



## Pages from a Kayaker's Journal

by John Pearson

May 10, 2003 - We are on the Little Sioux River, Robin Fortney in her solo canoe, Don & Kay Wall in a tandem canoe, me in my kayak. The river, here near its headwaters in Dickinson County, is scarcely more than a creek. Fortunately, recent heavy rains assure that our trip will not be one of dragging over rocky riffles; instead, I scan the put-in site at Twin Forks for signs of flood, but this, too, is a needless worry. (The USGS gauge at Linn Grove- 50 miles downstream- indicates a flow of 1000 cfs.) The gray sky and chill wind presage an approaching storm front scheduled to arrive in the afternoon, but we gaily float away from the Twin Forks Access shortly before IOAM. Cayler Prairie and Freda Haffner Kettlehole lay downstream between us and the take-out at Horseshoe Bend Park some twelve miles away.

We pass quickly beneath the first bridge, where a man has stopped his pick-up truck to watch our departure. A rattle demands my attention and when I look back after wrapping around a bend, the bridge is gone. Grassland sprawls across the landscape, unbrokenly green due to regrowth from a spring burn. My eyes are drawn to distant hillcrests and along the unfettered, rolling horizon between land and sky. Its utter treelessness looks strangely different than the view from other streams and I feel the relaxing expansiveness that only a prairie landscape can evoke.

As we enter the northern boundary of Cayler Prairie- a square mile of state-owned grassland, with a native prairie preserve in its southwest quarter- we pass a Canada goose nest on a tiny island, seven huge brown eggs crowded into its straw-lined bed of downy feathers. The parents honk indignantly as they evade our approach and watch apprehensively as Robin pauses to snap a photo of their vulnerable nest. They fly swiftly back to the nest as we round the next bend, finding it undisturbed by our brief passage.

The botanical part of my brain notes that the grassland that we are traversing here is still mostly bromegrass (the true native prairie still lays ahead out of view); Emory sedge and canarygrass line the bank. However, negotiating a mile of river through riffles, meanders, sprinkling rain, and a blustery wind has already detached me from the more clinical, scientific approach to the prairie that I have more typically taken during previous visits- land-based, car-delivered, job-related problem-solving- as a professional ecologist. The river now engages senses and perceptions not required of a walking inspection, field trip, or data transect. Science and adventure, analysis and experience, reason and feeling are the ying and yang of a true naturalist.

The only man-made features on the prairie landscape loom into view as we near the preserve: huge pylons draped with leagues of power cable, all radiating from an electrical substation on the upland east of the river. Electricity is a vital part of our modern society, but maybe someday we will invent a way of transporting it across the landscape less obtrusively. As requested, Don and Kay are waiting for Robin and me under the first crossing of the wires over the stream.

We regroup, then float a short distance farther to a landing on the right bank. Avoiding a patch of cocklebur, we step out onto a grassy lowland and climb to a low rise. We gaze southwestward at the native prairie preserve. Eskers rise ruggedly beyond a wet swale, still tawny with winter bluestem grasses. Despite the lowering sky and cold wind, we set off toward the nearest esker, slowly weaving our way between sedge tussocks. Climbing the steep flanks of the esker, we suddenly find ourselves walking through thousands of pasqueflowers, their "Phyllis Diller" fruiting heads waving in the cold wind. Squeals of discovery of blooming flowers soon follow: "Prairiesmoke!", "Groundplum!", and "here's a pasqueflower still in bloom!". *continued page 12*

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## Leaves from the President's Notebook

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Much of the property contiguous to my farm in Decatur County still has pockets of unplowed land. One of the least disturbed pieces is a four hundred acre farm west of our property line. Until recently only the ridge tops and some of the bottom ground had ever been plowed. A diverse collection of forbs, native grasses and sedges covered the rest of the property. Springs bubbling from a hillside drained into a sedge wetland below. Among the many conservative plants which thrived on this property was a large population of *Asclepias sullivantii* (Sullivant's milkweed).

I had not been on the property since it changed hands six years ago. But when the current owner offered to sell me some of his acreage I was anxious to see it again. He proudly showed me the improvements he had made. I was shocked by what I saw. The sedge wetland had been replaced by a big mud puddle that he called a marsh. Most of the *Asclepias sullivantii* had been extirpated in order to build a small pond above the marsh. And to help pay the mortgage the most diverse hillside prairie had been plowed and replaced by a soybean field. Eastern red cedar had taken over most of the remaining virgin land.

The owner thought his improvements had doubled the value of this property. He had no idea that he had destroyed a priceless fragment of Iowa's natural history. To him the prairie grasses and forbs were worthless weeds.

This year INPS will inaugurate a small grant program to fund land acquisition and educate the public about Iowa's native flora. Hopefully this will help enlighten landowners like my neighbor.

*Sibylla*

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: 2004 Dues Reminder :

• Have you paid your dues for 2004? •

• Our dues structure: •  
• basic membership (includes family) - \$10; •  
• supporter - \$25; •  
• benefactor - \$50 or more. •  
• Membership form on page 13. •

• Dues should be sent to: •  
• Diana Horton, 720 Sandusky Dr., Iowa City, IA 52240 •

• 2004 ANNUAL MEETING •

• Mark your calendars and plan to attend the 2004 joint meeting of the Iowa Native •  
• Plant Society and the Iowa Prairie Network July 9-11, in Chariton on the Southern •  
• Iowa Drift Plain. Check the next INPS newsletter and website for more information •  
• as details are developed. •  
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## The Iowa Native Plant Society's 2004 Field Trips

By Mark I. Leoschke

A big thanks to all our field trip leaders for leading field trips. All field trips are scheduled for Saturdays and begin at 10 a.m. unless otherwise noted. They take place rain or shine, so come prepared for the weather. The terrain varies from site to site, so wear appropriate footwear. Bring a lunch and something to drink.

The Iowa Sportman's Atlas has large county maps with wildlife management areas, parks, preserves, etc. owned by public and some private conservation organizations. Its current edition (2002) has 911 street names for counties in Iowa which use this system (most counties do), which greatly helps one locate a favorite natural area or a new one. If you are interested in purchasing a copy, check with your local bookstore or call 1-800-568-8334. The cost is \$19.95 plus sales tax.

### May 8th: Clinton County (eastern Iowa)

Manikowski Prairie is an area of thin soil over dolomite bedrock on the Southern Iowa Drift Plain. It overlooks an ancestral valley of the Mississippi River called the Goose Lake Channel. This channel was formed when Illinoian glaciers dammed the Mississippi and forced it to take a new course. The shallow soil and rock outcrops helped to preserve this remnant prior to its acquisition by the Clinton County Conservation Board in 1985. Two additional parcels have been added since that initial purchase. An early May field trip will hopefully coincide with the peak flowering of the shooting star (*Dodecatheon meadia*), along with birds-foot violet (*Viola pedata*), wood betony (*Pedicularis canadensis*), violet wood sorrel (*Oxalis violacea*), columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), bastard toadflax (*Comandra umbel/ata*) and puccoons (*Lithospermum canescens* & *L. incisum*). Infrequently you may also come across prairie violet (*Viola pedatifida*), as well as *Viola X bernardii*; its hybrid with the common blue violet (*Viola sororia*). Some unusual species include the sedges *Carex richardsonii* and *C. umbel/ata*, along with a panic grass (*Dichanthelium perlongum*), three-flowered melic grass (*Melica nitens*) and the rock sandwort (*Minuartia michauxii*).

