

Gateway to Kamama Prairie

Acres: 6.027 Project Total: \$253,858

Kamama Prairie was the second preserve in the Arc of Appalachia Preserve System and remains its crown jewel of biodiversity - sheltering 24 rare and endangered plant species in all. One out of every three state-listed species in the entire 7300-acre Arc Preserve System lies in this lone, relatively small preserve. Kamama also boasts 68 extraordinary plant species previously state-listed.

The intricate and rich ecosystem in this preserve, with its tens of thousands of native plant and animal species, is not supported merely on Kamama's 186 protected acres. Insects, birds, mammals and reptiles all have loose boundaries, and to meet their needs they also depend on the ecosystems of neighboring meadows and woodlands, irrespective of human ownership. Size matters. Thus, adding more land to Kamama's preserve holdings is the single best conservation strategy we can perform for the perpetuation of Kamama Prairie's rare plant and animal communities.

Ever since we acquired our first parcel in 2004, despite three expansions, Kamama Prairie has remained landlocked and without legal access. To remedy our access problem, for over a decade we have had our eyes on one particular property - a narrow six-acre parcel that ran

along the entire western boundary of Kamama Prairie. Because the tract was developed with a manufactured home and outbuildings, we knew it would be expensive to buy. However, it was the very best parcel to provide Kamama with extensive road frontage on Steam Furnace. The map above - with the acquisition shown in green - illustrates the parcel's ideal location for legal access and, just as significantly, public access. Also note on the map that the road running along the west side of the green parcel is Steam Furnace Road.

When the "For Sale" sign went up on this very property a few months ago, to say we were elated was an understatement. Our patience was rewarded! Rather than chance the tract selling to another party in the current COVID-influenced sellers' market (There were six showings the first weekend!), a sympathetic sister nonprofit, Wilderness East, hurried in and purchased the property with the plan of holding it until we had the funds to purchase it from them. When that time comes, Wilderness East has generously agreed to sell the property to the Arc at the same price they paid for it.

Not only is this planned acquisition an important



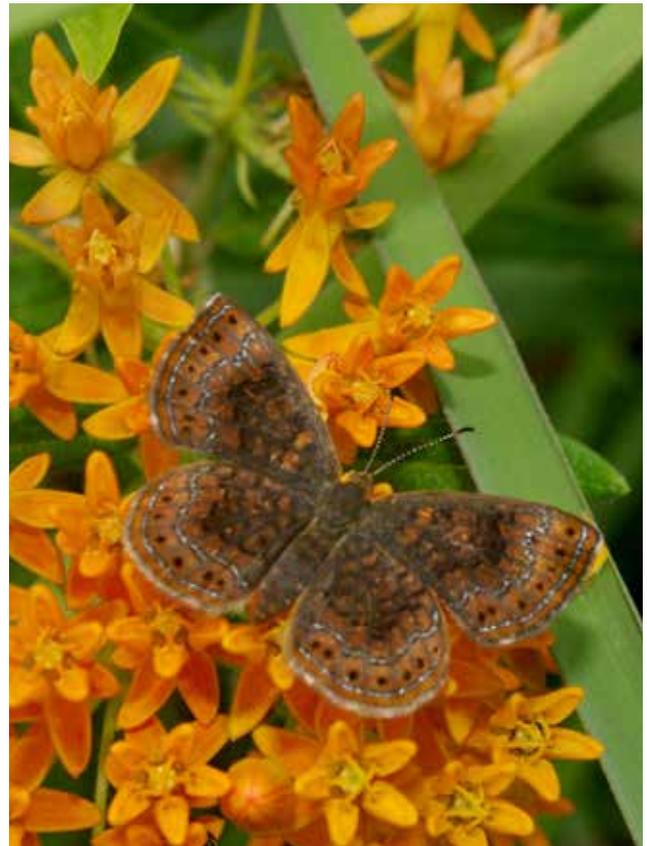
Project balance as of 11/01/2021 is \$138,711.
Check the current balance of Kamama Gateway
on our website at www.arcofappalachia.org

