

OSU McPherson Preserve

Payne County

160 acres

Including large institutions in the Registry program can be a bit more challenging than working with individual landowners. The process of registering a property that belongs to a university, state agency or corporation starts simply enough with a site visit. From there the process becomes more complicated. Instead of only one or two people to review and sign a Registry agreement, there are usually multiple people, including attorneys who must review the agreement and authorize signatures. And that authorization process can take time. So when a newly completed agreement for the Oklahoma State University McPherson Preserve arrived at the Registry office, it was a particularly nice surprise. The Department of Botany at OSU owns the preserve and sponsored the new Registry agreement. Members of the department have also been managing the McPherson Preserve for the past six years or so.



Prescribed burns are important tools used in the restoration process because they help control invasive plants such as the red cedar while encouraging biodiversity.

The site is dominated by crossttimbers, a mosaic of Post Oak/Blackjack Oak forest and tallgrass prairie. It also has a creek with a waterfall. The site initially qualified to become part of the Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry because there are populations of the Oklahoma beardtongue (*Penstemon oklahomensis*) in the scattered prairies. Stewardship and restoration projects at the property consist of the removal of many Eastern red cedars and prescribed burns on the northwestern portion of the property. Dr. Michael Palmer oversees much of the stewardship activities at the McPherson preserve. He and other professors also use the preserve as a study site for various class field trips.

I would like to extend a special note of thanks to Dr. Palmer for his assistance with the completion of the

new agreement with the OSU Department of Botany. Commending large institutions such as OSU for their role in the protection and restoration of Oklahoma's biodiversity is especially rewarding. Its voluntary participation may serve as a catalyst for otherwise reluctant institutions to participate in the Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry in the years to come.



The McPherson preserve was named in honor of the late Dr. James McPherson, who was a professor in the Botany department at OSU.



The waterfall trickles along during drier months.

