

# Iowa Native Plant Society Newsletter

August 2000

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## Taking Inventory: ISU Study Looks at How Plant Life in Ames Has Changed by Mike Krapfl

Reprinted with permission from *The Tribune*, Ames, Iowa, May 20, 2000.

Bill Norris, the ever-present botanist's magnifying glass hanging from his neck, studied the prickly head of a sedge under a university microscope.

"There's a chance that's something different," Norris told Jimmie D. Thompson, an amateur botanist who has made it his mission to search creek banks, seeps and other out-of-the-way places around Ames for plants that are indeed different.

Norris, an Iowa State temporary professor of botany, handed the sedge (a grass-like plant with extra edges because of its triangular stem) back to Thompson.

"Put that at the top of the pile," Norris said. "It's a high priority."

There's a chance that plant may be added to a new inventory of the plants growing in Ames and within two miles of city limits. Four scientists and Thompson, a retired postal worker, have been at the study for years. They've compared new data with historical data. They've revised and rewritten the paper describing their work and findings. They've come up with pages of discussion, analysis and applications.

The research, for example, tells all of Ames what's growing and where it is, said Deb Lewis, the curator of the Ada Hayden Herbarium at Iowa State. That can help planners and builders and residents avoid developing on higher-quality prairies, wetlands or forests.

The researchers also learned that while Ames has changed dramatically over the past 140 years—more people, bigger houses, farms instead of prairies, roads everywhere— a lot of the plant life has remained the same.

"There are a lot of native plants left— despite the dramatic alteration of habitat," Norris said. "Most plants are still here, albeit in small populations."

The plant hunters— Norris, Thompson, Lewis, Mark Widrlechner of the Department of Agriculture's North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station and Richard Pope of Iowa State Extension— have spent ten years and thousands of hours finding, identifying and listing Ames' plants. They found 868 plant species during the 1990's.

Com and soybeans didn't count. Nor did the ornamental plants growing in your garden. The only plants that did were growing and reproducing on their own. They were found in roadsides, on prairies, beside railroad tracks, in mudflats, within forests, near quarries, at the edge of housing developments, in wetlands, outside Iowa State's Bessey Hall, just about everywhere.

The plant hunters also looked at specimens in Iowa State's herbarium and found another 158 species from Ames. Two previous inventories of Ames plant life listed another 63 species. Add those up and the grand total of plant species found in and near Ames since 1859 jumps to 1,089.

That's actually more plants than were found in each of 17 Iowa counties studied since 1950. It's more than half the plant life recorded for the

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## Leaves from the President's Notebook...

The warm weather trend has continued with an early spring and summer-like temperatures in April and May. If you didn't get out earlier than usual to see the spring flowers, you probably missed the best of the show.

The warming weather continued on into June and July, but there may no longer be talk of a drought. The rivers have been up-and-down, flooding low-lying areas. The moisture has spurred growth of our native plants. Sedges have produced flowering culms, cranesbill bloomed on sand prairies, and spiderwort put on a show in our roadside ditches.

I had a very enjoyable field trip outing to Fairfield, Iowa, and two state preserves. I got to see several plants I had not seen before, such as cream violet, camass lily, and spring avens. The weather was wonderful, and we all enjoyed the late April day.

We lost two botanists recently who influenced my interests in botany. Dr. Larry Eilers died on March 26<sup>th</sup>. I was fortunate to study field botany under him at Iowa Lakeside Laboratory in the early 1970's. He led our class to ponds, marshes, fens, prairies, eskers, and quartz outcrops to explore and find new plants. I will also miss his sense of humor - "Loosestrife for the *Lysimachia!*"

George Knaphus passed away May 20<sup>th</sup>. Professor Knaphus lectured my first botany class at college - Botany 101. He always drew clear figures on the chalkboard and clearly discussed the material. We will miss his presence also on our field trips.

The annual meeting is now just a few months away. We have been looking at speakers and other plant related topics to share. If you are interested in serving the Society as an officer, please contact our vice-president.

There are still several field trips planned yet this summer season. Hope you can attend and enjoy our wild places. See you there!