Goose Lake Wildlife Management Area (owned by the Iowa DNR), a shallow marsh/sedge meadow complex, is also nearby for anyone wishing to extend the field trip to that area.

**Directions:** From the intersection of State Highway 136 and 362<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in Goose Lake (northeast Clinton County), go north on 362<sup>00</sup> Avenue approximately 1 mile to 137<sup>th</sup> Street, a gravel road. Turn right (east) and travel approximately 1/4 mile. Park by the entrance sign.

### June 5th: Chickasaw County (northeast Iowa)

Dr. Laura Jackson, a professor of biology at the University of Northern Iowa, is leasing a neat, approximately 2 acre mesic to wet prairie in Chickasaw County on the Iowan Surface. Mark J. Leoschke, the botanist for the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Bureau, will be our field trip leader. The prairie has a wonderful spring flora display with species like shooting star (*Dodecatheon meadia*), swamp saxifrage (*Saxifraga pennsylvanica*), prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*), prairie phlox (*Phlox pilosa*) and yellow stargrass (*Hypoxis hirsuta*). It would be a good idea to bring boots if you want to walk in the wetter portions of the prairie.

**Directions:** At the intersection of U.S. Highway 63 and 110<sup>th</sup> Street in extreme northern Chickasaw County (one mile south of the Howard County line) turn right (east) on H0<sup>th</sup> Street, a gravel road (If you turn left, you will be on County Road T76, a paved road that will take you to Alta Vista). Drive about 0.9 mile and park along the road. The prairie is on the south side of the road.

### July 9-11: Lucas County and vicinity (south-central Iowa)

The **Iowa Native Plant Society** and the **Iowa Prairie Network** will be holding a **joint annual meeting** in Chariton on the Southern Iowa Drift Plain. It will take place at the Lucas County Conservation Board's nature center at Pin Oak Marsh. There will be several field trips as part of the meeting. Check the next INPS and IPN newsletters, as well as the web pages of these organizations, for details as they develop.

### August 28: Jasper County (south-central Iowa)

John Pearson, a botanist for the Iowa DNR's Conservation and Recreation Division, and park manager Roger Thompson will show us the prairie remnants in Rock Creek State Park on the Southern Iowa Drift Plain.

**Directions:** To reach the park take Interstate 80 to the Kellogg exit (State Highway 224). Drive north about 5.5 miles (passing through the town of Kellogg) and turn right (east) on North 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue East (County Road F27). Travel a little over 3 miles and turn right (south) into the south unit of the park (you should be on the west side of the artificial lake). Follow the road (it twists and turns) until you reach the parking lot for the beach (located at the south end of the park road

*continued page 4*

Continued from page 3

on the west side of the lake). You can not go any further as the road loops back to the north. Meet in the parking area. Go to this web address for a map: <http://www.state.ia.us/dnr/organizationalppd/rockcrk.pdf>

### **September/October: Allamakee County (northeast Iowa)**

Dr. Don Farrar, a pteridologist (a person who studies ferns and fern relatives) at Iowa State University, will lead us on a weekend long fern workshop and field trip in Allamakee County on the Paleozoic Plateau. Details will be announced in the next newsletter. If Don decides to schedule the fern field trip for October, there will probably be a September field trip added to the schedule.

## **A Wonderful Botanical Discovery in Mahaska County**

**by Mark J. Leoschke, Botanist**

**Wildlife Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources**

On Saturday, March 6th, the southeast chapter of the Iowa Prairie Network held its annual winter gathering at the Mahaska County Conservation Board's Conservation Center north of Oskaloosa (south-central Iowa). After the potluck, presentation and meeting, a group (Sue Irving, Pam White and John Herdrich) went for a hike in the adjacent Russell Wildlife Area, also owned by the CCB. Linda Zintz and I caught up with them a little while later. The hiking group had found a "mystery plant" and brought back a piece for identification. I went into botanical orbit, as they had discovered ground cedar (*Lycopodium digitatum*), a fern ally and a special concern species for Iowa! We walked back to the site where the ground cedar grew, a portion of a forest dominated primarily by shrubs and next to a mowed trail. The ground cedar covered an area of about 6 meters by 8 meters, possibly one very large plant. The stems were still green, typical for this species even in Iowa's cold winters. A small number of stems still had last year's dried stroboli or cones, which produce yellow clouds of tiny spores that can travel long distances on the wind.

Dr. Don Farrar, a pteridologist (a person who studies ferns and fern allies) at Iowa State University, says that ground cedar can grow one half to one meter a year. So it is possible that the plant in Mahaska County is as little as 6 to 8 years old. Don notes that ground cedar and ground pine (*Lycopodium clavatum*) tend to benefit from disturbance. Consequently they can colonize road cuts, infrequently used dirt lanes and other places where there is a fair amount of light plus temporarily reduced competition from other vascular plants. Over time they tend to be shaded out by taller plants, which explains why these species have a tendency to appear and then disappear at some Iowa sites. For example, there is a pre-1950 record for ground cedar in Chickasaw County in northeast Iowa, but the species has not been recorded from the county since that time.

The past five years have been a bonanza for *Lycopodium* in southeast Iowa, a genus which had never been found further south in the state than Muscatine County. In April 1999, Don Pfeiffer, the southeast district wildlife supervisor for the Iowa DNR, mailed an envelope to John Pearson (plant ecologist for the Iowa DNR's Conservation and Recreation Division) with a "mystery plant" that he had found while helping to install a fence at the LaHart Wildlife Management Area in Monroe County (south-central Iowa, a site owned and managed by the Wildlife Bureau of the DNR). The "mystery plant" turned out to be ground pine (*Lycopodium clavatum*). John and I were excited, as no species of *lycopodium* had ever been documented from this far south in Iowa. We checked the site on Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, and were stunned (at least I was!) to find not one, but three species of *lycopodium* - in addition to the ground cedar (*Lycopodium clavatum*), shining clubmoss (*Lycopodium lucidulum*) and ground cedar (*Lycopodium digitatum*) were also present! The latter two grew as modest populations in the right-of-way of a tractor lane in oak-hickory forest, but the ground cedar was common in the tractor lane and the right-of-way.

As if that was not enough botanical excitement for one spring, the next month Dr. Diana Horton, a bryologist (a person who studies mosses, liverworts and hornworts) at the University of Iowa, and Tom Cady, a self-trained botanist, found large populations of ground pine and ground cedar in a road cut in Lee County, which is in the southeastern corner of Iowa. No species of *lycopodium* had ever been documented from this county and this site is even farther south than Monroe County.

