



# Erythronium

Newsletter of the Iowa Native Plant Society vol. 17 no. 1 April 2011

## Iowa Wildflower Week – May 1-7, 2011

The Iowa Native Plant Society is promoting the second annual Iowa Wildflower Week to encourage Iowans to connect with the native flora.

### Sunday – May 1 – Garlic Mustard Pull at Rochester Cemetery

10am-12:30pm

Workers will get to see the response to last fall’s burn, see a more recent burn area, and will be done in time to go to the walk at the Geller Preserve at 1PM, where you can see Indian Paintbrush and other wonderful things a few miles from Rochester Cemetery.

### Sunday – May 1 – Wildflower Walk at Geller Historical Preserve

1-2:30pm

This is a 120 acre tract of land located at the corner of 265th St. and Snaggy Ridge Road in rural Cedar County. Meet at the south gate on 265th St.

Directions from the south: Exit I-80 at the Tipton exit (Hwy 38), travel north about a mile and a half, and take F44 west for one mile. Turn north into Rochester, follow the crooked road through town and continue north on Snaggy Ridge Road (gravel). Go north two miles, turn east onto 265th St. and the property is on the north side of the road. (2010 information: That’s probably the most direct route. Unfortunately 265th St. is not a through road; there’s a bridge out, or it’d only be a mile off Hwy 38.)

Sponsor: the Cedar County Historical Society <http://cedarcountyhistoricalsociety.webs.com/>

### Tuesday - May 3 – Woodland Wildflower Hike

6:30-8pm

Margo Frankel Woods State Park has had huge displays of wildflowers in the past.

Difficulty: moderate, hilly terrain.

Directions: Follow NE 2nd Street (HWY 415) about two miles north of I-80/35. The park is located on the

east side of the road, just south of NW 66th Avenue. Meet in the parking lot. This is north of Des Moines and east of Johnston.

Sponsor: the Sierra Club, Central Iowa Group

Contact: Ginger Soelberg [soelbergv@dwx.com](mailto:soelbergv@dwx.com) 515-253-0232

### Thursday – May 5 – Wildflower Wonders

5:30-7pm

Prairie Heritage Center 4931 Yellow Avenue Peterson, IA 51047

This will be a family friendly walk through the prairie to find and admire the wildflowers.

Sponsored by the O’Brien County Conservation Board.

Contact: Charlene Elyea [occb@iowatelecom.net](mailto:occb@iowatelecom.net) 712-295-7200

### Friday – May 6 – Woodland Wildflower and Fern Walk

6:00pm – 8:00pm

Dolliver State Park (Webster County, near Lehigh, south of Ft. Dodge), has a great diversity of spring wildflowers, and some/most of the ferns should be unfurled by then, too. Meet at Boneyard Hollow.

Difficulty: easy to moderate, hilly terrain. It may be wet from recent rain, so wear appropriate footwear.

## Table of Contents

INPS Field Trips .....	page 3
Loess Hills Prairie Seminar .....	page 5
Prairie Biotic Research Grants.....	page 6
Endow-Bio, Inc. ....	page 7
Tallgrass Prairie Bees.....	page 7
Works of Art.....	page 8
Iowa Sedge Identification Workshop .....	page 10
Iowa Prairie Conference .....	page 12
Membership Form.....	back page

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Directions: From the north: from US Hwy 20, take US Hwy 169 south ~5.3 miles to IA Hwy 50/290th Street. Turn east and go ~5 miles to Dolliver Park Avenue/Co. Rd D33; turn north ~1 mile to the park.

From the south: from US Hwy 30, take US Hwy 169 north for 16 miles until it intersects IA Hwy 175. At this point, Hwy 169 turns west, but continue north 7 miles on Co. Rd P61/Paragon Avenue to IA Hwy 50. At Hwy 50, turn east ~1 mile to Dolliver Park Avenue/Co. Road D33; turn north ~1 mile to the park.

Boneyard Hollow, marked by a sign, is west of the park road, and a parking lot is on the east side of the road. Park information is available at: [http://www.iowadnr.gov/parks/state\\_park\\_list/dolliver.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/parks/state_park_list/dolliver.html)

Sponsor: the Iowa Native Plant Society

Contact: Deb Lewis [dlewis@iastate.edu](mailto:dlewis@iastate.edu) 515-294-9499

### **Saturday – May 7 – Goat Prairie, Woodland, Limestone Bluffs, and Caves in Jackson County**

10am-3 pm

See INPS Field Trips on page 3 for details

### **Saturday – May 7 – Garlic Mustard Pull at Rochester Cemetery**

10-11am

See Sunday, May 1 for details

### **Saturday – May 7 – Wildflower Walk at Geller Historical Preserve**

1-2:30pm

See Sunday, May 1 for details

Iowa Prairie Heritage Week, promoted by Iowa Prairie Network, is scheduled for September 11-17, 2011. Please notify Dianne Blankenship [bennaid@hotmail.com](mailto:bennaid@hotmail.com) with your program details.

## **Other Upcoming Activities**

### **BugGuide Gathering**

July 29,30,31

Ames, Iowa

For more information: <http://bugguide.net/node/view/456910>

### **IDOT Maps**

Iowa County maps, with road names, available at IDOT website: <http://www.iowadot.gov/maps//msp/index.html>

## INPS Field Trips 2011

Each year the INPS sponsors several official field trips. Thank you to the many people who have stepped up and offered to organize, lead, host, or otherwise help with this effort! The summary is below, and below that or elsewhere in the newsletter are more details. The INPS website calendar always has the most up-to-date information.

