

LOCAL & STATE

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PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MARGY STEWART

ARTIST'S 'INSTALLATION' TAKES SHAPE

AT RIGHT: Artist Betsy Roe works on an outdoor "installation" this weekend on a prairie restoration site in eastern Geary County. The nonprofit corporation Prairie Heritage Inc., commissioned this work to honor the memory of conservationist Jan Garton, who died last November. The work will be composed of materials found on site and will be completely biodegradable. Roe, named Kansas Emerging Artist of the Year in 2009, doesn't just depict natural processes but makes them an actual part of her work.

AT LEFT: The outline of Roe's installation slowly emerges through these "presences," composed of dogwood branches cut to prevent encroachment on native prairie. Visitors to the site have associated these forms with a variety of beings — tornadoes, monks, Druids, Native American elders, nuns, mummies, captives and goddesses. Roe calls them "the gals" and says each one has a distinctive personality. She hopes to complete the installation by mid-June.