And now ground cedar has reared its stroboli in Mahaska County, which just goes to show we still have a lot to learn about the flora of Iowa!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Newly Discovered Iowa Truffle Honors Dr. Tiffany

If you attended last spring's dinner honoring Dr. Lois Tiffany's 50-plus years on the faculty at Iowa State University, then you heard the announcement that a new species of fungus was being named in her honor. Now it's official - *Mattiolomyces tiffanyae* Healy has been published! The scientific name is a mouthful, by the time the genus, species and author (Rosanne Healy) are included. Fortunately, in publication the full name can be mentioned once, then the species referred to more simply as "*M. tiffanyae*". Also, if you were to read the paper announcing the new name in the fungus journal *Mycologia* (vol. 95, pp. 765-772), you would find that the publication of a new species must include both a Latin and English description, the designation of a type specimen, and other details that follow the rules of publication listed in the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature*.

Rosanne and "Dr. T" have been conducting a survey of Iowa's truffles, and this was just one of the exciting results of their study. Although it really is a *truffle*, *M. tiffanyae* is only distantly related to the edible, very expensive truffles of southern Europe. First collected in late summer of 1998, *M. tiffanyae* has been found at several locations in Story Co. in mixed deciduous upland woods.

#### New Course Offered:

### Restoration and Management of Native Plant Communities

The Boone Campus of Des Moines Area Community College will be offering the premier edition of Biology 172, RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT OF NATIVE PLANT COMMUNITIES. The class will be a five week intensive course with space for only 15 students. Start date, June 1. Class days are Tuesday and Thursday from 9 am to 3 pm.

The hands-on sessions will be conducted within the Ledges State Park and also within savanna remnants within the Saylorville corridor. The Army Corps of Engineers and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources are full partners in the class.

For more information, contact Daniel Je Wirth - 515-965-6010, ext. 421 or e-mail: ehorizon@netins.net. This will be a balanced course between the practical and theoretical, with the final project consisting of each student scoping an area for restoration and producing a "prescription" based on knowledge and skills gained during the class.

### Become a Steward of our Beautiful Land

An educational program co-sponsored by Trees Forever and the Living Roadways Trust Fund of the Iowa Department of Transportation. The UNI Native Roadside Vegetation Center is a cooperating partner.

Increase your knowledge of Iowa's native plant communities and their use to beautify roadsides, community entryways, butterfly gardens, outdoor classrooms and other planting projects for your community. Stewards of the Beautiful Land, a six-session educational course, will be offered in Northeastern and Northwestern Iowa this summer. Class work and field experience include plant identification, basic design principles, planting (how, what, and when), establishment practices, site maintenance, safety issues and potential funding sources. No prior experience or knowledge of prairies and trees is necessary, only a commitment to actively participate in the entire course.

The course consists of six sessions that take place every other week throughout the summer. Locations will vary in order to visit different sites and plantings relevant to the topic of the evening. Meetings will take place from 6 - 9 pm on the following Tuesday evenings

**Northeast Iowa:** June 8, June 22, July 6, July 20, August 3 and August 17

**Northwest Iowa:** June 15, June 29, July 13, July 27, August 10 and August 24

A \$30 registration fee covers the cost of books and materials. Eighteen hours of continuing education credits are available at no charge. Space is limited. Registration is required by May 25<sup>th</sup>. For more information or to register, contact Tracy Feldmann, Roadways Team Administrative Coordinator at Trees Forever at (800) 369-1269 or [tfeldmann@treesforever.org](mailto:tfeldmann@treesforever.org).

### Native Seedling Identification Workshop

Native Seedling Identification Workshop, Native Roadside Vegetation Center, UNI. Thursday, April 29, 9-2:00. Registration \$35 per participant. Cost includes lunch, reference materials, lab materials, "Prairie Seedlings Illustrated" booklet by Dr. Laura Jackson. Examine seedling stage of many commonly planted prairie species. Seedlings of common weed species will also be studied for comparison. Limit 30 participants. Reserve a spot by calling Greg at 319-273-3005, or email [iowa-ecotype-project@uni.edu](mailto:iowa-ecotype-project@uni.edu).

Greg Houseal Program Manager, Iowa Ecotype Project, Native Roadside Vegetation Center, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0294, U.S.A., 319-273-3005, FAX 319-268-0668

## Urban Prairie - Back to Our Roots

submitted by Laura Elliott

Through the Urban Prairie Project, the Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department will be integrating small pockets of native prairie into the landscape of several Des Moines parks, schools and community green spaces. Varying in size from a few square feet to nearly 10 acres, these numerous prairie plots will return a small measure of Iowa's original "wild" to an unlikely setting - the streetscapes of the capital city. The Urban Prairies are an effort to bring prairie back to Iowa and help ensure that this amazing ecosystem does not disappear from the state's landscape forever.

### Why Prairies In the City?

The Urban Prairies will serve as both educational resources and spaces for repose and relaxation. These living, outdoor classrooms will allow field trip opportunities . . . without children leaving the schoolyard. Prairie pockets located within the Des Moines park system will not only add year-around native beauty but also reduce erosion, decrease chemical run-off and create habitats for animals. The prairie grasses and flowering plants will provide a picture of Iowa's past in a uniquely beautiful landscape and provide an opportunity for young and old to learn about a fascinating and rapidly disappearing ecosystem.

Visit one or many of the Urban Prairie locations in Des Moines, including: Capital Elementary School, Cowles Elementary School, Hillis Elementary School, Moulton Elementary School, Brody Middle School, Merrill Middle School, Glendale Cemetery, Ewing Park BMX Tract, Grandview Golf Course, Greenwood Park, Gray's Lake Park, Sargent Park, and Weeks Middle School

The Des Moines Park and Recreation Department Urban Prairie Project has been funded in part through an Iowa Department of Natural Resources Resource Enhancement and Protection Grant. Additional partners in the development and funding of the project include: Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge and Private Lands Department; Polk County Conservation Board; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Pheasants Forever; and Iowa Department of Transportation.

## Interactive Keys and Color Photos for Iowa Plants

XID Services, Inc. - Expert Identification System and Flora ID Northwest, LLC have developed a CD containing interactive keys and color photographs for the vascular plants of Iowa. Here is the information from the website [www.xidservices.com](http://www.xidservices.com)IFID:

The computer plant keys described here include all the vascular plants known to grow in the state or province for which the keys are available. This includes native and naturalized introduced plants, trees, flowering plants, grasses, grass-like plants, and spore-bearing plants. The keys are much easier to use than traditional dichotomous keys... [How the interactive key works is described, available on the website]

### Other features

- Color photos included for virtually all species
- Technical botanical terms are kept to a minimum
- Help screens can guide the user throughout the program
- User's Guide and Tutorial included in the Help Program
- Definitions of terms are provided, illustrated with line drawings
- Descriptions of the habitat are provided
- Descriptions of the geographic range for each plant are provided

Comprehensive statewide keys are available for each of the following: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota and Iowa. A single key is available for the Pacific Northwest which includes all of British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Utah and Colorado. Just released is a single key for the Great Plains, including all of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota and Iowa, and the eastern portions of Montana, Wyoming and Colorado.