May 6 – 6-8pm – Woodland Wildflower and Fern Walk at Dolliver State Park near Lehigh in Webster County (northern-central Iowa) – Deb Lewis is leading this. See the Iowa Wildflower Week article for details.

May 7 – 10am-3pm – Goat Prairie, Woodland, Limestone Bluffs, and Caves in Jackson County (east-central Iowa) – Bill and Marlys Brown and Linda and Bob Scarth are the leaders. See details below.

(June 3-5 – Loess Hills Prairie Seminar – in and near Onawa in Monona County (west-central Iowa) – INPS is a supporter and will have an exhibit there. See the LHPS article for details.

June 25 – 12:30-3pm – Gitchie Manitou State Preserve in Lyon County (northwest Iowa) – Delmar Vanderzee is leading. See details below.

July 23 – 10am-12:30pm – Nelson Paradise Wildlife Area in Mitchell County (north-central Iowa) This is a sedge meadow. The leader is Mark Leoschke. See the details below.

July 28-29 – Iowa Prairie Conference at Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville – See article later in this newsletter for details.

September 10 – 10am-3pm – INPS Annual Meeting on September 10 at Snyder Farm and other central Iowa sites with Joe McGovern leading. The details will be forthcoming.

### **May 7 - Goat Prairie, Woodland, Limestone Bluffs, and Caves in Jackson County**

10am – 3pm

Where: Jackson County in east-central Iowa (19400 21st Ave., Monmouth, Iowa)

Field Trip Description: We'll take a morning walk to the goat prairie (shuttle also available), then lunch at the Browns' on-site private campground (with shelter, microwave, refrigerator, picnic tables, electricity, and outdoor privy). In the afternoon, we'll walk the wood-

land trail along the bluffs which should have abundant wildflowers in bloom, and visit a cave. Wear hiking boots, bring hiking sticks if you wish, and dress for the weather including raingear if necessary.

If you wish to camp overnight on the Browns' land, you are welcome to do so. If so, please contact the Browns in advance at 319-854-7578.

This field trip will be led by Bill and Marlys Brown and by Linda and Bob Scarth. It is sponsored by INPS.

Land Description: Bill and Marlys Brown own 119 diverse acres that include a goat prairie, native woodlands, and northern relicts along a half-mile, little-disturbed section of the North Fork of the Maquoketa River. Spring woodland flowers (spring beauty, rue anemone, hepatica, etc) grow along cliffs with Canada yew. The goat prairie at the top of the cliffs is recovering through the Brown's management. New plant species continue to be documented here, as do woodland birds and interesting fungi, reptiles, and amphibians. Species such as pileated woodpeckers and scarlet tanagers nest here, bobolinks inhabit the grasslands, and kingfishers patrol the river. (Audubon Club visitors to the site usually count 30-40 species). The Browns continue to actively restore the land, and have donated a conservation easement to INHF. See [http://www.inhf.org/projects/jackson/jackson\\_brown\\_2006fall\\_easement.htm](http://www.inhf.org/projects/jackson/jackson_brown_2006fall_easement.htm). INPS visited this site several years ago; its special character makes it well worth a repeat visit.

Directions: In Canton (on E17, Jackson County), stop at the parking lot in front of a small store and canoe rental. Head east and cross over the bridge, then turn left immediately on 6th Ave. Go 1.3 miles north past Wildwood Acres to 166th Street, and turn right (east). Go 0.5 miles to 21st Ave., and turn north (left). It's about 1.3 miles to the bridge crossing over the North Fork, and then 0.5 miles to the top of the hill, past the Ozark cemetery. The Brown's land is the first gate on the left past the cemetery. They will hang a wind sock on the gate. The road is passable, but if anyone does not want to drive clear down to the campground, the Browns will be happy to shuttle. You can reach Bill Brown at his cell phone (319-560-3500) the day of the field trip.

## **June 25 – Gitchie Manitou State Preserve in Lyon County**

12:30-3pm

Where: Meet at the official parking lot on County Road K10 (Adams Ave.) and we will probably carpool to another unmarked entrance.

Description: Visit this unique area that is formally dedicated as a geological, archaeological, historical, and biological state preserve. It is known for its natural outcrop of Sioux Quartzite and native plants that are rare in Iowa.

See sandcherry (*Prunus pumila*) in its only Iowa location, and the state endangered prairie or rough-seeded fameflower (*Phemeranthus rugospermus*, formerly *Talinum rugospermum*). The brittle pricklypear cactus (*Opuntia fragilis*), also in its only location in Iowa, will likely be in bloom. We'll look for western cliff fern, whitlow grass, tumblegrass, buffalo grass, blue grama, and rock spikemoss.

The leader is retired Dorcht College professor Delmar Vanderzee who published the botanical studies of the site in 1979.

Contact: Dianne Blankenship bennaid@hotmail.com  
712-255-3447

## **July 23 – Sedge Meadow at the Nelson Paradise Wildlife Area in Mitchell County**

10am-12:30pm

BRING BOOTS! The Nelson Paradise Wildlife Area is owned by the Mitchell County Conservation Board and occurs northeast of the small town of Otranto (also the name of a town in Italy). The sedge meadow/fen in the southeast portion of the wildlife area has a number of interesting species including dwarf raspberry (*Rubus pubescens*), fen thistle (*Cirsium muticum*) and purple angelica (*Angelica atropurpurea*). Mark J. Leoschke, botanist for the Wildlife Bureau of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in Des Moines, will lead us on an exploration of the wetland flora. BRING BOOTS!