*Ed Freese*

## In Memorium:

Dr. George Knaphus died on May 20<sup>th</sup>. "Dr. K" was an outstanding and energetic teacher who inspired many to productive careers in botany and science teaching. He was a great photographer and especially enjoyed photographing mushrooms and other fungi. His research, typically as a co-investigator with Lois Tiffany, resulted in numerous publications. These include *Mushrooms and Other Fungi of the Midcontinental United States*, which is co-authored by Donald Huffman and Dr. Tiffany; this useful guide to Iowa's fungi features many of George's photographs. Memorial contributions may be made to the Borlaug Farm Restoration Project and sent to his wife, Marie, at 2322 Hamilton Drive, Ames, 50014.

Continued from page 1

entire state. The new study includes 44 species never before recorded in Iowa.

Is the Ames area really that rich in plant life? Well, no, the researchers concluded. It's just better studied.

"We do not contend that the flora of Ames, Iowa, is especially remarkable," says the latest draft of their paper. "In fact, we suspect that the floras of most counties are far more diverse than this one. Therefore a major lesson of this investigation is that additional field botanical work is needed to more thoroughly document the Iowa flora."

Another surprise was the number of native plants still hanging on in Ames. Back in the late 1800s, about 83 percent of the species found here were native to Mid-Iowa. In the 1990s, the research team found that 74 percent of the species growing around here are natives. "When I think of Ames from the 1800s to now," Widrlechner said, "I would think it would have been a bigger drop."

This wasn't a big-budget study with implications for industry or feeding the world. It was, in fact, a study with no budget and no support. Norris, Lewis, Widrlechner and Pope worked around their regular jobs and assignments.

Thompson volunteered about 40 hours a week during the past few growing seasons.

The study sprouted in 1991 when Norris went to work for the Ames Planning Office. He was to identify, map and determine the quality of Ames' remaining forests, prairies and wetlands. As he went about that work, Norris listed each of the 493 species he came across. In 1996, he enlisted Lewis in a more comprehensive hunt for more species. Pope and Widrlechner joined in 1997. And Thompson signed up in the summer of 1998.

"We're all real passionate field botanists," Norris said. So they had fun wandering around town looking for anything green, growing and different. The hunt was, for example, a chance "to get into places around Ames that I had overlooked," Widrlechner said. "I looked at my neighborhood in a different way."

Thompson hopes the research will have Ames people looking at their town's natural areas in a different way. He'd like to see the new information "keep developers out of the woods and prairies."

But a big lesson from all their work, which they hope to publish in state and national journals, is that 150 years after settlement we still don't know everything about our own backyard. "We know a lot about the Iowa flora," Norris said. "But we have a lot more to learn."

## Schroeder Preserve and Split Rock County Park by Mark J. Leoschke

The two field trip sites are both owned and managed by the Chickasaw County Conservation Board. Schroeder Preserve has about 5 acres of good mesic to wet prairie in the southern portion of the preserve (this site was purchased by the Iowa chapter of The Nature Conservancy and given to the county conservation board). Split Rock has about an acre of mesic prairie and a two acre rich fen in the southwestern corner of the park.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> was a wonderful day for a field trip—sunny and warm. Our small group visited the Schroeder Preserve first. Much of the spring prairie flora was past peak bloom, but shooting star (*Dodecatheon meadia*, the most important plant in the known universe since it blooms in spring, grows on prairies, comes in multiple colors of white, lilac and pink and is very showy at sites like the Schroeder Preserve when it is in peak bloom), prairie lousewort (*Pedicularis canadensis*), prairie phlox (*Phlox pilosa*), yellow star grass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*), swamp saxifrage (*Saxifraga pennsylvanica*), hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*), wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), false dandelion

(*Krigia biflora*) and golden alexander (*Zizia aurea*) were in flower. The serious photographers in the group (those lugging tripods and bags/camera jackets full of camera paraphernalia) were soon left behind getting the perfect picture while the rest of us searched the prairie for neat plants.

One of the neat, although somewhat inconspicuous, plants here is the field sedge, *Carex conoidea*. This species is up to 2 feet tall and has narrow leaves. The fruits are elliptical in shape and have impressed veins, veins that looked like they have been pushed into the surface of the fruit. Most species of *Carex* have raised veins.