All keys are distributed by:  
**FLORA ID NORTHWEST, LLC**

731 NW 5th  
Pendleton, OR 97801  
541-276-5547, Fax 541-276-8405  
[flora@ucinet.com](mailto:flora@ucinet.com)

Visa and MC accepted

STATEWIDE KEYS are \$100 each; a 10-site license is \$330  
PACIFIC NORTHWEST KEY is \$300; a 10-site license is \$990.  
GREAT PLAINS KEY is \$250; a 10-site license is \$825.

## In Memory....

Paul H. Monson, 77, Professor Emeritus at the University of Minnesota - Duluth, died in Duluth on 9 August 2003. He graduated from Hawley (Minnesota) High School in 1943. After serving in the Navy during World War II, he entered Luther College in Iowa, graduating in 1950. He was one of Richard Pohl's early graduate students and later returned to earn a Ph.D. under PoW in 1958. His graduate research interest in the floristics of the glaciated region of the north-central United States continued throughout his career, especially for aquatic and wetland plants. Dr. Monson conducted comprehensive surveys of the vascular flora of Voyageurs National Park and Grand Portage National Monument for the U. S. National Park Service. He retired from the University of Minnesota - Duluth in 1990, but remained active as Curator of the Olga Lakela Herbarium for a number of years beyond that. He is survived by his wife Betty, sons David, Philip, and Mark, all of Minnesota, 10 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Paul always reminded his students never to be without their hand lens, it was therefore fitting that at his funeral there was a wild-picked bouquet, around the vase of which was looped the neck cord of Paul's hand lens.

## Calendar of Events of Other Organizations

April 15-17 (Thurs-Sat): Lost Mound Sand Prairie Conference, Galena, Illinois. The Lost Mound Unit is the newest addition to the National Wildlife Refuge system and contains the largest sand prairie remnant in Illinois and one of the largest prairies in the region. This conference is an opportunity for biologists, land managers, researchers, and prairie enthusiasts to share information, expertise, and experiences from a variety of sand prairies in the Midwest. Topics will include endangered species, habitat management, species reintroductions, geology of sand deposits, and the ecology of sand prairie organisms. The conference includes a half-day field trip to Lost Mound and plenty of time for discussing problems, ideas, and research opportunities with other sand prairie enthusiasts. It is not too late to submit ideas for additional presentations. Please send abstracts and registration forms by March 1. For further information and a registration form contact Dan Wenny, (815) 273-3184, <dwenny@inhs.uiuc.edu>. There will be a car from ISU taking people to the conference.

April 16-17 (Fri-Sat): Insect Biodiversity on the Prairie, Lincoln, Nebraska. Annual meeting for the Kansas (Central States) Entomological Society. Contact: Mary Liz Jameson, mjameson1@unl.edu, (402) 472-2664, [www.museum.unl.edu/research/entomology/CSE/CSE2004.html](http://www.museum.unl.edu/research/entomology/CSE/CSE2004.html)

April 17 (Sat): Prairie Chicken Day, Ringgold Co. Prairie Chicken Day at the Iowa DNR Kellerton Bird Conservation Area. DNR biologists Mel Moe and Ed White encourage outdoor enthusiasts to join them at dawn to watch these native birds boom and dance. There will also be an opportunity to plant prairie forbs later in the morning. The viewing site is two miles west of Kellerton on Hwy. 2. then about 1.5 miles south.

April 17 (Sat): Earth Day activities at Neal Smith Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, 9AM-3PM, Jasper Co. Stewardship activities and special interpretive programs suitable for all ages. Contact: AJ Murray (515) 994-3400, <http://www.tallgrass.org!>

April 17 (Sat): Earth Day - Prairie Rescue Events scheduled around the state. Summary posted at [www.inhf.org!rescue2004.org](http://www.inhf.org!rescue2004.org)

April 24 (Sat): Prairie Rescue, 9AM-1 PM, Polk Co. Join the 3rd annual prairie rescue at Big Creek State Park, help remove the last of the black locust and gray dogwood and establish a prairie nature trail. Wear tough clothing, bring leather gloves. Lunch provided. Contact: Kim Olofson (515) 250-4308, or 984-6473.

April 24 (Sat): Prairie Rescue, 10AM-IPM, Warren Co. Join the Warren Co. Conservation Board to help preserve Rolling Thunder Prairie, primarily removing woody shrubs and trees. Located 4 miles NE of New Virginia. Contact: (515) 961-6169

April 29 (Thurs): Native Seedling Identification Workshop, Blackhawk Co. Learn to identify native seedlings, and compare and contrast to weed look-a-likes. All participants will receive the booklet "Prairie Seedlings Illustrated" by Dr. Laura Jackson. \$35, pre-register by April 23. Contact: Greg Houseal, 319-273-3005, [gregory.houseal@Uni.Edu](mailto:gregory.houseal@Uni.Edu)

May 1 (Sat): Iowa River Corridor Prairie Work Day, 10AM-3PM, Benton Co. Help plant prairie species, learn about prairie too! Near Belle Plaine. Contact: Rick Trine 641-752-5521 or Ryan Wenthold 641-489-2574.

May 1 (Sat): Owego Wetlands Field Day, Woodbury Co. Migratory birds, restored prairie, reconstructed wetlands, 7 miles east of Salix. Contact: [dchapman@sioux-city.org](mailto:dchapman@sioux-city.org).

May 8 (Sat): Breakfast with the birds, 7-11AM, Johnson Co. Bird watching walk, open to everyone, breakfast and binoculars provided. Herbert Hoover Nat'l Historic Site, near Iowa City. Contact: Daniel Peterson, (319) 643-2541, [dan\\_peterson@nps.gov](mailto:dan_peterson@nps.gov).

May 8 (Sat) Whitham Woods Wildflower & Bird Hike, Jefferson Co. Conservation Board - <http://www.inhforg!25events.htm>.

May 8-9 (Sat-Sun): International Migratory Bird Day, 9AM-4PM, Jasper Co. Neal Smith Nat'l Wildlife Refuge will have crafts, activities, educational programs and a free lunch for all who attend. Contact: (515) 994-3400, <http://www.tallgrass.org!>

May 15 (Sat): Prairie Work Day, 10AM-3PM, Boone Co. Join staff from the Iowa DNR Prairie Seed Team as they plant 2000 plants in a prairie reconstruction at Ledges State Park. Bring a watering can if you have one, attend for an hour or all day. Free camping too! Contact: Bill Johnson or Tim VandeNoord (515) 432-2823.

