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Kansas Land Trust Names New Executive Director

by Sondra McCoy

RoxAnne Miller has been named Executive Director of the Kansas Land Trust. Laurie Ward, who has been Executive Director since January 1, 1998, will continue as Special Projects Director.

RoxAnne's duties will consist primarily of administration of KLT; working on conservation easements and monitoring easements; maintenance of office records; fundraising; representation and communication with other organizations, agencies, and the public; and coordination of staff and volunteers.

Laurie will focus on fundraising, membership development and events, special projects, and communications via newsletters, publications, and press releases. Both Executive Director and Special Projects Director are half-time positions at the present.

Increased public interest and landowner inquiries on conservation easements has made it necessary to increase the staff at Kansas Land Trust. This is very encouraging to all interested in furthering KLT's mission to protect and preserve significant lands in Kansas.

RoxAnne grew up in western Kansas, specifically WaKeeney, Hays, and Russell. Always wanting to be of service to the community, she kept searching through the years for the most satisfying and suitable venue. She believes her work with the Kansas Land Trust will fulfill her dream of service.

She began her academic career as a nontraditional student, graduating from Ft. Hays State in 1991 with a major in political science. She then entered the University of Kansas to study law and graduated from the University with a joint degree in Urban Planning and Law.

Following graduation she began practicing real estate and land use law with the firm of Lathrop & Gage L.C. in Kansas City, Missouri. According to RoxAnne, her practice "as a transactional real estate attorney, included representation of buyers, sellers, landlords, tenants, lenders and local governments in a variety of real estate and land use transactions." On May 1, 2001, RoxAnne left Lathrop and Gage to begin a solo practice. She wrote, "I look forward to managing this firm according to my value system. Beginning a new business means I have the time to pursue opportunities that fit that vision. The Executive Director (of KLT) position would allow me to play a part in preserving valuable land resources and give back to my community. Enjoying nature is one way I rejuvenate my body and soul and I would like to ensure future generations that privilege."

At the present time RoxAnne will continue her private legal practice part-time while working part-time for KLT. It is hoped funds and growing interest in conservation easements will make way for a full-time Executive Director.

She lives in Lawrence and recently opened a Lawrence law office with an adjacent Kansas Land Trust office (see p. 2). RoxAnne began working for KLT on August 15, 2001.

When asked about her vision for KLT, RoxAnne says that she would like to see a cooperative, balanced working relationship between developers and conservationists. One-

sidedness is not conducive to balance and progress. Also, she believes that Kansas needs to promote awareness of its resources. She sees Kansas as "under appreciated." RoxAnne looks forward to encouraging and cooperating with other conservation-minded agencies and groups throughout the state. Coordinating volunteer programs which involve skilled, professional people is another goal expressed by Roxanne. Her legal expertise with real estate law will be especially useful to the KLT.

RoxAnne participated in co-founding two not-for-profit corporations. One of them was CASA of the High Plains, and the other KC Crew (a networking organization of real estate professionals).

Eric Strauss, former Chair of Urban Planning Studies at KU, praised RoxAnne's ability to multitask and in fact had nothing but praise for RoxAnne. He could think of no reasons why KLT shouldn't "jump on it and hire her as soon as possible." donna luckey, KLT board president, remembers RoxAnne as a student who was "well organized, a 'rigorous' thinker, and highly ethical."

RoxAnne Miller is excited about Kansas Land Trust and her new position as its Executive Director. "This is a wonderful opportunity, and I am looking forward to working with the board and members to accomplish the goals of the organization. Preserving Kansas' valuable land resources is an important service that I will be proud to be part of."

Sondra McCoy is a KLT
Board of Directors member.