After lunch at Split Rock, we walked down to the prairie and fen. The prairie flora was similar to that at the Schroeder Preserve, though less diverse. The fen had 1000's and 1000's of water horsetail, *Equisetum fluviatile*. There was also lots of marsh fern, *Thelypteris palustris*. One of the neatest plants here is the bog birch, *Betula pumila*. Bog birch is a shrub up to 12 feet tall with round, toothed leaves about the size of a nickel to a quarter. This species occurs primarily in fens in Iowa and is rare in the state.

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## Iowa's Very Own VIII. Prairie Bush-clover, Lespedeza leptostachya Engelm. by Thomas G. Lammers

The name of Charles Edwin Bessey (1845-1915) is well known among Iowa plant-lovers. Bessey was the first Professor of Botany at what is now Iowa State University, serving from February 1870 until his departure for greener pastures in 1884. During this time, Bessey pioneered laboratory-based instruction in the plant sciences, including the use of microscopes by undergraduates. He authored textbooks and was an indefatigable proponent of the application of botanical theory to practical agriculture. The first checklist of the Iowa flora was published by Bessey, in the college's *Biennial Report* for 1871. And he collected plant specimens throughout the state. These specimens formed the nucleus of what is today the Ada Hayden Herbarium, housed on the third floor of the building named in his honor, Bessey Hall. Among the many specimens Bessey collected in Iowa was the type of a member of the legume family (Fabaceae), the Prairie Bush-clover, *Lespedeza leptostachya* Engelm.

The genus *Lespedeza* Michx. includes 100 species and is distributed widely in temperate North America, eastern Asia, and Australia. The flora of Iowa includes seven representatives, five of them native and the other two naturalized. Most of our native species have rather broad ranges in eastern and central North America. But the geographic distribution of Prairie Bush-clover is quite limited, restricted to a small area of the Upper Midwest: northeastern Illinois and southern Wisconsin to central Minnesota, south to northwestern and central Iowa. The geographic scarcity of this species has been exacerbated by the near-total destruction of its primary habitat within that range, gravelly upland prairie. For these reasons, on 9 January 1987, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service extended to *L. leptostachya* the protection of the 1973 Endangered Species Act, listing it as "threatened."

Prairie bush-clover is a perennial herb with yellowish flowers, similar to the common and Widespread Round-headed or Rabbit's-foot Bush-clover (*L. capitata* Michx.), but with much smaller flowers (only 4-6 mm long) arranged in loose, interrupted spikes supported by long peduncles. Furthermore, the stalk (petiolule) of the terminal leaflet of each three-parted leaf is shorter than the stalk (petiole) supporting the whole leaf; in *L. capitata*, the reverse is true. *Lespedeza leptostachya*

can still be found in some of Iowa's prairie remnants, most notably at the Cayler Prairie State Preserve in Dickinson County.

As is so often the case with species described from Iowa, we know very little about the circumstances surrounding Bessey's collection of the type. From the label, we know that he collected it in Emmet County sometime in 1871, and then sent the specimen to George Engelmann, a St. Louis physician who was the Midwest's foremost botanist at that time. It was subsequently incorporated with the rest of Engelmann's herbarium into the collections of the Missouri Botanical Garden.

Bessey's specimen was not the only one of *L. leptostachya* to reach Engelmann; he had actually received several from various Midwestern collectors. After careful examination of all this material, he concluded that it represented an undescribed species. He wrote up a formal description and coined the name *L. leptostachya*, in reference to the relatively narrow flower spikes. This description he forwarded to Harvard professor Asa Gray, the dean of American botanists. Gray concurred with Engelmann's conclusions, and inserted the description into a manuscript of his own, which was published in the *1876 Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*.

Engelmann did not specify which of the several specimens he examined was to be considered the type; in fact, he did not even enumerate the material he had seen. Therefore, when Andrew Clewell monographed the North American species of *Lespedeza* in 1966, it was left to him to establish which of the original specimens studied by Engelmann should stand as the type of *L. leptostachya*. After thorough study, he designated the Bessey specimen from Emmet County as the lectotype (Le., a type selected from a body of original material by a later worker). It was this action, then, that made Prairie Bush-clover one of Iowa's Very Own!