May 15-16 (Sat-Sun): 10th Annual Wrngs and Wetlands Festival, Spencer, IA (Clay Co.) Contact: 712-837-4866

May 27 (Thurs): Doolittle Prairie walk, 7PM, Story Co. Join Lloyd Crim and prairie enthusiasts for an evening stroll through Doolittle Prairie Preserve. From I-35 exit 123 (Roland) go west on E-18 about 1/2 mile, then south 1.5 miles on (gravel) 560th Ave. Follow lane west to the preserve. Contact: Lloyd Crim, (515)432-5026, [lcrim@opencominc.com](mailto:lcrim@opencominc.com)

June 4-6 (Sat-Sun): Loess Hills Seminar, Monona Co. Sponsored by the Western Hills Area Education Agency.

June 12-13 (Sat-Sun): Sand Prairie Field Days, Clinton Co. More information IPN at [www.iowaprairienetwork.org](http://www.iowaprairienetwork.org) or Carol Rogers, [carolrogers3@mchsi.com](mailto:carolrogers3@mchsi.com) (563)324-8897, Inger Lamb, [ingerlamb3@mchsi.com](mailto:ingerlamb3@mchsi.com)

June 19 ( Sat): Volunteer prairie work day, Monona Co. Join David Zahrt on the summer solstice to work on prairie restoration in the Turin Nat'l Natural Landmark and Special Landscape Area. Contact: David, (712) 353-6772, [ch.bnb@longlines.com](mailto:ch.bnb@longlines.com)

*continued page 8*

*Calendar of Events of Other Organizations continued from page 7*

June 24 (Thurs): Doolittle prairie walk, 7 PM, Story Co. See May 27 event for details.

June 26 (Sat): Buffalo Day, 9AM-3PM, Jasper Co. Neal Smith Nat'l Wildlife Refuge signature event, held in conjunction with Prairie Days in Prairie City. Contact: (515) 994-3400, <http://www.tallgrass.org/>

July 9-11 (Fri-Sun): Joint IPN and Iowa Native Plant Society annual meeting, Chariton.

July 9-11 (Fri-Sun): Dragonfly Society of the Americas Annual Meeting, Winnesheik Co., Decorah, IA. Contact: [www.windsofkansas.com!dsa2004.htm](http://www.windsofkansas.com!dsa2004.htm).

July 17 (SaL): Vincent Prairie Hike, Loess Hills Preserve Society, <http://www.inhf.org/25events.htm>

July 22 (Thurs): Doolittle prairie walk, 7PM, Story Co. See May 27 event for details.

August 1 (Sun): Wiegert Prairie Farmstead Fallfest, 10AM-4PM, Pocahontas Co. The 37 acre Wiegert Prairie is located one mile north of Kalsow Prairie on 280th Ave. Contact: Pocahontas County Cons. Board, 712-335-4395

August 7-8 (Sat-Sun): Go Wild, a Celebration of Native Plants and Native Lands Madison, WI. Note: precedes NAPC (next listing), in same location. Contact: (877) 394- 9453, [www.for-wild.org](http://www.for-wild.org)

August 8-12 (Sun-Thurs): 19th North American Prairie Conference, Madison, WI. Contact: [www.napc2004.org](http://www.napc2004.org)

August 14-15 (Sat-Sun): Adult Nature Weekend, IA Lakeside Laboratory, <http://www.inhf.org/25events.htm>

August 26 (Thurs): Doolittle prairie walk, 7PM, Story Co. See May 27 event for details.

October 1 (Fri): Volunteer prairie work day, Monona Co. Join David Zahrt on the autumnal equinox (in conjunction with a Festival) to work on prairie restoration in the Turin Nat'l Natural Landmark and Special Landscape Area. Contact: David, (712) 353-6772, [ch.bnb@Ionglines.com](mailto:ch.bnb@Ionglines.com)

October 9 (Sat): Ding Darling Day, 10AM-2PM, Jasper Co. Neal Smith Nat'l Wildlife Refuge will have stewardship activities and a children's art contest. Contact: (515)994-3400, <http://www.tallgrass.org/>

October 16 (Sat): Mississippi Bluffs Eco Cruise, Clinton & Jackson Co. Cons. Board, <http://www.inhf.org/25events.htm>

November 6 (Sat): Wet & Wild Iowa: A Wetlands Bus Tour, Louisa Co. Cons. Board, <http://www.inhf.org/25events.htm>

December 18 (Sat): Volunteer prairie work day, Monona Co. Join David Zahrt on the winter solstice for prairie seed processing in the Turin Nat'l Natural Landmark and Special Landscape Area. Contact: David, (712) 353-6772, [ch.bnb@Ionglines.com](mailto:ch.bnb@Ionglines.com)

February 8-10, 2005 (Tues-Thurs): Prescribed Fire Conference, Ames. Contact: Inger Lamb, [ingerlamb3@MCHSI.com](mailto:ingerlamb3@MCHSI.com)

## Iowa's Tallgrass Prairies Past, Present & Future

Saturday, July 24, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. at Ames Izaak

Walton League. This program is presented by Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa. Program will include presentations by Carl Kurtz, Harlan Ratcliff, Deb Lewis, Marlene Ehresmen, Laura Jesse and MJ Hatfield. Program includes tours by bus of Doolittle Prairie State Preserve and Mike Meetz's private reconstructed prairie and wetlands in Story County, via the 1-35 DOT Plantings. Program is designed to be of interest to the novice and members of the community interested in learning about native plants. An optional field trip is being offered on July 23 for attendees. Cost \$20. For more information and registration form contact MJ Hatfield at [mjhatfield@oneota.org](mailto:mjhatfield@oneota.org) or 2502 Tullamore Lane, Ames, IA 50010.

## Earth Day - Prairie Rescue schedule

Prairie Rescue events will be posted on the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation website at ([www.inhf.org/rescue2004.org](http://www.inhf.org/rescue2004.org))

If you know of a rescue planned for your county and would like it listed with the rest, please send the details to: Alicia Hraha, Ecosystems Management Team, AmeriCorps, Iowa DNR (515) 280-3134 [Alicia.Hraha@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:Alicia.Hraha@dnr.state.ia.us)

*What ever happened at the Eddyville Dunes? continued from page 9*

Many people from many conservation organizations helped "Save the Dunes." The Iowa Sierra Club was a staunch advocate for an alternative route for the Eddyville Bypass, one that would avoid impacting the Dunes entirely. This did not happen, but collectively, we did move the IDOT to redesign the bypass enough to avoid much of the natural area destruction that was scheduled to take place. For the impacts that did take place, 250 acres were set aside, with funds for restoration and management. Within their respective counties, these acres are contiguous, and can continue to provide homes for rare plants and animals that belong in Iowa. This is no small accomplishment. We remain grateful to all who wrote letters, stood up, and spoke for the Dunes. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens . . ." (Margaret Mead). High school kids aren't supposed to get excited about a field trip. "Wow, we didn't know this was here!" they said. "This is cool!"