Directions: BRING BOOTS! From the intersection of U.S. Highway 218 and State Highway 9 in Osage (Mitchell County) drive north and west on U.S. Highway 218 to St. Ansgar. Take U.S. Highway 218 north out of St. Ansgar and drive about 5.5 miles to County Road A19 (480th Street). Turn left (west) on County Road A19 and drive about 2 miles (you will

pass Oak Lane Cemetery on the north side of the road, a small prairie remnant owned by the Mitchell County Conservation Board). Turn right (north) on Dancer Avenue and drive about 0.6 mile. Park in the Mitchell County Conservation Board parking area on the left (west) at the curve in the road or along the road after it turns east. We will walk to the sedge meadow/fen. BRING BOOTS!

Map: <http://www.osage.net/~mccb/images/maps/nelson.jpg>

## **Events at the Prairie Resource Center at Brushy Creek**

July 2nd at 10 am meet at the Prairie Resource Center for a prairie walk. We will explore a remnant prairie "Root Cellar Prairie". This remnant prairie is unique because part of which was moved to the top of the hill prior to the filling of the lake area. Root Cellar Prairie is a moderate-high quality prairie that overlooks Brushy Creek Lake. It should have many species in bloom including a great show of Pale purple coneflowers and Butterfly milkweed. The Prairie lilies may still be lingering if we are lucky.

August 27th at 1 pm we will be having a Butterfly tagging and identification event led by Stephanie Shepherd. The Prairie Resource Centers wildflower plots are magnets to many species of butterflies. We will meet at the Prairie Resource Center at 1 pm August 27th to begin the event and travel to wildflower plots and remnant prairies of Brushy Creek to find some of Iowa's insect beauties. Stephanie will have several nets available, but if you have a butterfly net please bring it along.

Contact Information:

Bill Johnson, Biologist, Iowa DNR Prairie Resource Center, 2820 Brushy Creek Road, Lehigh, IA 50557, 515-543-8319, [William.Johnson@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:William.Johnson@dnr.iowa.gov)



## Loess Hills Prairie Seminar – Prairie! – June 3-5, 2011

The seminar begins on Friday evening with presentations at West Monona High School in Onawa, includes a field day at and near the Sylvan Runkel State Preserve all day Saturday, dinner and another program at the high school on Saturday evening, and then birding and more field sessions Sunday morning at the Preserve. It ends at 11:30am with the release of a raptor by SOAR.

On both evenings a campfire program follows the program at the high school. This will be at the campground provided for the seminar at the Loess Hills Wildlife Management Area at 178th St. and Oak Ave., Castana, IA, right by the Runkel Preserve.

This annual event in its 35th year is sponsored by Northwest AEA, the Monona CCB and the Iowa DNR with major support from LRTF and IPN as well as generous support from INHF, Izaak Walton, INPS, Iowa TNC, Loess Hills Audubon, Woodbury County Conservation Foundation, Briar Cliff's Center for Prairie Studies, and Sierra Club – Northwest Iowa Group.

For registration information, visit the NWAEA LHPS website: [http://www.nwaea.k12.ia.us/en/upcoming\\_events/loess\\_hills\\_prairie\\_seminar/](http://www.nwaea.k12.ia.us/en/upcoming_events/loess_hills_prairie_seminar/)

For photos and writings from past seminars, visit: <http://www.lizblankenship.com/shareloess/>

and the Sharing site: <http://www.lizblankenship.com/shareloess/content/home> for more information,

or contact Dianne Blankenship, Coordinator, for more information. [bennaid@hotmail.com](mailto:bennaid@hotmail.com)

Field sessions on Saturday begin at 8:15am, 10:15am, and 1:30pm. Dinner is at 4:45 at the West Monona High School in Onawa, 1314 15th St. The program begins at 6pm. A campfire sing-along will begin at 9.

The Sunday morning program begins with an early morning bird walk at 6, breakfast at 7 including live music, and the final field sessions beginning at 8:15.

## Seedling ID Workshop on May 12th

The Tallgrass Prairie Center will be hosting a Seedling Identification Workshop on May 12th at the Tallgrass Prairie Center in Cedar Falls. Participants will learn to identify seedling characteristics of common prairie wildflowers, legumes, and grasses and weed look-a-likes with live plants. The cost is \$60.00 per participant and includes registration materials, lunch, workshop reference binder, native seedlings to take home, and The Tallgrass Prairie Centers Guide to Seed and Seedling Identification in the Upper Midwest. For more information and registration information for this workshop contact Ryan Welch by email [rwelch@uni.edu](mailto:rwelch@uni.edu) or call (319) 273-3828. Registration deadline is April 29, 2011.