## Sharon Bluffs State Park by Mark J. Leoschke

Sharon Bluffs State Park is owned by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and is found near the Missouri border in the southeastern portion of the state. The park is located southeast of the county seat, Centerville and just west of the Chariton River. It is managed by the Appanoose County Conservation Board. The park is one of our smaller state parks at 144 acres, but has some nice upland and bottomland forest.

The rain on the drive down from Des Moines' on the morning of June 24<sup>th</sup> was not a good omen for a field trip. I might have stayed home except for the fact I was the field trip leader, but I did wonder if anyone else would show up! Fortunately, four hardy souls appeared and we had a field trip with overcast skies and intermittent rain.

False hellebore, *Veratrum woodii*, an uncommon species in Iowa, is a resident of the slopes of the upland forest here. We found several plants. This member of the lily family has large, corrugated basal leaves and blooms in late summer. False hellebore is infamous for its sporadic blooming—some years few, if any, plants in a population have flowers and in other years many of the plants will bloom. False hellebore has brown flowers and they don't smell very pleasant, a hint that it is pollinated by flies.

We saw several other interesting plants including the shrub bladdernut, *Staphylea trifoliata* (at this time of year it has light green, three-lobed bladder-like fruits) and yellow false foxglove, *Aureolaria grandiflora* (vegetative on this day, but in late summer it has light yellow flowers about 1.5 inches long).

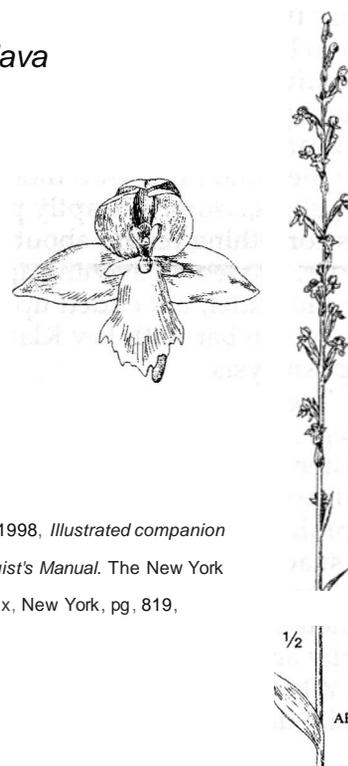
Dr. Lois Tiffany, a mycologist in the Botany Department at Iowa State University, identified many of the fungi that we found along the trail and adjacent woods. There was quite a variety of colors (white, lavender, light green, red), shapes and sizes.

The bottomland forest is dominated in part by kingnut hickory, *Carya laciniosa* (so called because it has big nuts, the largest of any hickory in Iowa) and pin oak, *Quercus palustris* (identified in part by its numerous drooping branches). Gray's sedge, *Carex grayi* (it has large fruits in a ball-like or mace-like cluster), hop sedge, *Carex lupulina* (it has large fruits in a cluster in the shape of a column) and cattail sedge, *Carex typhina* (it has small fruits in a cluster in the shape of a cattail) are found along the edges of or even in shallow portions of the

intermittent pools of the bottomland forest (I saw hundreds of fairy shrimp in these pools in late March).

The most exciting find of the day was the most unexpected! A search for cattail sedge produced a plant that came as a wonderful surprise—southern rein or tubercled orchid, *Platanthera flava*! It is up to two feet tall and has small green flowers (the name tubercled orchid comes from the tubercle or bump on the lower lip of the flower). This orchid is rare in Iowa, known from less than 10 extant sites. Southern rein orchid is found in prairies, sedge meadows and bottomland forest in our state. It has been documented from the eastern third of the Iowa. This is the first time that this orchid has been reported from Appanoose County, which made the find even more fun (this orchid is also known from the Eddyville Dunes area in Monroe and Wapello Counties), a fitting reward for persistence on a rainy day! has been documented from the eastern third of the Iowa. This is the first time that this orchid has been reported from Appanoose County, which made the find even more fun (this orchid is also known from the Eddyville Dunes area in Monroe and Wapello Counties), a fitting reward for persistence on a rainy day!