## What happened at the Eddyville Dunes?

### Update by Glenda Buenger

Step out the back door of the Eddyville-Blakesburg High School and you are at the northern end of the 200-acre Wapello County preserve created as a result of the Eddyville Bypass project. On this particular day in early June, Mahaska CCB Naturalist Pete Eyheralde is leading a field trip for a group of about a dozen EBHS science teachers and Jr.-Sr. High students. Pete shows them prickly pear cactus and other plants. They glimpse six-lined racerunners, a small whiptailed lizard which inhabits the Dunes. They see snakes - a bull snake, a blue racer, and an Eastern hognose, so named because of its upturned nose. The kids don't remember the public controversy of only a few years ago, when the road project was delayed because somebody had discovered state-protected orchids and turtles in the path of the proposed bypass. The kids are surprised by what they see and learn with Pete. 'We didn't know this was here!' they say, 'This is cool!'

The next day the group has a second outing with amateur naturalist Pat McAdams, a geologist by training, who shows and tells them about the origins of the Dunes. Some 12,000-15,000 years ago, fierce winter winds deposited all this sand, picked up from fresh glacial outwashes, along the northwest bank of the Des Moines River at Eddyville. In some areas, he tells them, the sand deposits are 50-60 feet thick, and some of the kids inadvertently look down at their feet, amazed by what they are standing on. During this time, McAdams continues, the winds also created many clay-lined depressions in the sand. They act like plugged bathroom sinks, holding water. The Dunes were born. Because of the extremes of habitat, from dry sand prairie to lush wetland, the Eddyville Dunes support a wide range of biological diversity. An astounding array of plants and animals live at the Dunes, in high contrast to the monoculture lawns, corn, and bean fields that most of these kids know. They listen to frogs, smell the sweet odor of crushed calamus leaves, and find turtle egg shell fragments on the sand.

The bypass project has radically changed the Dunes landscape in some areas, left it untouched in others. The slope behind the Amoco station, at the intersection of Hwys. 63 and 137, has been bulldozed, reshaped and smoothed to create an interchange. The former turnoff onto 182 St., the gravel road that runs through the wetland where the pale-green orchids are, has been obliterated. Access to this area is gained only by an out-of-the-way route from the east, and 182nd St. is dead-ended at the top of the dune. This prevents any development between the new 4-lane, when complete, and the natural preserve.

The same is true at the north end of the bypass project, where Mahaska County was awarded a 50-acre sand prairie and wetlands tract as mitigation for negative impacts. The tract abuts mOT right-of-way, so that no development such as truck stops can take place just over the fence from the preserve. Main access to the Mahaska County preserve will be from the north interchange access road, which creates the west boundary of the preserve. A small parking lot has already been built on land that had been previously heavily disturbed by farming practices. Visitors will need to hike a short distance from the parking lot; MCCC's intent is to protect more biodiverse areas from incidental visitor traffic. On the east side of the Mahaska County preserve, the road past the Eddyville cemetery has been dead-ended just past the old Teno entrance to the sand prairie. Again, one will need to hike in to see what there is to see. The cemetery road, incidentally, is the oldest piece of concrete outside a city limits in the state of Iowa, and is listed on the National Register. Eddyville citizens paved it around the turn of the century to help grain wagons over the sand dune toward the mill in town.

Although property deeds will not be transferred until the project is complete, the DOT has awarded management funds to both Wapello and Mahaska counties as part of the impact mitigation settlement. Wapello CCB's big purchase was a tractor with a 15-ft. batwing mower, to combat brush encroachment. Similarly, Mahaska CCB's big purchase was a bobcat with a tree shearer, for the same purpose. Both counties view tree removal, mowing, and burning as their best weapons against woody encroachment, the biggest management challenge at the Dunes. Both CCBs have approached management issues with no small amount of respect for the number of native plant and animal species, and the range of habitat requirements, that they are now responsible for.

The two counties are taking different approaches to aiding and re-establishing native vegetation. MCCC's Director Mike Gipple is taking a "little at a time" approach. Some of MCCC's land was farmed, and Mike is following successive outer rims at this area to see how it can re-seed itself, and to see if suppressed species reappear. WCCB Director Kurt Baker is taking a more assertive approach, having already seeded a 2-3 acre area east of the orchid wetland at 182 St. with Zone 3 (southern Iowa) Yellow Tag seed. He has also begun production plots of native species, starting with locally-harvested seed. Both directors are committed to local ecotype. The other good news is that Perry Thostensen, who was MCCC Director during the bypass controversy, has recently taken a position as Natural Resource Manager with WCCB. Thus the Dunes are in excellent shape in terms of those who will be making restoration decisions.

The additional good news is that as time passes and the bypass gets closer to getting paved and opened, some of the local adversarial feelings stirred by the construction delay seem to be dwindling. Mahaska CCB Director Mike Gipple comments that "anti" people are now "pro," citing a couple who live just east of the 182nd St. preserve. They were very opposed to delaying the bypass in order to spare orchids and turtles. Now they show friends their pictures of the Ornate box turtle who visits their vegetable garden.

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## Basic Requirements for Comprehensive Botanical Inventories

From: P. M. Catling (catlingp@agr.gc.ca) and A. A. Reznicek (reznicek@umich.edu),  
BEN: Botanical Electronic News, No. 317, December 2, 2003

Over the past few months we have received a number of requests for information on the requirements for comprehensive inventories of vascular plants. These requests have come from field botanists, government agencies and other organizations. Our standard response to these requests has been the following list of considerations which may be of general interest, but the main reason for reproducing them here is to solicit additional ideas. An improved list of requirements and acknowledgements will be made available at a later date. Here 'inventories' refers to baseline floristic information including composition of plant communities and the species present within a specified area. Such information provides a framework for subsequent monitoring, management and stewardship as well as the data necessary for evaluation of composition and representivity for protection.

**Impact:** An understanding of why the survey is being done and its potential impact is very important. There are often specific questions but overall and future impact should not be overlooked. It seems remarkable but the fact is that people doing botanical surveys sometimes do not really understand why they are doing them, and this leads to difficulties in both methodology and interpretation.

**Expertise:** Substantial knowledge of plant classification, plant morphology and identification procedures and plant collecting and herbarium procedures is required to conduct adequate botanical inventories. A good knowledge of the other workers in the field and of the relevant literature is desirable. With prior arrangement, experts in herbaria are often willing to determine specimens in exchange for a labeled collection that can be deposited in the experts home institution. Such collections should have standard labels and be unmounted (to facilitate evaluation of distinctive features, - too often specimens are mounted with only the upper leaf surface visible and the lower surface covered with glue making the evaluation of microscopic characteristics of the undersurface very difficult). Herbarium curators at universities and museums can provide guidance in appropriate methods of collecting and labelling and they often have a knowledge of experts as a result of loaning their specimens.

People generally cannot find what they do not know, and even when they collect everything they see, there will be a lot that is missed as a consequence of not knowing what to look for. Thus botanical experience on the landscape is extremely beneficial. However, an equally important ability is to understand the limitations of the expertise available. With regard to issues such as species at risk and the use of floristic quality indices as landscape evaluation tools, accuracy and completeness of botanical surveys has become especially critical.

