waconda Cultural Association opened an “organizational” fund with the SVCF for the base amount of \$2,000. When the fund reaches the minimum amount of \$10,000 (within the first five years), it will begin “pay-outs” to benefit WCA projects. At the “Give to Grow” Event, WCA board members hosted a table. For that event the fund received a match from SVCF for \$1449.13, related to the \$2,687.00 in donations from that day. The fund now totals \$6,619.55 and growing, and is the long-term vision for history and project.

## **Lakefest 2024**

Waconda Lakefest was held the afternoon and evening of July 6, 2024. WCA donated \$500 to the Beloit Area Chamber of Commerce towards the cost of fireworks display at the end of evening activities. Lakefest is the annual fundraiser for the WCA. A net revenue of \$18,900 was raised, with over \$14,000 being from the auction of wood carvings. Music was provided by Henry Tice, Chey and the Caleb Bowers band. As with Lakefest 2023, a storm with high winds caused significant damage to the large and smaller tents. In 2024, most of the smaller individual tents were destroyed. No effort was made to replace the destroyed large tent because a new, large shelter house is in the plans. The attendance was estimated to be approximately 400, with people coming and going from our area, an estimate of a thousand in the park for the evening fireworks. The early morning Fun Run by the Glen Elder Lions is also a part of the day.

## **Indian Festival 2024**

The Festival was held on the first Saturday of October, October 5. Entertainers included Ron Brave and his son, who played the drums and sang, also providing history. Greg Victors, The Wichita War Dancer, brought two additional dancers, and a flutist. The attendance was estimated to be approximately 150 throughout the day. Buffalo stew and fry bread were sold for lunch. The tipi was set up and used for legendary storytelling. Children’s activities were cancelled because of the wind. Booths of Native American arts and crafts were on site. Nearby, a blacksmith demonstration and prairie history art were available for purchase and education. The Indian Festival is an educational event. Any donations and sponsors to the event are welcomed.

## **Ghostly Storytelling Night**

This event is sponsored by the State Park staff with WCA members assisting with serving warm drinks and smores. Fire rings are provided around the playground area, and WCA members arrange for the legends to be shared, after trailer rides throughout the Park. The ghost stories by area story tellers finish off the evening. The attendance was estimated to be approximately 120 adults and children.

## **Other-2024**

- \$405 was received as a donation in honor of Jerry Keezer.
- \$100 was received in honor of Earl Root.
- \$10,000.00 was received in honor of his father, Earl Root, from Lynn Root. This money was designated to purchase a metal buffalo statue. State Park staff will install it near the Visitors Center.
- The WCA was awarded a grant from Solomon Valley Community Foundation of \$900 to be used for the Indian Festival event. An anonymous donor with the Foundation sponsored an additional \$300.
- Linda Clover resigned as secretary in June. The Board appointed Sheila Paxton to fill the secretary position. Sheila resigned from the vice chairman position. The Board appointed Dave Stortz to the position of vice chairman.
- WCA donated \$250 toward the cost of a tourism sign on US 24 west Cawker City. This is the first billboard/sign devoted to advertising the Waconda Springs Visitor Center/Replica on Hwy24, and should create additional visitors to the Park.
- The WCA Board voted to fund approximately \$18,000 for a new playground, mainly received from the Lakefest, 2024 fundraiser. WCA will pay for materials and the Park Staff will construct.

- The proposed shelter house project has been approved by the State of Kansas and the Federal Bureau of Reclamation. WCA will contribute \$50,000 toward this work, which was raised at Lakefests 2021, 2022 and 2023. Scott Jordan, Park Manager, reported that the work should be completed by the end of 2025.
- Financial assets as of **January 1, 2024** were \$15,215.38 cash and a CD valued at \$50,000.00.
- Assets as of **December 31, 2024** were \$31,558.08 cash (\$9,000 designated for 2<sup>nd</sup> half of playground equipment) and a CD valued at \$52,025.59(\$50,000 committed to the new shelter house project).

## Past Activities

### 2023

Elementary School Children Tours of Visitor Center/Replica in April/May

Big Kansas Road Trip Visitors at Visitor Center, May 5, 6 & 7

Waconda Lakefest, July 1, 2023 & Fireworks

Wakonda Indian Festival, October 7

Ghostly Storytelling Event, October 21

New Attraction at the Park- 35 ft metal arrow photo-op by the Visitor Center

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: planted a variety of plants around the Visitor 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.

### 2022:

Indian Festival rained out.

Concrete slab for the new basketball court in the playground at the Kanza campsite:	\$7308
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New lumber and hardware for picnic table repairs	\$1900
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Quart size original Waconda Springs glass bottle	\$200
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New TV and stand for display of visual displays at Visitor's Center	\$453
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### 2021:

First Day hike

Lakefest

Waconda Indian Festival

Ghostly Story evening at Lake

Big Tent (partial grant)	\$2853
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Lumber and hardware for picnic table repairs	\$1890
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Large sign for placement on wall of Visitor's Center	\$710
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### 2020:

Dedication of the Replica Restoration

Waconda Indian Festival (The virus cancelled this and other events that year.)

Shrubs around and improvements to the Visitors Center (grant)	\$870
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Kiosks and signs at the Replica	\$4,700
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Original 3- and 5-gallon Waconda Springs jugs for display at Center:	\$935
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### 2018-2019:

Rehabilitate the Waconda Springs Replica (grant)	\$20,000
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View Finder	\$3,170
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### 2018:

Grand opening of Visitors Center

Ghostly Story evening at Lake

### 2019:

July 4 Lakefest

Ghostly Story evening at Lake

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For more information about any WCA activities, please check our Facebook page at Waconda Cultural Association, or the website at [www.waconda.com](http://www.waconda.com). The Waconda Cultural Association e-mail is [wacondaca@gmail.com](mailto: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**

Lucille Heller (Pres), Dave Storz (VP), Sheila Paxton (Sec), John Cashatt (Treas), Linda Clover, Randy Dubbert, Sharon Sahlfeld, Kent Miller, Blake Housh, Steve Richardson, Mick McGuire, Scott Jordan and Annette Ybarra.

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**Waconda Cultural Association / Membership Drive, 2025**

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

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_ **City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Form To:**

- John Cashatt  
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