*Platanthera flava*



from: Holmgren, Noel. 1998. *Illustrated companion to Gleason and Cronquist's Manual*. The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York, pg. 819,

## My Excellent Adventure at the North American Prairie Conference by John Pearson

Sunday: I missed the pre-conference field trips because of the need to spend time with my family, the four of us having taken 3 separate vacation trips the week before (wife & daughter touring East Coast colleges, son at camp, me in the Boundary Waters). I have yet to see Slinde Mounds State Preserve, missed my chance again!

Monday: Rode up to Mason City from Des Moines with Jim Zohrer, Wendy Zohrer, and Daryl Howell in the Zohrer minivan. During the ride, we regaled each other with stories from the Boundary Waters. Due to lack of advance planning ("What? the Prairie Conference isn't next week?!? what happened to June?"), I had no conference registration, no room reservations, no cash, and no return ride when I arrived at NIACC. Discovered that I was to chair a session. No problem, it all worked out due to helpful people at the conference. Made it to only a few formal sessions on Monday because of encountering a seemingly endless stream of people in the hallways with whom to exchange news and make plans. As a result, I got more done in few hours at the Conference than in several typical days of telephone tag in the office. Got a dorm room- it was nice and cool due to the arrival of a long-awaited cold front, but people said it was hot and stuffy the night before. Went on the evening field trip to Union Hills Wildlife Area and saw a beautiful sunset over a beautiful, reconstructed prairie pothole landscape- this was all corn and soybeans just 10 years ago, even the wetlands! Also saw the wind farm with those gently rotating propellers,...someone aptly pointed out that there was something restful about the pace of those blades. Missed an evening appointment with Connie Mutel, but ended up going to a noisy downtown bar with Erv Klaas and talked about Gap Analysis.

Tuesday: Field trip day! Mark Leoschke, Jon Steege, and I led a field trip to Becky's Fen (a.k.a. Kauten Fen) and Hayden Prairie. During the 1990 Prairie Conference in Cedar Falls, we led a busload of prairie enthusiasts to Becky's Fen, which helped persuade the skeptical owner (Becky's Dad) that "at least someone thinks that bog is good for something". This year we had TWO busloads. Becky and her parents laid out the red carpet for us. What a great place, what a great story! Onward to Hayden Prairie, which we promptly turned into

a "people pasture" (John Madsen's apt quote). Several of us found the Prairie Fringed Orchids. In keeping with the people pasture metaphor, we had to "herd" people off the prairie into the bus for the return trip. Returned to NIACC to help finish off the buffalo meat. The 10th anniversary celebration of the Iowa Prairie Network was very pleasant (enjoyed seeing recognition for the first-ever "Prairie Mom"- Martha Skillman). On my way back to the dorms in the pouring rain that evening, I witnessed the plodding migration of a giant beaver across the causeway between the campus ponds (I am not making this up, Jon Andelson saw it too). Finally connected with Connie, talked until IIPM about the Loess Hills and the National Park Service's "Special Resource Study" presently underway.

Wednesday: Bewildered by choices of sessions, I attended the presentations on prairie insects. It is increasingly obvious to me that we need to "mix up our management" of prairies in a way that is more sensitive to insects. We need to move away from a regime of spring-burns-only, and incorporate summer and fall burns, to (re)incorporate haying where feasible, and to re-examine the placement of our burn unit boundaries to split habitats into burned and unburned parcels. We also need to move beyond adversarial arguing over this issue and get on with the cooperative task of designing management regimes that make good use of a wide variety of tools, including fire.

The evening banquet was a delight, full of camaraderie. (How did Kirk Henderson win that buffalo nightshirt anyway?) And then those great photographs by Frank Oberle, illustrated-bigger-than-life on the giant screen in that impressive NIACC Auditorium.

Thursday: Carol Schutte, conference organizer, got a well-deserved standing ovation (BEFORE she even spoke!) during the closing session. Daryl Smith's prairie film is "Coming in 2001". Is the Prairie Conference over already? What happened to July??