**Funding support:** Inventory is a complex and time-consuming task that requires adequate funding. Too often a client requires an inventory but pays so little that all that is possible is a compilation of fragmentary existing data. Insufficient funding may also limit available expertise.

**Background:** It is important to begin an inventory with a thorough basis of the existing information. This often means library and computer searches and contacting a number of people.

**Adjustment of methods:** Methods may be adjusted to the question or the area or to other aspects. For example, the "is it present" question can be answered by creation of species lists, but the "what is the trend" question may require both counting or establishment of permanent quadrats that are sometimes advantageously set out during an initial inventory so as to provide data as soon as possible. As another example, recording during random walk may be suitable for a small area whereas permanently marked transects set out to cover conspicuous zonation may be more appropriate for larger areas.

**Coverage by season:** Since flowers and fruits are often necessary to identify plants, and these are available at different times during the season for different species, visits at several times are often necessary to gather identifiable material. Some plants, such as the spring ephemerals in eastern North American deciduous forests (e.g. *Erthronium americanum*) can be dominant but have completely disappeared above ground after midsummer. Spring, fall and summer visits to each habitat type are usually a minimal requirement for a reliable inventory.

**Coverage over a period of years:** Some species appear only during wet years. This phenomenon is most prevalent in dry habitats, but it is by no means confined to deserts and scrublands. *Euphorbia commutata* of eastern North American alvars

continued page JJ

*continued from page 10*

appears only in wet years. Other species such as those in a submerged seedbank waiting for exposure may only appear in very dry years at irregular intervals when water levels are at an unusually low level.

**All within a group of plants:** It is desirable to be as complete as possible. At the very least a major group, such as all vascular plants should be included in a survey. In some cases difficult subgroups such as grasses or sedges, which are extremely useful indicators, are omitted. Expertise should be sufficient to include these groups or additional expertise should be sought.

**All habitats:** All kinds of wetlands including fens, bogs, marshes, and swamps within a study area should be surveyed. Open water is often neglected or overlooked due to difficulty of access or because the submerged plants are inconspicuous. It is a variable habitat that can be alkaline to acid and differs in floristic composition in relation to amounts of wave action, flow rate, water transparency, etc. Variability in open water leads to relatively high biodiversity and significant species (locally rare, at risk, etc.) may also be present. Cliff faces are also sometimes neglected (due to difficulty of access!) but are also very important. Binoculars may be useful for surveying this special habitat.

**All vegetation types:** Consideration should be given to sampling all identified vegetation types within a study area.

**All factors:** Microclimate (exposure such as both cool, moist north-facing slopes and warm, dry south-facing slopes), soil or substrate (acid or alkaline rocks), ecological aspects (areas of grazing versus non-grazing), historical aspects (such as villages of indigenous people where cultivated or selected native germplasm persists), areas recently disturbed for example by fire (where a seedbank has been released) are among the considerations in this category.

**Voucher specimens:** Collection of specimens to document important records is a very good idea. The extent of collection depends on what is already available and whether an institutional collection will accept the specimens. Rare species should not be collected or only parts collected (which can be supplemented by photographs). Such specimens of legally protected and rare plants may be essential under certain circumstances (litigation for example).

Procedures for collection, care and submission of botanical specimens for identification are available: ([http://vres2.agr.gc.ca/ceorc/dao/daoll\\_e.htm](http://vres2.agr.gc.ca/ceorc/dao/daoll_e.htm) - see also Saville 1962, Brayshaw XXX, Metsger & Byers 1999, etc.)

**Local help:** To the extent possible experts on the local terrain (guides) and experts on the local flora should be contacted and invited to assist either formally with payment or informally depending on circumstances. Local experts may be just as valuable as scientific experts.

**Expectation list:** It is very useful to prepare a list of at least the significant species that could occur in the area, based on comparison with other more well known areas within the region. This allows for the development of specific search images and specific search behavior, and it increases the likelihood of significant discoveries.

**Contents:** Among the very important items to be included in an inventory report are the methods (recording, identification as well as a precise definition of the area), goals or purpose of the inventory work, context (an evaluation of the inventory results in a regional context at least), limitations (including reference to areas not adequately surveyed, times when visits should have been made but were not, unusual conditions affecting floral display such as drought, and any related considerations that will help to provide a basis for the next inventory), and threats (potential and actual threats to perpetuation of plants and plant communities including pollution, development, overuse, competition with invasive aliens, etc.). For more information on content see the web for example: <http://www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca/public/appendices2.pdf>

## References

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New edition. Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, BC 44 p.

Metsger, D.A. & S.c. Byers 1999. *Managing the modern herbarium -*

*an inter-disciplinary approach*. Society for the preservation of natural history collections, Washington D.C. 384 p.

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Publication 1113, 124 P

*Pages from a Kayaker's Journal continued from page 1*

Now atop the esker, amid a square mile of roadless grassland, we tum in place and see only rolling prairie for 360 degrees (or 720 or 1080 as I rotate again and again), bisected by the Little Sioux River where our boats lay hidden and marred only by the network of silent pylons marching across the eastern vista. A buffeting wind and intermittent drizzle add to a sense of remoteness from the ordinary places of everyday life. Although only a half-mile from a road, our arrival via the river lets us indulge in the fleeting vision of a wild Iowa, of an expansive prairie province reduced now to a point. We stand at the center of the arc and gaze at a remnant landscape.

Feeling the press of unfinished traveling (one mile down, eleven to go), we return to the boats and relaunch into the river. Shortly downstream, a pair of bluewing teal jump from the water and fly swiftly away. Low bluffs studded with prairie bunchgrasses slip past. A fence (the first of many that we encounter during the trip) awaits us at the south boundary of the prairie preserve. We pass cautiously underneath and find ourselves floating through a pasture. A scattering of horses on the right bank regards us tentatively from a safe distance at first, but then bands together and races down to the fenceline for a closer look. The rumbling of their many hooves elicits a mocked call of "Stammmmpeeeede!" from someone in the group. The gang of horses stops abruptly at the fence and watches us curiously, eyes bright and ears collectively aprick, jostling with each other for a better view. Robin snaps a photo of their comical line-up as we drift out of their pasture.

At the far end of the pasture, a second fence- this one brushing the surface of the river next to our second bridge of the day- is too low to pass under and too high to pass over, forcing us to land on a small sandbar for a portage. Once past the bridge, a chunky black bird flies clumsily across the river in front of us from a willow thicket into a dense band of horsetails and cattails. I glimpse a short beak and patches of orange underfeathers before it disappears into the vegetation. A rail! Maybe a sora? The secretive behavior of the bird, the inaccessibility of the birdbook in fastened gear, and the pull of the river prevents further research.

We lunch on a small grassy knoll in the midst of a large, green pasture. As we settle to eat, sleet begins to fall. Tiny iceballs accumulate on the dark fabric of my rainpants. Thunder rumbles distantly. I peer at the others, worried as trip leader that people could quickly become dispirited if they are wet and cold. Fortunately, everyone is wearing good raingear and no one seems discouraged. Although the sleet soon ends, the chill of inactivity moves us to resume paddling.