Ryan Welch, Outreach Coordinator  
Tallgrass Prairie Center, UNI  
(319) 273-3828 Phone  
(319)268-0668 Fax  
[rwelch@uni.edu](mailto:rwelch@uni.edu)

## April 29, 2011. Woodland Wildflower Walk. 4:15 - 6:15 pm.

Please join us for a 0.5-mile hike in our oak-hickory forest to observe a myriad of spring wildflowers in bloom. Wildflower blooms that we may see include Dutchman's breeches, trout lilies, spring beauties, bloodroot, hepatica, toothwort, mayapples, wild ginger, false rue anemone, prairie trilliums, woodland plox, Virginia bluebells, and Jack-in-the-pulpits. If you would like to join us, please RSVP for transportation from Grinnell to Larissa at [mottll@grinnell.edu](mailto:mottll@grinnell.edu) or 641-269-4717. We'll leave from the parking lot by the John Chrystal Center on campus at 4:15 pm. If you would like to drive separately, please meet us at the upper forest parking lot at 4:40 pm. Driving directions: Take I-80 Exit 173 (Kellogg/Sully) north to first gravel road crossing (S. 12th Ave E.) Take the gravel road east 1.5 miles to our main entrance. Sponsored by the Center for Prairie Studies.

## Prairie Biotic Research, Inc.: Iowa Researchers Funded in our 2011 Small Grants Program

Six of 17 grants awarded in 2011 support researchers living in Iowa. These grants funded proposals of five faculty members at Drake University, Mount Mercy University, University of Iowa and Wartburg College, as well as two PhD students, both at Iowa State University. One of these PhD students conducts his field research in Montana, so he was ineligible for Iowa-restricted funding and his grant was funded from the general pool.

The Iowa-restricted funds used were \$2595 donated by The Fred Maytag Family Foundation and \$2090 donated by the Irwin Andrew Porter Foundation, support for which we are profoundly grateful.

We invite your support! Please send a small donation to Prairie Biotic Research, Inc., PO Box 5424, Madison, WI 53705. Thank you!

### **Neil Bernstein & Thomas Rosburg (\$1000) for, “Sand dune succession following removal of pine planting: impacts on microclimates, habitat succession, and ornate box turtles.”**

Neil is a faculty member at Mount Mercy University; Thomas Rosburg is on the faculty of Drake University. They will study the effects of removal of planted pines on a former shifting sand prairie at Hawkeye Wildlife Area in Johnson County. Rare ornate box turtles live here and seem negatively impacted by the decreased area of loose sand for nesting and hibernating. Microclimate changes, plant community changes, and reaction to such changes by these turtles will be monitored over several years. Neil first saw this site in 1983, shortly after pines had been planted, and has been studying this turtle population since 1996. Thomas is perhaps the premier field botanist in Iowa today.

### **Peter Eyheralde (\$1000) for, “Seed dispersal by bison in tallgrass prairie.”**

Peter is a PhD student at Iowa State University. He will determine the dispersal of native and non-native seeds in bison hair and feces in a reconstructed tall-grass prairie. He will compare plant species diversity in areas proximal to and distal from bison wallows and develop environmental education programs to interpret the role of bison in restored grassland ecosystems. He has owned and managed a herd of 26 bison on his farm in southern Iowa for 12 years. This work will be conducted at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge,

near Prairie City, Iowa.

### **Johanna Foster (\$1000) for, “Bison wallow effects on beetle communities.”**

Johanna is on the faculty of Wartburg College. She, too, will be conducting the field component of her research at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge. She'll be assisted by Kristen Nielsen, a senior at Wartburg, whose participation will fulfill part of her research requirement for graduation. Our funding makes Kristen's participation possible. Johanna previously won PBR funding in 2007.

### **Stephen Hendrix (\$1000) for, “Are wild bee communities declining?”**

Stephen is on the faculty at University of Iowa and has been studying Iowa's native bees for some years with the assistance of several graduate and undergraduate students. We have previously funded his research, in 2006, 2007, and 2009, and two of his students have also won PBR funding through our Small Grants Program. This grant will support an experienced undergraduate assistant, Caitlin Digman.

### **Paul Skrade (\$1000) for, “Migration and wintering of mountain plovers.”**

Paul is the second PhD student who won funding, and his field research is in Montana, so his work is funded from our unrestricted pool. Mountain plover is a lovely, upland shorebird of the steppe or short-grass prairies just east of the Rocky Mountains. This bird is in serious trouble and we are happy to provide funding to study its migration so that we can better understand its habitat requirements. This beautiful, prairie-dependent species might yet be saved from extinction.

### **Keith Summerville (\$685) for, “Use of grazing as a management tool to increase butterfly diversity.”**

Conservation grazing can be likened to a deadly medication that is essential for patients' health -- applied thoughtlessly it is ruinous, but it must be applied. So, how do we proceed? This grant will extend Keith's present three-year project to allow collection of a fourth year's data at the Bolton-Hay Prairie, part of the Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, east of Des Moines. Keith's fine research skills will help elucidate a small aspect of this huge and complicated subject. Keith is a faculty member at Drake University. He previously won PBR funding in 2003, making him one of the earliest beneficiaries of our Small Grants Program.

## Endow-Bio, Inc.

Please help us to publicize our brand new, all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) public charity.

“Endow-Bio, Inc., the First National Endowment for Biodiversity. Learn more at Endow-Bio.org.” might be used as a short public service announcement or to fill an occasional small void on your printed page. Please visit our website to better understand what we do, why we do it, and how we do it.

Endow-Bio, Inc., the First National Endowment for Biodiversity, is engaging the public to join us in supporting other organizations' efforts relating to conservation through rare species management, scientific research, environmental education, environmental law, land acquisition, habitat management, advocacy, wilderness, wildlife rehabilitation, family planning and other social issues relating to conservation of biodiversity.