## **Invasive Plants and Animals in Iowa - October Conference** by Jim Dinsmore

A two-day meeting this October 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> on invasive species in Iowa should be of interest to many in the Iowa Native Plant Society. The meeting will cover a broad range of topics including case studies of some species and programs to try to control their spread. The Conference will be held at the Scheman Center on the campus of Iowa State University. Note that the meeting overlaps with a home football game at Iowa State so lodging will be in short supply. Plan to attend and make arrangements for lodging now.

A symposium on Invasive Plants and Animals in Iowa, being planned by the Iowa Academy of Science and supported several other groups, promises to provide an interesting and educational forum on one of the major issues facing natural resource professionals. As the number of invasive plants and animals found in Iowa and the United States continues to grow, natural resource managers face an ever increasing problem of how to deal with these species. Some of these species have little effect on native plants and animals, but others have become an important problem to natural communities. Many people responsible for preserving and managing natural areas consider invasive species as the second most important threat, after habitat loss. A number of public agencies and other groups have recognized this problem and are trying to address this concern. Although some work has been done in Iowa, it seems like an appropriate time to bring interested people together to discuss the issue in Iowa.

The meeting is set up as a two-day event so that there will be ample time both to examine some of the issues and to discuss possible solutions. There will be two full-day sessions, starting on Friday morning (6 October) and continuing on Saturday. The emphasis on Saturday will shift over to learning about some of the activities already occurring in Iowa in response to invasives and to having ample opportunity to discuss these approaches to see if there are ideas that can be applied to other groups or problems.

Besides speakers with an Iowa emphasis, we have several out-of-state speakers. These include:

Dr. Randy Westbrooks, U. S. Department of Agriculture invasive species expert now working with the Department of Interior. He will provide a keynote address on: Invasive Alien Species.

. Homogenizing the World's Flora and Fauna. Strategies for Action

Jerry Asher, Bureau of Land Management, Portland, OR. Speaking on: War on Weeds: Winning it for Natural Areas

### **Important Note On Lodging And Meals:**

The second day of the meeting is also a home football game for Iowa State. Thus lodging Ames will be at a premium and access for parking at the Scheman Center on Saturday will be difficult (read impossible) after early morning. To accommodate these concerns, the planning committee has made the following arrangements:

1. We have reserved blocks of rooms in two motels in Boone [Super Eight (515-432-8890, reserved in Jim Dinsmore's name) and AmeriHost Inn (515-432-8168, reserved for Invasive Species Conference)] for participants of the conference. We encourage you to reserve rooms early as lodging in Ames is probably already all taken. Lodging can also probably be found in Nevada (Super Eight), Story City (Super Eight, Viking Inn), or Ankeny. Further information on motels for Nevada and Story City as well as several bed and breakfasts and camping areas is available through the website for the meeting. Make lodging arrangements now!

2. Lunch will be served on-site on both Friday and Saturday and that cost is included in the registration fee. This should provide greater efficiency in the meeting itself and still leaves Friday evening open for those who wish to dine out. Note that with a home game the next day, restaurants will probably be busy Friday night in Ames.

Registration for the meeting is set at \$55 and includes lunches both days, breaks, etc. One-day registration is \$35. On-line registration will also be available soon through the website for the meeting.

For further information on the symposium, see:

<http://www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/aec1/invasives/index.html> or contact Jim Dinsmore: 515-292-3152 or [oldcoot@iastate.edu](mailto:oldcoot@iastate.edu)

# INPS Fall General Meeting

The Society's Fall Meeting will be held on **October 14<sup>th</sup>** at the Otter Creek Nature Center northeast of Toledo in Tama County. This is a good time to catch up on news, present ideas for next year's activities, bring along "unknown plants" (as specimens or photographs) in hopes of getting an identification, renew acquaintances, etc.

This year we'll have a "pod identification" contest, so bring along your odd-looking seed pods or fruits and see if others can guess what they are. Also bring your favorite books, posters, displays, photos, and other items (craft projects using plant materials?) that might be interesting to other "plant enthusiasts"!