We proceed down the river and I begin to watch for landmarks for the Freda Haffner Kettlehole preserve, where I want to take a second prairie walk. Light rain comes and goes several times. Heavily grazed, grassy hills- treeless except for widely scattered cedars in places- flank the river, sometimes close, sometimes farther away. Having approached the preserve previously only by car and foot, I worry about bypassing the prairie without recognizing it, but it is unmistakable when it comes into view at last. On river right, a forested hillside- the first woods that we have seen since leaving Twin Forks- forms a dark beacon visible from over a mile away. As we round a final meander, a long, steep, grassy hillside opposite the forest rises up on river left, studded with tawny bunchgrasses just like the eskers on Cayler Prairie. The esker looks bigger and more impressive than I had remembered from previous walking visits.

We pull ashore on a sandbar, walk several yards across a bluegrass pasture, and slip under the preserve boundary fence. As if touched by a magic wand, the vegetation changes suddenly to native prairie. Cordgrass in the slough, bluestems and porcupine grass on the slopes. A few steps up the hillside reveals blooming groundplum, prairie violets, prairiesmoke, and bastard toadflax as well as more big stands of fruiting pasqueflower. We climb to the rim of the kettlehole and look down into the basin formed by its clasping arms. During the great meltdown at the end of the Pleistocene epoch, a sand-laden stream flowing under the rotting continental glacier here encountered a giant block of ice that had fallen from the frozen ceiling and was forced to diverge around it as an island; when the flow of water under the ice slowed, its passages around the ice block became clogged with deep sand, forming the two arms of the esker we now stand upon. As on Cayler Prairie, our roadless approach and the extensive natural viewscape lend a mystique to the experience. Robin and I later spoke of how this landscape evoked a sense of "buffalo country"- by squinting at distant cattle on an open pasture skyline, we could easily imagine bison silhouetted on a prairie horizon.

After brief exploring and botanizing, we return to the boats. We are at the midpoint of our float trip and need to reach Horseshoe Bend before the approaching storm front. Thunder rumbles ominously as we resume paddling. The rain begins to fall in earnest, pattering aggressively on the surface of the river, and the lulls between rains become shorter. My recollections of the journey grow more impressionistic: a hillside seep on the right bank, festooned with thousands of bright yellow marsh marigolds; another herd of horses on river left; spotted sandpipers and a lone Franklin's Gull (swimming inconspicuously in a wooded reach of the stream); a swimming muskrat that dove suddenly as we slipped up quietly behind it.

I have been counting fences across the stream and am up to nine when I lose track. Most are easily dodged by Robin and me in our low-profile solo canoe and kayak, so we need to portage only once. However, the higher profile of Don and Kay's tandem canoe forces them to portage several times. The nastiest one is on the upstream side of the

*continued page 13*

*Pages from a Kayaker's Journal continued from page J2*

Highway A34 bridge: low, barbed, and electrified. Both Don and Kay are zapped as they portage their canoe along the bank- Kay when she inadvertently touches the wire and Don when the metal gunwale at the stem brushes against the wire as he pulls from the bow. In addition to the physical break in the continuity of the float trip by the Highway A34 fence, a psychological break in our experience of natural scenery occurs just below the highway when we encounter newly constructed houses on the banks and bluffs (with more promised ominously by a sign glimpsed from the river for a future "West Sioux Estates" subdivision). Fortunately, a fenceless, natural landscape resumes a short distance later.

Forest becomes increasingly extensive as we proceed downstream from the kettlehole and is continuous as we wind through the morainal hills upstream of Horseshoe Bend. In fact, trees now arch over the narrow stream almost everywhere. Bur oak and basswood on the hillside are joined by silver maple, elm, hackberry, walnut, and boxelder on the floodplain. Some lean low across the stream, requiring us to duck. The crowns of others have toppled into the water, forming small sweepers to be avoided. Still others are sunken in the water and one of them snags Don and Kay's canoe as they attempt to float over its tangled branches. After watching their unsuccessful struggle to extricate themselves, and apprehensive about the canoe capsizing and delivering them into a strainer, I paddle back upstream and dismount on shore. Don tosses me a rope and I am able to pull them gently out of the mess. Just around the next bend, we encounter a large tree that has fallen completely athwart the river, blocking our passage. Robin has already scouted a portage around it, but upon reembaring we discover a second tree blockade only a few paddle strokes later, requiring yet another portage.

The storm catches us as we struggle through the final mile. Lightning flashes brightly, thunder crackles with an angry edge, and the rain redoubles in intensity. The deteriorating weather and obstacles threaten a grueling finish to the trip, but Robin lightens our spirits with servings of cookies and good humor as we rest in a rain-soaked and timber-strewn portage. After a final reach of trouble-free paddling, the take-out at Horseshoe Bend Park comes into view and we pull out-tired, wet, but happy- in the pouring rain about 4:30PM.



INPS Website: <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~herbarium/inps/inps/home.htm>

## INPS Membership/Change of Address Form and Survey

Send with your 2004 dues of \$10.00 to Diana Horton, 720 Sandusky Drive, Iowa City, IA 52240.

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

## **INPS Grant Information**

The Iowa Native Plant Society is a plant oriented organization whose goals are education, conservation and ethical use of native plants and to increase appreciation and enjoyment of Iowa's native flora.

Types of projects supported - The INPS will consider proposals for projects in two areas:

- 1) Acquisition of land that will significantly contribute to the conservation of Iowa's native flora
- 2) Research, training and education that will contribute to conservation, appreciation and increased knowledge of Iowa's native flora.

Who may apply - Non-profit institutions and individuals. Applicants need not be Iowa residents, however, the project must be carried out in the state of Iowa.

Size of grants - INPS will award each year: Land acquisition grants up to \$1250, Research grants up to \$500, Training and education related grants totaling \$250

Review of applications - Proposals will be reviewed by the INPS board.

When to submit - Proposals must be postmarked September 1, 2004, for funding effective January 1, 2005. Applicants will be notified November 1 if their proposals are approved.

Information requested on the application form: IOWA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY GRANT APPLICATION

The Iowa Native Plant Society accepts applications for small grants. These grants may be awarded in several categories described on the announcement.

Download the Word document from the INPS website. \_\_\_\_\_

Complete and submit a copy as an email attachment to Sibylla Brown, INPS president, attimbrw1@grm.net. Or send it to: Sibylla Brown, 2910 Pony Farm Road, Leon, IA 50144.

Applications may also be sent or given to any INPS board member.

Proposals must be postmarked by September 1 of the application year, for funding effective January 1. Project report is due to INPS by December 31 of grant year.

Applicant Information - Name (person or organization) - Contact person - Address City, State, Zipcode - Telephone - Fax - Email - Amount of Request - Project Title and Description: (attach additional pages as needed)

### **Newsletter**

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