We have many environmental problems and we are all complicit, whether through water and air pollution, loss of topsoil, homogenization of the world's fauna and flora, global warming, over-consumption of natural resources like oil and aquifers and fish stocks, release of myriad novel chemicals into our environment, plastic waste filling the sea -- the list goes on and on. As our human population increases our various impacts on nature worsen dramatically. But the worst and most symbolic problem is the sharp increase in extinctions of species that we are causing, the crisis in biodiversity.

Many individuals, organizations and governments are working to alleviate our many problems, yet only 2% of charitable donations in the U. S. support conservation. We think this number should be much higher. The mission of Endow-Bio is to publicize these hopeful ventures and to elicit participation by the public in working toward resolution of these problems.

Endow-Bio, Inc. is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) public charity that operates only within the United States. We raise money and give it away in an annual cycle, raising money for many different agencies over time, and our members get to vote on where this money goes. We practice grassroots philanthropy: anyone can participate fully in our work with a donation of as little as \$1.00. Let your small gift be a pebble tossed into quiet water -- through our endowment, the ripples

your action sets in motion just keep on expanding!

You can also help us greatly by recommending our website to everyone you know who cares about the environment we leave our children, about the many other species we are causing to go extinct, about the beauty and balm of wildness now under siege.

Thank you,

Andrew Williams, Pres.

## Identification and Ecology of Tallgrass Prairie Bees: June 13- 17, 2011

The Nature Conservancy's Tall Grass Prairie Preserve, Osage County, Oklahoma

(<http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/oklahoma/preserves/tallgrass.html>)

The goal of this course is to introduce participants to the genera and many of the species of bees in tallgrass prairie communities, their ecological relationships, and the resources available to help students learn more about bees on their own. The five day course is geared towards bee students, pollination ecologists and prairie biologists. Some background in entomology, field botany and prairie ecology will be helpful but is not necessary. Course time will be split evenly between the field and lab, depending on the weather (see agenda below). Students will have the opportunity to build a reference collection of their own. Tall Grass Prairie Preserve is the largest protected remnant of tallgrass prairie left on earth and is an ideal location to study prairie biota. TGP Preserve Headquarters and the TGP Ecological Research Station are located about 20-30 minutes north of Pawhuska, OK. Class size is limited to 15.

Instructor/organizer: Mike Arduser. Additional instructor(s): Rob Jean

Fee: \$450.00

What we will provide: Lodging in bunkhouses, food, course guide hardcopy, collecting/survey materials, internet access

If interested in participating, call/email Mike Arduser. Questions? Call or email Mike Arduser 314-591-7728 (cell), [Michael.arduser@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:Michael.arduser@mdc.mo.gov)



## Works of Art

Many stories could be told about how a piece of land has changed a person's life. This is a story about how a yard changed the life of Blossom Shaw.

The yard lies in a residential neighborhood on a quiet street in Iowa City. Jay and Blossom Shaw bought the house at 309 Windsor Drive in 1979. It was the first house they had ever owned, and they would raise their son and daughter here. The Shaws loved their house and the neighborhood. But the yard had some problems, especially the back yard of the one-third-acre lot. Hardly any grass grew on much of it, thanks to the shade of several large trees near the house.

"A muddy hill," was how Blossom once described it.

And so she set out to do something about it. Over the years the experience would be as transforming for her as it would be for the yard.

Blossom had helped in the family garden as a child and loved the out-of-doors, but she had never taken on a gardening project like this. But over the next few years she would go from being a novice gardener to being an innovator in the use of native plants in natural landscaping. No less important, she would turn her gardening into an art form. "I became determined to make the yard into a natural and beautiful work of art," she says.

None of this was apparent in the early '80s as Blossom struggled to grow grass below the big silver maple and other trees. Then her husband designed and built a terrace that curved out from the house. It gave Blossom a platform for a shade garden. She poured over catalogs and frequented nurseries looking for plants that would bloom in the shade. She joined a local garden club. A terrace garden of shade-blooming perennials gradually took shape with plants such as bleeding heart, Solomon's seal and columbine

Hostas also caught her eye. She knew nothing about them, but soon saw their possibilities as a ground cover and as a design element. Today she grows 57 varieties, mixing the different sizes, colors and leaf patterns in arrangements throughout the yard as an artist might add paint to a canvas. "I love the palette you can make with hostas," she says.

The next step. But her terrace garden and the "hosta hill" garden covered only part of the bare area shaded by the trees. What about filling in with a mini wood-

land? she thought. She'd never heard of anyone trying such a thing on a city lot. This was in the early '80s after all. But she loved the woods, and her search for shade-loving perennials in the terrace garden had already led her to native woodland plants. With little to go on, she forged ahead with her unusual idea.

An existing cottonwood, an oak and a maple would serve as the canopy for the woodland. She'd have to create the rest from scratch. For the understory she added a pagoda dogwood, an American hornbeam and a serviceberry---all smaller native trees that would produce shelter and food for wildlife.

Then she searched for herbaceous plants for the ground layer. Scouring a friend's woodland in the country and going to local plant sales, she added some 30 woodland species, including trilliums, bloodroot, wood phlox, May apple, bellwort, doll's eye, wild geranium, ginger and ferns. The collection included the rare green dragon, which she dug up from a vacant lot.

Rocks provided natural-looking borders. With the help of her family, she made many trips hauling the rocks from an area farm. Yes, there was the one trip that resulted in broken springs on the family car.