## Tentative Schedule

9:30 - Social/gathering time, with coffee, juice and rolls

10:00 to 12:00 - The morning's activities will include a program/panel discussion\* led by Deb Lewis, a slide show\*\* by Bob and Linda Scarth, and our annual business meeting.

12:00 - Potluck lunch (bring a favorite homemade "goody", or the results of a stop by Hy-Vee also acceptable)

Seedpod identification (with prizes for the winners)

Posters, pictures, etc. on display

1:30 - Service project on a small native prairie remnant, brush-cutting needed; bring gloves, loppers, clippers/pruners, hand saws, and possibly chainsaws, and dress appropriately if you want to participate.

\*Program: Deb Lewis will tell us about the "Inventory of the Ames Flora" project, then she will be joined by others who have done inventory work for a "panel discussion". They'll talk about getting started, identifying unknown plants, possible sources of funding, and other aspects of plant inventory projects. The Ames Flora project has highlighted the fact that we often don't know what's in our own backyard - for example, a species NEW to Iowa's flora was found in the front lawn of Bessey Hall, the building that houses ISU's Botany Department!

\*\*Slide show: "Up Close and Personal - Two Looks at Iowa and Midwestern Wildflowers". We've often seen Linda and Bob using their cameras on INPS field trips. Here's a chance to see the results and relive some of the "special finds" from these trips, as well as see the "neat plants" they've encountered in other places!

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## Farewell to Bill and Denise

Bill Norris and Denise Friedrick have moved to Colorado Springs, CO, where Bill has accepted a two-year teaching position at Colorado College. Their contributions to the Iowa Native Plant Society will be greatly missed. Bill was a co-founder of the Society in 1995, and he has served as chair of the program committee, authored several newsletter articles, and led a number of field trips. He has also worked behind-the-scenes in countless other ways - recruiting new members, planning activities, etc. The quality of our newsletters has been largely due to Bill's and Denise's efforts. Bill has "recruited" articles, edited, and proofread the issues, and both Bill and Denise have assisted in folding/labeling the newsletters for mailing. Denise's beautiful illustrations have graced several issues of the newsletter. We wish Bill and Denise all the best!

## Iowa Native Plant Society Field Trips and Activities

All field trips are held on Saturdays and begin at 10 a.m. (the Fall Meeting starts at 9:30 a.m.). Come prepared for the weather, rain or shine, and wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Bring a lunch and something to drink.

August 12<sup>th</sup> - Cherokee County, northwest Iowa

Tom Rosburg will show us one of Iowa's premiere prairies - Steele Prairie State Preserve. At 200 acres, Steele Prairie is one of Iowa's largest remnants outside of the Loess Hills. It occurs in two pieces, 160 acres in one tract and 40 acres in another. Steele is one of just a few examples of mesic prairie on the Northwest Iowa Till Plains, a landform characterized by a gently rolling terrain with a fairly well established network of branching streams. This external drainage, combined with a drier climate, sets this landform apart from the Des Moines Lobe in north central Iowa. Although most of Steele is mesic prairie and dominated by typical species such as big bluestem, porcupine grass, panic grasses, golden alexanders, prairie clover, and stiff sunflower, there are also smaller communities of sedge meadow and riverine marsh present. A total of 159 plant species have been recorded. Some of these that may be in flower during our visit include: Michigan lily, swamp lousewort, Culver's root, and wild prairie onion. We will meet at the north entrance to the 160 acre tract. To get there, take Highway 59 north out of Larrabee. From the intersection of 59 and Co unty C16 on the north edge of Larrabee, go 1 mile north. Turn west on a gravel road and take it 1.75 miles to Steele Prairie.

September 9<sup>th</sup> - Buchanan County, northeast Iowa

Rowley Fen is owned by the county conservation board and is one of the best fens in the eastern portion of the state. The fen should be at its fall finest with Riddell's goldenrod, sage willow, grass of Parnassus and the beautiful flowers of fringed gentian. Our guide to the muck will be Mark Leoschke, an avid fen fan. From the intersecton of highways 939 and 150 in Independence go south on 150 to County D47 (also known as 290<sup>th</sup> Street). Turn left (east) on D47 and go 2 miles to the west edge of the town of Rowley. Turn left (north) on Lucas Avenue and look for the access road to Rowley Wildlife Acres (Rowley Fen) that is north of the cemetery and on the west side of the road. Park in the parking lot or along Lucas Avenue.

