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**\$500,000 Grant from Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation
To Create Koch Wetlands Exhibit at Cheyenne Bottoms**

*More than \$2.8 Million Given by Foundation
To Environmental Projects in Kansas*

Wichita, Kan. – The Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation has given a \$500,000 grant to the Fort Hays State University Foundation to create the Koch Wetlands Exhibit inside the new \$4 million Kansas Wetlands Education Center at Cheyenne Bottoms near Great Bend, Kan.

The 2,000-square-foot Koch Wetlands Exhibit will feature displays on birding, hunting, farming, wildlife and more. It will include life-size silhouettes, maps, a timeline depicting the wetlands of central Kansas throughout the past 10,000 years, and wildlife viewing areas. The exhibit is scheduled to open in spring 2009 at the 41,000-acre Cheyenne Bottoms, a natural land sink that contains the largest ecosystem in Kansas.

The Kansas Wetlands Education Center has been a collaborative effort according to Dr. Edward H. Hammond, FHSU president. "This project would not have been possible without many partners including government, private individuals, independent organizations and foundations," said Hammond. "The Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation played an indispensable role by funding the permanent exhibits that will tell the story of Cheyenne Bottoms and the great Central Flyway. Thanks to the generosity of the Koch Foundation, visitors from near and far will come to understand that Cheyenne Bottoms is truly a national treasure."

"This is a signature environmental project for Kansas and one in which we are proud to play a role," said Liz Koch, president of the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation. "The dynamic exhibits, hiking trails, observation areas and remote cameras will bring visitors close to nature and encourage hands-on learning and interaction. As word spreads about the center, we think our state will enjoy the economic benefits that result from increased tourism and use of the Cheyenne Bottoms area," Koch said.

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Governor Kathleen Sebelius gave the keynote address at the official groundbreaking for the Kansas Wetlands Education Center in October 2006. "This is a very generous donation from the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation to Fort Hays State University," said the governor at today's announcement. "The wetlands exhibit will be an excellent educational tool for Kansans of all ages to learn about the dynamic natural environment that can be found right in their own backyard."

Since 1997, the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation has given more than \$2.8 million to a variety of environmental projects in Kansas. The Koch Wetlands Exhibit expands the footprint of the foundation's environmental projects in Kansas.

According to Alan Pollom, Kansas State Director for The Nature Conservancy, "It is great to see the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation continuing its history of investment in conservation and environmental education. This new grant ties nicely with the foundation's record of past major support for the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita and the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Chase County."

The Kansas Wetlands Education Center will be owned and operated by FHSU as part of its Sternberg Museum of Natural History. Other partners involved in the project include the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks; the Kansas Department of Transportation; the Kansas Department of Commerce; Fort Hays State University; Barton County Community College; the Kansas Wildscape Foundation, Inc.; The Nature Conservancy; the city of Great Bend; the city of Claflin; the city of Ellinwood; the city of Hoisington; the Great Bend Convention & Visitors Bureau; the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce; and Barton County.

Established in 1953, the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation focuses its resources on not-for-profit organizations in Kansas that significantly enhance the state's quality of life through arts and arts education; environmental stewardship; human services; enablement of at-risk youth; and education. More information at www.fmkfoundation.org.

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Koch Wetlands Exhibit at Cheyenne Bottoms

Koch Wetlands Exhibit

- Created through a \$500,000 grant from Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation
- A 2,000-square-foot exhibit hall inside the Kansas Wetlands Education Center
- Features displays on birding, hunting, farming and wildlife
- Includes life-size silhouettes, maps, displays and a timeline depicting the wetlands of central Kansas throughout the past 10,000 years



Kansas Wetlands Education Center

- An 11,246-square-foot facility that will open in April 2009
- Located on Kansas 156 Highway, along the Wetlands & Wildlife National Scenic Byway, about 10 miles northeast of Great Bend
- A collaborative \$4-million project by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks; the Kansas Department of Transportation; the Kansas Department of Commerce; Fort Hays State University; Barton County Community College; the Kansas Wildscape Foundation, Inc.; The Nature Conservancy; the city of Great Bend; the city of Claflin; the city of Ellinwood; the city of Hoisington; the Great Bend Convention & Visitors Bureau; the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce; and Barton County
- Operated by Fort Hays State University through its Sternberg Museum of Natural History

Cheyenne Bottoms

- A 41,000-acre natural land sink in central Kansas that acts as a natural regulator and filter by absorbing storm runoff and thereby purifying the water by trapping silt and filtering out pesticides and other pollutants
- It is one of the most important ecosystems in Kansas and one of the most significant wetland habitats in the Central Flyway, which is the main route taken by migrating waterfowl, shorebirds and others through the Great Plains of North America
- As the richest wetland feeding grounds in the Central Flyway, it hosts more than 600,000 waterfowl during the autumn migration
- A "critical habitat" for a number of threatened or endangered birds during nesting, staging or wintering periods, including species such as whooping cranes, peregrine falcons and bald eagles
- At the peak of the annual spring migration, it can see as many as 250,000 ducks and geese, plus white pelicans, hawks, sandhill cranes and songbirds



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- Also home to a rich diversity of plants, insects, fish, snakes, reptiles, amphibians and mammals
- Designated by the international Ramsar convention in 1988 as globally significant, one of only 22 such sites in the United States

Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation

- The Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation (www.fmkfoundation.org) was established in 1953. The donors for whom the foundation is named shared a passion for education and a love of the outdoors.
- The foundation focuses its resources on not-for-profit organizations in Kansas that significantly enhance the state's quality of life through arts and arts education; environmental stewardship; human services; enablement of at-risk youth; and education.
- One of the foundation's signature projects is the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in the Flint Hills of Kansas. In 2006, the foundation contributed \$1 million to The Nature Conservancy to complete its acquisition of the 11,000-acre Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. At that time, the gift was one of the largest private donations for conservation in Kansas history. The preserve is the only national park dedicated to conservation of the tallgrass prairie.
- In 1997, a \$300,000 grant from the foundation helped make possible construction of the Koch Habitat Hall at Wichita's Great Plains Nature Center.
- In 2007, a gift from the foundation helped bring the National Symphony Orchestra to Kansas for its first-ever Kansas Residency. The Residency included concerts in five cities throughout the state and more than 100 events scheduled in schools, libraries and retirement centers.
- The foundation provides funding to colleges and universities throughout the state including the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, Wichita State University, Fort Hays State University, Emporia State University, Newman University, and Friends University.
- In 2008, the foundation, along with Koch Industries, Inc. donated \$400,000 to Kansas State University's office of diversity to increase enrollment of multicultural students and help them succeed in college.
- Since its inception in 1970 through 2008, the Koch Scholarship Awards Program sponsored by the foundation has awarded more than \$2.3 million in scholarships to deserving undergraduate students who are dependents of full-time employees of Koch companies and meet certain criteria.

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