But the mini-woodland idea worked.

Benchmark. You follow a path as it curves through layers of dappled shade. Chipmunks scamper. You might see a red-bellied woodpecker or hear the call of a catbird or a warbler. Like a fine painting, the little woodland transports you to another realm. Fusing the natural and the aesthetic, it set a benchmark in Blossom's approach to gardening.

Getting free chips from a landfill, Blossom finished off the shady part of the yard with a wood-chip island that ties the woodland and other gardens together. Stumps provide seating around the fire ring, the result of Blossom watching for trees being cut down in the neighborhood. "May I have a log?" she'd ask. A hollow log that she and her husband dragged home provides food for microorganisms, insects and animals, while its texture and shape add to the overall composition. Even the wood pile adds to the design, as well as to wildlife habitat. Birds gather at the feeders and waterer. This summer a pair of chickadees nested in a nearby bird house.

Sculptures underscore the aesthetics of the yard. Stainless steel wing-like figures entitled Kite Plants rise from the wood chips. A piece called Angel stands



out in its whiteness against the backdrop of a hemlock.

The sculptures also honor the memory of their creator, the Shaws' son, Eric, a talented artist whose work was inspired by nature. Three of his largest sculptures are on display at Midwest art museums---The Cedarhurst Sculpture Garden in Mt. Vernon, Ill.; the Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences in Peoria, Ill., and the Krasl Art Center in St. Joseph, Mich.

Prairie gardens. In six years Blossom had designed and done her entire yard. In recent years, she created two prairie gardens to break up the lawn in the sunnier part of the back yard. After Jay stripped away the sod, Blossom planted little bluestem and prairie dropseed along with 24 forbs. The plugs came from Ion Exchange in northeastern Iowa. "The plantings aren't large," Blossom says, "but prairies are part of our natural heritage and I wanted to integrate them into the landscape. They also add diversity and habitat."

Other prairie species such as coneflower, butterfly weed, and yarrow grow in the butterfly-hummingbird gardens in the front yard. They join other butterfly- and bird-friendly plants. A sign from the National Wildlife Federation reads, "Certified Wildlife Habitat."

"The yard is habitat for us as well---a space where we can thrive," Blossom says as she pulls out a sheet of paper that totals everything she's planted over the years. It comes to 25 trees, 25 shrubs, 30 native woodland species, 25 prairie forbs and two grasses, 30 perennial species in the bird/butterfly gardens; 27 other perennial species and 57 varieties of hostas. She's identified 54 species of birds, along with the squirrels, rabbits, chipmunks, deer, voles, opossums, raccoons, toads, ground hogs and bats.

All this from a yard that in 1979 consisted of eight large trees, three shrubs, three perennials and one hosta.

"It's been a privilege to make a contribution, but I give Blossom all the credit for the yard," Jay says. "It's something we enjoy all hours of the day."

It didn't come easily. In addition to all the usual work such a project demands, Blossom fought the clay soil, roots, weeds and an invasion of garlic mustard.

"It was worth every minute," Blossom says. "The yard is like my little world---my 30-year work of art."

Blossom Shaw lives at 309 Windsor Dr., Iowa City, IA 52245 (319) 887 2091

*Story and photos by Rollie Henkes*

*Reprinted with permission from Woodlands & Prairies Magazine.*

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Subscriptions can be ordered online at: [www.woodlandsandprairies.com](http://www.woodlandsandprairies.com) Or contact the editor at [rhenkes@neitel.net](mailto:rhenkes@neitel.net) . Tel: 539 4144. P.O. Box 713, Monona, IA 52159.

NOTE: 15% of subscriptions paid by members of the Iowa Native Plant Society will be donated to the Society. If ordering online, state that you are an INPS member.



Prairie garden. Cream false indigo and coreopsis are two of the forbs flourishing in the prairie garden in only the second year after being planted from plugs.

# Iowa Sedge Identification Workshop

Friday, June 17 – Saturday, June 18, 2011

Grinnell College Conard Environmental Research Area (CERA)

Sedges are a group of plants that create some of the greatest challenges for identification. Their small flowers and fruits require very careful field and lab study to properly identify plants to species. In addition, they are also difficult to identify by vegetative characteristics alone.

Despite these challenges, sedges in the genus *Carex* (Iowa's most diverse plant genus with about 120 taxa), are common components of every type of habitat in Iowa, and their identification is critical for assessing habitat floristic quality, collecting appropriate seeds for restoration projects, and documenting their distributions and habitat preferences.

Iowa sedge experts, Dr. William (Bill) Norris, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Western New Mexico University, Dr. Tom Rosburg, Professor of Biology, Drake University, and Mr. Scott Zager, plant ecologist, Wildlands Ecological Services, will provide lab and field instruction for this workshop.

## Workshop location and format:

The workshop will take place at the 365-acre Grinnell College Conard Environmental Research Area (CERA) in Jasper County near Kellogg. Generally, the morning sessions will take place in the Environmental Education Center and focus on (1) learning and identifying sedge characteristics on sample specimens and (2) using keys. The afternoon sessions will involve field identification practice in forest, prairie, and wetland habitats within easy walking distance of the lab facility at CERA. The full 2-day format of this workshop is intended to provide ample time for interaction with instructors and exposure to as many sedge species as possible in a variety of habitats. Practice and repetition are keys to mastering plant identification, and this workshop will offer ample time for both.