Photo Top Down: A preview of Kamama's future hiking trails. Northern Metalmark Butterfly on Butterflyweed by John Howard.

buffer for Kamama Prairie, it is also a botanical hot-spot and thus worthy of preservation in its own right. John Howard - an Adams County resident, botanist, naturalist, and field researcher - performed a preliminary botanical investigation. Even for a tract so small in size, John discovered 3 state-listed plant species (Tall Larkspur, Crested Coralroot, and Wild Kidney Bean), 21 plant species that were previously state-listed, and 5 state-listed fauna (Blanchard's Cricket Frog, Woodland Box Turtle, Eastern Black Kingsnake, Chuck Will's Widow, and a first-year Eastern Hognose Snake).

Kamama Prairie - and the new Gateway property too - shelter a globally rare plant community known as an Alkaline Shortgrass Prairie. Here in Ohio, it is restricted to Adams County and, to a lesser extent, Belmont County. Alkaline Shortgrass Prairies are populated with plants that are genetically distinct from both the shortgrass prairie species of the Great Plains and those of the tallgrass prairies of the Midwest. Their distinct assemblages of plants are specially adapted to shallow soils derived from underlying limestone, dolomite, and calcareous shale bedrocks.

Remarkably, John also recorded 28 plants that are signature species of the Alkaline Shortgrass Prairie Community on the six acre tract, as well as a very rare Ohio butterfly known as the Northern Metalmark. According to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Bug Lady,



"Kamama" is Cherokee for butterfly, and Kamama has well earned its name, sheltering a dizzying diversity of both butterflies and moths.



Page 32. Photos Counter Clockwise from Top: Kamama stars and fireflies by Brian Prose. Chucks-Will's-Widow. First year Hognose Snake found on the six acres by Samuel James. This incredible Mantisfly is frequently found at Kamama. It looks like a praying mantis but is actually related to Lacewings and Ant Lions. Photo by Samuel James.

Page 33. Photos Clockwise from top right: Hummingbird Clearwing Moth by Jeff White, Giant Swallowtail on Butterfly Milkweed by John Howard, Male Eastern Fence Lizard in breeding coloration by Samuel James, and Pipevine Swallowtail on Dwarf Larkspur by Jeff White.





Northern Metalmarks prefer “open/dappled stream edges and meadows near woodlands, with shale, limestone or serpentine rock barrens or outcroppings close by.” This perfectly describes the conditions at Gateway to Kamama Prairie!

Once this property is acquired by the Arc of Appalachia, we will finally be able to open Kamama Prairie Preserve to the general public, providing access to one of the state’s most renowned botanical and zoological paradises. Planned developments include the removal of the older double-wide house and the outbuildings from the tract and the installation of a new parking lot to serve as the preserve’s public trailhead. An awarded Clean Ohio grant is helping to support the site’s acquisition and trailhead development. Donations sought will provide the required match as well as building stewardship funds for what will be a new and major public preserve.

The Arc of Appalachia is committed to caring for its preserves into perpetuity. Without any tax dollars supporting the Arc, all of the annual attention required from our staff to maintain trails, cultivate volunteers, and steward native ecosystems requires yearly expenditures of a minimum of \$30,000 - \$50,000 each year for each and every preserve that is open to the public.

For the first time in the Arc’s history, we are committed to building up a Stewardship Fund for Kamama Prairie to help ensure that the Arc’s shiniest JEWEL of biodiversity is given the attention it deserves, not just today and not just next year, but forever. If we reach our campaign goal, we will have raised 1/6 of the monies we need for Kamama’s full sustainability - funding annual stewardship of the preserve’s natural communities and its public trails. We think that’s a good start, and each time we add new acres to the preserve in the future, we’ll raise more yet.

This is our way of responsibly planning for the future. There are many treasures in the Arc, and buying them is only the beginning of their preservation journey.