October 14<sup>th</sup> (9:30 a.m. starting time) - Tama County, central Iowa

The Iowa Native Plant Society's Fall Meeting will be held at the Otter Creek Nature Center northeast of Toledo. Details are provided elsewhere in this newsletter.

## Membership/Change of Address form and Survey

Send with your 2000 dues of \$10.00 to Mary Brown, 330 Windsor Dr., Iowa City, IA 52245.

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

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

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information or special interests for member directory entry: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark this box 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 1 January to 31 December. Use this form for change of address.

## In a Nutshell

IPN = Iowa Prairie Network; TNC = The Nature Conservancy, Iowa Chapter

**August 12, 10 a.m., Story County, Grantridge and Stargrass Prairies Fieldtrip.** The owners, Roger Maddux and Cindy Hildebrand, will lead the visits to these remnant and reconstructed prairies. Please contact Cindy ahead of time for directions and so parking can be planned. Cindy can be contacted at 515-232-3807 or at grantridge@aol.com. IPN

**August 15, 8 p.m., Story County, Pohl Memorial State Preserve and Ames High School Prairie.** Night Singers of the Prairie. Ken Shaw, retired Professor of Entomology and Royce Bitzer, Research Associate in Entomology at ISU will teach us how to recognize the sounds of crickets, katydids, and other singing insects of the prairie. Bring flashlights and bug spray, and wear long pants to protect against poison ivy. For more information, contact the TNC at 515-244-5044.

**August 19, 10 a.m., Hamilton and Webster counties, Cemetery Prairies.** This visit to 3 or 4 historically interesting as well as beautiful cemetery prairies will be led by Lloyd Crim, MJ Hatfield and Lois Larson. Meet at the convenience store (Ampride) on Highway 175 in Stratford. Contact Lloyd at 515-432-5026 or lgrim@iastate.edu or lgrim@willmet.net for more information. IPN

**August 24, 7 p.m., Story County, Doolittle Prairie State Preserve.** Lloyd Crim has led numerous field trips to this pothole prairie during the last 10 years. The walks are sponsored by the Story County Conservation Board and the Central Iowa Prairie Network. For more information call Lloyd at 515-432-5026 or the SCCB at 515-232-2516.

**August 29-31, Polk County, "Carbon: Exploring the benefits to farmers and society".** Tuesday through Thursday at Polk County Convention Center in Des Moines. Sponsored by USDA, NRCS, Iowa Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society, IDNR and other national and Iowa agencies. For more information, contact Alice Vinsand at 515-225-1051 or 800-264-1084 or visit the Web site [www.cvr.cd.org/carbon.htrn](http://www.cvr.cd.org/carbon.htrn). Registration fee \$225 after August 8<sup>th</sup>.

**September 2, 10 a.m., Poweshiek and Jasper counties, Field trip to prairies near Grinnell.** The field trip will start at the Reichelt Unit of Stephens State Forest at a 20 acre prairie remnant on Highway 6 about halfway between Oakland Acres and the Kellogg intersection. Other areas will include the Sugar Creek Audubon Nature Sanctuary and the Conard Environmental Research Area of Grinnell College. For more information, contact Russell Tabbert at 515-236-7309 or Pam White at 515-673-3508.

**September 9, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., Jasper County, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Prairie Learning Center, Iowa Prairie Celebration.** Visit the nation's largest tallgrass prairie reconstruction during Iowa Prairie Week and be reminded of the sweeping grasslands of the Native Americans and early pioneers. For more information call 515-994-3400.

**September 19, 6:30 p.m., Story County, Pohl Memorial State Preserve at Ames High School Prairie.** Deb Lewis will lead a look at the tallgrasses and wildflowers of autumn. For more information, contact the TNC at 515-244-5044.

*Iowa Native Plant Society  
c/o Deb Lewis  
Department of Botany  
Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011-1020*



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