A field trip to Engeldinger Marsh in Polk County is planned for Saturday. Please be prepared to carpool.

## Registration includes:

- 2 full days of field and lab instruction
- Continental breakfast, lunch, and afternoon refreshments on both days

- Draft keys to 120 Iowa *Carex* taxa developed by Norris and Zager

- Packet with workshop materials

## Recommended materials:

- 10X Hand-Lens (Available from [www.kooters.com](http://www.kooters.com))

## Optional sedge identification guides to bring:

Hipp, A.L. 2008. *Field Guide to Wisconsin Sedges: An Introduction to the Genus Carex*. University of Wisconsin Press, ISBN-10: 0299225941

Mohlenbrock, R.H. 1999. *Sedges: Carex* (The Illustrated Flora of Illinois). Southern Illinois University Press, ISBN-10: 0809320746

Yatskievych, G. *Steymark's Flora of Missouri*, volume 1. Missouri Botanical Garden Press, ISBN-10: 188724719X

## Lodging options:

- Newton and Grinnell are 10 miles from CERA; Marshalltown is about 25 miles.
- The Grinnell College Grinnell House has 9 rooms that workshop participants can reserve for \$60/night plus taxes on a first-come, first-serve basis. The rooms will be held for workshop participants until May 13. You can contact Conference Operations & Events, Grinnell College, at 641-269-3178, to make reservations. Indicate that you are participating in the sedge workshop at CERA. Here's a link for more information: <http://www.grinnell.edu/offices/collegeservices/guesthousing/>
- Camping: Rock Creek State Park, Kellogg is about 10 miles from CERA. Advance campsite reservations can be made through the park reservation system. Half of the campsites are available on a first-come, first-serve basis: [http://www.iowadnr.gov/parks/state\\_park\\_list/rock\\_creek.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/parks/state_park_list/rock_creek.html)

## Driving directions to CERA:

Take Interstate-80 west from Grinnell (or east from Newton) to Exit 173. Go north on Hwy 224 and take the first gravel road on the right (S 12th Ave. E). Follow it east about 1.5 miles to the main entrance of CERA. Watch for our main entrance sign on the right.

## Iowa Sedge Workshop Registration Form

Please fill out this form and mail with your check or credit card information by Friday, May 13 to:

Larissa Mottl  
Center for Prairie Studies  
Grinnell College  
Grinnell, IA 50112

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Title/Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Payment can be made by check or credit card. Make checks payable to: Grinnell College.

Payment by credit card (check type):  Master Card  Visa  American Express

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card number \_\_\_\_\_ 3-digit code \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of card holder \_\_\_\_\_

Please note if you have any dietary restrictions or preferences.

We would be happy to send an email out to all participants, about a week prior to the workshop, listing participant names and hometowns for the purpose of facilitating carpooling.

Would you like us to include you on this list? Yes No

## Sedge Workshop Registration Information

To register, please complete the attached form and return it with your payment to the address indicated by, Friday, May 13, 2011. The workshop is limited to 30 participants. A waiting list will be kept in case there are any cancellations. You will receive an email or phone confirmation when we receive your payment.

Registration Fee: \$40, cancellations are refundable if notice is received by June 3, 2011.

For your records: Date registration mailed \_\_\_\_\_

Payment method \_\_\_\_\_ Confirmation received \_\_\_\_\_

For questions about the workshop, contact Bill Norris at 575-538-6625 (office), 575 519-9325 (cell), or by email at: [norrisw@wnmu.edu](mailto:norrisw@wnmu.edu).

For questions about CERA, contact Larissa Mottl at 641-269-4717 (office), 641-990-3109 (cell), or by email at [mottll@grinnell.edu](mailto:mottll@grinnell.edu) or visit our website at: <http://www.grinnell.edu/academic/biology/cera>.

Thank you!

## 2011 Iowa Prairie Conference, July 28 & 29

### Iowa Lakes Community College

Estherville, Iowa

This year, the 2011 Iowa Prairie Conference will be hosted by Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, Iowa. This conference is recognized as one of the premier prairie events in Iowa and is anxiously awaited by prairie enthusiasts from all walks of life. If you would like to learn more about our native prairies and rub shoulders with some very knowledgeable prairie experts, then this conference is for you. Come join us for the conference and participate first hand in the prairie experience. Field trips are an important part of each Iowa Prairie Conference and provide an opportunity for people to tour and experience some of the best prairies in Iowa. This year, those field trips will occur in Emmet and Dickinson Counties in northwest Iowa. For more information concerning the conference and these field trips, contact Gary Phillips at Iowa Lakes Community College, Estherville, Iowa. Gary can be reached at (712) 362-7978 or by e-mail at [gphillips@iowalakes.edu](mailto:gphillips@iowalakes.edu).

Registration Information will be available soon

### Conference field trips

Glacial Moraine Prairie Field Trips (Thursday, July 28 and Friday, July 29)

During this year's conference we will be exploring the glacial moraine topography of Dickinson and Emmet Counties in northwest Iowa and its tall grass prairies. Located on a landscape created by the Altamont and Algona moraines, this area possesses several of Iowa's best prairie sites. On the first day of the conference we will be visiting Anderson Prairie State Preserve in Emmet County. After a morning of presentations on the second day, we will conclude the conference with a field trip to Cayler Prairie State Preserve and the Freda Haffner Kettlehole State Preserve in Dickinson County. All three of these sites offer an excellent opportunity to see both a diversity of glacial landforms as well as the rich botanical communities which thrive on these sites. These field trips offer "must see" experiences for the Iowa prairie enthusiast.

### Call for Papers

Friday morning, three hours have been set aside for presentations. If you are doing something related to prairies that would be of interest to those attending the conference, please consider making a presentation. Presentations on field surveys, restoration efforts, invasive species control, or any other prairie related topic would be greatly appreciated. If you would like to present, please e-mail the title of your presentation and a very brief abstract to [gphillips@iowalakes.edu](mailto:gphillips@iowalakes.edu) so that it can include it in the final program schedule.

### Schedule

#### **Thursday (7/28/11)**

11:00 to 1:00: Registration

1:00 to 5:30: Emmet County field trip to Anderson Prairie State Preserve

6:00 to 7:00: Banquet and guest speaker (To be announced)

7:30 to 9:00: Evening field trip to Four Mile Lake to view a shallow lake restoration

#### **Friday (7/29/11)**

7:30 to 8:30: Continental breakfast

8:30 to 11:30: Presentations

11:30 to 12:30: Lunch

1:00 to 5:30: Dickinson County field trip to Cayler Prairie State Preserve and Freda Haffner Kettlehole State Preserve

#### **Saturday (7/30/11)**

8:00 to 12:00 or later: Optional post-conference field trip to the Red Rock Ridge sites near Jeffers, MN

Conference accommodations in the Estherville, Iowa area

### Area motels

Sleep Inn  
2008 Central Avenue  
Estherville, Iowa 51334  
(712) 362-5522

Super 8  
1919 Central Avenue  
Estherville, Iowa 51334  
(712) 362-2400



## Area camping

Fort Defiance State Park  
Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources  
Information of camping can be obtained at: [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)

Wolden Recreation Area  
Emmet County Conservation Board  
Information regarding camping can be obtained at:  
[www.emmetcountyconservation.com](http://www.emmetcountyconservation.com)

## Post-conference field trip

Red Rock Ridge Prairie Field Trip (Saturday, July 30)

Come explore with us the 23 mile long Red Rock Ridge of Cottonwood County, Minnesota and experience firsthand one of the most unique tall grass prairie sites in North America. The Red Rock Ridge is part of an exposure of 1.2 billion year old Sioux quartzite which extends from Sioux Falls, South Dakota to New Ulm, Minnesota. While excellent prairie sites can be found all along this exposure, some of the best are to be found along the ridge in Cottonwood County, Minnesota. Located at the southern edge of the "Coteau de Prairies" region, this tour will travel through the center of the recovery area for the federally threatened prairie bush clover. On this tour we will visit numerous sites including the Jeffers Petroglyphs State Historical Site which provides an opportunity to experience not only the botanical wonder of this area but also to observe the pre-settlement human interface that took place on the prairie. Few places in the prairie region of North America offer such opportunities for one to make such a meaningful connection with the prairie and its earliest human inhabitants. The Red Rock Ridge Prairie field trip will be led by Gary Phillips (environmental educator) and Daryl Smith (prairie ecologist).

## About Iowa Lakes Community College

Organized in 1967, Iowa Lakes Community College serves a five county district including Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, and Palo Alto Counties. The two largest campuses are located in Emmetsburg and Estherville. Iowa Lakes Community College also has campuses in Algona, Spencer, and Spirit Lake. Over 80 vocational, technical, career option and liberal arts programs are offered by the college. Currently, more

than 3,900 full- and part-time students are enrolled in coursework at Iowa Lakes. For more information about Iowa Lakes Community College, go to [www.iowalakes.edu](http://www.iowalakes.edu).

## Iowa Great Lakes Area

And after the conference, there will still be ample time to take in the numerous attractions that abound in the Iowa Great Lakes Region. Bring your bike and pedal on the local trail system, bring your kayak and paddle to your heart's content, bring your fishing poles and catch a mess of fresh fish, or simply bring your appetite and try some of the areas award winning restaurants. For more information about the Iowa Great Lakes Region, go to [www.okoboji.com](http://www.okoboji.com).

## New Wildflower Garden in Recognition of 2010 Wildflower Week

*submitted by Larry Grill*

The West Central Iowa Chapter of the Izaak Walton League in honor of the Iowa Wildflower Week is establishing a Wildflower Garden. The Wildflower Garden will comprise a 1500 square foot area adjacent to, and in full view of, Highway # 39 about nine miles north of Denison, Iowa. The European and invasive plants in the area have been sprayed for a second time and the seeding will commence shortly. It will be a great addition to the aquatic and woodland ecosystems already established on our club grounds.

# Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership categories and dues:

\$ 10 Member     \$25 Supporter\*     \$50 (and up) Benefactor\*

Send with your dues to: Peter Hoenle,  
IA Valley RC&D,  
920 48th Avenue  
Amana, IA 52203

Additional information or special interest for member directory entry \_\_\_\_\_

NEWSLETTER Preference-I prefer to receive the newsletter  Electronically  US Post

Check here if you do not wish to have this information published in the INPS member directory.

The INPS mailing list is never distributed to other organizations or companies. Dues are payable on a calendar year basis from January 1 to December 31. Please use this form for changes of address.

\* Annual contributions over \$10 are tax deductible. Iowa Native Plant Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

## NEWSLETTER

Iowa Native Plant Society

c/o Deb Lewis

Department of EEOB

Iowa State University

340 Bessey

Ames, IA 50011-1020